

**MINUTES  
INGLEWOOD PLANNING COMMISSION  
MEETING  
WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 2, 2013**

**(1) PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:**

The City of Inglewood Planning Commission held its meeting on Wednesday, October 2, 2013, in the City Council Chambers, on the ninth floor, in City Hall. Following the Pledge of Allegiance, led by Planning Commissioner Darius Leevy, the meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m.

**(2) ROLL CALL:**

The roll was called:

Present: Chairman Larry Springs  
Commissioner Darius Leevy  
Commissioner David Rice  
Commissioner Aide Trejo  
Commissioner Terry Coleman

Staff: Linda F. Tatum, AICP, Planning Manager  
Christopher E. Jackson, Sr., Senior Planner  
Jeff Lewis, Assistant City Attorney  
Laura Zingg, Planner  
Arturo Salazar, Assistant Planner  
Evangeline Lane, Acting Secretary

**(3) APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

Chairman Springs asked for a motion to approve the minutes of August 7, 2013. Commissioner Trejo made a motion that was seconded by Commissioner Coleman to approve the Planning Commission meeting minutes of August 7, 2013 with corrections.

The motion was carried by the following roll call vote:

Ayes: Commissioners Leevy, Rice, Trejo, Coleman and Chairman Springs

Noes: None

**(4) STAFF COMMUNICATIONS:**

Ms. Tatum stated that there was communication regarding the continuation of item 6A on tonight's Agenda to the November 6, 2013, regular Planning Commission Meeting by the applicant and when that item is read, the Planning Commission will vote regarding that request.

**(5) PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

There were none.

**(6a) SPECIAL USE PERMIT NO. 1186 (SP-1186) AT 701 GRACE AVENUE:**

A public hearing to consider an application by Margo Harris, for Special Use Permit No. 1186 (SP-1186) to convert a convent for nuns to a girls boarding school for 44 students, ages 11-14 on a 3.63-acre site located on an R-3 (Multiple-Family) zoned property located at 701 Grace Avenue and to affirm a Notice of

Exemption (EA-CE-2013-43) in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

Chairman Springs asked for a motion to approve the continuation of this item.

**MOTION:**

Commissioner Coleman moved to approve to continue Special Use Permit 1186 at 701 Grace Avenue to date certain of November 6, 2013, at 7:00pm and was second by Commissioner Trejo.

The motion was carried by the following roll call vote:

Ayes: Commissioners Leevy, Rice, Trejo, Coleman and Chairman Springs.

**(6b) SPECIAL USE PERMIT NO. 1187 (SP-1187) AT 224-226 SOUTH MARKET STREET:**

A public hearing to consider an application by David Micena, for Special Use Permit No. 1187 (SP-1187) to convert a 6,527 square-foot theater to zoned property located at 224-226 South Market Street and to affirm a Notice of Exemption (EA-CE-2013-49) in compliance with CEQA.

Ms. Laura Zingg, Planner, made the staff presentation.

Chairman Springs asked the Planning Commission for questions to staff.

Commissioner Rice asked if the church were requested by the Planning Commission to lease parking from the City's parking structure would they be required to do so; and he understands that the handicapped accessibility entrance is from the rear alley and asked Ms. Zingg to describe the accessibility path from the stage area to the seating area.

Ms. Zingg stated that the church is not required to obtain parking from the City structure, and she explained that the ramp goes from the stage to the seating area at the lower level sanctuary per the plans submitted by the applicant.

Commissioner Trejo asked about the discrepancy in attendance for Sunday ranging from 100 to 250 and whether the applicant proposed an alternative for transporting parishioners, or parking for the increase in attendance.

Ms. Zingg stated that no alternatives had been provided.

Chairman Springs invited the applicant to speak for the project. Mr. Peter Elias, 14549 Archfort Street, Suite 301, Van Nuys, CA, 91405, representative for the Universal Church, spoke about the parking situation.

Commissioner Trejo asked about special events at the church such as weddings, concerts, quinceneras, etc.

Mr. Elias stated that there will be special events throughout the year, including weddings, maybe two to three times a year, youth programs, senior programs, or women's programs. He stated that they are more flexible than other institutions and typically schedule these events an hour or two prior to their normally scheduled hours of operation.

Commissioner Leevy asked about the churches resolution to park at the Locust Street parking lot and asked how would that be monitored that your parishioners will adhere to using the lot and not attempt to dominate the parking meters on the street just to be close to the church when attempting to park, thus putting the businesses in the area at risk of not having parking for their clientele?

