



City of Santa Barbara

PLANNING COMMISSION

MINUTES

JUNE 2, 2022

1:00 P.M.
City Hall, Council Chambers
735 Anacapa Street; and
40612 Meadow Ln
Palm Desert, CA 92260

COMMISSION MEMBERS:

Gabriel Escobedo, Chair
Roxana Bonderson, Vice Chair
John M. Baucke
Jay D. Higgins
Sheila Lodge
Devon Wardlow
Lesley Wiscomb

STAFF:

Tava Ostrenger, Assistant City Attorney
Allison DeBusk, Senior Planner
Gillian Fennessy, Commission Secretary

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Escobedo called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

I. ROLL CALL

Chair Gabriel Escobedo, Vice Chair Roxana Bonderson, Commissioners John M. Baucke, Jay D. Higgins, Sheila Lodge, Devon Wardlow, and Lesley Wiscomb

STAFF PRESENT

Tava Ostrenger, Assistant City Attorney
Allison DeBusk, Senior Planner
Kathleen Kennedy, Project Planner
Julia Pujó, Project Planner/ Environmental Analyst
Brad Hess, Principal Project Manager, Public Works
Janet Ahern, City TV Production Specialist
Gillian Fennessy, Commission Secretary

II. PRELIMINARY MATTERS

- A. Requests for continuances, withdrawals, postponements, or addition of ex-agenda items:
No requests.
- B. Announcements and appeals:
No announcements.
- C. Review, consideration, and action on the following draft Planning Commission minutes and resolutions:

1. May 12, 2022 Planning Commission Minutes
2. Planning Commission Resolution No. 003-22
701 N. Milpas St
3. Planning Commission Resolution No. 004-22
25 Las Alturas Rd
4. May 19, 2022 Planning Commission Minutes
5. Planning Commission Resolution No. 005-22
3239 Cliff Dr.

MOTION: Wiscomb / Bonderson

Approve the minutes and resolutions as presented.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Ayes: 7 Noes: 0 Abstain: 0 Absent: 0

D. Comments from members of the public pertaining to items not on this agenda:

Public comment opened at 1:02 p.m., and the following individual spoke:

1. Steve Fort

Public comment closed at 1:03 p.m.

Written correspondence from Michael & Sandra Christenson was acknowledged.

III. ENVIRONMENTAL HEARING

ACTUAL TIME: 1:04 P.M.

DRAFT MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION (MND) PUBLIC COMMENT HEARING

601 SANTA BARBARA STREET (Formerly 119 E. Cota St.) (Police Station)

Assessor’s Parcel Number: 031-151-018

Zoning Designation: M-C Zone

Application Number: PLN2020-00627

Applicant / Owner: City of Santa Barbara

The project consists of demolition of an existing parking lot (Cota Commuter Lot) and construction of a new three-story, approximately 53-foot-high, approximately 64,000-square-foot Police Station building, and associated 37.5-foot-high, approximately 84,000-square-foot parking structure to accommodate 236 parking spaces (128 for Police Department fleet vehicles and 108 for employee vehicles). Eight additional surface parking spaces would be provided for visitors.

The purpose of the environmental hearing is to receive comments from the Planning Commission, interested agencies, and the public on the adequacy and completeness of the Draft Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) for the proposed project. Written comments on the Draft MND will be accepted through **June 12, 2022**.

No formal action on the development proposal or environmental document will take place at this hearing.

Kathleen Kennedy, Project Planner, gave the Staff presentation. Julia Pujo, Project Planner/ Environmental Analyst and Brad Hess, Principal Project Manager were available to answer questions.

Adam Poll, Air Quality Consultant, Dudek was available to answer questions. John Davis, Project Manager, Dudek was available remotely to answer questions.

Public comment opened at 1:24 p.m., and as no one wished to speak, it closed.

Written correspondence from Rich Untermann and Paulina Conn was acknowledged.

Commissioner comments:

Commissioner Wiscomb:

- Staff has done great job on the MND. It is very thorough.
- The document is complete and easy to read in terms of explanation for the mitigation measures and why they are implemented.
- All of the studies that have been done and the studies that are required prior to construction speak to more than an adequate analysis.
- The Project Environmental Coordinator (PEC) will play a key role in the project as it moves through construction. The PEC will be proactive to assure appropriate mitigation measures are being used as the construction progresses. There may be changes throughout the construction process, so it is important that the PEC duties be included in the MND.
- Appreciates the short-term, construction-related mitigation measures because things will probably change, but also appreciates the long-term operational mitigation measures as they were very thoughtful to the neighbors and the surrounding community.
- Would like to be clearer about the precise timing and process related to the Safe Parking Program. Would like the participants of the Safe Parking Program to be notified with ample time and a further study of locations be completed so it doesn't become an issue in the future. Would like Staff to provide this information in the MND and how it will be handled as we get closer to 2024 construction.
- The relocation of vehicles that currently park in the Cota Commuter Lot could be clearer by addressing the process and timing, and including the following:
 - A future survey to determine where the participants go after they park, when it is closer to construction.
 - Analysis of the reassignment of the potential places participants could go.
 - Is there adequate parking available at the alternative lots? Do not know because the survey hasn't been done yet.
 - Perhaps a future analysis of impacts to traffic by relocation of vehicles to another parking lot and if queuing up would create a traffic impact.

