

**MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING
NORWALK PLANNING COMMISSION
NORWALK, CALIFORNIA
NOVEMBER 25, 2024**

The meeting was called to order by Vice Chair Apodaca at 6:00 p.m., in the Norwalk City Hall, Council Chambers, 12700 Norwalk Boulevard, Norwalk, California. Present were Commissioner Nuno, Commissioner Vernola-Salas, and Vice Chair Apodaca. Commissioner Barragan and Chair Lopez were absent. Also present were Alex Hamilton, Interim Director of Community Development; John Lam, Deputy City Attorney; Gabriel Salazar, Senior Planner; and Ruth Hoffmann, Administrative Secretary.

MEETING MINUTES

The Planning Commission approved the minutes of the Special Planning Commission Meeting of October 23, 2024.

FINDING THE CITY OF NORWALK ACQUISITION OF 13200 BLOOMFIELD AVENUE (APN NO. 8045-008-902) TO BE IN CONFORMITY WITH THE GENERAL PLAN

Vice Chair Apodaca opened the public hearing.

Interim Director Hamilton presented a report stating that staff has provided the Commission with a revised resolution this evening in that the language that makes reference to the proposed acquisition be amended by adding the words “and disposition” of the property.

Further, he presented background information on the project site stating that the Norwalk Transit Village Specific Plan was approved by the Planning Commission on July 10, 2024, with a recommendation to the City Council to approve this plan; that the plan was approved and adopted by the City Council on November 19, 2024, and the Final Environmental Impact Report was certified. He indicated that the second reading of the ordinance is scheduled for the December 3, 2024, City Council meeting; and that as required by State law, the Planning Commission has to make a finding of conformity with the General Plan which is forwarded to the City Council for their consideration.

Continuing with his presentation, Interim Director Hamilton shared that the property at 13200 Bloomfield Avenue was identified for redevelopment potential in 2018; that the drafting of the Norwalk Transit Village Specific Plan was initiated by city staff; that the subject site was previously utilized as an all-male correctional facility from 1943 to 2011; that the site remained vacant until 2020 when the State housed persons with COVID and now is being used as needed; that it is currently owned by the State of California Department of General Services; that Government Code Section 11011.28(e) (AB 518) references special legislation that was approved for the subject property; that AB 518 authorized the State’s Department of General Services to sell the property to the City of

Norwalk at fair market value upon terms and conditions the Director determines are in the best interests of the State; that the city has until January 1, 2025 to wrap this project up with the State; that for the State to sell the property to the city at below the fair market value, the city is required to provide affordable housing to persons and families of low or moderate income; that if this part of the transition is not wrapped up in a timely manner, it authorizes them after January 1, 2025 to dispose of the property.

Interim Director Hamilton indicated that the Norwalk Transit Village Specific Plan allows a mixed-use development with up to 66,647 square feet of neighborhood commercial uses, 13,500 square feet of active commercial uses, a hotel with up to 150 rooms, up to 770 housing units, and 3.7 acres of open space/parkland uses.

Further, Interim Director Hamilton commented on the findings of conformity with the General Plan. He shared that in order to make the appropriate findings, they have to identify aspects of the General Plan that identify transactions as conforming elements which includes the 6th Cycle (2021-2029) Housing Element which identified the subject site as an Opportunity Site in reference to meeting the city's Regional Housing Needs Assessment of 5,034 units; that the future developer would be required to build forty percent (40%) of the units as affordable which would further the goals and policies in the Housing Element; that, additionally, the subject site is listed under the Housing Elements inventory which identifies up to 770 new residential housing units; and that this would go a long way in the city meeting its Regional Housing Needs Assessment.

Continuing with his presentation, Interim Director Hamilton commented on the General Plan Land Use Element stating that the acquisition of the property would provide for a larger, comprehensive development along the city's major arterials which would enhance the overall character of the streetscape and include adequate parking, buffering and landscaping; that the finding of conformity is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3) Common Sense Exemption; that AB 518 exempts the acquisition of the subject site from CEQA; that the City Council certified the Final Environmental Impact Report, approved a Mitigation and Monitoring and Reporting Program, and adopted a Statement of Overriding Considerations for the Norwalk Transit Village Specific Plan on November 19, 2024.

