

Claremont Planning Commission
League of Women Voters of the Claremont Area Observer Report
By Observer Paula Martinez
May 11, 2017

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 Douglas Lyon (term expires 2018); K.M.(Marie) Williamson (term expires 2017); Cynthia Humes (term expires 2017); James Jackson and Rick Reed (both with terms expiring 2018); and Leigh Ann Jones (term expires 2019.)

City Staff: The Commission is supported by Director of Community Development Brian Desatnick, Sr. Administrative Assistant Kim Wolfenbarger, various City Planners and Contract Planner, Belle Newman.

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 only single meetings in August, September, and November 2016 and in January, February, March and April, 2017.

The Commission is following good government standards. It operates transparently, welcomes public input and members appear well prepared. However, due to the insistence of some members' on very detailed minutes, it is sometimes months before the minutes are approved by the Commission and thus published on the City's website under Commission Minutes. After draft minutes are published in the agenda, further revisions made by Commissioners before the meetings are only available in paper format in the lobby. At the meetings, some members need to be reminded to speak into their microphones.

This year, the Commission approved Conditional Use Permits (CUPs) for several eating establishment projects and/or addition of alcohol service for Blaze Pizza, Cajun Crab, Rincon Azteca, Elvira Mexican Bar & Grill and Viva Madrid. CUPs were also approved for continued operation of existing massage establishments, for use of the 2nd and 3rd floors at 1 N. Indian Hill for Keck Graduate Institute offices and meeting rooms, and for addition of educational/tasting events at the Cheese Cave.

Additionally:

- For purposes of all Commission member training, a special meeting was conducted by the City Attorney regarding parliamentary procedure, the Brown Act, findings, and meeting decorum. Additionally, a workshop was specifically conducted for both the Architectural and Planning Commissions on the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

- Since the City failed to meet the State deadline last year for update of its required General Plan Housing Element, the Commission again considered a newly revised Housing Element Update which now identifies 6.5 acres of a 31.5-acre parcel on Indian Hill Blvd. (the old Claremont Golf Course) as a potential location to accommodate the City's remaining Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) allocation and directed staff to initiate the necessary land use designation changes for that purpose.
- In October 2016, the Commission conducted a review of the Claremont Colleges East Campus Plan. The Commission recommended approval of the Final EIR, tentative parcel map, conceptual site plan and development agreement between the City and the Claremont University Consortium for the phased development of a college sports complex.
- Considered by the Commission last year was a preliminary review of a proposed 4-story hotel at Indian Hill and the 10 freeway, to replace Knight's Inn. This year, the Commission considered and approved the Southwest San Jose Specific Plan for the proposed Hampton Inn facility at this site, along with a joint use parking agreement between the Hampton Inn and the BC Café.
- On tap for next year is a new Specific Plan for the Village South Area (the 17 acres south of the Claremont Village along Indian Hill Boulevard). Sargent Town Planners has been selected to complete the plan, including an upcoming community visioning process.