



TUESDAY, MARCH 11, 2025
701 East Carson Street, Carson, CA 90745
Juanita Millender-McDonald Community Center
Carson Dominguez Hall
6:30 p.m.

MINUTES
MEETING OF THE
PLANNING COMMISSION

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

“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)

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Thomas Called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Commissioner Wilson led the Salute to the Flag.

3. ROLL CALL

Planning Commissioners Present: Thomas, Diaz, Huff, Docdocil, Wilson, Mfume, Johnson, Monteclaro (Late)

Planning Commissioners Absent: Guerra

Planning Staff Present: Planning Manager Palmer, Assistant Planner Garcia, Assistant City Attorney Jones, Planning Secretary Gonzalez

4. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS FOR MATTERS NOT ON THE AGENDA

None

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

None

6. CONSENT CALENDAR

A) Approval of Minutes – February 25, 2025

Planning Commission Decision:

Vice Chair Diaz moved, seconded by Commissioner Huff, to approve the minutes as presented. Motion carried, 8-0.

7. CONTINUED PUBLIC HEARING

A) 2025ZTA-01 – Carson Municipal Code Amendment Administrative Approval of Tentative Parcel Maps and Tentative Tract Maps for Condominium Purposes

Request:

Consideration of a recommendation to the City Council concerning a Carson Municipal Code Text Amendment that would modify the existing municipal code to allow administrative approval of tentative parcel maps and tentative tract maps for condominium purposes.

Staff Recommendation:

Planning Manager Palmer presented the staff report and the recommendation to ADOPT Resolution No. 25-2882, entitled, "A RESOLUTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF CARSON RECOMMENDING THAT THE CARSON CITY COUNCIL MAKE A FINDING OF APPLICABILITY OF CEQA GUIDELINES SECTION 15061(b)(3) AND APPROVE CODE AMENDMENT NO. 2025ZTA01 ALLOWING FOR ADMINISTRATIVE APPROVAL OF TENTATIVE PARCEL MAPS AND TENTATIVE TRACT MAPS FOR CONDOMINIUM PURPOSES."

Chair Thomas opened the public hearing.

Ray Lawson (Western States Carpenters) – We ask that the commissioners consider that the plan going forth is allowed to have labor standards and by that we mean prevailing wage. We are the people that will be building projects going forth. To do that we have to have a decent livable wage. A lot of housing has been built in Carson right now and a lot of times it doesn't include labor standards, it doesn't include prevailing wage, and it doesn't include an apprenticeship. Apprenticeship means that a person can start working right after High School, become a journeyman carpenter, make a decent living, be able to make a fair wage, and be able to buy some of these homes that they are building. These people are also going to need decent health care. We ask you to consider it. If you are not able to do it, then City Council can consider by adding this to the final approval.

George Bocanegra (Wester States Carpenters) – We want to make sure that we include labor standards in the language. With labor standards we create a level playing field, a good wage, Medicare pension, and apprenticeship for everybody.

Chair Thomas closed the public hearing.

Planning Manager Palmer – I recommend approval.

Vice Chair Diaz – I would encourage us to consider language that covers those items that were articulated, labor standards, prevailing wage, apprenticeship, and local hire. I think it's important that we take that into consideration. If it's not within our purview then request that the City Council also include the language articulated this evening.

Commissioner Huff – I agree with my colleague. I think that the approval of such language would also further our Carson unlimited theme. We have a lot of young people that need an opportunity, a good paying job, and health care.

Commissioner Docdocil – I want to echo the sentiments of everybody that spoke before. It's fair and they have my support.

Chair Thomas – Is this the document that would allow us to add that as a recommendation to the City Council?

