



CITY OF SIERRA MADRE

PLANNING COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, April 16, 2026, 5:30 P.M.

City Council Chambers, 232 W. Sierra Madre Blvd.

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT

Pursuant to the Americans with Disabilities Act, persons with a disability who require a disability related modification or accommodation in order to participate in a meeting, including auxiliary aids or services, may request such modification or accommodation from the City Clerk at (626) 574-5455. Notification 48 hours prior to the meeting will enable the City to make reasonable arrangements to assure accessibility to the meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT & ACCESS

The Brown Act provides the public with an opportunity to make public comments at any public meeting. As an alternative, public comment may be submitted by e-mail to publiccomment@sierramadrecal.gov by 3:00PM on the day of the meeting. Emails will be acknowledged at the City Council meeting, filed into public record, and scanned onto the City website for public review.

A copy of the posted agenda and a live video stream of the meeting can be found on the City's website at sierramadrecal.gov, on Foothills Media website at foothillsmedia.org/sierramadre, and broadcast on Government Access Channel 3 (Spectrum).

If you require special assistance to participate in this meeting, please contact the City Clerk's Office at (626) 355-7135 at least 48 hours prior to the meeting.

CODE OF CONDUCT

The purpose of a City Council meeting is to conduct City business. Members of the public that behave in a manner that interrupts or obstructs the City Council's ability to conduct City business may be asked to leave the meeting. Any and all demonstrations which disrupt, interrupt, or obstruct the City Council's ability to conduct City business are prohibited. No signs, posters, or other large objects shall be brought into the Council Chambers or other meeting place if doing so would disrupt, disturb, or otherwise impede the orderly course of the meeting.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Denison called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. Director Lin called the roll.

2. ROLL CALL OF PLANNING COMMISSIONERS

Thomas Denison, Chair
Patrick Simcock, Vice Chair
Kevin Brennan, Commissioner
Christine Moran, Commissioner
Yong Yoo, Commissioner

Absent:

Also Present: Clare Lin, Director of Planning and Community Preservation
Aleks Giragosian, City Attorney
Joshua Wolf, Senior Planner
Katelyn Huang, Assistant Planner

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Chair Denison asked for a motion to approve the agenda as presented.

Vice-Chair Simcock made a motion to approve the agenda as presented.

Commissioner Brennan seconded the motion.

Ayes: Chair Denison, Vice-Chair Simcock, Commissioner Brennan, Commissioner Yoo and Commissioner Moran

Noes:

Absent:

Abstain:

The motion to approve the agenda as presented was approved by a unanimous voice vote by all commissioners present.

4. REPORTS FROM CITY COUNCIL LIAISON

Mayor Kristine Lowe provided a brief report thanking city staff and the city attorney for their assistance with planning matters and language updates.

5. PUBLIC COMMENT FOR ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA

Any person wishing to speak before the Planning Commission is asked to complete a Speaker Card and provide it to staff prior to the start of the meeting. Speakers are generally limited to three (3) minutes per person and time may not be delegated; any changes to the allotted time will be announced prior to the Public Comment period. Under the Brown Act, the Planning Commission is prohibited from discussing or taking action on any item not listed on the posted agenda.

Addressing the Planning Commission from the audience is not permitted; all comments addressing the Commission must be made from the podium. Only public comment made from the podium will be recognized by the Planning Commission and entered into public record.

Chair Denison opened the podium for public comment on items not on the agenda.

Seeing no one come forward, Chair Denison closed public comment.

6. PUBLIC HEARING

Any person wishing to speak before the Planning Commission on a public hearing item is asked to complete a Speaker Card noting the agenda item number and provide it to staff prior to the start of the public hearing. Separate and apart from the applicant (who may speak longer in the discretion of the Commission) speakers are generally limited to three (3) minutes per person; any changes to the allotted time will be announced prior to the Public Comment period. Under the Brown Act, the Planning Commission is prohibited from discussing or acting on any item not listed on the posted agenda. The applicant may additionally submit rebuttal comments, at the discretion of the Commission.

Following the closure of the public hearing and prior to the final decision, Commissioners shall disclose any ex parte communication that has taken place pertaining to the public hearing item. Planning Commissioners shall also disclose all visits to a site that is the subject of a quasi-adjudicatory proceeding before the Planning Commission. The disclosure will include whether the site visit was organized by staff, upon the invitation of the applicant, or on the Commissioners' own accord. The Commissioner must disclose all information learned from the site visit that is not included in the agenda packet and that informs his or her decision-making.

- a) Tentative Parcel Map (TPM 25-01): Request to subdivide an existing property located at 444 N. Lima Street into three parcels

Assistant Planner Katelyn Huang presented the staff report for the subdivision of a 30,872 square foot property into three parcels. The property is located in the R-1 zone and contains a 1948 single-family dwelling proposed for demolition, which has been deemed ineligible as a historic resource. The proposed parcels measure 8,611, 8,547, and 10,303 square feet, meeting the 7,500 square foot minimum requirement.

