

**PLACENTIA PLANNING COMMISSION
MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING
February 11, 2025
6:30 p.m. – City Council Chambers
401 E. Chapman Avenue, Placentia, CA**

CALL TO ORDER: Commissioner/Chair Perez called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m.

ROLL CALL:

PRESENT: Commissioner Guerrero, Navarro, Roche, Perez

ABSENT: Commissioner Evans, Ingalls

STAFF PRESENT:

Assistant City Attorney Kristi J. Smith, Director of Development Services Joseph Lambert, Associate Planner Lesley Whitaker, Planning Technician Sen Liyanage, Deputy Director of Public Works Gabriel Gabany-Guerrero, Administrative Assistant Margie McCoy

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Commissioner Guerrero

Chair Perez and Director Lambert welcomed new Planning Commissioner Juan Guerrero to the meeting and highlighted his extensive past experience as a Planning Commissioner for the City of La Habra.

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS: None

CONSENT CALENDAR:

1. **Minutes
Placentia Planning Commission Regular Meeting of:
November 12, 2024**

Recommended Action: Approve
(Approved 3-0-1-2 as recommended)

Motion by Roche second by Navarro and carried on a (3-0-1-2) vote to approve the Consent Calendar.

Ayes: Navarro, Roche, Perez

Noes: None

Abstain: Guerrero

Absent: Evans, Ingalls

PUBLIC HEARING:

1. **Applicant:** Gilad Ganish, on behalf of Orangethorpe Investment Partners, LLC

Project Location: 776 S. Placentia Avenue and 777 W. Orangethorpe Avenue (APN 339-112-27)

ZONING CODE AMENDMENT (ZCA) NO. 2024-01 AMENDING CHAPTER 23.105, SPECIFIC PLAN NO. 5, SECTION 23.105.050, PERMITTED USES FOR PARCELS 9 AND 11, BY MODIFYING THE MINIMUM RESIDENTIAL DENSITY OF PARCEL NO. 9 FROM 65 DWELLING UNITS PER ACRE TO 15 DWELLING UNITS PER ACRE PER ACRE ON PROPERTY LOCATED AT 776 S. PLACENTIA AVENUE AND 777 W. ORANGETHORPE AVENUE (APN 339-112-27)

Recommended Action: Approve

Chair Perez opened the public hearing at 6:50 p.m.

Director Lambert presented the Staff Report, stating that this item is a Zoning Code Text Amendment and is a request to modify the minimum residential density of parcel 9 of Specific Plan 5 from 65 dwelling units per acre to 15 units per acre. Approximately 5 months ago, the City Council reviewed and approved a Mixed-Use development on parcel 9 of Specific Plan 5, 776 S. Placentia Avenue, also known as 777 W. Orangethorpe Avenue. The Planning Commission recommendation on the development and the Specific Plan Amendment was denial. However, ultimately it was approved by City Council and that approved project includes development of a 5-story 248-unit residential building with ground floor commercial space and a 6-level parking structure.

After City Council deliberations regarding the project, a Resolution was adopted approving the project and adopting the CEQA determination. There was an Ordinance that changed the Municipal Code as it relates to Specific Plan 5, because Specific Plan 5 did not allow residential at all. Specific Plan 5 was amended to allow a Mixed-Use project on this parcel, parcel nine, with up to 248 units at a density range of 65 minimum to 95 maximum dwelling units per acre. During the Public Hearing process at City Council, it was brought up by the applicant, at the dais, asking if the minimum density could be lowered. At that time, the City Council elected not to make that part of their motion for approval. The Code was changed to allow a density range with a minimum of 65 units per acre and a maximum of 95 units per acre.

