

**CITY OF MONTEBELLO
PLANNING COMMISSION
MINUTES**

August 18, 2020

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

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER
6:32 P.M. by Chair Lomeli

2. ROLL CALL
Commissioners Present: Chair Lomeli, Vice-Chair Briseno, Commissioner Aliksonian, Commissioner Mooradian, and Commissioner Ramirez

Absent: None

Also present:
Director of Planning and Community Development – Joseph Palombi
Planning Commission Legal Counsel – Gloria Ramirez
Staff - Maria Roman, Josephine Pham and Aknesa Ananikyan

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, August 18, 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 where the public can submit public comments from 4:30 p.m. – 5:30 p.m. on Tuesday, August 18, 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. July 21, 2020 – Approved w/ corrections

7. STAFF COMMUNICATIONS ON ITEMS OF COMMUNITY INTEREST

A. Covid-19 Testing Site

Director Palombi - Madam Chair and members of the Commission, here's a brief update regarding the current efforts to provide additional COVID-19 testing locations within the City. The City of Montebello has partnered with the Los Angeles Department of Public Health, in collaboration with the Office of Los Angeles County Supervisor Hilda Solis, to establish a COVID testing location on the east parking lot of City Hall. This effort began on Tuesday, July 28th and will continue through mid-September 2020 contingent on funding. The days of operation include Tuesday thru Saturday from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm. City staff and City Hall visitors are required to park in the parking area located on the west side of City Hall during this testing operation. On Saturdays, the COVID testing is expanded to include the west parking lot. This testing location is averaging approximately 500 tests per day with test results provided within approximately two days. This COVID testing site is a drive-thru only and requires an appointment. Appointment registration is available via the Los Angeles County registration portal at: <https://covid19.lacounty.gov/testing/>

B. Temporary Outdoor Dining Program

Director Palombi - On June 24, the City Council authorized the City Manager to formulate and approve the City's Temporary Outdoor Dining Program. This approval came just before the most recent orders issued by the Governor's office regarding restrictions on indoor dining. As a result, staff worked extremely hard to prepare the standards and procedures and establish the application process for review and approval by the City Manager. The Temporary Outdoor Dining Program was approved on July 8 and has been well received by the business community. Maria Roman has been working closely with Josephine Pham and the various departments to administer the permits and coordinate loaner equipment associated with the City's Temporary Outdoor Dining Program. Josephine, our Associate Planner,

will provide a brief presentation regarding the current status of this program.

Josephine Pham (Associate Planner) - Good evening, Commissioner Chair Lomeli and members of the Planning Commission. Here's a quick update regarding Temporary Outdoor Dining Permits. I created a quick presentation that was sent a moment ago so if any of you would like to follow along, feel free to do so. As Joseph has stated, business owners, especially small business owners, are struggling from keeping their doors open with the safety precautions and direction from Governor Gavin Newsom's Pandemic Resiliency Roadmap plan for California's incremental reopening. We are currently at Stage 2: Lower-risk workplaces, which can be reviewed online on the [COVID19.CA.GOV](https://www.covid19.ca.gov) website.

We have been excited about the progress of the Temporary Outdoor Dining Permit Applications that I am sure you have all seen pop up around the City. Since the start of the Temporary Outdoor Dining Program, there has been expressed excitement and positive feedback throughout the community. Restaurants are especially excited to keep their doors open and keep their employees employed through these unprecedented times.

Our permits allow business owners to serve food and alcohol (with proper, up-to-date Department of Alcohol and Beverage Control licensing) within barricaded designated parking areas within their parking lot while adhering to the Los Angeles County's Department of Public Health's Guidelines of social distancing and providing hand sanitizing stations.

These temporary use permits have no fees and are streamlined to a one-week approval process.

Business owners can request "Loaners" for tents, k-rails, and tables— free of charge —by the City's Parks and Recreation Department on a first-come-first-serve basis. These applications are set to last until December 31st of this year, but may be extended or amended by the City Manager as needed.