Assistant City Attorney Jones – I see it as a separate issue. This document is taking Tentative Parcel Maps and Tentative Track Maps that are for condominium projects and changing the approval authority from the Planning Commission to the director. It's an amendment to the subdivision ordinance. The subdivision ordinance does not have anything to do with prevailing wage standards or anything like that, this pertains to private development. The city is much in compliance with prevailing wage laws with respect to the city's public works contracts. The city has its project labor agreement which provides for the city to pay prevailing wage for all city's public works contracts. This is the private development arena and we are not dealing with the zoning ordinance. We're dealing with the subdivision ordinance. It's the process for when the developer is seeking to split their land from one large parcel to multiple smaller parcels. This ordinance would say that when one of those two Tentative Maps is currently within the Planning Commission's purview to approve that would change to the director's purview. I would like to clarify one thing in relation to the staff report. The staff report says this change would only occur when the project itself is by right. The way the ordinance and the resolution are currently drafted is not limited to that. It would be a change from Planning Commission to director approval regardless of whether the remainder of the project is by right. It wouldn't make the map approval by right. The director would have the same level of discretion that the Planning Commission does. It's just that the director could approve instead of the Planning Commission and therefore there wouldn't be a public hearing. I see those issues as separate and distinct from the issue of paying prevailing wage. I do understand that developers have an option of what labor to pick and whether they pay prevailing wage. The commission can certainly provide a recommendation to council or provide direction to staff on that issue, but I would keep it separate from the ordinance that's being proposed.

Chair Thomas – I sort of explained that at the last meeting when we opened the public hearing because there was some misunderstanding as to what this item would do. As our City Assistant Attorney explained it's strictly about maps and that's all it's dealing with. I hear what you're saying and we do agree. I have sat in on many City Council meetings where if it's a project that would include workers, the mayor would demand prevailing wages. She would also demand a certain percentage be Carson hires. She would also demand all the things that you brought up tonight. As I observed, it was put in the conditions agreement before the project was approved. As our City Attorney said, it comes up under the private sector. You are never left out of that at least since this mayor has been in place. The last thing that I want to address to our Assistant City Attorney is that there are some who may view this as reducing the power of the Planning Commission, would you like to address that?

Assistant City Attorney Jones – It doesn't reduce the power of the city. It changes the decision maker for these two tentative maps from the Planning Commission to the director. The director would have the same level of discretion and authority in whether to approve or to deny, and whether to condition. That same level that the Planning Commission would normally have would just be in the hands of the director. This would expedite the process because it wouldn't require a public hearing. In many cases nowadays residential projects are administrative approvals or can be depending on the project. A lot of times the only approval that would need to go to the Planning Commission would be on the maps and so this would change it so that now it would be a full administrative approval across the board, which would streamline the review and approval process making things quicker. A lot of times this would involve residential condominium developments and so those involve ownership opportunities in the city. It would be more consistent with the spirit and intent of the new General Plan and the new Housing Element to help streamline that process for those types of projects.

Vice Chair Diaz – I would still like to have staff and City Council consider language to support labor standards, prevailing wage, apprenticeship, and local hire. I understand exactly what this subdivision ordinance is, but I would like to still direct staff and for City Council to consider including the language.

Planning Commission Decision:

Vice Chair Diaz moved, seconded by Commissioner Docdocil, to approve staff's recommendation, thus adopting Resolution 25-2882. Motion carried, 8-0.

8. PUBLIC HEARING

A) Conditional Use Permit (CUP) 3-24

Request:

A request for approval of Conditional Use Permit (CUP) No. 3-24 for alcohol beverage sales at a convenience store.

Staff Recommendation:

Assistant Planner Garcia presented the staff report and the recommendation to ADOPT Resolution No. 25-2883, entitled, "A RESOLUTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF CARSON FINDING A CEQA EXEMPTION AND CONDITIONALLY APPROVING CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT NO. 3-24 FOR ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE SALES IN CONJUNCTION WITH AN EXISTING CONVENIENCE STORE LOCATED AT 16502 S. MAIN STREET."

Chair Thomas – There's a restaurant on the property as well. Is the proprietor of the restaurant and the convenience store the same person?

Assistant Planner Garcia – These are separate businesses and separate owners.

Chair Thomas – Does the owner at the convenience store currently sells beer and wine?

Assistant Planner Garcia – It's not currently operating but they previously did. They do have an ABC license for this location.

Chair Thomas – I was there and I saw people going in and out.

Assistant Planner Garcia – If you keep walking, there's a walkway that leads to a door currently gated because it's not operating.

Chair Thomas – Do you know if the restaurant is selling alcohol at all?

