



CITY OF MONTEBELLO

PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING AGENDA

M I N U T E S

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 04, 2025 AT 6:30 PM

**CITY HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS
1600 WEST BEVERLY BOULEVARD
MONTEBELLO, CALIFORNIA**

CALL TO ORDER – Chair Medina called the meeting to order at 6:32 p.m.

ROLL CALL – Chair Medina, Vice-Chair Lomeli, Commissioner Morales, Commissioner Cuevas, and Commissioner Lopez.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE – Chair Medina.

CORRECTIONS TO THE AGENDA – None.

PUBLIC COMMENTS (30 MINUTES)

At this time, the general public may address the Commission/Committee on any items listed on the Agenda, including items not listed on the Agenda (Non-Agenda Items) that are within subject matter jurisdiction. Please be aware that the maximum time allotted for members of the public to speak shall not exceed three (3) minutes per person. State Law prohibits the Commission/ Committee from taking action or entertaining extended discussion on a topic not listed on the agenda. Please show courtesy to others and direct all of your comments to the Chairperson.

STAFF COMMUNICATIONS

None.

MINUTES

1. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FROM THE PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING HELD ON OCTOBER 07, 2025.

Vice-Chair Lomeli motioned to approve the meeting minutes and was Seconded by Commissioner Morales. Planning Manager, Viviana Esparza took roll, and the item was approved 5-0.

PUBLIC HEARING

2. CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT (“CUP”) CASE NO. PC-2025-0006-CUP FOR THE PROPOSED OPERATION OF AN INTERIM HOUSING FACILITY WITHIN AN EXISTING MULTI-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY LOCATED AT

2645 WEST VIA CORONA, MONTEBELLO, CALIFORNIA 90640 ("PROJECT SITE")

Director Palombi introduced the item, followed by a presentation from Assistant Planner, Ms. Grace Hayashi, regarding the adoption of Resolution No. 10-25, which recommends the Planning Commission deny the Conditional Use Permit request to allow the operation of an interim housing facility within an existing multi-family residential property located at 2645 W. Via Corona, Montebello, CA, 90640, based on the staff's findings that the project site is in close proximity to sensitive land uses. Following Ms. Hayashi's presentation, Chair Medina inquired if interim housing facilities are not allowed by right in any residential area. Ms. Hayashi clarified that seven or more residents require a Conditional Use Permit, and six or fewer residents can operate as a typical residential home. Commissioner Cuevas inquired about the zones surrounding the project site being multi-residential yet having one or two-family dwellings. Chair Medina inquired about the commercial space that's across the alley from the project site and the current uses in the space. Ms. Hayashi advised that there is Time Banquet Hall and Learn Academy, which is a behavioral, educational school for ages K-12. Commissioner Morales inquired if Learn Academy is still operating the school and if the surrounding zones across the street are commercial and residential. Ms. Hayashi confirmed that the academy still operates with a business license and that the surrounding zones across the street are commercial and residential. Chair Medina requested to hear from the applicant. The applicant, Ms. Mechille Johnson, who is the founder and CEO of Chances for Change, approached the podium, introduced herself, and began her presentation. Ms. Johnson and her organization were contracted by the Department of Mental Health (DMH) in November 2024 to open an interim housing site in SPA 7. Around this time, Ms. Johnson came to City Hall and spoke with Ms. Hayashi to obtain CUP information. Ms. Johnson states that Ms. Hayashi provided her with a phone number should Ms. Johnson have any follow-up questions. Ms. Johnson contacted the phone number for HdL Companies to inquire about the radius map. Ms. Johnson advised that she was given incorrect information by the HdL employee, which led her to submit for a Home Occupation permit. Ms. Johnson advised that they received their first clients on May 1, 2025, once they had received the Home Occupation permit. Upon providing the City with her Home Occupation permit, Ms. Johnson was informed by the City that she had an incorrect permit. Ms. Johnson explained that the project site has 24-hour staff and security, and has an alarm system that is connected to the police department. Ms. Johnson advised that the housing facility has a curfew and house guidelines that the clients must adhere to. Ms. Johnson advised that noise complaints are related to the banquet hall and foot traffic in the alley. Upon completion of Ms. Johnson's presentation, Commissioner Cuevas asked Ms. Johnson about being misinformed regarding the permit process. Ms. Johnson again clarified that it was not her intent to obtain a home office permit when her intended use was for 15 beds. Ms. Johnson further elaborated that she did not read the fine print regarding the specifics of the permit she was provided. Ms. Johnson discovered, after she obtained the Home Occupation permit and once she spoke with Ms. Hayashi, who informed Ms. Johnson that she had been speaking with HdL, which is a third-party vendor for the City, that she had obtained an incorrect permit for the intended use. Commissioner Cuevas explained that a Home Occupation permit is for an architect or attorney, for example, who works from home. Director Palombi advised that there are two additional operations with six beds or fewer that operate within the City and are operated through state law. Director Palombi further clarified that a Home Occupation permit is not issued in these instances, but rather a Business License. Ms. Johnson explained that the project site has eight bedrooms, that program participants are referred by DMH, and that 15 total program participants would live on site. Ms. Johnson further explained that participants are meant to transition out, at which point new participants would move in. Ms. Johnson explained that program participants can be there for 18 to 24 months. Commissioner Lopez inquired if Ms. Johnson is contracted through DMH, to which Ms. Johnson confirmed that she is contracted by them. Commissioner Lopez followed up his question by asking Director Palombi if it is customary for DMH to go through the City first, prior to a CUP happening for this kind of facility. Director Palombi confirmed that it is not standard practice for DMH to go through the City in these instances; however, he advised that it would be helpful for DMH to do so to alleviate confusion. Director Palombi further explained that the City never received an inquiry from DMH regarding the specific project site. Vice-Chair Lomeli inquired how the applicant occupied the project site prior to obtaining the CUP. Commissioner Cuevas referenced Ms. Johnson's three similar businesses in Los Angeles and inquired if she has a similar setup to the project site at hand, where there are 15 patients or more than six patients. Ms. Johnson confirmed. Commissioner Cuevas elaborated that such a facility/site requires a very common setup throughout the state, which requires a CUP. Chair Medina then turned the questions back to the staff to further discuss how the confusion surrounding the appropriate permit for this facility came to be. Ms. Hayashi explained that in November 2024, staff provided Ms. Johnson with the CUP application, supporting documents, and the HdL business license company handout, which Ms. Hayashi explained is customary to provide entitlement applicants. Ms. Hayashi explained that they provide the outlined documents to the applicant so they have them throughout the entire process, as well as upon the administrative plan check process, which would then require the business license application. Ms. Hayashi explained Ms. Johnson then contacted the HdL business license company due to the fact that the paperwork says City of Montebello business license; however, Ms. Hayashi further explained that HdL is a third-party company and does not work in the City or at City Hall. Ms. Hayashi clarified that HdL does not have the knowledge, nor do they understand the City's entitlement process. Director Palombi requested that Ms. Hayashi clarify the information that was initially provided to the applicant, which led to the Home Occupation permit. Ms. Hayashi explained that within