Since the start of the Temporary Outdoor Dining Permits on July 8th, we have received 20 applications and approved 13 businesses listed here. Our Public Information Officer, Pauline Aguayo, provided the images you see in the presentation from our existing businesses. The image seen on the left is from Crabby's Seafood Restaurant.

Let's continue to a few more images in the next few slides. I'll pause for the next few seconds to let you browse the images. We'll start up again at the last slide (slide 10); I do want to note that there is a duplication for Crabby's Seafood. It's the same image in case anyone is trying to figure out the differences in the two images. They are the same.

Director Palombi – We have all been trying to help the local businesses here and staff has been working really hard. We did put a lot effort in putting those standards and procedures completed in a very short time frame and we were able to help those businesses who had already established an outdoor dining area before the standards were in place. We had an amnesty program that allowed a 30 day threshold to grandfather them in. They were very cooperative during the application process. Public safety is first and foremost so the Fire Department has been engaged in reviewing these locations and making sure that all the barriers are adequate and making it as safe as possible. That concludes our presentation of the Temporary Outdoor Dining, if there are any questions I'd be more than happy to answer them.

Commissioner Mooradian – I have a question. My question is regarding other outdoor services, for example Crabby's. Two businesses down there is a nail salon place. That place had a lot of people and were blocking the entrances and cutting nails. My question is how sanitary is it to have that there by the food place because there is no plexiglass or sneeze guard blocking certain things that could potentially come near the food.

Director Palombi – All of the plans that have been approved have been approved consistent with the County social distancing measure. The County sort of administers the oversight when it relates to eating establishments. As far as the nail salons, from what I understand, that is based on a State directive, the City is not taking a position on those establishments and I think the State has allowed them to operate outside. If it is something that is an issue we definitely could address that at the County level to ensure that Crabbys isn't being affected by that use that is there and maybe we need to take a look at that and that is something that we can do. We are in the process of adding retail to the Temporary Outdoor Program. The Montebello Mall would be the first applicant in that process, they want to conduct a very limited operation on their parking lot. Their location is unique because they do have a large parking area and I think some of the mall tenants they want to utilize that area to conduct a retail business. The mall will have the hand sanitizing stations and handwashing stations in the

middle of the outdoor area. It will be similar or consistent with what they are doing at the Lakewood Mall and the Westfield Santa Anita Mall.

Commissioner Ramirez – It looks as if they are compliant, are these businesses exempt from providing ADA access or the minimum percentage required for ADA compliant seating area?

Josephine Pham (Associate Planner) – They are not, they should have at least some sort of seating for ADA.

Director Palombi – To answer your questions, yes, they would provide ADA access and in addition to that we have in some instances relocated the disabled access parking stalls that would be in close proximity to these outdoor dining areas and we would with our Public Works Department to do that.

C. General Plan Update

Director Palombi - The Planning Department is eager to kick-off the General Plan Update. After a formal RFP process, the City Council has selected Rangwala and Associates and their team consisting of Moule & Polyzoides (Architect), Kittelson & Associates (Transportation), Fuscoe Engineering (EIR Consultant, Civil Engineering), Rincon Consultants (Environmental Sciences, Planning, and Engineering), Fong Hart Schneider Partners (Landscape Architects), and Urban 3 (Economic Development Consultants). What they are doing is a physical MRI of the City which we expect to get the results back in the first quarter of 2020 and it looks at the City holistically to show where our uses as they stand today could possibly do better as part of this General Plan Update, that is something that will come before you and the Commission at a future time. I wanted to let you know that this is an exciting thing that is going on to give us a snapshot of how the City is doing and how we could possibly do better overall. With the understanding that this process will require extensive community engagement and pop-up meetings throughout the City, and in light of the COVID19 pandemic, City staff is optimistic this effort could be launched with an internal kick-off on September 1, 2020. An internal meeting with executive management, we would have the consultant give us an overview of what the next two years would look like and the implementation phase in addition to that. Once we get that done we can get out into the Community do the neighborhood engagement citywide would commence during the 4th quarter of 2020 and take place over the course of the next 18 to 24 months.

