

**MEETING MINUTES OF THE CITY OF  
COSTA MESA PLANNING COMMISSION**

**March 23, 2020**

**CALL TO ORDER**

The Chair called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM and read a brief statement into the record regarding the COVID-19 pandemic.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG**

Chair de Arakal led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**ROLL CALL**

Present: Chair Byron de Arakal, Vice Chair Jeffrey Harlan (via phone), Commissioner Kedarious Colbert (via phone), Commissioner Marc Perkins (via phone), Commissioner Dianne Russell (via phone), Commissioner Jenna Tourje (via phone), Commissioner Jon Zich

Absent: None

**Officials**

Present: Director of Economic and Development Services Barry Curtis (via phone), Assistant Director of Development Services Jennifer Le, Assistant City Attorney Tarquin Preziosi (via phone), Contract Engineer Bart Mejia (via phone) Senior Planner Mel Lee, Assistant Planner Katelyn Walsh (via phone), and Recording Secretary Julie Colgan

**ANNOUNCEMENTS AND PRESENTATIONS:**

None.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

The Chair asked if any emails from the public were received. Ms. Colgan responded no.

**COMMISSIONER COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS:**

Commissioner Perkins spoke on the COVID-19 virus.

Commissioner Colbert thanked City staff for their work during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Vice Chair Harlan thanked City staff for their work during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Chair de Arakal thanked City staff for their work during the COVID-19 pandemic.

**CONSENT CALENDAR:**

**1. MINUTES FOR THE MEETING OF AUGUST 12, 2019**

2. **MINUTES FOR THE MEETING OF JULY 22, 2019**
3. **MINUTES FOR THE MEETING OF JULY 8, 2019**
4. **MINUTES FOR THE MEETING OF JUNE 24, 2019**
5. **MINUTES FOR THE MEETING OF JUNE 10, 2019**
6. **MINUTES FOR THE MEETING OF MAY 28, 2019**

The Chair asked whether any emails from the public were received to pull an item for discussion. Ms. Colgan responded no.

**MOVED/SECOND:** Colbert/de Arakal

**MOTION:** Approve Consent Calendar Items one through six.

The motion carried by the following roll call vote:

Ayes: de Arakal, Harlan, Colbert, Perkins, Russell, Tourje, Zich

Nays: None

Absent: None

Abstained: Harlan abstained from Consent Calendar Item No. 4; Colbert abstained from Consent Calendar Item No. 5; Perkins abstained from all consent calendar items (was not a Commissioner yet); Russell abstained from Consent Calendar Item No. 6; Tourje abstained from Consent Calendar Item No. 1 and 6; and Zich abstained from Consent Calendar Item No. 2.

Motion carried:

Consent Calendar Item No. 1: 5-0

Consent Calendar Item No. 2: 5-0

Consent Calendar Item No. 3: 6-0

Consent Calendar Item No. 4: 5-0

Consent Calendar Item No. 5: 5-0

Consent Calendar Item No. 6: 4-0

## **PUBLIC HEARINGS**

1. **PLANNING APPLICATION 19-31 FOR A CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT TO OPERATE AN ESCAPE ROOM (UNLOCKED: ESCAPE ROOM) AND A MINOR CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT FOR A DEVIATION FROM PARKING REQUIREMENTS AT 1111 BAKER STREET, BUILDING A**

**Project Description:** Planning Application 19-31 is a request for a Conditional Use Permit for an Escape Room (Unlocked: Escape Room) including a minor conditional use permit to deviate from parking requirements based on unique operating characteristics.

**Environmental Determination:** The project is categorically exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) under CEQA Guidelines Section 15301 (Class 1), Existing Facilities.

No ex-parte communications to report.

Mel Lee, Senior Planner, presented the staff report.

Discussion ensued regarding the requested maximum number of players in the game; whether parking is sufficient; reciprocal parking; how General Plan Conformance Policy LU-601 and LU-7.6 support the project's use; other escape rooms in the City are in a similar land use designation as the proposed use and whether there has been any issues with them; noise complaints from similar properties; whether all activities for the proposed use will be indoors; how parking was calculated; and that no ride sharing is encouraged.

The Chair opened the public hearing.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Long John Nguyen, applicant, stated he has read the staff report in its entirety and spoke on the other escape room he runs in Irvine and why he would like to operate an escape room in Costa Mesa.