Mr. Elias stated that the way it has been explained to him from parking enforcement, is that the parishioner will go into the parking structure, pull the ticket and park their car, and upon entering into the church, will receive a parking sticker for that ticket, which will then make their parking free for using the structure. He stated that they can make this a policy at the church for the members to follow, he also stated that there is the possibility that someone will attempt to park at the meters which he will not have control over, but all they can do is try to make sure the parishioners know what the parking policy will be.

Commissioner Leevy asked if the church has decided to utilize some form of tram or shuttle service from the parking lot to the church location at any time?

Mr. Elise stated that there is no plan for that at this time.

Commissioner Rice stated that parking should not be an issue so long as you keep to the current seating plan and do not increase your density bonus, and he also asked what is the maximum seating capacity at present?

Mr. Elise stated that it is 210 people.

Commissioner Coleman stated that one thing to observe is that the church is a non-profit institution where it does not pay city taxes and with the increasing of churches coming to the downtown area, it becomes very difficult in making sure that there are parking spaces available in the downtown area for the businesses that do pay taxes to the City who will need parking for their clientele, also there is a concern about security and who will be responsible for ensuring that the parking structure has paid security to watch over the church members cars and their belongings in those cars, is the church willing to pay for 24-hour security. Also there will be the need for security during the evening and weekend hours if your members are to walk from the church to the structure, who will be there to watch over their safe arrival and departure, not to mention the rear of the church area for the handicapped accessibility, will there be security there also?

Mr. Elise stated that Commissioner Coleman has brought up very valid issues. As far as security, he believes that the church is willing to do what is necessary, and he stated that he does not know if the parking structure has monitored security or security cameras on the premises to watch over the vehicles or the people and is not sure if this action is done by the local city police department. He stated that if the Planning Commission feels that this should be a condition that the church should take up the initiative of making sure that there is security at the parking structure then they are willing to do so. Cameras are recommended by the Planning Division staff for both the front and rear of the building designated for the church.

Commissioner Coleman asked how many cameras the church intends to install.

Mr. Elise stated that the church is looking to install one in the front and one in the rear, with the rear fish-eyed camera sweeping from the back of the building up the street. If the planning commission has a desire for or a certain level of surveillance beyond the perimeter of the property he stated that the church will be willing to do so. He stated that although it is new to this church where they have not had to do for other locations but are more than willing to do what is needed.

Commissioner Trejo stated that she has several concerns regarding churches already in the vicinity of this location downtown. Parking is already strained and church uses are not quite consistent with what the general plan has determined for the area, especially with the Hollywood Park Land Company development and the Madison Square Garden Forum projects starting to bring new vitality to the City. She stated that she was hoping for a smaller version of Third Street Promenade in Santa Monica with a diversity of businesses and shops. At present the area is not looking like what the general plan has laid out, and the face of downtown Market Street is changing. If the Planning Commission allows this location to be used as a church, what would keep other churches from seeking smaller downtown retail spaces for 20-seater churches?

Mr. Elias stated that this theatre building has such a historical value because it was not only for movies but also for plays and as such. He noted that because it is not an easy venue to retrofit as a retail use, it is easier to keep it in its historical state with its sloped floors and theater seating, which makes it a great place of assembly for use as a church. He stated that a church at this site would bring more an influx of traffic to the downtown on weekends when the volume of traffic is very low, thus creating opportunities for businesses to have more weekend customers.

Chairman Springs opened the public hearing for this item.

**FOR:**

None

**AGAINST:**

- Jim Withrow, 436 W. Hillsdale, Inglewood Resident.
  - o Concern about the ticket booth being removed.
  - o Change of the face of the historical building.
- Dianne Sambrano, Inglewood Resident.
  - o September, 2013 regarding the City Council's closed session about the possible sale of the parking structure.
  - o Architectural Standards are not being followed by other church organizations in this city.
  - o The sound from churches in the neighborhoods on weekends is a problem because of poor insulation, not to mention the parking issues.
  - o The lack of tax income to the City is a problem.
  - o The aesthetics of the building changes when used as a church and do not reflect the historical makeup.

Chairman Springs closed the public hearing.

Attorney Lewis stated that because the church is not required to provide additional parking, even though this is a major concern

to the planning commission, but the church does not have to enter into a lease since they meet the parking code already. Typically the planning commissions standard of review is one of substantial evidence and courts tend to be deferential to these bodies. He stated that with religious uses there is a higher standard or compelling interest and the law is such that the desire is not to discriminate against houses of worship, so instead of a substantial evidence standard, there is a much higher compelling interest standard for places of worship. He noted that as they deliberate and make considerations they must recognize that there is a high standard. To deny a church for matters such as sound, esthetics, or security are well within this commission's right to discuss and put reasonable conditions on. Unfortunately, economics is not a basis for denial and although there is recognition that this commission is concerned about the economics he stated that he felt that it would be remiss on his part if he did not remind this commission that the church has already met the parking requirement.