As a follow up to the City Council's decision, the applicant, Mr. Ganish, asked staff how to amend that code, and after conferring with our city attorneys, including Kristi Smith, it was surmised that Mr. Ganish could apply for a Zoning Code Amendment. This application is a text amendment, and what he has applied for is to change that minimum density from 65 dwelling units per acre to 15 dwelling units per acre. Since Mr. Ganish applied for that, being a development related application, it went to the City Council, Housing, Community and Economic Development Committee. This meeting took place last week, and there were two members of the City Council on that committee. One of the City Council members initially questioned the proposed density reduction, however, by the end of the meeting there was consensus from the two members that eliminating the minimum density requirement altogether would provide the applicant with the greatest flexibility while keeping the 95 dwelling unit ceiling on the maximum density requirement. Based on the committee's recommendation and what the applicant applied for, the Resolution presented is set up for approval, recommending changing the minimum density for this parcel from 65 units per acre to 15 units per acre.

Commissioner Navarro asked if Planning Staff were in support. Director Lambert stated that Staff is in support of the 15-unit minimum density, so yes, Staff is in support of the 15-unit minimum density. Director Lambert noted that when this ordinance was crafted for approval, Staff gave it a minimum/maximum range to match our TOD Zone, or something similar to our Transit-Oriented Development zone, although this is not the same zone, but it's a similar

idea, in that it allows that high level of density along with other uses. However, if you look in some of our other zoning codes throughout the city, R-1 doesn't have a minimum density, but has a maximum density of approximately 7 units per acre. In the R-3 zone, the maximum density is 30, and it doesn't state a minimum in that code. If however, you're building one house on an R-3 property, you do need a use permit. So technically, a single house in an R-3 zone is permitted with a use permit and we researched other city codes. And it's split. Some cities include minimum/maximum, some cities just have a maximum. It's hard to argue that one way is right, and one way is wrong.

Commissioner Guerrero asked for clarification on the location of Parcel 9 and Director Lambert showed the Commissioner and the rest of the Commissioners the location of Parcel 9 on his iPad.

The first public comment from Craig Green of 650 Nenno Avenue included that he had spoken against this item when it first came before City Council. He strongly opposed this project as it changed the Zoning Code from Commercial to Residential, which would deprive the city of a badly needed revenue source. His concerns at that time pertained to safety issues, number of parking spaces per unit, fire and safety vehicle access, etc. The loss of Commercial zoning to Residential for this parcel is what Mr. Green feels is the biggest issue. He is requesting that this item be tabled until more specific information can be obtained from the developer.

Mr. Joe Queen, 835 Iowa Place, a resident across the street from the project, spoke about the eyesore the property presents in terms of graffiti, trash, etc. as it has remained vacant for quite some time. He and other residents are hoping this trash and graffiti will be cleaned up. The other issue Mr. Queen raised is the proposed retail space below the project and the concern is that it will likely remain vacant for some time and attract more trash and cause other security issues.

Applicant Gilad Ganish clarified that if there are any major changes to the existing entitlements that they would be brought to the Planning Commission at a later date. He also stated that there have been no changes to the project and there are no intended changes at this time.

Vice Chair Rocke and Commissioner Navarro expressed concerns about the potential for frequent changes to the approved development on parcel 9 and the impact on housing goals it may have.

Chair Perez and Commissioner Guerrero discussed the potential for future developers to request lower densities and the timeline for such changes.

Chair Perez closed the public hearing at 7:40 p.m.

Motion by Rocke second by Navarro and carried on a (3-1-0-2) vote to adopt Resolution PC-2025-01 with findings recommending denial of ZCA 2024-01.

Ayes: Navarro, Rocke, Perez
Noes: Guerrero
Abstain: None
Absent: Evans, Ingalls

Director Lambert stated that this recommendation will be forwarded to the City Council.