Discussion ensued regarding the applicant's Irvine location having time gaps in between games; how long it takes to prepare for the next game; whether there is sufficient parking at the Irvine location; whether groups traveled to the Irvine location; bike racks; Commissioner Perkins encouraged the installation of bike racks; maximum number of staff at any given time; how the reservations are made; the marketing for the website; signage; ride sharing discount programs; how the control room works; whether the Irvine location has onsite security and police or fire service calls; and that Mr. Nguyen would be in agreement to installing bike racks.

The Chair asked whether any emailed public comments were received. Ms. Colgan responded no.

The Chair closed the public comments.

Discussion ensued regarding whether public noticing occurred to property owners and residents within a 500-foot radius of the property; no public responses were received only a telephone inquiry; handicapped parking; existing security cameras on the building; Mr. Nguyen agreed to a condition to add a security camera on the exterior of the building at the main entrance; and the parking space credit for a bike rack.

The Chair closed the public hearing.

**MOVED/SECOND:** Colbert/de Arakal

**MOTION:** Move staff recommendation with added conditions for an exterior security camera at the entrance of the building and installation of bike racks.

The motion carried by the following roll call vote:

Ayes: de Arakal, Harlan, Colbert, Perkins, Russell, Tourje, Zich

Nays: None

Absent: None

Motion carried: 7-0

**ACTION:** The Planning Commission adopt a Resolution to:

1. Find that the project is categorically exempt from the provisions of the California

- Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) per CEQA Guidelines Section 15301 (Class 1) Existing Facilities; and
2. Approve Planning Application 19-31, subject to conditions of approval.

**ADDED:**

**Condition of Approval No. 13:** Prior to final inspection, the applicant shall install an on-site video surveillance system covering the front entry of the building, subject to review and approval by the Planning Division.

**Condition of Approval No. 14:** Prior to final inspection, the applicant shall install two hoop bike racks that meet the Transportation Services Division specifications for materials, finishes, and placement.

**Materials:**

1.5-inch schedule 40 uncoated pipe (1.90-inch OD).

Installation methods: In-ground mount is embedded into concrete base. Flange mount has two 2.5-inch by 6-inch by .25-inch feet – 4 anchors.

**Finishes:**

A rubbery PVC dip. Blue is standard.

**Hoop Bike Rack:**

Wall setback: For hoops set parallel to the wall, a minimum of 24 inches should be left between the wall and the rack. 36 inches is the recommended setback. For hoops installed perpendicular to the wall, a 28-inch setback is the minimum distance. 36 inches is recommended.

Distance between racks: 24 inches is the minimum distance between racks. 36 inches is recommended.

Street setbacks: 24 inches is the minimum distance between the street and the rack. 36 inches is recommended.

The foot-mounted hoop rack has a 2.5-inch by 6-inch by .25-inch foot which is installed onto a concrete base with 4 masonry anchors.

Commissioner Zich spoke in support of the motion.

Commissioner Tourje spoke in support of the motion and regarding cleaning up City codes.

Commissioner Perkins spoke in support of the use and regarding City parking requirements.

Commissioner Russell spoke in support of the motion.

Commissioner Colbert spoke in support of the item and regarding City codes.

Vice Chair Harlan commented regarding the project.

Chair de Arakal spoke in support of the item.

**RESOLUTION PC-2020-08 - A RESOLUTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF COSTA MESA, CALIFORNIA APPROVING PLANNING APPLICATION 19-31, FOR A CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT TO OPERATE AN ESCAPE ROOM (UNLOCKED: ESCAPE ROOM) AND A MINOR CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT FOR A DEVIATION FROM PARKING REQUIREMENTS AT 1111 BAKER STREET, BUILDING A**

**2. PLANNING APPLICATION 19-28 AND TENTATIVE PARCEL MAP NO. 2019-174 FOR A TWO-UNIT SMALL LOT SUBDIVISION RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT AT 377-379 LA PERLE PLACE**

**Project Description:** Planning Application 19-28 is a request for:

1. Design Review for the construction of two, two-story, detached single-family residences on a 7,200-square-foot lot, addressed 377-379 La Perle Place. The project satisfies all Small Lot Subdivision development standards and the City's Residential Design Guidelines.
2. Tentative Parcel Map No. 2019-174 for the subdivision of a 7,200-square-foot lot into two 3,600-square-foot lots, with one unit on each lot, consistent with the Small Lot Ordinance.