Commissioner Leevy stated that with regards to economics can Attorney Lewis elaborate on this and how the commission can remain within their legal scope?

Attorney Lewis stated that the commission would have to first show that this would have to be in violation of the general plan and maybe the commission could make this finding. He stated that he was not too clear on the economics and that was one main consideration a few years back when a religious organization came before the commission and the economic consideration really was not one that was felt could protect the commission or the city should it be challenged.

Commissioner Leevy stated that he wanted to make his concerns clear that allowing this applicant an SUP might cause other money making businesses to leave the downtown Market Street area—if this occurs where will the city be?

Attorney Lewis stated that he was not sure of what could be done with regards to the parking requirements since they already meet the requirements but that the commission's actions could possibly affect future applicants.

Commissioner Rice commented about the acoustics and whether any sound proofing improvements were required or proposed since any improvements would be better than they were in 1937 so as not to disturb neighboring buildings; maybe it would be for this commission to say that there can be no changes to the exterior of the building and that it should stay with the designs of the art deco styling presently there; He noted that churches contribute to society in the area of morality and agrees with the representative for the church that it would bring additional traffic to the Market Street area on Sundays.

Commissioner Coleman stated that the theater is a historical sight and his main issue is only health and safety and feels that there will be a great cost to the applicant and other businesses in the area to provide security for those parishioners who would be walking to and from the parking structure.

Ms. Tatum stated that she wanted to shed light on some of the questions and statements made.

- With regards to the historic nature of the building even though it is over 55 years old, it does not have any

protection because it is not on any historic listing. There was no discussion of any sound continuation improvement that are being proposed as a part of the appraise to the building however if the planning commission has any concerns about the sound it is something that can be appropriately conditioned or requested to be considered by the applicants apart of the site plan review process.

Chairman Springs stated that he had a concern regarding the general plan for the city and feels that this particular site is not listed as part of the general plan for the city.

Ms. Tatum stated that it is part of the general plan for the city however the designation for the area is called mixed use and allows for the use of the church is consistent with that designation and because the city's general plan is fairly dated it does not have very specific repeal guidelines about what happens within the downtown area and generally the downtown is set aside for commercial activities and businesses but it does not preclude the mixture of services and support even within the context of a commercial environment. She said that there is nothing in the general plan that would specifically preclude a church use from being compatible with the character of downtown.

Chairman Springs asked for a motion from the planning commission.

Commissioner Rice made a motion to approve Special Use Permit No. 1187 (SP-1187) and to affirm the Notice of Exemption (EA-CE-2013-49), with one added condition regarding the sound decibel requirement or the City Noise Ordinance be put into effect by the applicant for sound proofing, but there was no second.

Chairman Springs declared that the motion dies for lack of a second.

Attorney Lewis suggested that the Chairman request for another motion, possibly a motion for denial in order to obtain some form of motion that might pass.

Chairman Springs asked for a new motion and so made the motion himself.

Chairman Springs made a motion to deny Special Use Permit No. 1187 (SP-1187) and to not affirm the Notice of Exemption (EA-CE-2013-49), because it does not go along with Inglewood's general plan, health and safety issues along with the lack of security not only on the premises but also at the parking structure and was second by Commissioner Coleman that Resolution No. 1688

**A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY PLANNING COMMISSION  
OF THE CITY OF INGLEWOOD, CALIFORNIA DENYING  
A CERTAIN SPECIAL USE PERMIT TO CONVERT A  
6,527 SQUARE-FOOT THEATER TO A CHURCH ON AN  
APPROXIMATELY 7,400 SQUARE-FOOT C-1 (LIMITED  
COMMERCIAL) ZONED PROPERTY LOCATED AT 224-  
226 SOUTH MARKET STREET.**

be approved.

The motion was carried by the following roll call vote:

Ayes: Commissioners Trejo, Coleman and Chairman Springs

Abstained: Commissioner Leevy

Noes: Commissioner Rice

Ms. Tatum explained the appeal procedure.

**(6c) SPECIAL USE PERMIT NO. 1188 (SP-1188) AT 1740 NORTH CENTINELA AVENUE:**

A public hearing to consider an application by Giovanni Uriu, for Special Use Permit No. 1188 (SP-1188) to allow a vacant, previous gas station site to be developed with a 5,460 square foot single-story multiple-tenant shopping center on a C-2 (General Commercial) zoned property located at 1740 North Centinela Avenue and to affirm a Notice of Exemption (EA-CE-2013-50) in compliance with CEQA.

