



Department of Planning and Development

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MEETING MINUTES
PLAN COMMISSION

Location: via Videoconference (Zoom)

Wednesday, May 22, 2024 at 6:30pm

The Plan Commission held its regular session on Wednesday, May 22, 2024 via Videoconference (Zoom). The meeting commenced at 6:30 pm and adjourned at 8:52 pm.

Call to Order – (6:30 pm)

1. Roll Call

Present

Margaret Holly (Chair)

Al Fleischer Jr.

Charles Gascon

Ellen Hartz

Patricia McQueen

Tori Gonzalez

Jeff Hales (Council Liaison)

Excused

Mark Harvey

Staff Present

Mary Kennedy, Planner

Noah Chapin, Planner

John Wagner, Director of Planning &
Development

John Mulligan, City Attorney

2. Approval of Minutes –

- a. Minutes from March 27, 2024 were corrected to reflect that the motion regarding lot consolidation was made by Commissioner Fleischer, and that no second is required on the motion. The corrected minutes were approved.
- b. Minutes from April 17, 2024 were approved as printed.

3. Public Comments - None

4. Old Business - None

5. New Business

a. TXT-24-01

Applicant: City of University City

Request: Text Amendment to remove the 12,000 gross floor area limitation in the Limited Commercial (LC) District

VOTE REQUIRED

Ms. Kennedy introduced the proposed text amendment to code section 400.470(A), explaining that the Agudas Israel application was the impetus behind the analysis that led to the amendment, but that the proposed change benefits all developments by streamlining the code and removing redundant requirements while maintaining full review capabilities by the City. The code review committee had previously heard this proposed amendment and was in favor.

Chair Holly then took a motion to recommend approval of the text amendment to council. The motion was made by Commissioner Fleischer.
Vote passes unanimously.

b. **REZ-24-01**

Applicant: Rami Berner on behalf of Agudas Israel of St. Louis Synagogue

Request: Map Amendment from Single Family Residential (SR) to Limited Commercial

(LC)

Location: 558 and 564 Maplevue Drive

VOTE REQUIRED

Ms. Kennedy introduced the map amendment, explaining that this application is also related to the next two items on the agenda, a subdivision and a conditional use permit. Ms. Kennedy showed a map of the site and explained that the proposed use would be “place of worship,” which is a permitted use in all zoning districts, but that the map amendment is necessary for the subsequent subdivision and CUP to be approved. She then introduced the preliminary plat application and described the approval process.

Chair Holly confirmed that the Plan Commission has the authority to approve a preliminary plat, but that a final plat must then be submitted, on which the Plan Commission will make a recommendation to the City Council.

Ms. Kennedy then introduced the Conditional Use Permit. She explained that the CUP is not needed to approve the use of the site (place of worship is allowed in all zoning districts), but for 4 related requests pertaining to off-street parking, site coverage, and structure exceeding 3,500 square feet.

Ms. Kennedy explained how the parking requirement for this site is calculated as well as the reductions sought by the applicant. The applicant is providing 50 spaces, which is adequate assuming all reductions are approved by the City Plan Commission. She also showed a sketch of some public improvements that the Department of Planning and Development is considering in this same area, but unrelated to the approval of these applications. She then explained the remaining items related to the CUP, including a 1% increase in allowed site coverage, landscaping, setbacks, parking and loading areas, pedestrian access, and conformance with the Comprehensive Plan.

Applicant Rami Berner introduced himself and began his presentation, explaining the need, site and building design, and showing renderings.

Chair Holly opened the floor to questions by commissioners. Commissioner Fleischer raised concern about the treatment of the loading/dumpster area on the west and the pedestrian cut-through. Applicant stated that the area would receive further attention as they work through liability and other issues.

Commissioner Gascon sought clarification on the average parking need and occupancy of the synagogue. Applicant explained that peak hours of occupancy are on Saturdays.

Commissioner Gascon inquired about the impact that the shared parking agreement between the applicant and the neighboring property at 8220 Delmar would have on the future uses of 8220 Delmar, and if the 12 parking spaces being leased would then create a non-conforming parking situation if the use at 8220 Delmar changed in the future.