Assistant Planner Garcia – If they are a seat down restaurants, they are permitted by right so we wouldn't have a CUP on file. I would have to contact ABC to try to get that information.

Chair Thomas – Over the years we had issues that came up with the discussion of alcoholism. The goal in this city was to reduce the sale of alcohol. Do we have anything that says that we really are not trying to encourage permits for the selling of alcohol?

Assistant City Attorney Jones – We have limits in our existing zoning ordinance about the number of sale and of off sale sites. The phase two zoning code is coming and we'll have an opportunity to look at those regulations again more comprehensively as far as regulations of land uses that involve sale of alcohol. The permits for regulating alcohol sales and the details of all that is an ABC per right.

Chair Thomas – We have made a conscious effort to reduce alcohol selling places. We only have 49 for a reason. When we got the theater in Carson, there was a big issue with whether they could sell alcohol. The council didn't want that to happen and it shut it down. There was also an issue about selling alcohol at special events. I'm being very cautious about this.

Planning Manager Palmer – This location is already counted in the 49, it would not be raising the number to 50. Previously they had a license and currently there's still a license there. This is a new owner that's coming in to apply for a CUP to do it in accordance with the code.

Chair Thomas – Who has the license now?

Planning Manager Palmer – The license is with the land.

Chair Thomas – If this land already has a license, then why are we giving it a CUP?

Planning Manager Plamer – The code says that any time a new business comes, they're going to come through the CUP process. This gives us the opportunity to look at the existing conditions to see if it fits within the existing location. If the commission didn't think it was appropriate at this location that could be a reason to deny it. If the commission thinks that the hours of operation are inappropriate, they could recommend hours of operation. This is unique in the fact that they have been selling alcohol at the location since 1989.

Chair Thomas opened the public hearing.

Andrew K. – I'm here to represent the applicant, Justin Lee. He currently works at another liquor store as an employee. We started this process eight months ago and he put over \$40,000.00 to this process including all the CUP fees. I understand your sentiment with the issues of alcoholism and how we can address the issue at hand. This beer and wine license store has been in operation for over a decade. It's just a takeover. In essence nothing changes too much other than the formality with the CUP. This process has been going on for eight months. We signed the lease with the landlord. A lot of this is contingent upon this going through. If this delays further, this puts a lot of pain from our perspective. We ask you to be understanding with the situation we've been dealing with.

Commissioner Johnson – Are you guys actively paying on the lease or maybe decreased the amount while you're in negotiations?

Andrew – We were anticipating that this process was going to be done in four months. The landlord has been gracious and everything was signed. If you deny the CUP permit, then everything that Justin put in will have been for nothing. Everything is contingent on this going through.

Commissioner Johnson – Just to clarify, if the CUP doesn't go through the cost for the CUP process is nonrefundable?

Planning Manager Palmer – That is correct.

Chair Thomas – Is this a liquor store or a deli?

Andrew – It's a minimart.

Chair Thomas – Is it like gas station minus the gas?

Andrew – It's pretty much the same thing. No hard alcohol will be sold, it's just beer and wine.

Chair Thomas – When I say alcohol I'm talking about hard alcohol.

Assistant Planner Garcia – Beer and wine, no hard alcohol.

Chair Thomas – We are talking about beer and wine which would then be in concert with the land use.

Chair Thomas closed the public hearing.

Commissioner Monteclaro – Should we include in one of the conditions that only beer and wine can be sold and no hard liquor?

Planning Manager Palmer – We can do that. The license that they are applying for is specific to ABC. ABC would not permit them to sell anything but beer and wine. An approval today would limit the sale to beer and wine, and we'll notate it in the business license.

Assistant City Attorney Jones – I see it more as part of the project description than a condition of approval because getting into the distinction of what types of alcohol is going to be sold it's more of an ABC issue. We understand that they are seeking ABC license only for non-hard alcohol. The reason of why we are here is because our zoning ordinance says that in this zone for alcoholic beverage sales in conjunction with a variety store, drugstore, or minimarket, a CUP permit is required subject to the provisions of 9138.5, which is like the limitation on the number of permits. Nothing in our code gets into hard alcohol versus not, that's more of an ABC thing. We have the land use authority. I would recommend not having a condition of approval that says no hard alcohol and leave that up to ABC. We can put something in the recital of the resolution where it describes the project. It's not really the type of authority that we're exercising.

