

Claremont Planning Commission
League of Women Voters of the Claremont Area Observer Report
By Observer Paula Martinez
May 24, 2018

Purpose: The Planning Commission is the only City Commission required by State law. It advises the City Council on all matters dealing with the present and future development of the City, in accordance with the values and goals set forth in the City's General Plan, based on specified evidentiary-based findings.

Commission Members: Chair Richard Rosenbluth (term expires 2018); Vice Chair Leigh Ann Jones (term expires 2019); Douglas Lyon, James Jackson and Rick Reed (all with terms expiring 2018); and Catherine Curtis and Parker Emerson (both terms expiring 2021.)

City Staff: The Commission is supported by Community Development Director Brad Johnson, Sr. Administrative Assistant Kim Wolfinbarger, and various City Planners and Planning interns.

Regular Meetings: First and third Tuesdays of each month, 7:00 pm, City Council Chambers, except for the traditional August recess. *However*, this year, there were no meetings held in December 2017, and March 2018, and only single meetings in October and November 2017, and January and May 2018.

The Commission is following good government standards. It operates transparently, welcomes public input, and members appear well prepared.

Earlier this year, the Community Development Director determined that the Village Lofts project (Rich Products site) had not continued at a commercially reasonable pace and thus lost its prior approvals. The owners appealed the Director' decision to the Planning Commission. The commission denied the appeal and supported the Director's determination. The City Council ultimately approved the Planning Commission's decision.

The Commission approved Conditional Use Permits (CUPs) for several indoor fitness and ancillary massage establishment projects and approved the Meat Cellar's CUP for Wolf's Market site (community agreement later obtained). A CUP was also approved for use by Claremont Lincoln University of offices at 150 W. 1st Street. Variances were approved for minor changes within the Claremont Park Apartments at 510 S. Indian Hill and for a minor expansion of an existing nonconforming detached garage. The Commission also approved a Tentative Tract Map and associated Old School House Specific Plan CEQA Addendum.

Additionally:

- For purposes of Commission member training, a workshop was conducted on the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) – specifically a discussion of local CEQA guidelines and potential development of local thresholds of significance. Additionally, a

joint special meeting was conducted before both the Architectural and Planning Commissions as a study session for a proposed code amendment on accessory dwelling units (ADUs.)

- In September 2017, the Commission finally recommended the City Council approve the 2014-2021 Housing Element Update, Addendum to the General Plan EIR, General Plan and Zone Map Amendments to Add High Density Residential Overlay to 7.0 acres of 1550 N. Indian Hill Blvd.

- In April 2018, the Commission conducted an advisory review of draft goals, guiding principles, and initial land use and circulation concepts for the Village South Specific Plan (VSSP), encompassing the 17 acres south of the Claremont Village along Indian Hill Boulevard, prepared by Sargent Town Planning.

- Also, in April 2018, the Commission reviewed and provided input and feedback to the City Council on the Gold Line Design Elements for the Indian Hill Grade Separation and Update on Parking Structure Design.