



TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 2024  
701 East Carson Street, Carson, CA 90745  
City Hall, Helen Kawagoe Council Chambers  
6:30 p.m.

**MINUTES**  
**MEETING OF THE**  
**PLANNING COMMISSION**

Members:	Dianne Thomas Interim Chair	Louie Diaz Interim Vice Chair	Frederick Docdocil
	Carlos Guerra	Del Huff	Jaime Monteclaro
	Karimu Rashad	Richard Hernandez	DeQuita Mfume
Alternates:	Leticia Wilson		
Staff:	Christopher Palmer, AICP Planning Manager	Benjamin Jones Assistant City Attorney	Laura Gonzalez Planning Secretary

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“In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, if you require a disability related modification or accommodation to attend or participate in this meeting, including auxiliary aids or services, please call the Planning Department at 310-952-1761 at least 48 hours prior to the meeting.” (Government Code Section 54954.2)

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**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Interim Chair Thomas Called the meeting to order at 6:33 p.m.

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**2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Interim Vice Chair Diaz led the Salute to the Flag.

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**3. ROLL CALL**

Planning Commissioners Present: Thomas, Diaz, Guerra, Docdocil, Huff, Mfume, Hernandez, Wilson (Late)

Planning Commissioners Absent: Monteclaro, Rashad

Planning Staff Present: Planning Manager Palmer, Senior Planner Alexander, Senior Planner Coleman, Assistant Planner Garcia, Assistant Planner Collins, Assistant City Attorney Jones, Interim Secretary Solis

**ITEM NO. 6B**

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#### **4. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS FOR MATTERS NOT ON THE AGENDA**

None

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#### **5. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS FOR NON-PUBLIC HEARING ITEMS LISTED ON THE AGENDA (MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC)**

None

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#### **6. PUBLIC HEARING**

##### **A) Conditional Use Permits No. 1121-22 & 1122-22 (Freeway Tires)**

Request:

Consider finding a CEQA exemption and approving Conditional Use Permits 1121-22 and 1122-22 for a new truck tire sale & repair service shop.

Staff Recommendation:

Assistant Planner Richard Garcia presented the staff report and the recommendation to ADOPT Resolution No. 24-\_\_\_\_, entitled, "A RESOLUTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF CARSON FINDING A CEQA EXEMPTION AND CONDITIONALLY APPROVING SITE PLAN AND DESIGN REVIEW NO. 1960-24, AND CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT NO. 1121-22 AND 1122-22 FOR A NEW TRUCK TIRE SALE & REPAIR SERVICE SHOP (FREEWAY TIRES), AND BEING LESS THAN 100 FEET FROM A RESIDENTIAL ZONED PROPERTY AT 21212 ALAMEDASTREET."

Assistant Planner Garcia - We will bring this project at the next meeting. We are holding it to incorporate some development standards and an additional development application with CUPs.

Planning Manager Palmer - We will be re-noticing.

##### **B) Design Overlay Review (DOR) No. 1940-23 – Jack in the Box**

Request:

A request for approval of Site Plan and Design Review for demolition of an existing commercial building and construction of new 1,885 square foot drive-through restaurant.

Staff Recommendation:

Assistant Planner Jacob Collins presented the staff report and the recommendation to ADOPT Resolution No. 24-\_\_\_\_, entitled, "A RESOLUTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF CARSON FINDING A CEQA EXEMPTION AND CONDITIONALLY APPROVING SITE PLAN AND DESIGN REVIEW NO. 1940-23, FOR PROPOSED DEMOLITION OF AN EXISTING COMMERCIAL BUILDING AND DEVELOPMENT OF A NEW DRIVETHROUGH RESTAURANT AT 17625 CENTRAL AVENUE."

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Commissioner Huff – Most of the residents on Stevenson said that they did not receive this notice.

Assistant Planner Collins – We sent out the 750-foot radius procedure as we did for the December 12<sup>th</sup> meeting.

Planning Manager Palmer – Any residents that potentially did not received it could likely be outside the 750-foot radius.

Commissioner Huff – I checked, and some were inside the 750-foot radius.

Senior Planner Alexander – We are very confident that the notices were mailed by our repro department. Onsite posting was done two weeks prior.

Planning Manager Palmer – Staff is prepared to re-notice or move forward.

Commissioner Guerra – We should strongly consider continuing this item because of the allegations of inappropriate noticing.

Interim Chair Thomas – In an effort to be fair to everyone involved, we can go through the discussion then we can look at continuing the item and re-noticing for the next meeting.