Mr. Mulligan asked about the projected growth in membership of the synagogue, and if the projected growth justified the increase in building size. The applicant explained that the increase in building size is intended to give them more suitable spaces for their current membership and not specifically to attract new membership. Furthermore, applicant

explained that members of the congregation are required to walk to the synagogue at times and therefore must live nearby, effectively restricting the potential future growth to the size of the neighborhood and nearby available housing.

Mr. Hales, who was attending via Zoom, acknowledged the need for improving infrastructure along Delmar, particularly with crosswalks, and encouraged those in the room to reach out to their council people to support those projects when possible.

Chair Holly then took a motion to recommend approval to city council of the map amendment REZ-24-01, Mr. Gascon instead asked that the motion and vote on the map amendment be held until after the public comment period pertaining to the CUP. Chair Holly specified that the public hearing should be only about the CUP, and therefore a vote on the map amendment should still be held now. Some clarification about city procedure was provided by Chair Holly, particularly regarding which applications would have public hearing at the commission meeting, and which would only have public hearing at the council meeting.

The motion to recommend approval of the map amendment to City Council was made by Commissioner Fleischer. The vote was held, and the motion passed 5 to 1, with the dissenting vote by Commissioner Gascon.

c. **SUB-24-02**

Applicant: Rami Berner on behalf of Agudas Israel of St. Louis Synagogue

Request: Preliminary Plat for Major Subdivision combining four lots into one.

Location: 8200-8206 Delmar Boulevard and 558, 564, and 568 Mapleview Drive

VOTE REQUIRED

Chair Holly introduced the application for preliminary plat to consolidate the four lots into one, then opened the floor to commissioners. No further discussion was brought up at the time, and a motion was made by Commissioner McQueen to approve the preliminary plat. The motion was approved unanimously by all 6 commissioners.

d. **CUP-24-02**

Applicant: Rami Berner on behalf of Agudas Israel of St. Louis Synagogue

Request: Conditional Use Permit (CUP) to approve four items related to parking, site coverage, and a land use exceeding 3,500 square feet

Location: 8200-8206 Delmar Boulevard and 558, 564, and 568 Mapleview Drive

PUBLIC HEARING, VOTE REQUIRED

Chair Holly introduced the application and reviewed the review criteria for conditional use permits as stated in the city code.

Ms. Kennedy stated that several written comments were received prior to the meeting and that they would be made available. (Those public comments are now attached to these minutes). Chair Holly then opened the floor for public comment and began calling those that requested to speak on the sign-in sheet to the microphone.

Several members of the synagogue and other neighbors spoke in support of the project. Some comments expressing concern about property values in the neighborhood behind the synagogue were received.

Commissioner Gascon inquired about the lighting in the parking lot and whether the light would be a nuisance. The applicant clarified that the photometric plan will be submitted, and that the lighting they are using is “zero trespass” and meets all city codes.

Commissioner Gascon reiterated his desire to know how the shared parking agreement will impact the future use of 8220 Delmar and expressed his hesitation with allowing currently residential zoned land to be converted into a parking lot.

Chair Holly took a motion to recommend approval of the CUP with conditions to City Council. The motion was made by Commissioner McQueen and the floor was opened to further comment by commissioners. Commissioner Gascon said he doesn't think that the City or applicant have adequately addressed pedestrian safety at the intersection. Commissioner Gonzalez disagreed, saying that the members of this synagogue are already walking, and that every development is subject to minimum parking requirements. Dr. Wagner indicated that the City intends to work with the county and other appropriate entities to improve pedestrian safety at the intersection, but that nothing was concrete yet.

Commissioner McQueen raised a question about peak times and how the building would be used outside of those times. The applicant described some of the other uses in the building such as classrooms.

Commissioner McQueen clarified that this would not be the end of the approval process, and that the public would have opportunities to be heard again at City Council.

Chair Holly reiterated that the use of the site was not in question, and that all discussion of the CUP should be restricted to the specific conditions of the CUP, *not* the overall land use of the site, which is a place of worship.

Commissioner Gascon proposed a condition that staff complete a review of the impact of the shared parking agreement will have on the future uses of the building at 8220 Delmar.

The vote to amend the motion and add the condition was held, amendment passed 4-2. A vote was then held on the motion to recommend approval of the CUP, as conditioned, to City Council.

Vote passed unanimously.

6. **Other Business - None**
7. **Reports - None**
8. **Adjournment** – The meeting was adjourned at 8:52 pm.