



Wednesday, December 16, 2015
Minutes of the Special Meeting of the City Council

CALL TO ORDER

A Special Meeting of the South Pasadena City Council was called to order by Mayor Joe on Wednesday, December 16, 2015, at 6:40 p.m., in the Amedee O. "Dick" Richards, Jr., Council Chambers, located at 1424 Mission Street, South Pasadena, California.

ROLL CALL

Present: Councilmembers Cacciotti, Khubesrian, and Schneider; Mayor Pro Tem Mahmud; and Mayor Joe.

Absent: None.

City Staff

Present: Sergio Gonzalez, City Manager; Teresa L. Highsmith, City Attorney; Evelyn G. Zneimer, City Clerk; Anthony J. Mejia, Chief Deputy City Clerk were present at Roll Call. Other staff members presented reports or responded to questions as indicated in the minutes.

STUDY SESSION

1. DISCUSSION ON THE DRAFT HISTORIC PRESERVATION ORDINANCE

Senior Planner Mayer narrated a PowerPoint presentation entitled "Draft Preservation Ordinance" and reviewed the historic preservation ordinance background, definitions of historic districts versus individually significant structures, purpose statement, legal framework, policy guidelines, streamlining of minor projects, acknowledgement of California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), Cultural Heritage Commission (CHC) authority, and enforcement mechanisms.

During the course of discussion, City Council discussed that coordination between advisory bodies needs to be improved, noting that when Certificates of Appropriateness are issued by the CHC it does not necessarily authorize removal of trees, which needs to be authorized by the City's Natural Resources and Environmental Commission. City Manager Gonzalez advised that the draft ordinance will be amended to reflect that coordination between advisory bodies occurs early during the application process and that applicants be advised of City processes. Planning and Building Director Watkins noted that CEQA plays a role in the sequencing of approvals for historic structures and tree removals.

Councilmember Schneider recommended that staff revise the Certificate of Appropriateness purpose statement, noting that the verbiage related to “historic resources” is circular in its explanation.

In response to City Council inquiry, Senior Planner Mayer explained that property owners are required to maintain historic properties and that demolition by neglect is a punishable offense under the draft ordinance.

Mayor Pro Tem Mahmud expressed concern regarding limitations being placed on the number of Mills Act Agreements authorized to proceed to the City Council on an annual basis, suggesting that the verbiage be modified to allow greater flexibility.

Robert Conte, Cultural Heritage Commission Member, explained that Mills Act Agreements require an extensive amount of time to review, approve, and monitor and that the proposed limitations will allow the CHC to process proposals in a timely and orderly process.

In response to City Council inquiries, Senior Planner Mayer explained that existing Mills Act Agreements have not been actively monitored, noting that the proposed ordinance will require annual review of existing contracts; advised that remodel of garages will need to be evaluated on a case-by-case basis to determine if it contributes to the historical significance of the property; explained that as it relates to garages, the criteria for determining if a structure is historically significant is typically based on a visual analysis from the street perspective; stated that secondary dwelling units and installation of solar panels are required to be approved without a discretionary permit under State regulations.

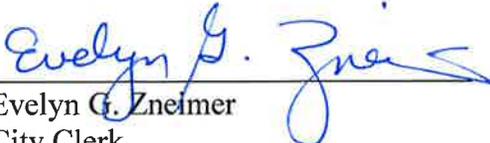
Robert Conte, Cultural Heritage Commission Member, explained that efforts should be taken to preserve garages if they contribute to the historical significance of a property, pointing out that applicants may appeal the CHC’s decision, if desired.

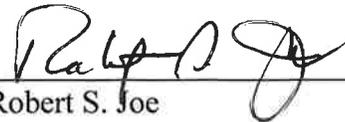
Councilmember Schneider questioned whether new property owners are made aware that their properties are within historical districts, pointing out that they may not know that Certificates of Appropriateness are required when they desire to remodel the property.

It was noted that staff should conduct a search throughout the proposed ordinance to ensure that capitalization and grammar is consistent.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Joe adjourned the Special City Council Meeting.


Evelyn G. Zneimer
City Clerk


Robert S. Joe
Mayor

Minutes approved by the South Pasadena City Council on January 6, 2016.