CITY OF TEMPLE CITY

PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES

REGULAR MEETING
Tuesday June 9, 2020, 7:30 P.M.
Via Teleconference
www.templecity.us

OPENING MATTERS:

- **Call to Order**

  Chair Lee called the Planning Commission Regular Meeting to order at 7:36 p.m. telephonically using the GoToMeeting application.

- **Roll Call:**

  - PRESENT: Cordes, Guan, O'Leary, Vice-Chair Haddad, Chair Lee
  - ABSENT:
  - ALSO PRESENT: Interim Community Development Director Reimers, City Attorney Thuyen, Associate Planner Liu and Planning Secretary Scott.

- **Pledge of Allegiance**

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS / PUBLIC COMMENT: NONE

CONSENT CALENDAR:

1. Planning Commission Minutes of May 26, 2020.

Commissioner Cordes made a motion to approve the minutes of May 26, 2020, listed on the Consent Calendar. Seconded by Commissioner O'Leary and approved unanimously by the following votes:

AYES:	Commissioner – Cordes, Guan, O'Leary, Vice-Chair Haddad, Chair Lee
ABSTAIN:	Commissioner – None
NOES:	Commissioner – None
ABSENT:	Commissioner – None

PUBLIC HEARING ITEM:

2. **File PL 19-1668**. A request for a conditional use permit to increase the height of an existing changeable copy sign from 12 feet to 16 feet.
   Address: 5637 Santa Anita Ave

   Recommendation: Planning Commission adopt a resolution (attachment 2) approving the conditional use permit with binding conditions. The project is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Section 15301 (Existing Facilities) of the California CEQA Guidelines.

   Project Planner: Hesty Liu, Associate Planner
   hliu@templecity.us

Attorney Thuyen asked the Commissioners to disclose any communication with the applicant, Arash Nourollach, before the meeting.

Commissioner O'Leary and Chair Lee stated that they spoke to the applicant before the meeting. Commissioner O'Leary stated that he told the applicant not to contact him further to discuss the item before the meeting. But the applicant made a second attempt. Chair Lee disclosed the content of his conversation with the applicant.

Associate Planner Liu gave a brief presentation.

Commissioner Cordes asked for clarification on the dimensions of the sign and he also asked if the requirements controlling the changeable signs will be imposed.

Mrs. Liu said that the applicant is proposing a 16-foot tall sign and the City staff recommendation is a 6-foot-tall sign with a 10-foot trellis. Requirements pertaining to the brightness and the frequency of the sign will be imposed on the project if the Planning Commission approves the request.

Commissioner Guan also asked for clarification if the alternative design proposed by staff is lower than the original height, which was 12 feet.

Mrs. Liu confirmed that the alternative design proposes a height of 6 feet which is less than the original height of 12 feet. The reason was that staff provided the alternative design based on an optimal design. The current code only allows 6-feet. This project was submitted under the old zoning code, and therefore, the six-foot limit does not apply.

Mr. Reimers said that when the sign was originally built, the three additional findings for a changeable copy signs were not in the code. The applicant did not apply for a permit until a code enforcement case was opened.

Commissioner O'Leary asked for clarification on the timeline when the sign was enlarged and asked if the applicant submitted a sign permit.

Mrs. Liu said that the sign was changed in 2017 or 2018. The new zoning code requirement for a changeable copy sign was added in 2013; staff did not receive any application for a permit.

Vice-Chair Haddad asked if the applicant submitted a permit when there was a change of ownership.

Mrs. Liu said that the new owner acquired a sign permit to make it into a changeable copy sign.

Chair Lee asked staff if the City has confirmation that the sign was 12 feet.

Mr. Liu said that the height was indicated in every document.

Arash Nourrollach, business owner, mentioned that he had been in communication with the head of the Building Department of the City. He stated that he spoke to Mr. Reed (Building and Code inspector III) in regard to changing out the vacuums. He stated that he never increased the height for the sign. The 12-foot height was not accurate because the sign company must have mistaken it as 12 feet when they added the electronic digital board. The City did not verify the sign height either. He stated that no electrical work was done this time. He stated that other businesses at the same intersection had tall signs. His sign height conforms with other signs around the intersection.

