

**CITY OF MONTEBELLO  
PLANNING COMMISSION  
MINUTES**

**April 21, 2020**

Planning Commission meets at 6:30 p.m., on the day scheduled in City Hall Council Chambers
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1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

6:38 P.M. by Chair Mooradian

2. ROLL CALL

Commissioners Present: Chair Mooradian, Vice Chair Aliksanian, Commissioner Briseno, Commissioner Lomeli and Commissioner Ramirez

Absent: None

Also present:

Director of Planning and Community Development – Joseph Palombi

Planning Commission Legal Counsel – Gloria Ramirez

Staff - Maria Roman and Michael Donovan

3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Commissioner Ramirez

4. PLANNING COMMISSION SECRETARY –CORRECTION TO AGENDA

NONE

5. STATEMENT OF PUBLIC ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

Speakers wishing to address the Planning Commission were encouraged to call in and/or email per the Governor's Executive Order No. N- 29-20, those interested in making public comments, were allowed to call on Tuesday, April 21, 2020 between 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. at (323) 887-1200, ext. 493.

Staff completed public comment cards in the order received. The public will be called during the Planning Commission meeting that begins at 6:30 p.m. the exact call back time is not predictable due to the nature of the Planning Commission agenda. As a result, you must be available until the end of the meeting to receive a live call from staff during the meeting. In addition, the City has created an email address [pcpubliccomment@cityofmontebello.com](mailto:pcpubliccomment@cityofmontebello.com) where the public can submit public comments from 4:30 p.m. – 5:30 p.m. on Tuesday, April 21, 2020. These questions will be read out loud and submitted for the record. The email address for Planning Commission meetings can be

located on the City's webpage under  
<https://www.cityofmontebello.com/planning-commission-meeting.html>.

6. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

A. April 7, 2020 – Approved with corrections

7. STAFF COMMUNICATIONS ON ITEMS OF COMMUNITY INTEREST  
NONE

8. PUBLIC HEARINGS

A. 2016-2021 Housing Element Update/Zone Code Amendment (“ZCA”)  
No. 01-20

The Planning Commission of the City of Montebello will conduct a Public Hearing regarding recommendations to the City Council for the 2016-2021 Housing Element Update and related Housing Opportunity Overlay Zone. The proposed update to the City's Housing Element, as described below, will apply citywide. The proposed Housing Element Update and related Housing Opportunity Overlay Zone is intended to establish goals and policies to conserve, rehabilitate, and provide housing to meet the existing and future needs of the community. The proposed Housing Element Update is consistent with State law and has been reviewed and approved by the California Department of Housing and Community Development.

Director Palombi – Madam Chair and members of the Commission.

Joseph Palombi, Director of the Planning and Community Development Department.

The item before you today includes the Housing Element Update and related Housing Opportunity Overlay Zone. The Housing Element Update, which was originally launched in 2017, will allow the City to begin to demonstrate compliance with State law after several years of non-compliance. It is important to note that this Housing Element Update covers the four year period from 2016 thru 2021 and is a precursor to a more robust General Plan update which will include public outreach and stakeholder participation where the City will be actively engaged with the community. This Housing Element is a positive step in regaining focus on the regional housing needs for the City of Montebello.

In an effort to provide some background, the Regional Housing Needs Assessment or “RHNA” is a representation of future housing needs for all income levels and is a requirement of California State housing law. Every jurisdiction must plan for its RHNA allocation as part of its current housing

element. Unfortunately, the City has not adopted an updated Housing Element for several planning periods. Therefore, the City is ineligible to receive available funding for housing related planning efforts. Specifically, the City did not meet the State's housing needs for the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Cycles under RHNA which covers the planning period beginning 2006 thru 2021.

For example, the City's RHNA allocation was 503 units for the 4<sup>th</sup> Cycle which covers the planning period beginning 2006 thru 2013. As a result, the City has an unmet lower-income RHNA of 123 for very low income, and 24 low-income units totaling 147 RHNA units under the 4<sup>th</sup> Cycle. For the 5<sup>th</sup> Cycle, the City's allocation under the State's RHNA methodology is 430 lower income units. In addition to the 430 units under the 5<sup>th</sup> Cycle, the City must also meet the unmet lower-income RHNA of 147 units for the 4<sup>th</sup> Cycle. This brings the total unmet RHNA numbers to 577 total units to date.

Please note that the lack of addressing the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Cycles was a pressing item when I came onboard with the City. There was discussion regarding individual zone changes on several different sites to demonstrate compliance with the State's regional housing needs. The approach to implement separate zone changes to accommodate the City's unmet housing needs was not feasible due to the timeline imposed by the State for the City to be in compliance and eligible to receive State grant funding up to \$350,000 for current planning efforts including the comprehensive General Plan update.

In an effort to immediately address this need and provide potential opportunities for much needed housing that would achieve the previously mentioned RHNA allocations, a density overlay has been proposed, which would allow vacant and underutilized sites to accommodate housing with increased densities. It is important to note that this Housing Element Update will allow the City to begin to focus on the 6<sup>th</sup> Cycle which covers the period beginning 2021 through 2029. Under the 6<sup>th</sup> Cycle, the RHNA methodology released by SCAG puts Montebello in a position to allocate approximately 5,039 new housing units. This will require extensive collaboration between the City and housing developers over the next decade.