In conclusion, Interim Director Hamilton stated that staff is recommending that the Planning Commission adopt Revised Resolution No. 24-12 finding that the City of Norwalk's acquisition of 13200 Bloomfield Avenue (APN No. 8045-008-902) in the City of Norwalk to be in conformity with the General Plan; and consider and find that the project is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act pursuant to AB 518.

Since there were no persons wishing to present testimony, Vice Chair Apodaca closed the public hearing.

In response to Commissioner Nuno's question what has the city's efforts been in acquiring this property as the Economic Development Opportunities Plan was adopted in 2018, Interim Director Hamilton indicated that he cannot speak to what happened in 2018; that he believes the discussions began for the special State legislation which takes time; that the site has always been identified as a key site for that activity; that he assumes that the discussions started early on; that once the project was conceptualized, there was extensive public outreach for the Norwalk Transit Village project; that they anticipate taking the Purchase and Sale Agreement between the city and the State and the Disposition and Development Agreement for consideration at the City Council meeting of December 3, 2024.

Vice Chair Apodaca shared that regarding the outreach meetings, she participated in virtual meetings during COVID; and that once the meetings transitioned to in-person meetings, they were held at the city's Arts and Sports Complex and at the Sproul Reception Center.

Deputy City Attorney Lam stated that he has been involved with this project since 2020; that once AB 518 was adopted, it gave the city the green light to purchase the property; that after 2019 until 2023 there were a lot of outreach meetings to figure out what the community wants in respect to the subject site; that once it became clear as to what was acceptable within the community they were able to advise the State as to the type of project that the community would support; that, at that point, the city had to work with the State to try and get an appraisal and figure out the value based on the project.

In response to Commissioner Nuno's question how many residents participated in the outreach meetings, Interim Director Hamilton indicated that he does not have that number readily available, but that staff kept records of those meetings.

Commissioner Nuno commented on the property's fair market value amount. Interim Director Hamilton shared that it was an amount initially agreed upon between the city and the State; that the value was based on an anticipated entitled project for the Norwalk Transit Village Specific Plan; that staff believes that the fair market value is a fair price considering the condition of the property; that the city will be passing on the amount to the developer; that, in essence, there will be two escrows, one with the State for the transaction and for the city to record the property, and the second escrow is with the developer for the cost of the acquisition and the remediation of the site.

Deputy City Attorney Lam added that the value also takes into account the forty percent (40%) of the affordable residential units; that a lot of times the government subsidizes those projects whether it be through land, loans or grants; and that this percentage is calculated into the Twenty Million Three Hundred Thousand dollars (\$20,300.00) amount.

Commissioner Vernola-Salas indicated that she has no questions.

It was moved by Commissioner Vernola-Salas and seconded by Commissioner Nuno to: (1) Adopt Revised Resolution No. 24-12 finding that the City of Norwalk's acquisition of 13200 Bloomfield Avenue (APN No. 8045-008-902) in the City of Norwalk to be in conformity with the General Plan; and (2) Consider and find that the project is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act pursuant to AB 518.

ON ROLL CALL VOTE

AYES: Commissioner Nuno, Commissioner Vernola-Salas and Vice Chair Apodaca

NOES: None

ABSENT: Commissioner Barragan and Chair Lopez

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

Interim Director Hamilton thanked the Planning Commission for attending this important meeting on short notice, and he introduced Associate Planner, Kristy Wong.

Vice Chair Apodaca wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving, and she welcomed Ms. Wong.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 6:24 p.m.

**KIM APODACA, VICE CHAIR
NORWALK PLANNING COMMISSION**

ATTEST:

**ALEX HAMILTON, SECRETARY
NORWALK PLANNING COMMISSION**