Vice-Chair Haddad asked the applicant for clarification if any construction occurred in 2017 and 2018.

Arash Nourrollach, business owner, said that nothing was done in 2017, but in April of 2018 the sign was buffed out and a digital board was added.

Commissioner Cordes commented that business signs around the corners belong to the City of Arcadia.

Arash Nourrollach, business owner, stated that in 2018 the code allowed 20-foot monument signs.

Commissioner Guan asked the applicant about the difference of the height after the digital board was added.

Arash Nourrollach, business owner, said that the digital board was only added to the existing structure. The sign was about 15.5 feet.

Commissioner O'Leary asked attorney Thuyen if the sign is a safety issue. He asked the applicant about the email he submitted which showed that the contractor was forcing him to make a decision in regard to payment. He also added that when measuring the sign, it is usually taken from the lowest point grade. He also asked what a "permit waiver", as requested by the sign company in an email to the applicant, was.

Arash Norrollach, business owner said that the company was a new company and that's why they requested cash payment, because it is an existing sign the company measured the top and he believes that it was done through google.

Attorney Thuyen reminded the Commission that in order to approve the Conditional Use Permit for this sign, the Commission needs to approve the project based on the proposed project.

Commissioner Cordes asked the applicant about the difference between the current height and the 12 foot height and commented that the change was not a small difference.

Commissioner O'Leary asked Mr. Thuyen if the sign would be a safety issue and commented on the sign contractor demanding the large payment and a waiver of permit.

Chair Lee opened the public comments.

Ehlana Nelson, resident, sent an e-mail. It was read into the record.

Vice-Chair Haddad move to close the public comments. The motion was seconded by Commissioner O'Leary.

Arash Nourollach, business owner said that the public comment might have been written by a competing business.

Attorney Thuyen mentioned to the applicant in regard to hearings that legally people have the right to give public comments anonymously. The City has a procedure that needs to be followed when having a hearing.

Commissioner Cordes said that the applicant needs to follow the code. He favored option two, approval of the application with staff's recommended conditions of approval.

Commissioner O'Leary decided to go with option two.

Vice-Chair Haddad thanked applicant for his business but asked the applicant to follow the city code. He favored option two.

Commissioner Guan said that she is always pro businesses. But the business needs to follow the code and work with staff. She favored option two.

Chair Lee said that it was not an easy item and hopes that the staff can compromise and work with the applicant.

Vice-Chair Haddad made a motion to approve file PL 19-1668, adopt the resolution to approve the sign subject to staff's recommended conditions of approval. Seconded by Commissioner Guan carried by the following roll call vote:

AYES:	Commissioner – Cordes, Guan, O'Leary, Vice-Chair Haddad, Chair Lee
ABSTAIN:	Commissioner – None
NOES:	Commissioner – None
ABSENT:	Commissioner – None

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS AND REPORTS:

4. **Planning Manager's Report**

Mr. Reimers, Interim Community Development Director mentioned that City Council met to discuss the draft budget 2020-2021, there will be some reduction in revenues because of the pandemic. He notified the Commission that two vacant positions in the Community Development Department will be removed from the budget, the Building and Code Inspector 1 position and either the Planning Manager or the Community Development Director. The city budgeted about $30,000 for the housing element. The next meeting is scheduled for June 23, 2020 and the re-organization for planning will be done on the first meeting in July.

5. **Comments from Commissioners**

Commissioner Cordes – Asked Scott to hang in there.
Commissioner Guan – Asked about the positions not being filled at this time.
Commissioner O'Leary – Talked about his grandkids.
Vice-Chair Haddad – Wished everyone to stay safe and healthy.
Chair Lee – No comments.

ADJOURNMENT:

6. The Planning Commission Meeting was adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Chair

Secretary