



City of Sunnyvale

Meeting Minutes - Draft Planning Commission

Monday, October 27, 2025

6:00 PM

Online and Council Chambers, City Hall,
456 W. Olive Ave., Sunnyvale, CA 94086

Special Meeting: Study Session - 6:00 PM | Public Hearing - 7:00 PM

6 P.M. SPECIAL PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING (Study Session)

Call to Order

Vice Chair Shukla called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

Roll Call

Present: 7 - Chair Nathan Iglesias
Vice Chair Neela Shukla
Commissioner Galen Kim Davis
Commissioner Chris Figone
Commissioner Martin Pyne
Commissioner Michael Serrone
Commissioner Ilan Sigura

Study Session

- A.** [25-1021](#) **Proposed Project:** Planning Commission Study Session for discussion and comment only for related applications on a 1.17-acre site:
 SPECIAL DEVELOPMENT PERMIT (SDP): to consider the redevelopment of a commercial site into four 3-story residential buildings with 28 townhome-style condominium units.
 VESTING TENTATIVE MAP (VTM): to create 28 condominium units.
Location: 845 Stewart Drive. (APN: 205-21-010)
File #: PLNG-2025-0080
Zoning: MS/ITR/R3/PD (Industrial and Service with Industrial to Residential/Medium Density Residential/Planned Development Combining District).
Applicant / Owner: Julia Koppman Norton, City Ventures (applicant) / Jenab Family Ventures (owner).
Environmental Review: The project is anticipated to qualify for a Class 32 (In-Fill Development Projects) exemption per California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) guidelines section 15332.
Project Planner: Wendy Lao, (408) 730-7408,

WLao@sunnyvale.ca.gov

Adjourn Special Meeting

7 P.M. PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Iglesias called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

SALUTE TO THE FLAG

Chair Iglesias led the salute to the flag.

ROLL CALL

Present: 7 - Chair Nathan Iglesias
Vice Chair Neela Shukla
Commissioner Galen Kim Davis
Commissioner Chris Figone
Commissioner Martin Pyne
Commissioner Michael Serrone
Commissioner Ilan Sigura

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

Chair Iglesias advised Himanshu Sethi that he may offer comments regarding Public Hearing Agenda Item 3 later in the meeting when the item comes before the Commission.

CONSENT CALENDAR

There were no public speakers for this agenda item.

MOTION: Commissioner Pyne moved, and Commissioner Davis seconded the motion to approve the Consent Calendar.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 7 - Chair Iglesias
Vice Chair Shukla
Commissioner Davis
Commissioner Figone
Commissioner Pyne
Commissioner Serrone
Commissioner Sigura

No: 0

1. [25-1022](#) Approve Planning Commission Meeting Minutes of October 13, 2025
Approve Planning Commission Meeting Minutes of October 13, 2025, as submitted.

PUBLIC HEARINGS/GENERAL BUSINESS

The Commissioners agreed by general consent to consider Agenda Item 3 before Agenda Item 2.

3. [25-0975](#) **Proposed Project:** Related applications on a 5.28-acre site:
SPECIAL DEVELOPMENT PERMIT: Redevelop three non-contiguous lots with:
- 1) A new two-story commercial building totaling 23,104 square feet on the commercial lot; and,
 - 2) 101 new market-rate townhouse units, distributed among 15 three-story buildings on the residential lots.
- VESTING TENTATIVE MAP:** Subdivide one existing lot into 26 lots and 101 residential condominium spaces, and merge two existing commercial lots into one.
- Location:** 1119-1163 Lawrence Expressway (APN 110-23-110); 1037 Lakehaven Drive (APN 110-23-109); and 1051 Lakehaven Drive (APN 110-23-108)
- File #:** PLNG-2023-0302
- Zoning:** VCMU-22 (Village Center Mixed-Use) and VCC (Village Center Commercial) [formerly C-1/PD (Neighborhood Business/Planned Development)]
- Applicant / Owner:** The True Life Companies (TTLC; applicant)/Dick's Lakewood Corporation (owner)
- Environmental Review:** No additional review required per CEQA Guidelines Section 15183 - environmental impacts are addressed in the Land Use and Transportation Element (LUTE) Environmental Impact Report (EIR)
- Project Planner:** Jeffrey Cucinotta, (408) 730-7424, jcucinotta@sunnyvale.ca.gov

Senior Planner Jeffrey Cucinotta advised that staff requests the continuation of this agenda item to the November 24, 2025, Planning Commission meeting and explained why.