**Environmental Determination:** The project is categorically exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) under CEQA Guidelines Section 15303 (Class 3), New Construction.

**3. PLANNING APPLICATION 19-34 AND TENTATIVE PARCEL MAP NO. 2020-103 FOR A TWO-UNIT SMALL LOT SUBDIVISION RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT AT 385-387 LA PERLE PLACE**

**Project Description:** Planning Application 19-34 is a request for:

1. Design Review for the construction of two, two-story, detached single-family residences on a 7,200-square-foot lot addressed 385-387 La Perle Place. The project satisfies all Small Lot Subdivision development standards and the City's Residential Design Guidelines.
2. Tentative Parcel Map No. 2020-103 for the subdivision of a 7,200-square-foot lot into two 3,600-square-foot lots, with one unit on each lot, consistent with the Small Lot Ordinance.

**Environmental Determination:** The project is categorically exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) under CEQA Guidelines Section 15303 (Class 3), New Construction.

**MOVED/SECOND:** de Arakal/Zich

**MOTION:** Combine Public Hearing Item Nos. 2 and No. 3.

The motion carried by the following roll call vote:

Ayes: de Arakal, Harlan, Colbert, Perkins, Russell, Tourje, Zich

Nays: None

Absent: None

Motion carried: 7-0

Two ex-parte communications to report: Commissioner Perkins had a conversation with a neighbor while on a site visit a couple of days prior to the meeting and Chair de Arakal

received a telephone message from Mr. Ridgeway and was not able to return his call prior to tonight's meeting.

Jennifer Le, Assistant Director of Development Services, presented the staff report.

Discussion ensued regarding whether public noticing occurred to all property owners within 500 feet and no comments were received; where the decorative wall will be installed in Condition of Approval No. 4; maximum height of the decorative wall; Commissioner Zich's concern with the height of the finished grade and how it might affect the height of the decorative block wall on the adjacent property in Condition of Approval No. 7; and the process for a tree removal and the tree replacement requirement.

Commissioner Russell reported that she spoke with one of the residents about the history of the large tree on the property during her visit to the site.

Discussion ensued regarding saving the large tree on the property; what the primary concerns with other small lot development projects on the street were at the time of approval; what happens if the Parks, Arts and Community Services Commission denies the removal of the trees located in the parkway; why the condition regarding tree removal in the public right-of-way is only in the staff report for PA-19-28; what underground infrastructure or utility considerations occur when population density grows in a community; and whether the development to the right of the property had the same condition and requirement as staff's proposed Engineering Code Requirement No. 35.

The Chair opened the public hearing.

## **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Ryan Oldham, the project architect, stated he has read the staff report and conditions of approval. He would like the Commission to consider modifications to the following conditions:

Condition of Approval No. 3: asked the Commission to allow the filing of the final map with the County prior to building permit issuance and the recordation of the final map prior to occupancy since the county is backlogged.

Condition of Approval No. 5 consider allowing decorative wood fencing in between the homes instead of block walls.

Condition of Approval No. 13 consider decorative pavers instead of concrete with turf joints in the driveway.

The Chair opened the public hearing and indicated that everything the applicant said will be a part of the record.

Discussion ensued regarding Commissioner Zich's concerns with the height of the finished grade; that Mr. Oldham would be amendable to vinyl fencing as well for Condition of Approval No. 5; that Mr. Oldham would be open to any tree that the City felt appropriate for the side yard in the landscape plans; what would happen if the applicant cannot get the final parcel maps recorded; and that Mr. Oldham would agree to permeable or semipermeable materials for the decorative driveway.

The Chair asked whether any emailed public comments were received. Ms. Colgan responded no.

The Chair closed the public comments.

Discussion ensued regarding why there is a requirement for landscape ground cover in the driveway in Condition of Approval No. 13; that the landscape ground cover in the driveway is not counted in the landscape or open space requirement; what are the City tree options on private property and what palette options the developer could choose from; modifying Condition of Approval No. 5; modifying Condition of Approval No. 3; the requirement for block walls around parcel lines; and the process for tree removal.

The Chair closed the public hearing.

**MOVED/SECOND:** Harlan/Zich

**MOTION:** Move staff's recommendation with modifications to Condition of Approval No. 35 and Condition of Approval No. 3 offered by Mr. Curtis.