Gabriela Marks (Architect) – We read the letters of concern from the neighbors. Our project is a permitted use. We have taken great care into understanding where our neighbors are, and we have placed our building as far away from the residents and the church as the site allows. We have also placed the menu board and the speakers directly at the opposite corner of those uses. This is the farthest they can be from the site. We have taken those things into consideration. We also put a 10-foot landscape buffer along both property lines. We decided not to have an open dining area to avoid homeless in the vicinity. The proposed landscape is all desert plant landscape that will not encourage people to sleep or spend time there. We went above and beyond to hire a noise engineer to help us understand if we needed to mitigate the noise any further. The engineer concluded that our project is not going to have a noise impact into the residence that is greater than the noise that exists right now. The Planning Department had the noise study reviewed by a third-party consultant who agreed with the report. We understand there are concerns and we are willing to make some concessions. The wall that is between our property and the church is about 30 inches high. We are willing to replace that with a 6-foot wall. We can replace the wall that is next to the house with a 6 or 8-foot-high wall.

Interim Chair Thomas opened the public hearing.

William Nathan (speaker) – I am opposing to this development as a Carson property owner and as many other residents. It would be a negative impact to our quality of life. Jack in the Box restaurants are open 24-hours a day and they are known for having long lines at their drive thru sending them to the roadway. People have experienced homelessness at various locations. Cars are constantly running through the stop signs and speeding through our neighborhood. I've reached out to the Sheriff's Office numerous times to request enforcement for this. Numerous things have been stolen and burglarized on our streets and driveways. Gangs and gunshots have been heard on our streets. This would be the tipping point for us.

Jack in the Box is not going to make the situation any better by increasing noise, traffic, and parking. We have more than enough drive-thru restaurants in the area. We don't need more unhealthy options. We can benefit from many other options such as housing, mixed-use building, a neighborhood market, bakery, butcher shop, or even a coffee shop. I'm aware that the zoning designation for this property falls under the Corridor Mixed Use. This development will not support retail and services that cater to the daily needs of the residents. It will be a benefit to the current commercial property owner. Numerous residents that I spoke to oppose this development. We all want what is best for our community.

Yolanda Coronado (speaker) – I work at the Carson Christian Center, it gets really noisy and there are a lot of homeless people. I don't think it's a good idea being that the kids are next door. I think it's better to put some kind of resource center.

Wilfredo Herrera (speaker) - I have worked for Jack in the Box for 44 years. This is also my community. I am involved a lot with the community, especially with the sheriff's department. We have been working very diligent for the last four years. We have something called the In House for The Homeless. I have a number where I can call when a homeless is at the restaurant. They are given two options, they can either be taken to a shelter or they can choose to leave the premises. This is something that has been working very well. We are willing to do whatever it's possible to be part of this.

Temo Buenrostro (speaker) – There is a lot of car theft in that area. It's going to make it a lot easier for people to get away with things at 3:00 in the morning.

Faith Kidane (speaker) – There's a Jack in the Box not too far from here and I'm sure all of us have been going there for years. When you go home, you are not going to be here when there is theft and congestion. Will homeless go deeper into the neighborhoods? Are they going to be sleeping in people's cars? They check for unluck cars to sleep in them. Is that going to be more on the residents now? You are putting a wall and blocking their view so that they don't hear what's going on.

Mildred Sims (speaker) – I've lived in Carson for over 40 years. We had a good community at one time. Now we are getting all kinds of people moving into our community and they are taking advantage of us. We have to lock our doors because we can't trust people. We don't think it's a good idea to bring more traffic into our community.

Speaker - I oppose the Jack in the Box. Carson is a family city. A lot of children ride their bikes and there are a lot of schools. We already have many fast-food places here. The business would attract an unfit crowd. It would be better to bring something better for the community.

Mekail Grant (speaker) – Jack in the box is going to possibly cause a safety issue for their employees. There is nothing more important than safety. It's a very unhealthy restaurant and it's going to incentivize kids to eat unhealthy, which is the last thing we need. Carson is a family-oriented town. Ideally if we are going to put a burger shop, I would like to see a smaller business there. We incentivize entrepreneurship and people who support their community. We are giving money to big business. It's going to attract more homeless people.

Speaker - Jack in the Box is also going to bring jobs to our communities. Jack in the Box gave me an opportunity and I'm still working for them many years later. Carson has grown so much in the last few years and it's thanks to the businesses. The businesses raise a lot of opportunities to the city and that is what gives economic growth to the city as well. We'll be bringing jobs to the city. Jack in the Box will be lit up, there will always be someone there, we are always looking out for employees and our customers.

