



**MINUTES OF THE
LAWDALE PLANNING COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING
APRIL 23, 2025**

A. CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Urrutia called the regular meeting to order at 6:36 p.m. in the Lawndale City Hall Council Chamber, 14717 Burin Avenue, Lawndale, California.

B. ROLL CALL

Commissioners Present: Chairperson Dr. Daniel Urrutia, Commissioner John Martinez, Commissioner Ni Kal S. Price, Commissioner Ignatius Lin

Commissioners Absent: Vice Chairperson Madonna Sitka

Other Participants: Deputy City Attorney Solange Z. Fortenbach, Community Development Director Peter Kann, Associate Planner Jose Hernandez, Associate Planner Jose Martinez, Administrative Assistant II Adrian Gutierrez

C. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Commissioner Martinez led the flag salute.

D. CONSENT CALENDAR

1. Minutes of the Lawndale Planning Commission Regular Meeting – March 26, 2025

A motion was carried by Commissioner Martinez and seconded by Commissioner Price to approve the minutes. The motion passed 4-0 with Vice Chairperson Sitka absent.

E. PUBLIC COMMENTS

None

F. PUBLIC HEARINGS

1. Case No. 25-07: A Request for the Planning Commission's Consideration to Amend a Previously Approved Set of Plans for Case No. 18-25. to Develop a Four-Unit Attached Condominium with a Common Driveway and Tuck-Under Parking Garage at the Property Addressed as 4604 W. 172nd Street

Director Kann introduced the item. Applicant Ugo Mbelu presented the project.

Chairperson Urrutia opened the public hearing at 6:44 p.m.

Resident Jay Gould expressed that the public hearing is an allowance for a mistake. He also stated that the City should not have code enforcement or enforce any rules and let anyone build what they want due to the approval of the project. He also referenced a neighbor's residential front yard and wall project that was denied, stating that the City has denied smaller projects for basic zoning

regulations, yet the townhome project was approved despite not being aesthetically compatible with the neighborhood or the City in general. Mr. Gould also mentioned that the construction of the townhomes has cracked the foundation of neighboring properties. In addition, Mr. Gould mentioned that no inspections were conducted by the city and that he measured the property himself.

Neighboring resident David, stated that the project has been a nightmare since it first began. He mentioned that the construction rattles houses and their foundations. He also brought up the property lines and setbacks for the development. He mentioned that he has not seen any three-story residential developments between the project site and City Hall. Lastly, he mentioned that the project site makes his neighborhood an awful place to live.

Resident Mary Ellen Martin mentioned that she only sees two-story residences on her block, but nothing as big as the three-story townhouse development. She stated that houses neighboring the development will not get sunshine and that the project is unsightly and horrible. She also commented on the height of the building, stating that it looks more like a five-story building than a three-story building. She believes that this type of development will set a new precedence for new residential development in the city. Lastly, she mentioned how the city does not approve certain types of projects yet decided to approve this townhome project. She asked if anyone in the Commission had gone out to look at the site.

Neighboring resident Rosa stated the neighbors around the development are longtime residents who take pride in their properties. She stated that a two-story development is acceptable, but this project is much bigger. She also stated that the project no longer makes the area feel like a neighborhood, but something like the South Bay Galleria mall. She commented that the development stands out like a sore thumb and expressed concerns over construction noise.

Neighboring resident Dan expressed disappointment that the project ended up being three-stories tall, plus the sundeck. He also expressed concerns regarding parking. In addition, he mentioned that he put in plans to the city for an addition above the garage, but due to the city's requirements, the project was denied.

Resident Randall Abram noted that he can see the development from his residence a block away. He brought up past comments about the size of the project that was made back in 2018, when the Commission at that time reviewed the project. He also brought up that the 41-Unit mixed-use project was originally going to be owned by homeowners, however, they were changed to rentals years later. Mr. Abram asked if there were any measures to prevent something like that from happening to this project, to ensure homeownership. He also asked about how the project would meet open space requirements and building setbacks. Lastly, he mentioned that the applicant's letter is requesting to meet ADA requirements, however, from his knowledge, condominiums are not required to meet ADA when they are being built.

Chairperson Urrutia closed the public hearing at 6:59 p.m.

Commissioner Price asked about seeing the prior approval for the project, not just reading the letter from the applicant. She also asked if the city had any records of residents calling in construction outside of the permitted hours. She also inquired about obtaining additional background

information on the project, its approval, and the information mentioned in the letter from the applicant.

Commissioner Lin asked if the current condition of the project breaks any City laws or codes. He summarized that the only issue being presented to the Commission is for the height adjustment. He also asked for clarification on open space and property lines. In addition, he asked if the units would be rentals or be privately owned, and if this is in the purview of the Commission.

Commissioner Martinez noted that he was a part of the Commission when the project was approved back in 2018. He mentioned that the project met all requirements at the time. Commissioner Martinez questioned if the project still met the code. He also spoke about construction hours and asked where the measurements for the property were taken from. He also asked if the project counts towards the City's Regional Housing Needs Assessment ("RHNA") numbers. He also had questions about the sundeck on the roof, setbacks, and open space.

Director Kann asked the Commission if they would like staff or have the applicant respond first to the questions and comments. The Commission asked that the applicant respond first.

Ike Mbelu addressed the concerns from 2018 and responded that the project was designed with open space in mind. Mr. Mbelu indicated the location of the open space areas. To address the homeownership concerns, Mr. Mbelu stated that the Covenants, Conditions, and Restrictions ("CC&R's") and Parcel Map have been submitted. Mr. Mbelu pointed out that the project does not exceed the thirty-five-foot maximum height requirement for the R-3 zone. He also spoke about the slope of the property, setbacks for the units and subterranean garage, and building heights. Lastly, he mentioned that the roof will contain the required solar panels.

Director Kann confirmed the setback requirements for the subterranean parking garage.

Commissioner Price wanted to confirm the timeline of the project, from being approved in 2018, to the start of construction.

Director Kann spoke about the request to amend the building height and how the building was measured, based on the municipal code requirements. He also responded to Commissioner Martinez's question about the project helping meet the City's RHNA numbers.

Commissioner Lin requested clarification on the impacts of the subterranean parking garage.

Director Kann mentioned that the project was previously approved with eighty-three conditions. The applicant is coming back to the Commission to revise the height of the building, which is still under the maximum height limit of the R-3 zone.

Commissioner Price asked again if the city received any calls regarding construction hours.

Director Kann noted that conditions of approval require that the applicant go through the Planning Commission to make any changes to the project and its conditions of approval.

Chairperson Urrutia summarized the purpose of the public hearing.

A motion was carried by Commissioner Martinez and seconded by Chairperson Urrutia to adopt Resolution 25-05, approving the request to amend a previously approved set of plans for Case No. 18-25, to develop a four-unit attached condominium with a common driveway and tuck-under parking garage, and find and determine that the proposed project is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act “CEQA” pursuant to Section 15061(b)(3) of the CEQA Guidelines. The motion passed 4-0 with Vice Chairperson Sitka absent.

H. ITEMS FROM THE DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Director Kann stated that there will be items presented to the Commission for both meetings in May. He also thanked the Commission for voting on tonight’s public hearing item.

I. ITEMS FROM THE COMMISSION

None

J. ADJOURNMENT

Chairperson Urrutia adjourned the meeting at 7:25 p.m. to the next regularly scheduled meeting to be held on Wednesday, May 14, 2025, at 6:30 p.m. at the City Hall Council Chamber, located at 14717 Burin Avenue, Lawndale, California.

Dr. Daniel Urrutia, Chairperson

ATTEST:

Peter Kann, Community Development Director