Please note that the internal kick-off will be followed by a joint City Council and Planning Commission meeting which is anticipated to take place in October 2020 and at that meeting the public will have an opportunity to see what the vision is and the consultant will go over the process and what we can expect.

Commissioner Ramirez – Are we going to include a Specific Plan, will this include an RFP process? What was the name of the main firm?

Director Palombi – Yes, it is Rangwala and Associates and to answer your question we did include the Downtown Corridor in the Specific Plan and that was something that they committed to provide to us in the scope of work in addition to the zoning code update. We will be working with them on a Downtown Corridor Specific Plan and we are also looking to implement street scape plans.

Commissioner Briseno – I have a question. When I went to Alhambra recently I noticed a lot of the businesses in the downtown area, it was very obvious that all the businesses their façade had a theme and they were all in sync with that theme. It was quite stunning; I was very surprised I hadn't been there in a long time. Is there a plan so that every time a business remodels or even for businesses outside of the downtown corridor are we going to ask that they follow a certain theme or are we just going to ask the businesses on the downtown corridor?

Director Palombi – To answer your question, what we would do as part of the General Plan, it is a holistic plan it covers the entire City. We would incorporate street scape plans and guidelines based on community input and also what the team puts together. It is something that would be before the Commission and Council for review and approval. The goal is include street scape plans along every corridor especially where it's heavy commercial and potential mixed use development areas. I know we have a transit, the east side extension, the light rails coming down Washington, so I think we have to reimagine what Washington Boulevard would look like. Also how do we incorporate a transit development district along the corridor district, specifically at Greenwood and Washington, because I believe that is where they are going to have a stop. So yes, to answer the question, we are going to look at all the corridors and not just downtown. Downtown would be a catalyst for many things but we would look at the entire City.

D. City Hall Closure and Measures

Director Palombi - During this Pandemic, the City of Montebello City Council and Executive Management Team have continued to remain vigilant on staying up-to-date with Federal, State, and County orders and official updates related to COVID-19. City Hall is closed to the public and all City business is currently conducted by appointment at a covered area located outside the main lobby between City Hall and the Police Department. This area is constantly staffed by City employees during normal business hours with sufficient social distancing barriers in place. These efforts are critical to ensure the safety and well-being of the customers and employees who visit City Hall. In an effort to further this mission to create a healthier and safe working environment, effective Tuesday, August 11, 2020, staff is required to take their temperature upon entering City Hall utilizing the mobile temperature screening kiosks that are located within each Department entrance. The City is now mandating that we take the temperature of all employees, every work day, when employees report to work during this critical time. Additionally, effective Monday, July 27, the City Manager authorized the re-deployment of a modified, hybrid operations schedule for which full-time staff were directed to work onsite and remotely (based on Director's discretion) until further advised. The Director in each respective Department has advised staff as to the schedule taking into consideration operational need, function of position, and ability for employee to effectively perform the job function remotely. Employees within the Planning and Community Development Department have been assigned to alternate schedules with half of the team coming in Monday and Tuesday and the other half coming in Wednesday and Thursday while those who are not in the office are working remotely and have been provided with equipment to do so. The intent is to limit exposure amongst team members in the City in City Hall. There has been no change to Public Safety scheduling and part-time employees will continue to be compensated for hours physically worked at a City facility.

Commissioner Briseno – Director Palombi, going back to the covid-19 what was the date, July 28 through September, until funds get regenerated? What was the date range?

Director Palombi – It was July 28th through mid-September. I don't believe that they have a date specific because if they receive additional funding it may be extended further than that but right now it is mid-September contingent on

funding. Obviously, if there is funding available they will probably extend that date.

Commissioner Briseno – And we are accepting people from other cities right?

