

**ARCHITECTURAL COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**

Wednesday, December 13, 2023 – 7:00 p.m.

Meeting Conducted Via In-Person and Video Recording is Archived on the City Website
<https://www.ci.claremont.ca.us/government/city-council/watch-city-council-meetings>

CALL TO ORDER

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

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

ROLL CALL

PRESENT

COMMISSIONER: BENNETT, NEIUBER, PERRY, AND SPIVACK

ABSENT

COMMISSIONER: CASTILLO AND CERVERA

ALSO PRESENT

Christopher Veirs, Principal Planner; Nikola Hlady, Senior Planner; Anne Bennett, Administrative Assistant; and Melissa Sanabria, Administrative Assistant

CEREMONIAL MATTERS, PRESENTATIONS, AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no ceremonial matters, presentations, or announcements.

PUBLIC COMMENT

This item starts at 00:01:21 in the archived video.

Chair Neiuber invited public comment.

There were no requests to speak.

CONSENT CALENDAR

This item starts at 00:03:31 in the archived video.

Chair Neiuber invited public comment.

There were no requests to speak.

1. **Architectural Commission meeting minutes of November 29, 2023**

Approved and filed the Architectural Commission meeting minutes of November 29, 2023.

Commissioner Perry moved to approve Consent Calendar, seconded by Commissioner Spivack; and carried on by roll call vote as follows:

AYES: ***Commissioner – Bennett, Neiuber, Perry, and Spivack***

NOES: ***Commissioner – None***

ABSENT: ***Commissioner – Castillo and Cervera***

PUBLIC HEARING

This item starts at 00:05:22 in the archived video.

2. Architectural and Site Plan Review #23-A10, Preliminary Review of a 65-Unit Townhome Development Located at 840 South Indian Hill Boulevard - Applicant: City Ventures (Funding Source: Privately Funded By Applicant)

Senior Planner Hlady gave a PowerPoint presentation and responded to questions from the Commission regarding: clarifications of design guidelines and development standards for properties identified for higher density housing in the General Plan Housing Element; if the California Department of Housing and Community Development provides any standards or guidelines for design or community value; potential risks for projects utilizing exceptions to development standards and design guidelines; if the Applicant provided alternatives to the proposed site plan, size of units' impact on density, unit pricing, reasoning for buildings' three-story height, setbacks, solar and EV consideration for roof and covered parking areas; which City body grants density bonuses and waivers; and the Planning Commission and City Council process for granting waivers pursuant to the State Density Bonus Law.

Principal Planner Veirs offered additional information regarding the developer's initial community meeting that resulted in adjustments to the proposed site plan, state requirements for waivers, and that the Planning Commission and City Council grant waivers in the City.

Chair Neiuber invited the Applicant to make a presentation.

Anthony Corbin (KTTY, Architect) and Patrick Chien, (City Ventures, Applicant), gave their presentation with slides and responded to questions from the Commission regarding how the project fits the community, frontage and landscape design, patio materials, if the kitchens will include islands, if other Claremont architectural styles were considered, if a traffic study is planned, line of sight studies, possibility of reducing the size and height of the east side buildings, and if trees were considered for a screening mechanism.

Principal Planner Veirs and Senior Planner Hlady explained that the railings on the perspective drawings were intended to highlight the architecture and are not meant to indicate the use of glass.

Chair Neiuber invited public comment.

Darvin shared privacy concerns related to the project's height, east-facing windows, future traffic impacts, architectural design, rezoning, and the project's inconsistencies with the General Plan and RM 2,000 zoning standards.

Ray Cota? voiced frustration with the project's design and shared his concerns about traffic, safety, privacy, and density.

Giselle raised concerns regarding privacy, traffic, parking, need for an additional entry and stop signs, and the height of the buildings facing homes to the east.

Virginia Ramirez expressed concerns regarding the project's impact on privacy, traffic, safety, and the changing appearance South Claremont and quality of the City.

Denise shared concerns regarding the impact the project will have on existing parking in the neighborhood, which is limited.

Unidentified Speaker agreed with the previous concerns voiced and added additional concerns regarding the Ficus trees' location and lack of screening for privacy.

Candy Gutierrez asked what the City is doing to monitor and deal with crime linked to sex trafficking, prostitution, and homelessness. She also echoed the privacy, traffic, and parking concerns voiced in the previous comments.