REGULAR AGENDA:

1. Applicant: City of Placentia

Project Location: Citywide

Study Session Regarding Residential Development Standards

Recommended Actions: It is recommended that the Planning Commission take the following actions:

1. Discuss the Residential Development Standards Survey Data
2. Provide staff direction as appropriate

Director Lambert stated that the item on the agenda is a Study Session and is related to the Planning Commission's direction that Staff received over the past 18-months to begin to look at the possibility of updating various City Residential Development Standards. In November of 2023, the Planning Commission requested that Staff work with the Streetscape and Transportation Advisory Commission. At that time, it was noted in the minutes that Staff would begin the work to study alternatives for residential driveway widths and gates across driveways as well as other Standards. Residential driveway approach Standards are a Public Works Standard and not necessarily a Development Standard under the purview of Development Services and the Planning Commission. But they do often relate to development. We had the Commission's direction to study some of these Standards.

The information presented at this meeting is broken down into single family residential and multiple family residential for single family garage space dimensions, like the interior of a garage, usable outdoor driveway dimensions, if any, and drive approach widths. We also researched front yard fencing height limits, rear yard fencing height limits, and any driveway gate regulations, meaning gates that may roll or swing across single family driveways, and then multifamily residential, developments like the Hudson condominium town home projects that this commission has seen where we covered topics such as covered parking space dimensions, uncovered parking space dimensions, guest parking dimensions, and backup distance from guest parking. Internal, private street widths, those without street parking, internal, private street widths, when they have garages on both sides, drive approach widths and in general, fence heights and regulations.

One of our newest members in Development Services, Mr. Sen Liyanage, who was a former intern, has been promoted to a part-time Planning Technician. Sen and Associate Planner Lesley Whittaker have helped with the survey of several local cities and each city's Standards. Discussion may span more than one Planning Commission meeting. Deputy Director of Public Works and City Engineer, Gabe Gabany-Guerrero, was in attendance at tonight's meeting. If the Commission recommends Code Amendments, then Staff will communicate that to City Council through the Interim City Administrator to make sure that City Council has an appetite for Staff to continue moving forward with the discussion. If Staff gets a sense overall that there is a desire to make some changes to our Code, then we would just have to make sure, through memos, working through our City Administrator, to communicate to Council. Director Lambert then presented slides showing the city survey data with each category's results, going through each line by line and there was discussion about each item.

The Commission agreed to seek Staff recommendations on potential garage space dimensions

After some discussion, Commissioner Guerrero suggested that Staff research each of the items; outdoor driveway space dimensions including separating one-way and two-way requirements, investigating County of Orange Standards on backup distances, including requirements, residential lighting Standards in single and multiple family districts, Fire Department access and alignment with Fire Code requirements. Commissioners agreed that this is an efficient way to proceed and that a possible update of the Standards is in order. Assistant City Attorney Smith stated that if the Standards are specific and not left up to interpretation, that this will establish a track record and will avoid subjective interpretations and potential litigation. Commissioner Navarro discussed the recently presented issue of a vehicular gate being proposed at the property line, which blocked a crosswalk and conflicted with pedestrians. He suggested a setback for the gate to avoid these conflicts. Commissioner Guerrero added that evaluating past complaints or issues related to specific line items could help prioritize areas of concern. Vice Chair Rocke highlighted the importance of considering the aesthetic impact of wide driveways and garages, suggesting they could look unsightly. Director Lambert mentioned the challenges of Fire Truck access in mixed-use projects and the need for special parking spots on the street. There was consensus on the need for thorough Staff analysis and Commission feedback on proposed changes.

OLD BUSINESS: None

NEW BUSINESS: None

DEVELOPMENT REPORT: None

DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

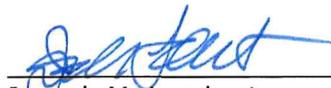
Director Lambert gave a brief update on various projects, including Chick-fil-A, Toll Brothers and a new commercial building.

PLANNING COMMISSION REQUESTS: None

ADJOURNMENT:

Chair Perez adjourned the Regular Meeting of the Planning Commission at 8:45 p.m. to the regular meeting of Tuesday, March 11, 2025, at 6:30 p.m. in the City Council Chambers at 401 East Chapman Avenue, Placentia, CA.

Submitted by,



Joseph M. Lambert,
Secretary to the Planning Commission