

**PLANNING COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**

Tuesday, May 6, 2025 – 7 p.m.

Video Recording is Archived on the City Website

<https://www.claremontca.gov/Government/City-Council/Watch-a-Meeting>

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Emerson called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

ROLL CALL

PRESENT

COMMISSIONER: ALVAREZ, DAVIS, EMERSON, ROSENBLUTH, WILLIAMSON, WONG (Arrived at 7:01)

ABSENT

COMMISSIONER: RAHMIM

ALSO PRESENT

Brad Johnson, Community Development Director; Alisha Patterson, City Attorney; Chris Veirs, Principal Planner; Daniel Kim, Assistant Planner; Nhi Atienza, Senior Administrative Assistant

CEREMONIAL MATTERS, PRESENTATIONS, AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no ceremonial matters, presentations, or announcements.

PUBLIC COMMENT

This item starts at 0:01:16 in the archived video.

Chair Emerson invited public comment.

Commission Secretary Atienza announced that we received one written public comment.

There were no requests to speak.

Chair Emerson closed public comment.

CONSENT CALENDAR

This item starts at 0:03:46 in the archived video.

Chair Emerson invited public comment.

There were no requests to speak.

Chair Emerson closed public comment.

Commissioner Williamson moved to approve the Consent Calendar, seconded by Commissioner Rosenbluth; and carried on by roll call vote as follows:

AYES: Commissioner - Alvarez, Emerson, Davis, Rosenbluth, Williamson
NOES: Commissioner - None
ABSTENTION: Commissioner - Wong
ABSENT: Commissioner - Rahmim

1. Planning Commission Meeting Minutes of April 1, 2025
Approved and filed.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

This item starts at 0:05:48 in the archived video.

2. Request For A Conditional Use Permit (File #25-C03), To Establish A Cigar Lounge, Located At 230 West Foothill Boulevard. Applicant – Nick Roefer.

Assistant Planner Kim presented a PowerPoint presentation and addressed Commissioners' inquiries regarding Prop 65 signage, alcohol, cigarettes, cannabis, tree canopy, types of improvements triggering CEQA, minor access, outdoor use, HEPA filters to eliminate carcinogens, potential future alcohol license, the City's indemnification, and ADA compliance.

Nick Roefer, Applicant stated that no one under age 21 is permitted by state law. He hopes to become a Claremont staple, collaborating with the colleges and local businesses to network socially. Only cigars are allowed.

Paul McBurger, Chief Operating Officer stated that the HVAC has been redone with MERV 14 filters to pull out carcinogens, aromas, and other contaminants, deionizing purifiers, and ozone level monitors. He can look into the activated carbon filters per Commissioner Rosenbluth's request. Fire precautions include leather furniture, plaster walls, and table lighters.

Chair Emerson invited public comment.

There were no requests to speak.

Public comment was closed.

Commissioner Williamson stated that the zoning is appropriate, and findings can be made. She is in favor of the project.

Commissioner Wong agreed with Commissioner Williamson and thinks this will be a unique and good addition to Claremont.

Commissioner Rosenbluth reviewed the findings and zoning. He is concerned about the exhaust to the outside and recommended that Section 3.J be amended to add the word "activated" to "carbon filters".

Commissioner Davis stated that the findings can be made and commended the applicant.

Commissioner Alvarez agreed with adding the word "activated" to "carbon filters".

Chair Emerson requested that the following conditions be added to the Resolution: minors are prohibited, activated carbon filters, Merv 14 or greater filters, and only cigars are allowed. He is concerned that we are permitting a business to allow the public to smoke, which is a liability to the City. He cannot support the project even with the added changes.

Commissioner Wong moved to adopt Resolution No. 2025-05, A RESOLUTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF CLAREMONT, CALIFORNIA, APPROVING A REQUEST FOR CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT #25-C03, TO ESTABLISH A CIGAR LOUNGE, LOCATED AT 230 WEST FOOTHILL BOULEVARD. APPLICANT – NICK ROEFER as amended and find this item is exempt from environmental review under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Seconded by Commissioner Davis; and carried on a roll call vote as follows:

AYES: Commissioner - Alvarez, Davis, Rosenbluth, Williamson, Wong
NOES: Commissioner - Emerson
ABSENT: Commissioner - Rahmim

Chair Emerson announced this decision can be appealed within ten calendar days.

3. Tentative Tract Map #84564 For The Proposed Subdivision Of 3 Acres Of Land (2.67 Net Acres After Dedications) For A 70-Unit Townhome Condominium Development Proposed For Vacant Land And A Decommissioned Tennis Club Located At 840 South Indian Hill Boulevard. Applicant: City Ventures (Claremont 2 Inv, LLC).

This item starts at 0:46:32 in the archived video.

Principal Planner Veirs presented a PowerPoint presentation and addressed Commissioners' inquiries regarding the lack of vegetation, traffic, block wall barrier, ingress/egress, inclusionary housing dispersion, tandem garages, other City Ventures projects in Claremont, Claremont low-income requirement, and solar panels.

Patrick Chien presented a PowerPoint presentation. He and Chris Burt, Land Use Counsel, addressed Commissioners' inquiries regarding inclusionary housing dispersion, green area, market & low-income rates, similar developments with one entry, addition of gates, double pane windows on the northern units, guest/handicap parking, and guest EV charging stations.