Chair Thomas – What I hear you saying is that an ABC license in and of itself limits what can be sold.

Assistant City Attorney Jones – The ABC license that they get will be a beer and wine license. They would have to get a separate kind of ABC license to have hard alcohol. They are not proposing that so there is no need for a condition. The condition would be inappropriate because it's something that's within ABC's purview.

Planning Manager Palmer – If they decided that they wanted to sell hard liquor they would have to go back to ABC and request a license for that.

Commissioner Monteclaro – If they do that and ABC approves it then should that modification be considered by the Planning Commission?

Planning Manager Palmer – Yes because ABC will direct them back to the city.

Commissioner Monteclaro – If the conditions are modified later that makes our determination of approving it ineffective because any condition can be modified, deleted, or added.

Planning Manager Palmer – Modifications that are set in place by the Planning Commission can only be modified by the Planning Commission.

Planning Commission Decision:

Vice Chair Diaz moved, seconded by Commissioner Johnson, to approve staff's recommendation, thus adopting Resolution 25-2883. Motion carried, 8-0.

8. MANAGER'S REPORT

We have a draft of phase two over the next couple of meetings. I'm going to start to introduce some of the phase two to you. I don't want to get too far out in front of our public outreach that's going to be part of this. Get ready.

9. COMMISSIONERS' ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

Commissioner Monteclaro – I'm happy to be back, I've been around the world. It was enjoyable and a learning lesson for many occasions. I'm happy to be back healthy, safe, and be of service to our city and the community.

Commissioner Johnson – Very excited to keep a small business in our city. I understand that post covid a lot of small businesses have been through some things. I'm excited to keep them here and not have a vacant space. We have to give them the public works number for the graffiti removal. I remember having a small business and not going to municipality because of their CUP process. They explained to me that if it was not approved they would keep my \$5,000.00. We didn't apply in that city because we were new business owners and didn't have \$5,000.00. That is the position that man is in. As I look at empty places in our city and want to compete with other municipalities for the most business-friendly city, I just want to keep that in mind as we make our decisions. I'm happy that we were able to move it forward.

Commissioner Mfume – I also thought we were talking about hard alcohol. Make sure we are on top and know what we're asking for, what they are asking for, and what we are going to approve. Our Planning Manager is on top of it. You moved into that position and it just fits you. You are awesome.

Commissioner Wilson – Another great meeting, thank you staff and commissioners. I request that we have a pointer at our meetings.

Commissioner Docdocil – Always a joy to be part of our meetings. I reiterate what has already been said. Hats off to our staff for always doing the necessary work to make our meetings as seamless as possible. It's nice to see our community show up. I agree with what Commissioner Johnson mentioned. The pandemic did affect a lot of people of small businesses. I think Carson would make a great home for them and other small businesses. It's just a matter of reminding the community that we are a place that they should be coming to. Some areas of the city are rougher than others and having owners that take ownership of their space is absolutely going to help. It's also necessary for our community that if you see something say something. We should all take that to heart and take care of our city.

Commissioner Huff – I think tonight was proof of how we each see things a little differently. I'm glad that we were very thorough. There's a lot going on in our city, if you see something say something.

Vice Chair Diaz – I concur with my fellow commissioners. I couldn't agree more with everything that's being said.

Chair Thomas – We approved the In-N-Out Burger on Avalon at the Carson mall. As I remember it, there was one lane for the queuing up of cars and there was space there to have a second lane. The idea being that the queue might get too long and block traffic. When we approved this, we said there would be two lanes for queuing so that would not happen.

Planning Manager Palmer – I'll review the conditions and make the appropriate adjustments.

Chair Thomas – I want to remind residents that State of the City Address is happening on March 20th, put it on your calendar. It's going to be quite an event. I really appreciate my colleagues on this Planning Commission and all that you do in serving. Staff thank you for all that you do.

10. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 7:46 p.m.

Dianne Thomas
Chairperson

Attest By:

Laura Gonzalez
Planning Secretary