Limeka Sexton (speaker) – We have a lot of kids and elderly in our community. Unfortunately, the elderly has nowhere to go if they want to buy a carton of eggs. They have to go outside the city to get their necessities. If we are going to put something there, we should cater to the elderly people and not just to the fast food where the parents can grab something fast for their kids. The homeless has been coming into the neighborhood. We have to lookout for safety in our community.

Assistant Planer Collins read the following comment letters:

Letter No. 1 from Nerissa Jackson - I feel it would negatively affect not only myself but other residents. There are already pre-existing issues with speeding vehicles, theft, gang activity, homelessness, etc. in the area. A fast-food chain like Jack in the Box would only worsen these occurrences. Also, these types of establishments are a magnet for individuals who are unhoused, drug addicted, and/or suffering with mental health. We believe there is no need for another fast-food restaurant in the community. Residents are already suffering with higher mortality due to the proximity to unhealthy food options. Establishments such as Jack in the Box would only increase health risk due to its unhealthy food options and ingredients. Residents in the area feel another fast-food drive thru restaurant would also bring increased crime, noise pollution, possible rodent infestations, and gang activity, which you can understand are not desirable for anyone living in the immediate area.

Letter No. 2 from Arnel and Irene Esguerra - As a resident of this area, I strongly oppose this development due to several critical reasons that warrant careful consideration. Firstly, our neighborhood is home to many seniors whose tranquility and well-being are of utmost importance. The introduction of a drive-thru restaurant may disrupt the peaceful environment they currently enjoy. The potential noise and increased activity could greatly impact their quality of life. Moreover, constructing such an establishment will likely lead to escalated traffic flow. This surge in vehicles navigating through our streets poses a tangible risk, not only in terms of congestion but also in terms of safety. The increased traffic could jeopardize the safety of pedestrians, especially considering the presence of elderly individuals and children who may be more vulnerable. I humbly request a reconsideration of this proposal, taking into account the potential negative impacts it might impose on our community. Preserving the tranquility and safety of our neighborhood should be of paramount importance.

Letter No. 3 from Mayor and City Council of the City of Inglewood – We are writing to express our enthusiastic support for the permit application submitted by Jack in the Box franchise owner, Wilfredo Herrera, specifically for their proposed establishment at 17625 Central Avenue within your esteemed city. In our capacity of current elected officials for the City of Inglewood, we have had the opportunity to closely observe the activities of the Jack in the Box located at 1220 Centinela Avenue within our city, and we can confidently attest to their exemplary conduct and positive impact on our community. The Jack in the Box located at 1220 Centinela Avenue

has consistently demonstrated responsible business practices. They have operated in accordance with all applicable regulations and have been a conscientious member of the local business community. Throughout the construction phase of their project, they collaborated closely with the City of Inglewood, always keeping the best interests of the community in mind. One notable aspect of Wilfredo Herrera and Jack in the Box's presence in Inglewood is their ongoing commitment to community engagement. They actively participate in and sponsor local events, demonstrating a genuine interest in supporting the vibrancy and well-being of our community. Jack in the Box has proven to be a responsive partner, promptly addressing any community concerns, and consistently engaging with residents to foster positive relationships. Furthermore, the establishment at 1220 Centinela Avenue has maintained high standards of cleanliness and order. The premises are well-kept, and there have been no reported issues of loitering or disruptive behavior associated with the business. In light of their exemplary track record and commitment to responsible business practices, we wholeheartedly recommend the approval of Jack in the Box's permit application for their proposed establishment in Carson. We believe their presence will contribute positively to the Carson community.

Letter No. 4 from James A. Connor, Trustee, Connor Family Trust - I am the owner of the above referenced property which is the subject of the Design Overlay Review #1940-23. I am writing this letter to you and the Carson Planning Division/staff in response to a letter you recently received from a nearby resident (Mr. William Nathan II) who lives behind our property, and who apparently opposes our plans to redevelop it with a new Jack in the Box restaurant. I read Mr. Nathan's letter and while I acknowledge his opposition to the redevelopment of our property and his personal opinions therein, I want to remind the Carson Planning Division/staff that this future intended use of the property is allowed by right under the current CG zoning (CMC section 9131.1). Furthermore, the application submitted by Marks Architects on behalf of the applicant is a Design Overlay Review and not a Conditional Use Permit application, and therefore any public opinion should be limited to comments regarding the design and architecture (etc.) being proposed and not the use. Specifically, the Planning Commission as part of this DOR, should limit their scope of this proposed project to its compatibility with the general plan, compatibility with architecture and the proposed design of the project, convenience and safety, and attractiveness (per CMC section 9172.23.D.I). Therefore. Mr. Nathan's opposition to this project and any other public opinion concerning this project and the proposed use, should be beyond the scope of the Planning Commission and not considered in its evaluation thereof. Based on the Planning Commission Staff Report (dated December 12, 2023) it appears this proposed project is in compliance with the General Plan and meets the findings required for approval of a Site Plan and Design Review Application. As a result, your staff is properly recommending that the Planning Commission adopt PC Resolution 23-XXXX and recommending that the City Council approve it. It should also be noted, that in a show of good faith, the applicant will be preparing a noise study in advance of the next public hearing and will agree to include any mitigation measures in the plans, that the engineer (who is preparing this noise study), may recommend.