The motion carried by the following roll call vote:

Ayes: de Arakal, Harlan, Colbert, Perkins, Russell, Tourje, Zich

Nays: None

Absent: None

Motion carried: 7-0

Discussion ensued regarding modifying Condition of Approval No. 5. Vice Chair Harlan stated that his motion did not include modifications to Condition of Approval No. 5.

Vice Chair Harlan and Commissioner Zich agreed to modify Condition of Approval No. 13 to replace landscaped driveway verbiage with permeable pavers.

Discussion ensued regarding Condition of Approval No. 5.

Commissioner Colbert provided comments regarding Condition of Approval No. 5.

Discussion ensued regarding whether to include modifications to Condition of Approval No. 5 to the motion. Commissioner Zich and Vice Chair Harlan stated that they are not including modifications to Condition of Approval No. 5 to the motion and their reasons why not.

**ACTION:** The Planning Commission adopt a Resolution to:

1. Find that the project is categorically exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) per CEQA Guidelines Section 15303 (Class 3), New Construction; and
2. Approve Planning Application 19-28 and Tentative Parcel Map 2019-174, subject to conditions of approval.

**REVISED CONDITIONS:**

**Condition of Approval No. 3:** The final subdivision map shall be recorded with the County prior to the issuance of building permits for the proposed development, unless otherwise agreed to by the Director of Development Services.

**Condition of Approval No. 13:** Each individual driveway within the 20-foot front setback shall incorporate appropriate permeable pavers in compliance with the final approved plans.

**Engineering Code Requirement 35:** Dedicate a 3-foot public sidewalk easement behind the existing right-of-way line on La Perle Place and construct sidewalk per City standards.

**RESOLUTION PC-2020-09 - A RESOLUTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF COSTA MESA, CALIFORNIA APPROVING PLANNING APPLICATION 19-28 AND TENTATIVE PARCEL MAP NO. 2019-174 FOR A TWO-UNIT SMALL LOT SUBDIVISION RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE R2-MD ZONE FOR PROPERTY AT 377-379 LA PERLE PLACE**

The Chair explained the appeal process.

**MOVED/SECOND:** Harlan/Zich

**MOTION:** Move staff's recommendation with modifications to Condition of Approval No. 3, No. 13 and No. 35.

The motion carried by the following roll call vote:

Ayes: de Arakal, Harlan, Colbert, Perkins, Russell, Tourje, Zich

Nays: None

Absent: None

Motion carried: 7-0

Commissioner Colbert provided updated comments on the decorative wall in Condition of Approval No. 5.

**ACTION:** The Planning Commission adopt a Resolution to:

1. Find that the project is categorically exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) per CEQA Guidelines Section 15303 (Class 3), New Construction; and
2. Approve Planning Application 19-34 and Tentative Parcel Map No. 2020-103, subject to conditions of approval.

**REVISED CONDITIONS:**

**Condition of Approval No. 3:** The final subdivision map shall be recorded with the County prior to the issuance of building permits for the proposed development, unless otherwise agreed to by the Director of Development Services.

**Condition of Approval No. 13:** Each individual driveway within the 20-foot front setback shall incorporate appropriate permeable pavers in compliance with the final approved plans.

**Engineering Code Requirement 35:** Dedicate a 3-foot public sidewalk easement behind the existing right-of-way line on La Perle Place and construct sidewalk per City standards.

**RESOLUTION PC-2020-10 - A RESOLUTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF COSTA MESA, CALIFORNIA APPROVING PLANNING APPLICATION 19-34 AND TENTATIVE PARCEL MAP NO. 2020-103 FOR A TWO-UNIT SMALL LOT SUBDIVISION RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE R2-MD ZONE FOR PROPERTY AT 385-387 LA PERLE PLACE**



The Chair explained the appeal process.

**DEPARTMENTAL REPORT(S)**

1. Public Services Report – none.
2. Development Services Report – Mr. Curtis reported that the One Metro West project will be heard at the next two meetings and the public review for the project's EIR has been extended to March 30, 2020.

**CITY ATTORNEY'S OFFICE REPORT(S)**

1. City Attorney – none.

**ADJOURNMENT AT 8:33 PM**

Submitted by:

  
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BARRY CURTIS, SECRETARY  
COSTA MESA PLANNING COMMISSION