The City has established an open line of communication with the California Department of Housing and Community Development and staff continues to work closely with State officials to identify the deficiencies specifically related to compliance with State housing law. The current

Housing Element Update, which has been reviewed and approved for compliance by the State, establishes a foundation to address these challenges holistically by making it possible to achieve the required densities associated with the housing opportunity overlay ranging from 20 to 80 units per acre while continuing to rely on the existing development standards and underlying zoning in the City's Code.

This concludes staff's presentation. Thank you.

Chair Mooradian – Do any of the commissioner have any questions?

Commissioner Ramirez– I do. Thank you Joseph, I really appreciate that amount of work that was put into this especially since we skipped a cycle and now we are going into our 6<sup>th</sup> cycle. I just wanted to be clear regarding some of these numbers that you are reading to us. During the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> cycle that we are currently going to submit, is it true we lack affordable housing by as much as 577 units?

Director Palombi – That is correct.

Commissioner Ramirez– I just want to make clear some of the things I'm interpreting. Typically I would have like to have done more stake holder meetings with this commission because I know when this started in 2017, I'm sure a very few of us were around, it's hard for us to review this lengthy document and bring ourselves up to date with this very little time. I really appreciate that you are bringing the City up to date with this and there is time sensitivity here. Because this is going to be a recorded document, there were a few errors that I found. On page 31 of the Housing Element, the California Building Code should be referred to as the 2019 and it says 2012.

Director Palombi – We haven't yet adopted the 2019 Building Code, we're about to do that.

Commissioner Ramirez– Nevertheless, before 2019 it was 2016 and not 2012. I do have a comment about the lot coverage elimination for R3 and R4 zone. This is something that I would not recommend and would keep the lot coverage there, that's on page 60. On page 62, under accessory dwelling units, attached units should not exceed 50% and not 35%. On page 63, where it states the owner of the property has to be living there, that is not true anymore. I don't recommend our 8 foot minimum separation between structures to be reduced to 5 feet. I think that becomes very dangerous and 8 feet would have been okay to keep. I think the City of LA has 10 feet

so 8 feet should be sufficient. When we go forward in our next cycle I look forward to having many meetings and a lot of stakeholder involvement.

Commissioner Briseno – The General Plan Advisory Committee, does that still exist? If so, who were the members? Were they residents or a mixture of City employees, could you tell me a little about that?

Director Palombi – I know there was an effort for a General Plan update that was launched in I believe 2015 and I think that advisory committee was a part of that. I am not aware of an advisory committee today but there will be one as we start to move forward.

Commissioner Briseno –Who are going to be members?

Director Palombi – Once we get a consultant on board, we are in the process of reviewing proposals as part of an RFP that went out in February, we will work with the consultant to identify key members of the community, stakeholders to be a part of that advisory committee.

Chair Mooradian – In light of what Commissioner Ramirez said there are additional parts that have outdated information so if we could just make sure those are updated. For example, the median household income goes into 2017 and it's been a few years since.

Director Palombi – This document was something that we had inherited and has been in the works since 2017. It has been very challenging to get through the State for their approval and considering that this covers the period from 2016 thru 2021 we are putting a band aid on a preexisting condition that the city had that is going to make up eligible for funding this year which is the important part of this process. We plan, we being staff and the commission will be involved, on opening this back up quickly in 2021 to take a harder look at not only the Housing Element but at the General Plan and the General Plan framework as well as the zoning that is in our code today and how we can enhance that zoning to coincide with what we want to see in the neighborhoods and in the communities in the City of Montebello. Our General Plan hasn't been updated since 1973 and I am excited for that opportunity. I think this is a big step in the right direction. We worked really hard in a short period of time with the State to get to this point. So I would caution with making any drastic changes to this document because substantive changes would require us to go back to the State to get approval from them which could take up to a month.

Chair Mooradian – Thank you for the clarification. Are there any more questions from the commissioners?

Commissioner Ramirez – Just a comment, normally I probably would have had a bunch of changes request but I am very satisfied that the 6<sup>th</sup> cycle is going to begin very soon and so I am ok with moving forward with this document and then implementing comments with what happens next. Thank you Joseph for putting the time into document.

MOTION: Commissioner Ramirez motions to approve recommendations to the City Council for the 2016-2021 Housing Element Update and related Housing Opportunity Overlay Zone. The proposed update to the City's Housing Element, as described below, will apply citywide. The proposed Housing Element Update and related Housing Opportunity Overlay Zone is intended to establish goals and policies to conserve, rehabilitate, and provide housing to meet the existing and future needs of the community. The proposed Housing Element Update is consistent with State law and has been reviewed and approved by the California Department of Housing and Community Development.

SECOND: Commissioner Briseno

ACTION: 5-0-0-0

9. CONSENT ITEM (S)

None

10. STAFF COMMUNICATIONS TO THE PLANNING COMMISSION

Director Palombi – I would like to note that City Hall is closed to the public however over the course of the next two weeks beginning this week through May 3, 2020 there will be limited staffing. Staff is encouraged to work remotely during this peak period of the COVID-19.

11. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS –CONTINUED

None

12. PLANNING COMMISSION ORALS

Chair Mooradian – Joseph, did we apply for SB2 grants?

Director Palombi – Yes we did.

Chair Mooradian – Did we receive a response as to how much we will be receiving?

Director Palombi – If we can get this Housing Element done, we would be in line to receive I believe up to \$350,000.00

Vice Chair Aliksanian  
Commissioner Briseno  
Commissioner Lomeli  
Commissioner Ramirez

13. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 7:01p.m.



Joseph Palombi, Planning Commission Secretary