Planning Manager Palmer read the following comment letters:

Letter No. 5 - We don't not agree with a Jack in the Box. I live on Amantha and we already have too much traffic and no parking.

Letter No. 6 - I live on Amantha Ave. I do not agree with having a Jack in the Box. We already have too much food. A little market would be more convenient.

Letter No. 7 – We do not agree with the Jack in the Box. I live on Radbar where you want to put a Jack in the Box. We do not need more food. It will be a mess of traffic.

Letter No. 8 – I live in Stevens Village. I do not agree with a Jack in the Box that will bring more traffic. It's horrible already. This is a residential area.

Letter No. 9 – I'm against the new proposal of a Jack in the Box. Adding another fast-food establishment will impact the living environment conditions in the area. It will impact the parking overflow, traffic overflow on Central and will bring the wrong crowd. The elderly has no place to walk and buy the simple household items. Where are the grocery stores in the area to go grab simple items, there are none. Please rethink the plan and look out for the elderly that have been living here for years.

Letter No. 10 – I'm against the development of the Jack in the Box. I would like to see quality developments in the area. I would also like to express disinterest in the usage of the extend stay hotel as a homeless shelter. The homeless shelter will not attract more quality development and it will also add to the crime in the area. There needs to be a better investment in the small business and enforcement of the city rules. I see semitrucks parked on the street all the time and I am also starting to see prostitutes in the area. Please be mindful of the state initiatives. Homeless shelters will not advance the city, it will make our streets more unsafe and takes away from the quality of life from people who enrich the city the most. Please don't cater to the political movement interest of the state and do the best to preserve the integrity of the small city. Do things that attract more small businesses, entrepreneurs, and higher quality developers. Please do not allow Carson to become a dumping site for the state of California.

Interim Chair Thomas – The traffic engineer is here to answer questions and concerns that the commissioners may have regarding general traffic questions. Because the site is zoned for the purpose that is being requested there is no high-level traffic study that was done.

Planning Manager Palmer – The use is permissible by the code and all we are looking at here is the design of it. Doing a traffic report to do an analysis of the level of service or the vehicle miles traveled it's not required. Anything that is related to the traffic or something of that nature is feasible because it's allowed and compatible with the General Plan according to what our analysis says.

Assistant City Attorney Jones – Your job is to take the facts that are presented and use your discretion to determine if on those facts the required findings are met. If you determine they are met in the affirmative based on substantial evidence in the record, then you are to approve the DOR.

Commissioner Guerra – How can we determine if we are unaware of the cumulative impacts that the project may produce?

Planning Manager Palmer – It's a permitted use, it is assumed that accumulative impact is less than significant. That is why it's allowed by right. Anything that could be a potential nuisance

could be potential traffic, those are called out specifically in the code. Those are required to have a CUP, we'll do an initial study to determine whether or not traffic or noise are an issue or other potential impacts that we potentially mitigate. According to the code it is allowed so there is nothing to mitigate because it's a permissible use in the zone that allows this type of use.

Commissioner Guerra – Despite the potential cumulative impact?

Planning Manager Palmer – We don't look at it as having cumulative impact because the code permits it by right.

Interim Chair Thomas – Basically, you are saying there is not cumulative impact.

Assistant City Attorney Jones - Cumulative impact is usually a CEQA term and the proposed CEQA finding is that the project is exempt.

Commissioner Huff – What made them come to Carson with this project?

Applicant – I was a student at Dominguez Hills in 2005, I worked all my life in Los Angeles, I know the community, and I strongly feel that I still belong to the community.

Interim Chair Thomas – You are planning a 24-7 operation?

Applicant – Yes

Commissioner Guerra – Can we hear from the traffic engineer so that we can make everyone feel comfortable? Are there any suggestions that you would consider to make the vehicular and pedestrian travel safer keeping in mind the specific project?