Principal Planner Veirs reviewed LA County Fire threshold for the single entry.

Associate Engineer Ramos stated that the City's TIA guidelines deem the service level insignificant. He also reviewed the General Plan's service levels and triggering mechanisms.

David Chew, TJW, explained the City's traffic guidelines, level of service, and study areas. The study area is at level E, which is acceptable. This project generated fewer than 50 trips during peak hours, which did not warrant a traffic analysis.

The Commission recessed at 9:06 PM and reconvened at 9:11 PM.

Chair Emerson invited public comment.

Commission Secretary Atienza announced that we received seven written public comments.

Speaker expressed concerns that the project will destroy Claremont's uniqueness and character, increase traffic/accidents, the lack of open space, and the dangers related to the homeless situation in the area. Please consider the residents in the area.

Speaker expressed concerns regarding the traffic blockage onto American, the parking problem the development will pose to the City of Pomona, and Mills being the only exit.

Speaker expressed concerns about the density, single entry, fire dangers, and potential electrical shortage.

Speaker expressed concerns about public safety and transparency. The developer is relying on state laws to bypass safety and health concerns. She raised concerns about the information contained in the traffic study. She requested for reduced density, protection of privacy, and enforcement of the RM 2000 zoning.

Darvin Gomez stated that the developer has ignored the Architectural & Preservation Commission's recommendations. The revised plans have more density, less parking, and less open space. The proposed project will worsen the already dangerous traffic conditions. He reviewed the various items in the traffic study. He requested for a recalculation of the density, compliance with the RM 2000 zoning, the CC&R to include ficus trees of a specific height on the eastern boundary, and the replacement of damaged ficus trees during construction with mature trees.

Pomona Resident is directly impacted by the parking problems imposed by the existing development on Indian Hill; and the proposed development will worsen the situation.

Gene Boutilier, Board of Directors of the Housing and Homeless Collaborative of Claremont strongly supports the project. It aligns with city goals, serves Claremont's housing needs, and benefits Claremont. Build the project.

Speaker stated that the traffic is bad and the lights are not properly timed. She understands the need for housing, but this is too dense. She is also concerned about the lack of parking, open space, and single entry.

John Reeder favors the project as it complies with the law, and the developer has met with neighbors to address their concerns. This is a private business, and the buyers can decide if it suits them. Once the housing concerns have been addressed, we can be picky about the developments.

Pomona Resident expressed concerns regarding the traffic between Indian Hill and Mills, the stop sign on Mills with traffic in both directions, and the legal implications during an emergency.

Bryan Trunik expressed the neighborhood's concern for public safety regarding the traffic and single entry.

Public comment was closed.

City Attorney Patterson addressed Commissioners' inquiries regarding the Adverse Impact Findings the Commission must make if they are inclined to recommend denial, Planning

Commission's purview, impact of traffic, development waiver, affordable housing, objective standards as it relates to the Housing Accountability Act, affordable housing dispersion, public hearing limit, and the recommendation of approval with the understanding that City Council address the objective inconsistency with the Inclusionary Housing Ordinance for the dispersal of inclusionary units.

Associate Engineer Ramos apologized for omitting the Indian Hill and Auto Center Drive. This intersection will be included in the revision.

David Chew, TJW, responded that slower traffic yields less severe accidents and provided a list of the intersections studied. He also confirmed that the traffic study did not include consultation with the Claremont Police Department, and the pedestrian traffic was not studied.

City Engineer Tipping clarified how a traffic study is done based on the level of service.

Chris Burt, Land Use Counsel for City Ventures stated that the Commission can make the recommendation with the understanding that the applicant work with staff on the Inclusionary Housing Ordinance for the dispersal of inclusionary units.

Commissioner Rosenbluth moved to adopt Resolution No. 2025-06, A RESOLUTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF CLAREMONT, CALIFORNIA RECOMMENDING THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF CLAREMONT APPROVE TENTATIVE TRACT MAP #84564 FOR THE PROPOSED SUBDIVISION OF 2.67 ACRES OF LAND FOR A 70-UNIT TOWNHOME CONDOMINIUM DEVELOPMENT ON A PROPERTY LOCATED AT 840 SOUTH INDIAN HILL BOULEVARD. APPLICANT: CITY VENTURES (CLAREMONT 2 INV, LLC) with the understanding that City Council address the objective inconsistency with the Inclusionary Housing Ordinance for dispersal of inclusionary units and find this item is exempt from environmental review under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Seconded by Commissioner Wong; and carried on a roll call vote as follows:

AYES:	Commissioner - Davis, Emerson, Rosenbluth, Williamson, Wong
NOES:	Commissioner - Alvarez
ABSENT:	Commissioner - Rahmim

Chair Emerson announced this decision can be appealed within ten calendar days.

ADMINISTRATIVE ITEM – None

REPORTS

This item starts at 3:32:15 in the archived video.

Staff

Director Johnson reported on items of interest from the previous City Council meeting and described future items coming before the Commission.

Commission/Committee

The Commission expressed its appreciation for Bob Gerecke's work in providing accessible summaries of the City Council and various Commission agendas.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Emerson adjourned the meeting at 10:37 PM.

Chair

ATTEST:

Administrative Assistant