Huang noted that seven protected trees exist on the site, with two proposed for removal due to poor health and severe damage. She also stated that a flood control easement exists on parcel 3, and no encroachment permit is required per LA County Public Works.

Staff recommended approval, finding the project consistent with the General Plan, suitable for subdivision, and exempt under Class 15 CEQA. Chair Denison verified that net area calculations apply for floor coverage and noted these lots typically won't need design review due to size constraints.

Adrian Dahl from Dahl Architects presented on behalf of the applicant, explaining that the property owner Steve Riboli lives nearby on Auburn Street and plans for his three children to occupy the future homes. All three homes are planned as two-story structures requiring separate design review permits. Dahl described proposed home sizes and emphasized the intention to preserve the large oak tree by designing the shared driveway around it, while removing only damaged trees.

Community Input

Chair Denison opened the floor for community input for public hearing item a.

Public comments on the project included:

Joe Catalano

480 North Lima Street

Joe Catalano, former planning commissioner and neighboring property owner spoke in strong support of the project, noting its compatibility with his property and expressing hope that an existing concrete block wall would be removed.

Cynthia Loesch

435 Adams Street

Cynthia Lash raised concerns about privacy impacts from the proposed two-story homes. She specifically objected to home number 3 being sited only 24 feet from her property line, arguing this would create direct lines of sight into her backyard and bedroom windows regarding General Plan policy L 6.3.

Guy Bailey

418 N. Lima Street

Guy Bailey supported the subdivision concept but questioned whether the trees proposed for removal were truly in poor condition, suggesting independent verification should be required.

Jennifer Maqueda

118 E. Laurel Avenue Unit C

Jennifer Makeda questioned whether the proposed development would meet future homebuyers' needs for yards and privacy, expressing concern about the townhome-like character of the development.

Deliberation

Commissioners disclosed ex parte communications. Vice Chair Simcock and Commissioner Yoo reported walking the property, while Chair Denison also conducted a site visit. No substantive ex parte contacts occurred.

Commissioners focused on their limited role in reviewing lot splits versus future home designs. Vice Chair Simcock initially asked about conditioning lot approval on design review requirements but was advised by City Attorney Aleks Giragosian that such conditions were inappropriate since no home applications had been submitted.

Commissioner Moran stated there were sufficient findings to split the lot. Vice Chair Simcock agreed, noting the minimum lot size requirements were met and the arborist report provided sufficient evidence for tree removal proposals.

Commissioner Yoo concurred, noting the correction that the large oak tree would be preserved.

Chair Denison emphasized that the commission's role was strictly to evaluate the lot split, not future development, and noted that precedent existed with other three-lot splits on Lima Street.

Commissioner Moran made a motion to approve Tentative Parcel Map (TPM 25-01) as discussed.

Vice-Chair Simcock seconded the motion.

Ayes: Chair Denison, Vice-Chair Simcock, Commissioner Brennan, Commissioner Moran and Commissioner Yoo

Noes:

Absent:

Abstain:

The motion to approve Tentative Parcel Map (TPM 25-01) was passed by majority vote of all commissioners present.

b) Municipal Code Text Amendment (MCTA 26-01) Amending Chapter 17.22 (Accessory Dwelling Units) of Title 17 (Zoning) of the Sierra Madre Municipal Code

Senior Planner Joshua Wolf presented updates to Sierra Madre's ADU ordinance to align with recent state laws and HCD expectations. The update seeks to establish objective standards, resolve internal conflicts, clarify ambiguities, and support housing strategies.

Wolf explained that since the March 19th discussion, staff clarified with HCD that up to four ADUs can be created on a single-family lot. He showed different scenarios with combinations of state-mandated ADUs—like junior, conversion, and new detached ADUs.

Chair Denison and commissioners questioned distinctions between state-mandated and city-permitted ADUs.

Wolf explained city-permitted ADUs adhere to zoning standards, whereas state-mandated ADUs have fewer local regulatory constraints.

Extensive discussion on height and angle plane standards ensued. Wolf demonstrated via visuals that 16-foot ADUs with 4-foot setbacks can fit through thoughtful design and grading, even on sloped lots. He noted that compliance is simpler when property lines are at the higher slope side, while lower side property lines demand innovative design solutions like stepped-back building volumes or strategic grading.

City Attorney Giragosian stated that HCD's new interpretation permitting four ADUs per lot is contentious and unprecedented, lacking support from regional city attorneys. He clarified that angle plane standards can be enforced except for state-mandated ADUs below 800 square feet with 4-foot setbacks.

Wolf summarized additional changes with updated definitions referring to state law, revised parking rules, fire sprinkler requirements, and standards organized by attached or detached

ADUs. The ordinance aims to simplify permitting by combining ADU and building permit reviews, eliminating separate 60-day reviews.