Director Palombi – That is correct.

8. PUBLIC HEARINGS

A. None

9. CONSENT ITEM (S)

None

10. STAFF COMMUNICATIONS TO THE PLANNING COMMISSION

A. Department Staffing

Director Palombi – I wanted to provide an overview of our department I think that it is important because most of us are relatively new so I don't know how much you are in touch with staffing so I wanted to give you a general overview. The mission of the Planning and Community Development Department is to promote the economic growth and sustainable development of the City consistent with the values and objectives of the community. Currently, the Department consists of four divisions including the Planning Division, Building Division, Code Enforcement Division, and Housing Division.

The Planning Division is responsible for among other things the ongoing management and administration of proposed and existing entitlement request as well as zoning related issues. Planning is currently comprised of Josephine Pham, who is our Associate Planner, Michael Donovan, who was recently hired as a full-time Assistant Planner, and Saara Chaudry who will be joining the Department as an Assistant Planner on Monday, August 24. This team is prepared to review and process the discretionary approval requests and related matters that will be coming before this Commission in the future. A few notable projects in the City's cue include a proposed residential development project by BrandyWine Homes and a proposed Proton Cancer Treatment Center.

I am happy to report that thanks to the huge effort associated with the Housing Element Update from staff and approval from the Planning Commission and City Council. On May 27, the City received an award

under the SB2 Planning Grant Program in the amount of \$310,000 from the California Department of Housing and Community Development ("HCD").

In addition, staff successfully submitted an application for additional funding under the Local Early Action Planning ("LEAP") Grant. This Application was submitted on June 25, 2020 with the potential for an additional \$300,000 in LEAP grant funding. Collectively, these grant funds would be used for the City's General Plan Update.

As for the Building Division, they are responsible for all administrative building and mechanical permits and building plan checks. The Building Division has been extremely busy during the COVID19 pandemic averaging 54 new building permits in July. Jeannette Rios is our Building Permit Technician who coordinates all of the new permit requests in connection with the City's Building Official and Building Inspector who are contracted through Infrastructure Engineers.

The Code Enforcement Division is currently staffed with two full-time code enforcement officers and one Code Enforcement Manager. Mathew Ramos is the Code Enforcement Manager who recently joined Team Montebello from the City of El Monte, and George Torres and Eric Huerta have responded to numerous code enforcement issues during the pandemic. We have been successful in resolving those issues. In some cases we have had requests over the weekend and Code Enforcement has been able to get out there and respond to those issues and the residents have been very appreciative of that. Code enforcement is instrumental in addressing concerns related to safety and quality of life in the City. They average approximately 1,800 cases per year.

The City's Housing Division was historically managed by consultants and the City Manager recently authorized the Department to hire a full-time senior management analyst. Coming from the County of Los Angeles Department of Public Social Services, we are excited that Aknesa Ananikyan decided to join the Department in June as a full-time Senior Management Analyst. Aknesa is responsible for all housing related matters in the City including the Community Development Block Program and ensuring federal, state, and local compliance.

As you may know, Maria Roman is a critical member of the team who works closely with all divisions to ensure things are running smoothly in the Department.

Unless there are any questions from the Commission regarding department staffing, Aknesa is present and ready to provide a brief overview regarding the City's 2020-2025 Consolidated Action Plan and related programs.

Commissioner Mooradian – I have a question. My question is regarding the Building Division. You stated that you are contracting out for the Building Official and Building Inspector is there any change to internally hire staff rather than consulting out for those two positions?

Director Palombi – That is something that is being explored. At this time we do have a contract in place with the consult that is on board. That is something that the executive management and others have been exploring.

Commissioner Ramirez – Kudos for all the effort. Did the Planning Director position get filled or is that still vacant?

Director Palombi – I oversee all the departments so as the Director of Planning and Community Development all of the four divisions I just explained are under my direction.

Commissioner Ramirez – Before we had a Director of Planning and Community Development and also a Planning Director. Did that position get eliminated?