Commissioner Pyne confirmed with Senior Planner Cucinotta that this meeting will not count toward the total number of public hearings permitted under Senate Bill 330 (SB 330).

Commissioner Serrone proposed that the discussion on Public Hearing Agenda Item 3 be continued to a date uncertain since November 24, 2025, occurs during the week of Thanksgiving. Since there is great community interest in the proposed project, Commissioner Serrone advised that an alternative meeting date should be selected.

Commissioner Pyne confirmed with Principal Planner George Schroeder that continuing the discussion on Public Hearing Agenda Item 3 to a date uncertain would require new meeting notices to be mailed. This requirement does not apply to continuing discussion on the item to a date certain.

Chair Iglesias opened the Public Hearing.

Hillel Hachlili, Sunnyvale resident, advocated for the restriction of night clubs on the proposed project site. He stated that the permitted noise level there should be minimal since it is close to surrounding residential developments.

Himanshu Sethi requested that the discussion on Public Hearing Agenda Item 3 be scheduled to a date other than November 24, 2025, since that date falls on Thanksgiving week. He explained that the selection of a new date would allow greater community participation.

Vanessa Scudder spoke in agreement with Himanshu Sethi's comments and noted that that new meeting date should not coincide with any holiday week to ensure full community participation and availability.

A Sunnyvale resident providing audio public comment spoke in favor of selecting a new date that will allow a greater number of people to participate and voice their concerns.

Z C spoke in support of a new meeting date in December 2025 or later to allow more people to participate.

Larry Chan expressed his appreciation for Commissioner Serrone's suggestion to continue the discussion on Public Hearing Agenda Item 3 to a date uncertain and offered his support for public comments made before him.

Benjamin Dawson, Sunnyvale resident, agreed that the discussion on Public Hearing Agenda Item 3 should not take place during the week of Thanksgiving.

Chair Iglesias closed the Public Hearing.

MOTION: Commissioner Davis moved, and Commissioner Pyne seconded the motion to continue the discussion on Public Hearing Agenda Item 3 to a date uncertain.

Commissioner Davis stated that in the interest of inclusion and transparency, a new date should be chosen to discuss Public Hearing Agenda Item 3.

Commissioner Pyne proposed the regularly scheduled Planning Commission meeting date of December 8 since it does not overlap with any major holidays. He also requested that Attachment 7 clearly outline the applicant's justifications for the requested waivers.

Chair Iglesias confirmed his support of the motion.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 7 - Chair Iglesias
Vice Chair Shukla
Commissioner Davis
Commissioner Figone
Commissioner Pyne
Commissioner Serrone
Commissioner Sigura

No: 0

Principal Planner George Schroeder noted that the discussion on Public Hearing Agenda Item 3 will be continued to a date uncertain, and the neighborhood will be re-noticed once a new meeting date has been chosen.

2. [25-0987](#) **Proposed Project:** Appeal of a decision by the Director of Community Development denying a **TREE REMOVAL PERMIT** for a 21-inch diameter Fruitless Pear tree in the front yard.
Location: 385 Redondo Terrace (APN: 165-46-025)
File #: PLNG-2025-0521
Zoning: R1.7/PD (Low-Medium Density Residential Zoning District with a Planned Development Combining District)
Applicant/Appellant/Owner: Kaye Suyama

(applicant/appellant)/Kamayatsu-Peterson Erika L Trustee (owner)

Environmental Review: Categorically exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Sections 15301 (Class 1) and 15304 (Class 4).