Wendy strongly supported the previous comments made and voiced additional concerns for the disproportionate use of green space, past discrimination, impact of crime on tennis court use, density, traffic capacity, setbacks, outcome of the community meeting, and the need for a traffic study.

Heather voiced concerns regarding the project's height, privacy, neighborhood sight line constraints, overflow parking, amount of units planned, and traffic. She also requested that the buildings closest to Drake Avenue be reduced to two stories tall and urged the City to deny the developer's request to waive Claremont Municipal Code standards for the RM 2,000 zone.

Jim Keith voiced concerns regarding the waiver request from the RM 2,000 zone's development standards, the amount of units, wall setbacks, privacy, building height, lack of a second entrance, and traffic.

Chair Neiuber invited each Commissioner to provide comments on the project.

Senior Planner Hlady responded to additional questions from Commissioner Spivack regarding the lot to the west, the five-foot setback from the commercial uses, the possibility of adding a second entrance, the use of parking to the north, fire safety, and if the common open space areas are the same grade.

Commissioner Bennett stated that there is an opportunity to improve the landscaping for privatization and encouraged conducting a landscape study. The design includes flat walls, so he recommended incorporating elements like false beams, removing the arches, and softening the walls' appearance. In the open space areas, Commissioner Bennett

suggested using less lawn, adding more active social spaces, or incorporating more water-wise options. He also voiced safety concerns associated with utilizing only one entrance.

Commissioner Spivack spoke in favor of the project's color palette, roofline, metal use, windows, casements, and vinyl color. She shared concerns about the design's reflection of the community and other architectural styles found in Claremont. She is also concerned about privacy, traffic, and the five-foot setback. Commissioner Spivack suggested allowing the surrounding neighbors access to the common space and adding an additional entrance to the project. She spoke in support of reducing the buildings on east to only two-stories tall and encouraged the Applicant to continue working with the City and surrounding community, as she is concerned about the design and loss of the character of Claremont.

Commissioner Perry explained that the design is too dense and does not fit with the surrounding community. He voiced concerns regarding the ability to enforce local development standards, which creates challenges for making decisions within and for the community. Commissioner Perry recommended conducting an additional study on access. While there is a demand for larger homes, the design brings about privacy, parking, and internal space issues. The design borrows from too many elements, which is why guidelines and criteria for architecture and development are needed. Commissioner Perry encouraged the Applicant to conduct a focused study for a plant program. While he likes the diversity of plants, he urged caution with the king palm and dragon tree as they can freeze in Claremont's climate.

Principal Planner Veirs asked Commissioner Perry to provide comment on the Ficus trees. Commissioner Perry explained the potential growth for Ficus, noting that they can easily grow to 30 feet high and form a very dense hedge.

Chair Neiuber expressed concern that the project does not meet the Architectural Commission's review criteria and is not consistent with the General Plan or the surrounding neighborhood. He suggested that choosing a specific architectural style rather than mixing different styles together would be more compatible for Claremont. He encouraged the Applicant to reduce the height of east side buildings to be entirely two-stories and to add more detail to the outdoor living area. He has mixed feelings about the ingress/egress for the project, as one driveway will affect American Avenue, Drake Avenue, and other surrounding streets. Chair Neiuber shared that there appears to be a Commission consensus on the concerns shared by the public, which include traffic, east side buildings' height, and the five-foot setback.

ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS - NONE

This item starts at 02:22:50 in the archived video.

REPORTS

This item starts at 02:23:01 in the archived video.

Commission

Commissioner Comments

Commissioner Bennett explained that the Art Committee has not met since the Commission's last meeting.

Chair Neiuber and Commissioner Spivack shared concerns regarding the planting of the Ficus trees at Motel 6, asked for clarification on the approved landscaping plan, and inquired about the lighting at the Motel.

Commissioner Bennett asked if someone other than Motel 6 owns the parcel containing the tennis courts.

Commissioner Perry asked how he might become involved for the on-going maintenance and refurbishment of landscaping along Foothill Boulevard as he had helped with plant selection and layout when it was installed.

Staff Briefing on Council Meetings

Principal Planner Veirs reported on items of interest from the previous City Council meetings.

Briefings on Other Items

There was no report.

Upcoming Agendas and Events

Principal Planner Veirs described items expected to come before the Commission at the January 24, 2024, meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Neiuber adjourned the meeting at 9:49 p.m.


Chair

ATTEST:

Administrative Assistant