The commission discussed whether to impose a 90-day application abandonment timeline for incomplete applications. Wolf explained current practice involves contacting applicants after one year to determine continuation or abandonment.

Community Input

No public comment was received on the ADU ordinance amendments.

Deliberation

Vice Chair Simcock noted he had reviewed the red-line document and found only minor grammatical issues that could be addressed with staff offline. Commissioners agreed the changes captured their previous discussions appropriately.

Vice-Chair Simcock made a motion to approve Municipal Code Text Amendment (MCTA 26-01) as amended and discussed.

Commissioner Moran seconded the motion.

Ayes: Chair Denison, Vice-Chair Simcock, Commissioner Brennan, Commissioner Moran and Commissioner Yoo

Noes:

Absent:

Abstain:

The motion to approve Municipal Code Text Amendment (MCTA 26-01) was passed by majority vote of all commissioners present.

7. CONSENT CALENDAR

All matters listed under the Consent Calendar are considered to be routine and can be acted on by one roll call vote. There will be no separate discussion of these items unless a member of the Planning Commission requests that a specific item be removed from the Consent Calendar for separate discussion and action.

a) Regular Meeting Minutes of March 19, 2026

CEQA: Not a Project

Recommended Action: Approve

Chair Denison asked the Commission for a motion to approve the March 19, 2026, Meeting Minutes.

Vice-Chair Simcock made a motion to approve the March 19, 2026, Meeting Minutes.

Commissioner Yoo seconded the motion.

Ayes: Chair Denison, Vice-Chair Simcock, Commissioner Brennan, and Commissioner Yoo

Noes:

Absent:

Abstain: Commissioner Moran

The motion to approve the March 19, 2026, Planning Commission Meeting Minutes was passed by a majority voice vote by all commissioners present.

b) Regular Meeting Minutes of April 2, 2026

CEQA: Not a Project

Recommended Action: Approve

Chair Denison made a motion to approve the April 2, 2026, Meeting Minutes.

Commissioner Brennan seconded the motion.

Ayes: Chair Denison, Vice-Chair Simcock, Commissioner Brennan, and Commissioner Moran

Noes:

Absent:

Abstain: Commissioner Yoo

The motion to approve the April 2, 2026, Planning Commission Meeting Minutes was passed by a majority voice vote by all commissioners present.

8. DISCUSSION ITEMS

a) Annual Review of Conditional Use Permit 21-03 for the Alverno Heights Academy 2021 Master Plan Update

CEQA: Project

Recommended Action: Approve

Assistant Planner Katelyn Huang presented the annual review of Alverno Heights Academy's conditional use permit as required by resolution conditions. The 12-acre institutional campus is located north of Michillinda Avenue between West Grand View Avenue and Highland Avenue.

Huang stated that the city council approved the master plan update in May 2023. The modular classrooms, extended in 2024, were removed by September 2024. At the annual neighborhood meeting on September 16, 2025, attended by city staff, Commissioner Simcock, the police chief, and three neighbors, discussions included pedestrian noise, school traffic, traffic flow changes, and water usage.

The sports courts are completed and have final building permits. From May 2025 to March 2026, there were 13 calls for service, mostly noise complaints, with others about animals, traffic, or disturbances. Staff found no call patterns indicating operational issues outside planned events.

Huang noted no proposed changes or violations to the conditional use permit, master plan findings, or conditions of approval. Calendar events continue to be mailed to neighbors in a timely manner.

Staff recommended the Planning Commission receive and file the annual report, finding Alverno Heights Academy has met the conditions of CUP 21-03.

Commissioners asked clarifying questions about the timeline for future master plan reviews, with staff indicating the full plan spans 10-20 years with periodic reviews.

Community Input

No public comment was received.

Vice-Chair Simcock made a motion to receive and file the Annual Review of Conditional Use Permit 21-03.

Commissioner Yoo seconded the motion.

Ayes: Chair Denison, Vice-Chair Simcock, Commissioner Brennan, Commissioner Moran and Commissioner Yoo

Noes:

Absent:

Abstain:

The motion to receive and file the Annual Review of Conditional Use Permit 21-03 was passed by a majority voice vote by all commissioners present.

9. REPORTS FROM PLANNING COMMISSION

No reports were provided by commissioners.

10. REPORTS FROM CITY STAFF

Planning Director Clare Lin reported that the May 7, 2026, meeting has been advertised for a public hearing on Sierra Madre objective design standards for multifamily zones. The draft standards are being developed through the regional San Gabriel Council of Governments (SGVCOG) with four participating cities. Materials will be provided to commissioners for review in advance of the meeting.

Commissioner Yoo asked about participation levels, with Lin clarifying that four cities are participating in the COG initiative out of a larger regional membership.

11. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 7:00 pm to the next meeting on May 7, 2026.



Secretary to the Planning Commission
Clare Lin, Director of Planning and Community Preservation