Mr. Arturo Salazar, Assistant Planner made the staff presentation.

Chairman Springs asked if the applicant is present to come before the planning commission.

Mr. Giovanni Uriu stated that he is looking to pattern this site exactly like the one across the street with the same style of architecture and that both sites will be like a gateway into the city of Inglewood.

Commissioner Coleman asked about the two-way driveways in and out of the site and is concerned about health and safety, that the exit from the site must be right turn only to prevent an accident occurring. Next he asked about what type of businesses are planning on opening on the site.

Mr. Max Netty, owner and developer of the property stated that at the present time they did not have a name but have been speaking to several national chains such as what is across the street with regards to takeout and sit down types of restaurants.

Commissioner Coleman asked if there would be a maintenance czar where the city will have direct contact with that person who can be called upon 24/7 with regards to the up-keep.

Mr. Netty stated that he fully understands that and there will definitely be someone available at all times and how to reach them when needed. He stated that he spoke to Councilman Padilla and gave a commitment to him that since they just acquired the property back in August, 2013, they have done their best to clean up the site and will keep it clean even during construction and once it is completed, he stated that he will be the point person to contact should there be a need to call for any problem.

Commissioner Coleman asked staff about the need for more security cameras or live security guards and if it can be stipulated on the site plan review that this be required for the various businesses since there is no way of knowing right now who or what businesses will be utilizing the complex.

Ms. Tatum stated that the planning commission has the authority to stipulate directions to staff that during the site plan review process that certain types of businesses would warrant the security cameras and that staff will review various types of

shopping centers to see what type of security would be best for each of the businesses that open in the complex.

Chairman Springs opened the hearing for the public to speak either for or against this project.

**FOR**

- Ms. Juanita Withrow, 436 West Hillsdale, Inglewood Resident.
- Ms. Dianne Sambrano, Inglewood Resident.
  - o Alley exit way onto La Cienega Boulevard.
  - o Landscaping
- Mr. Jim Withrow, 436 West Hillsdale, Inglewood Resident.
  - o Alley exit way onto La Cienega Boulevard.
  - o The cleaning of the area.
- Mr. Ron Redmond, 628 West Hillsdale, Inglewood Resident.
  - o Alley exit way onto La Cienega Boulevard.
  - o Parking along the alley way monitored.

**AGAINST**

None

Chairman Springs closed the public hearing and asked if there were any questions from the planning commissioners.

Chairman Springs stated he had several questions for staff regarding the project and first question was about the possibility of traffic entering in from the La Cienega Boulevard and is it a safety issue and second he asked about the regulations regarding no parking in the alley way and if there can be signs posted and last he asked about the posting that there is a right-turn only out of the complex with some type of enforcement to ensure that the traffic will abide by this to avoid any accidents.

Ms. Tatum responded with;

- Regarding the entering of the site from La Cienega Boulevard, the speed of the traffic at that point is very high speed and would be too dangerous, so yes it is a safety issue.
- There are regulations that state it is illegal to park in the Alley way and staff can assist with giving the applicant and the owner signs from the police department for posting on the walls stating the no parking in the alley way.
- Staff will make sure that there will be signs posted and markings and that there is a median in the street to prevent any left turn attempts by anyone.

Commissioner Trejo asked that once there is a motion made if the requirement also be made that the use of graffiti resistant material and paint for the block wall by the applicant.

Chairman Springs asked for a motion.

**MOTION:**

Commissioner Trejo made the motion to adopt the attached resolution affirming the Notice of Exemption EA-CE-2013-50 and adopting the attached resolution approving SP-1188 subject to the six conditions also require the use of graffiti resistant material and paint be included on the decorative masonry wall, that right turn only signs be posted at the exits on Centinela Avenue and La Cienega Boulevard and no parking in the alley with

posted signs used at the property and was second by Commissioner Coleman that Resolution No. 1689;

**A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY PLANNING COMMISSION  
OF THE CITY OF INGLEWOOD, CALIFORNIA,  
APPROVING A SPECIAL USE PERMIT FOR GIOVANNI  
URIU, TO ALLOW A VACANT, PREVIOUS GAS STTION  
SITE TO BE DEVELOPED WITH A 5,460 SQUARE-  
FOOT SINGLE STORY MULTIPLE-TENANT SHOPPING  
CENTER ON A C-2 (GENERAL COMMERCIAL) ZONED  
LOCATED AT 1740 NORTH CENTINELA AVENUE.**

be approved.