Director Palombi – We do have a Planning Manager budgeted for this fiscal year, it has not been filled yet and we have not posted it either. We are trying to grow our team and work with what we have now. Hopefully in the future we can fill these positions.

Commissioner Ramirez – And the Housing Department will that person be in charge of the next cycle of the housing element?

Director Palombi - That would still be a function of the Planning Department. Planning would oversee that process. The Housing Division is more of managing our CDBG Programs and Loan Reconciliation. We have a lot of loans under the HUD and Federal Loan Program that we are required to administer and make sure that we are complying with the different Federal and State regulations, that's a huge effort.

Commissioner Ramirez – Thank you so much for all the good work. I feel like you have brought a lot of good progress so thank you for that.

Director Palombi – Thank you so much.

B. 2020-2025 Consolidated Action Plan

Aknesa Ananikyan (Senior Management Analyst) - Good evening Commissioner Chair Lomeli, and members of the planning commission. I am very excited to be here. As Director Palombi explained, I am currently working on our 5 year consolidated plan for 2020-2025. The consolidated plan is completed every 5 years to establish goals that address the needs of the community with the use of the Community Development Block Grant and Home program federal funds. Our proposed goals over the next 5 years include creating sustainable neighborhoods, increasing the earning capacity of our low income families, and providing vital public services.

I am also working on our annual action plan which is completed every year and identifies how the city plans to use federal funds over the next fiscal year to meet the goals established in the consolidated plan. Over the next year the city is proposing funding projects to improve infrastructure and street improvements, as well as continuing our home rehabilitation program.

The city will hold a public hearing on August 26 to obtain City Council and public input regarding the consolidated plan and annual action plan.

Chair Lomeli – How will we be notified of the upcoming annual action plan and the consolidated plan?

Aknesa Ananikyan (Senior Management Analyst) – We will be having our public hearing on August 26th to get input from City Council and the public. Once we receive input, and if all goes well, we are planning on taking it to our second meeting in the month of September to get it adopted.

11. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS –CONTINUED

None

12. PLANNING COMMISSION ORALS

Chair Lomeli

Vice-Chair Briseno – I do have a comment. Two weeks ago I received a call from two neighbors and on Facebook a lot of people were commenting on the same issue regarding the Montebello Plaza. At the Montebello Plaza they put in charging stations for electric vehicles and in the process they also remodeled a section next to the post office. They demolished all of that and it looks really nice but a lot of the trees disappeared and a lot

of people were concerned about the trees. Fortunately, I drove by today and I saw that they were planting trees. However, I noticed that all the trees are going to be very close to the stores. The walkway that all the stores share is where the bulk of the trees are going to go. The entire parking lot, the center part of where the cars park all the way from Best Buy, Kohl's CVS, Albertsons, it's just going to be trees, I don't see holes in the ground to prepare for them. I just wanted to bring this up for the future. It's looking really bare. I just kind of want to avoid this moving forward. I think the Montebello Plaza isn't going to have much shade for the cars and it's all going to be concentrated very close to the walkways that the stores share. There were a lot of concerns that the trees weren't going to be put back but that's not the case. That's all I wanted to say.

Commissioner Aliksanian

Commissioner Mooradian

Commissioner Ramirez - I wanted to see if we would get an update on all the cannabis manufacturing business that were granted their CUPs a few months ago. Has any of that process moved forward or is that something that you can update us on the next meeting?

Director Palombi – We have been working with those cannabis operators who are motivated. Out of the 24 that have been approved there are currently, I believe 8 or 9, that are actually close to obtaining their Certificate of Occupancy. We have issued 2 Certificates of Occupancy's within the last few months and the State has asked the City for confirmation and we have provided that. We have received payment in connection with the existing Development Agreements. So to answer your question, we are moving forward but we would be happy to bring an update to the Commission at the next meeting.

13. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 7:20 p.m.



Joseph Palombi, Planning Commission Secretary