Project Planner: Cindy Hom, (408) 730-7411, chom@sunnyvale.ca.gov

Associate Planner Cindy Hom presented the staff report with a slide presentation.

Commissioner Sigura confirmed with Urban Landscape Manager Travis Rios that the roots of the subject tree did not appear to cause significant damage to the hardscape surrounding it.

Chair Iglesias confirmed with Associate Planner Hom that one of the standards under Sunnyvale Municipal Code (SMC) Section 19.94.060 must be met to approve the protected tree removal permit.

Kaye L. Suyama, applicant and appellant, provided an oral presentation to support her case.

At Commissioner Pyne's request, Ms. Suyama explained that the subject tree was pruned as recently as last year and explained that this was in response to Liberty Mutual revoking her homeowners insurance after deeming the tree as a risk for property damage.

Commissioner Pyne asked whether there is any record of other tree removal actions taken in this neighborhood. Ms. Suyama answered affirmatively, and Associate Planner Hom responded that staff would need to conduct some research to verify.

Commissioner Davis confirmed the following with Associate Planner Hom: the decision made by the Planning Commission on this item will be considered final; one of the standards under SMC Section 19.94.060 must be met to approve the protected tree removal permit; the staff-recommended conditions of approval that must be met in the event the protected tree removal permit is granted.

Commissioner Davis and Ms. Suyama discussed the cost associated with safely removing the subject tree.

Commissioner Figone and Ms. Suyama discussed the costs she incurred by maintaining the subject tree, applying for the tree removal permit and appeal, and replacing her homeowners insurance.

Ms. Suyama provided details about the distance from the subject tree to her home and to the sidewalk. She noted that there is an area on the hardscape on her property that has been damaged by the subject tree's roots.

Associate Planner Hom explained to Vice Chair Shukla that violations of tree pruning or removal are subject to penalties.

Associate Planner Hom advised Commissioner Pyne that there were about six tree removal permits within the subject neighborhood.

Vice Chair Shukla and Associate Planner Hom discussed the process by which a tree removal violation complaint is addressed and what is required once a tree removal permit is approved.

Commissioner Serrone and Urban Landscape Manager Rios discussed the subject tree in detail and the pruning methods that would allow it to continue to grow healthily and provide community benefits.

Commissioner Sigura confirmed with Associate Planner Hom that since the subject tree did not meet criteria for removal, the applicant was not given the option to remove it and replace it with additional mature trees.

At Commissioner Sigura's request, Urban Landscape Manager Rios shared his observations about the subject tree and its roots from his site visit.

When asked by Chair Iglesias whether it is normal for a healthy tree branch to fall, Urban Landscape Manager Rios explained that summer limb failure is a normal occurrence among certain tree species.

Chair Iglesias opened the Public Hearing.

Vanessa Scudder urged the Planning Commission to consider that maintenance of the subject tree requires the homeowner to possess knowledge beyond what is expected of the average citizen.

Gail Rubino sympathized with concerns raised by Ms. Suyama and spoke in support of removing the subject tree and replacing it with a smaller tree elsewhere on the property.

Diane noted that the subject tree's proximity to the property's entrance will prevent the property owner from installing an Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) ramp.

Ms. Suyama provided closing comments.

Chair Iglesias closed the Public Hearing.

Vice Chair Shukla spoke in support of Alternative 2 and explained why.

Commissioner Figone sympathized with Ms. Suyama's struggle to maintain the subject tree and the challenges she faced to seek approval for the subject tree's removal. He voiced his support for granting the appeal and provided justifications for the subject tree's removal.

Commissioner Serrone noted that there are numerous trees throughout the City at risk for dropping branches and questioned what makes the subject tree uniquely dangerous. Urban Landscape Manager Rios emphasized that the community benefits that trees provide outweigh the risks associated with their presence.

Commissioner Serrone cautioned that the approval of the subject tree's removal may set the wrong precedent and spoke in support of staff's recommendation to deny the appeal.