The motion was carried by the following roll call vote:

Ayes: Commissioners Leevy, Rice, Trejo, Coleman and Chairman Springs

Noes: None

Ms. Tatum explained the appeal procedure.

**(9) PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

Ms. Dianne Sambrano, Inglewood Resident.

- Is the Planning Commission aware that the Chili Verde Restaurant in the Imperial Highway and Crenshaw Boulevard shopping center is now serving beer and was surprised that this has been granted and asked if the commission approved this.
- Another property on Prairie Avenue not far from St. Mary's and the corner of Florence and it has zero landscaping.
- The General Plan coming before the City Council and encouraging all the of the Planning Commission to look at it since there is a new proposal of 30 units per acre, seeming to be the new standard operation and that seems a bit dense since this community was based on single family homes with a few multiples up to a certain limit which will now place a heavy impact on our infrastructure.

**(10) PLANNING COMMISSION INITIATIVES:**

Commissioner Leevy:

- Ask staff to look into the Parking policy especially within the dense areas in the downtown section and Market Street so that the planning commission does not have to be caught up in a similar situation like this evening and what can be done to improve it and what can be done to give the planning commission more jurisdiction in terms of the extra-cudements as it relates to religious institutions.

Commissioner Rice:

- With regards to whomever attempts to utilize the theater regarding the sound problems or any property on Market Street that there will be parking issues for that applicant and there will always be some type of conflict no matter what type of business comes before the planning commission and he does not see how this can be resolved unless maybe the planning commission agrees as a whole to have the theater demolished and reconstructed into something else that will benefit the city.

Commissioner Trejo:

- Asked staff how does the planning commission go about having some of our older buildings protected under a Historic Preservation Ordinance and how could the City benefit and be a part of this since we do have some other buildings older than 55 years and is there some form of tax incentive from either the state or government?
- The point about beer and wine ordinances being allowed for sit-down restaurants in a multi-tenant establishment without having to come before the planning commission is that true and it is a point that needs to be addressed and she asked staff if there is a way that in future projects the planning commission can be made aware prior to or there be a condition required that in the event a restaurant proposes to sell beer and wine that they will have to come before the planning commission to obtain an SUP approval first?
- With regards to Commissioner's Rice question and statement regarding the issues about the lack of parking in the City of Inglewood and how it has been an issue for quite some time - it is something that will need to be addressed, but possibly until that comes about maybe the planning commission can encourage the use of public transportation.

Ms. Tatum stated that staff will do the research about our City qualifying for such a program and get back with the planning commission since there are some Cities that have Historic Preservation Ordinances that staff can look at but there is also what is called the Mills Act Ordinance that allows for tax incentives and some funding and there are also tax incentives from not only the state but some local tax incentives that can be looked into.

Ms. Tatum stated that yes, a sit-down restaurant can obtain a beer and wine license without having to come before the Planning Commission first to obtain an SUP since it is a full service establishment, but only as a sit-down restaurant, not a take-out or fast-food establishment. With regards to the Planning Commission's ability or authority to implement that type of condition and any legal ramifications, staff would like to take time to investigate this and get back with the planning commission at a later date.

Chairman Springs:

- Had a question regarding the restaurant in question Chili Verde, and just a clarification on the type of restaurant it is and what type of SUP they would need in order to sell beer and wine, if any and as Commissioner Trejo stated, that the Planning Commission can have the authority to say from now on that any applicant restaurant coming before the commission can be told what we require and that they must obtain an SUP from the planning commission first?
- Property on 8th Avenue and Hardy on the southwest corner has vehicles parked on their lot and even though it is a fenced property, the cars seem to have been there a long time and it does not look good at all.
- He stated that he really enjoys working with this group of Planning Commissioners and feels that they are doing a wonderful job in caring for this City of Inglewood and really care about this community and looks forward to working them for a long time.

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Ms. Tatum stated that regarding the restaurant Chili Verde if it or any restaurant is a full-service restaurant they are not required to obtain an SUP in order to sell beer and wine only but if the restaurant wanted to sell distilled spirits or alcohol they would need to obtain an SUP. Regarding what legal authority the Planning Commission will have towards the requesting or pre-condition use in a shopping center is what the planning staff would like to further investigate and will come back with an answer at a later date.

**(11) ADJOURNMENT:**

Chairman Springs declared that the meeting was adjourned at 8:42 p.m.

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Evangeline Lane, Acting Secretary  
City Planning Commission  
Inglewood, California

Approved this 4th Day  
of December, 2013

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Chairman Larry Springs  
City Planning Commission