

**MINUTES OF THE  
REGULAR STUDY SESSION  
OF THE CITY OF SAN CLEMENTE  
PLANNING COMMISSION  
February 3, 2021 @ 6:00 p.m.  
Teleconference Only via  
[www.san-clemente.org/live](http://www.san-clemente.org/live) or Cox Channel 854**

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**CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Ruehlin called the Regular Meeting of the Study Session of the Planning Commission of the City of San Clemente to order at 6:04 p.m. The meeting was offered teleconference only due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, and available to the public via live stream from the City's YouTube Channel or live on Cox Channel 854.

**ROLL CALL**

Commissioners Present: Donald Brown, Barton Crandell; Chair pro tem Zhen Wu, Vice Chair Michael Blackwell, Chair Jim Ruehlin (All Planning Commissioners participated via teleconference)

Commissioners Absent: Chris Kuczynski

Staff Present: \*Gabriel J. Perez, City Planner  
\*Christopher Wright, Associate Planner II  
\*Kyle Webber, Community Development Technician  
\*Eileen White, Recording Secretary

\*Participated in the meeting via teleconference

**AGENDA**

A. **South El Camino Real Focus Area Standards** – (Wright/Webber)

This study session will provide an overview of development standards for the South El Camino Real (West of Interstate-5) General Plan Focus Area that includes the Mixed Use 3.2 Zone. The Planning Commission requested an assessment to ensure the standards can fulfill City goals for the area and to identify potential development constraints.

Christopher Wright, Associate Planner II, narrated a PowerPoint Presentation entitled, "Planning Commission Study Session Mixed-Use Standards, dated February 3, 2021." A copy of the Presentation is on file in Planning Division.

Kyle Webber, Community Development Technician, and Nick Buchanan, Private Developer, were also on hand to discuss the development standards and answer questions.

Nick Buchanan, developer of the 1010 South El Camino Real property (previously called Cape Point), discussed challenges he faced due to the many property constraints and restrictive regulations in place at the time he designed his property. He opined that some of the overly restrictive regulations that negatively affected his design were high minimum commercial Floor Area Ratio (FAR), in the amount of required parking, and height restrictions that make it challenging to have more marketable ceiling heights and reduce development cost. He said allowing a couple more feet above El Camino Real without a use permit would make it easier to develop a nice project. He further stated that the desired architectural character of the area should be more of a focus for height limits and less significance should be given to policies for the preservation of coastal views for southbound freeway traffic. Mr. Buchanan suggested considering reducing the minimum commercial FAR to .25 or .2 that is enough to maintain a mixed use zone but reduce parking and allow projects to possibly have more residential units that are more profitable than commercial space these days. Also, Mr. Buchanan emphasized that a predictable shorter review process has great value for enticing investment.

During the ensuing discussion, the Commissioners requested to continue discussion on standards for the area, and commented either individually or in agreement, with mention of several issues:

- Lowering minimum commercial FAR from .35 to possibly .25 or .2,
- Adjusting the height ceiling, without a use permit, with emphasis that coastal views from the I-5 should possibly be less weighted in reviewing projects, and
- Explore reducing parking standards, both number and design standards.

### **COMMISSION COMMENT**

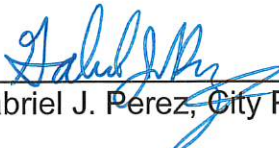
### **RECESS**

The Commission recessed until the start of the regular session.

Respectfully submitted,

  
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Jim Ruehlin, Chair

Attest:

  
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Gabriel J. Perez, City Planner