Commissioner Davis noted that it has become increasingly difficult to secure homeowners insurance in California and recognized that the subject tree may prevent Ms. Suyama from retaining her homeowners insurance.

Commissioner Sigura emphasized the subject tree's ecological importance, but he added that approval of its removal must be accompanied by the stipulation that it must be replaced with at least two or three mature trees.

Senior Assistant City Attorney Sandra Lee advised the Planning Commission that a motion to grant the appeal must identify the standard that is met under SMC Section 19.94.060.

Chair Iglesias noted that the Planning Commission may specify conditions of approval that the applicant would be subject to if her appeal is granted.

Chair Iglesias shared his thoughts on the standards under SMC Section 19.94.060

and how they apply to the subject tree.

Vice Chair Shukla attempted to make a motion to grant the appeal with a modification to the conditions of approval, but she withdrew this motion since it did not identify which of the standards under SMC Section 19.94.060 have been met.

MOTION: Commissioner Davis moved, and Vice Chair Shukla seconded the motion to approve Alternative 3 – Grant the appeal based on a finding that the proposed removal meets standards (b), (c)(6), and (c)(7) under SMC Section 19.94.060 with modified Condition of Approval DC-1 listed below:

DC-1. TREE REPLACEMENT:

The applicant shall install one 36-inch box replacement tree in the front yard of the property within 90 days of removal of the subject tree. There is no in-lieu fee option available. [COA] [PLANNING]

Commissioner Davis elaborated on how approval of the protected tree removal permit meets standards (b), (c)(6), and (c)(7) under SMC Section 19.94.060.

Vice Chair Shukla explained that, in general, the approval of tree removal permits must be considered on a case-by-case basis. She expressed her support for the approval of the subject tree's removal in this case.

Commissioner Serrone stated that while he is sympathetic to Ms. Suyama's concerns, he is not supportive of motion since it overrides the judgement of City staff. He also noted that a replacement tree will inevitably grow and produce branches that may be at risk of falling. Lastly, he proposed the inclusion of a new standard under SMC Section 19.94.060 that considers the loss of homeowners insurance since, in his opinion, the protected tree removal permit does not meet any of the existing standards.

FRIENDLY AMENDMENT: Commissioner Pyne proposed a friendly amendment to indicate that the appeal is being granted based on a finding that the proposed removal meets only standards (b) and (c)(7) under SMC Section 19.94.060. Commissioner Davis and Vice Chair Shukla accepted the friendly amendment.

Commissioner Pyne shared his conflicted feelings surrounding the matter. Ultimately, confirmed that he can make the findings that support the subject tree's removal.

Commissioner Sigura spoke in strong support of denying the appeal and explained why.

Chair Iglesias, like Commissioner Pyne, expressed his conflicted feelings on this matter. He confirmed his support for the motion since he believed the identified standards under SMC Section 19.94.060 to have been met.

The motion carried by the following vote:

- Yes:** 5 - Chair Iglesias
Vice Chair Shukla
Commissioner Davis
Commissioner Figone
Commissioner Pyne
- No:** 2 - Commissioner Serrone
Commissioner Sigura

This decision is final.

STANDING ITEM: CONSIDERATION OF POTENTIAL STUDY ISSUES

None.

NON-AGENDA ITEMS AND COMMENTS

-Commissioner Comments

At Commissioner Pyne's request, Principal Planner George Schroeder elaborated on the changes made to the City's Study Issues Process at the City Council meeting of October 21, 2025. Commissioner Pyne noted that a list of potential Council Priority Project ideas proposed by Council may be found on the agenda for the City Council meeting of October 28, 2025. Principal Planner Schroeder explained that a discussion of potential Council Priority Project ideas will likely be agendized for the Planning Commission meeting of December 8, 2025. He also assured the Commissioners that additional guidance on this matter will be provided in the coming weeks.

-Staff Comments

Principal Planner George Schroeder announced that since he has accepted a