- Tree replacements should be clearer in documenting that the replacement areas, Las Positas Multi-Use Path and Elings Park, have sufficient areas to accommodate the additional trees.
- The process of relocating the Farmers Market could be clearer.
- Recommends that the project description states that this does not include the existing Police Station so that the public understands that it is not part of this project, and that the potential future uses of the existing Police Station will be defined under a separate project while this project is being constructed.

Commissioner Baucke:

- Believes this is a very thorough document and commends Staff for their diligence.
- Agrees with Commissioner Wiscomb's comments.
- Would like the MND to include reference to the site selection process and associated CEQA documentation. All of the documentation on the site selection process should be part of the record for this MND because the public has raised issues about the site selection process and alternatives.
- Would like to include some background on the existing police station and what its future may or may not be.
- As feedback to the Architectural Board of Review, he has concerns regarding the blank façade of the tower included on the plans.

Commissioner Higgins:

- Would like the visual resources section of the MND to be approached like the biological section in terms of overcompensating. Would like to include a discussion in the MND that visual resources are not considered a significant impact under CEQA because of State law and not because the design review board found it compatible. Compatibility is not necessarily a way to address impact.
- Believes that this is going to be a large building in context of the surrounding buildings and would like better forewarning to the public about the height and size.
- Would like to see improved water use disclosure including an explanation of how the numbers were arrived at, for instance, the institutional usage rate.
- Would like to include information about how much water current police station uses.

Commissioner Lodge:

- Agrees with Commissioners Wiscomb and Baucke about thoroughness of the analysis.
- The mitigation measures are appropriate.
- Believes that the current police station building is inadequate because it is holding more people than it was designed to hold and it is spread out over three other buildings.
- Believes this project is essential and is glad that the proposed building will contain all police services.
- Recalls that the decision to relocate the Farmers Market to Carrillo and State was made by the Santa Barbara Certified Farmers Market Association.

Commissioner Wardlow:

- Agrees with fellow Commissioners.
- Agrees with the idea this project will be and already has been scrutinized by the public, but it is something that is needed.
- The analysis is adequate and appreciates it.
- The mitigation measures are appropriate, but would like to see more notice to the public.

- Community engagement with the surrounding businesses and educating people on the impacts, specifically traffic, is important, especially regarding construction.
- Would like to ensure that the Farmers Market is properly relocated prior to construction.

Commissioner Bonderson:

- Agrees that the document is thorough.
- The mitigation measures are appropriate.
- Parking analysis related to the relocation of commuter parking from the Cota Street Lot to other lots should be completed and provided in the MND.
- The explanation regarding traffic was adequate for today's conversation but a more formal study and formal decision with regard to traffic, both during construction and possibly in the future, after construction is completed on Santa Barbara Street, needs to be documented.
- Important to make this document as detailed as possible.
- Commends Staff for their hard work and appreciates the time and attention spent on it.

Chair Escobedo:

- Agrees with Commissioner Wiscomb's comments.
- In regard to the Safe Parking Program, would like to make sure that there is adequate noticing and a planning process that occurs more than a few months before construction.
- Would like to make sure there is a conversation with the participants in the Safe Parking Program.
- Supports the suggestion made by Commissioner Higgins which was to outline State law that refers to infill development and visual resources.
- Would like to avoid using diesel generators as much as possible, instead would like to rely on battery storage first to delay the usage of diesel generators.
- The analysis is amazing and the document is well written.
- The mitigation measures are appropriate.
- No specific edits.
- In the future, it would be beneficial to have a document of this size further in advance.

IV. ADMINISTRATIVE AGENDA

ACTUAL TIME: 2:40 P.M.

A. Committee and Liaison Reports:

1. Staff Hearing Officer Liaison Report

No report.

2. Other Committee and Liaison Reports

- a. Commissioner Wiscomb announced the upcoming Plaza De La Guerra Working Group meeting on June 3, 2022.
- b. Commissioner Lodge reported on the May 25, 2022 meeting of Historic Landmarks Commission.
- c. Commissioner Bonderson reported on the April 18, 2022 and May 2, 2022 meetings of Architectural Board of Review.

V. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Escobedo adjourned the meeting at 2:57 p.m.

Submitted by,



Gillian Fennessy, Commission Secretary