John Merrill (Engineer) – When we received the plans from the applicant, we asked the applicant to consider the ability of having vehicles turn in or out of the facility off Central Ave. We asked the applicant to assume that a passenger vehicle would be turning into or out of the driveway at the same time that a service vehicle would be turning into or out of the driveway, and to make sure that the driveway had enough space so that both vehicles could turn concurrently for safety and flow reasons. We determined that a driveway should be adequate to allow that movement and allow the movement in such a way that does not interfere with the flow of traffic and adjacent lanes.

Commissioner Guerra - So you believe that site to be safe.

John Merrill (Engineer) – Can't speak to that entirely whether it's safe or not, but I can tell you that we applied general engineering practices to the traffic flow for that site and we believe that contributes to safe flow.

Planning Commission Decision:

Commissioner Huff moved, seconded by Commissioner Docdocil, to continue this item to the next meeting on February 27th. Motion carried, 7-0, (Commissioner Diaz abstained).



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## **7. MANAGER'S REPORT**

Senior Planner Alexander – We are currently updating our zoning code as well as amending the zoning map. It came before you recently and you unanimously voted to recommend approval to City Council. One of the things that we want to share with you is that behind-the-scenes staff is working really hard in engaging the public with these efforts for Phase 1 and Phase 2. We have a dedicated website for the Zoning Code Update on the city's website. There is also information on the Carson2040.com website. We have conducted virtual lunch and learn sessions that we've sent out the link to kind of listen to the status of what's happening and to try to engage the public to provide their comments and opinions regarding this effort. We also had a listening session in person after hours to try to get people who may not be available during lunch time to come in and meet with staff and get involved with the Zoning Code Update. It's very important that we get input from the community. We are talking about our residents, folks who own businesses here, who visit our city, who play in our city because it's all a collective effort.

Senior Planner Coleman – We will start going to local farmer's markets which will have booths at to be able to talk to the public and have conversations about our upcoming Zoning Code Update for Phase 2. I'm currently out and circulated through out the city our Zoning Code Survey for the commercial and mixed-use. You can access it on our website and through our QR codes that we have posted on Facebook, Instagram, and anywhere on our socials. We have our Zoning Code Update at carsonca.gov where you can email us if you have any questions.

Planning Manager Palmer – It's really hard to pull off a Comprehensive Code Update and we are halfway there. Thank you for the recommendation to City Council from the last meeting of moving Phase 1 forward. Phase 2 is currently underway. We have a robust public outreach program. We go above and beyond putting out all types of information. We welcome feedback.

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## **8. COMMISSIONERS' ORAL COMMUNICATIONS**

Commissioner Wilson - Thank you staff for all the information you put together, it makes it easier to analyze these issues. Thank you, Chairwoman, for always being so diplomatic, listening, and considering everyone. Thank you for your leadership.

Commissioner Mfume – Happy New Year. Madam Chair you do an awesome job. Thank you to everyone here.

Commissioner Hernandez – Does the City have accommodations for veteran's housing situations?

Interim Chair Thomas – We have a veteran's complex located at the corner of Figueroa and Carson. We have staff in the City responsible for low-income housing. Deborah Scott in the Housing Division can provide a list.

Commissioner Hernandez – I noticed that some bus stops have covers. Is there a plan to have all of them covered because of the weather?

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Planning Manager Palmer – I'll sit down and talk to our division and see if there's anything that can be done.

Commissioner Hernandez – Does Carson have a plan for the homeless?

Planning Manager Palmer – We do but I don't have the specifics. I will provide that information to you and the commission.

Commissioner Hernandez – A long time ago we had a soap box derby down Central. It was something that the whole community could enjoy. I would like to see it come back.

Commissioner Docdocil – I would like to commend staff for everything that you all do to prepare for these meetings. Thank you to my fellow commissioner for the passion and dedication that you show for our community. Thank you to our residents that made their voices heard. We have a homeless outreach basically looking to help these individuals. The City of Carson provides sandbags that you can pick up at the corporate yard.

Commissioner Huff – Thank you all for what you do for the city.

Commissioner Guerra – The more information that we allow residents to have should also be our goal.

Interim Chair Thomas – Thank you for all the hard work. I appreciate all of the well wishes as I have gone through the loses in my life. Keep an open mind and remember what our job is, remember what we are called to do. Happy Valentine's Day.

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## 9. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:14 p.m.

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Dianne Thomas  
Interim Chairperson

Attest By:

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Laura Gonzalez  
Planning Secretary