the received business license under the Home Occupation application, there was a letter enclosed. The letter has a list of conditions that explicitly state there cannot be any individuals coming to the site, and that the site is mainly used as an office for people to work from home and run a small business operation within their home. The applicant is then required to sign the application and get it notarized by the county. Director Palombi confirmed the City has the signed document from the applicant, which states the applicant cannot have clients coming to the property since it is a Home Occupation. Ms. Johnson confessed that she did not read the fine print within the document that Eric from HdL sent her before signing it and having it notarized, since she was thoroughly convinced this was the appropriate permit she was seeking per HdL's instruction. Commissioner Cuevas then inquired if the applicant or the applicant's organization owned the home (project site). Ms. Johnson replied and explained that the project site is owned by DK Wealth LLC and confirmed that her organization has leased the location for three years. The Public Hearing was opened at 7:18 p.m. Six (6) members of the public spoke in support of the interim housing project, citing the need for projects like this due to debilitating homelessness. Members who spoke in support further noted that the project helps with rehabilitating people, reintegrating people into society, finding them work, and allowing for normalization as part of life and changes. 11 members of the public spoke in opposition to the interim housing project, citing concerns about the appropriate zoning, neighborhood, and location for such a project, concerns about children in close proximity to the project site via the school, park, and playground, feelings of worry, lack of safety which forces community members to stay indoors and install security cameras due to the proximity to the project. Members in opposition further noted heightened noise concerns during the week coming from the project site, as well as a lack of transparency regarding the population staying at the project site, increased traffic, inconsistency with the City's General Plan, smell of marijuana, and unknown vehicles taking photos and recording the neighborhood. Chair Medina then invited the DMH representative to speak. Ms. Maria Funk from DMH approached the podium to explain DMH's involvement and connection to this item. Ms. Funk confirmed DMH, which contracted Chances for Change, is the funder for the interim housing project. Ms. Funk explained that DMH wanted to ensure there was interim housing located in all areas of Los Angeles County. Ms. Funk further explained that DMH's funding targets individuals with mental illness. Ms. Funk confirmed that DMH never contacted the City regarding the interim housing project. Ms. Funk stated that DMH did require that Chances for Change seek the appropriate zoning and permit for the facility, and DMH believed Chances for Change had obtained the correct permit. Ms. Funk explained that DMH rented a county van the next day upon learning they had incorrect permitting required for 15 beds, and DMH moved nine (9) of the participants out of the project site to follow the requirement of six (6) participants and beds. Ms. Funk further elaborated that their goal is ultimately to move participants into permanent housing. Upon completion of Ms. Funk speaking, Ms. Johnson approached the podium to briefly address the public comment that mentioned photos being taken by an unknown vehicle. Ms. Johnson explained that the property manager is selling the property, and they were taking pictures to put the property on the market. The Public Hearing was closed at 8:13 p.m. Chair Medina noted that the Commission received 16 emails in opposition of the project and one (1) email in support of the project. Commissioner Cuevas proceeded to thank the applicant for the humanitarian work she's doing. Commissioner Cuevas further expressed his concern that the housing project is not in the right location and should be in a more commercialized area. Commissioner Morales explained that she is concerned about pedestrians, students, residents, and transportation that have been affected and will continue to be affected by the location of this facility. Commissioner Morales advised that this facility should be located in a different part of the city, in a different zone. Commissioner Lopez noted his admiration for the work that Chances for Change is doing and acknowledged that there have been some miscommunications and misunderstandings along the way. Commissioner Lopez voiced the need to have this facility located in a different area so the City can protect the community and welfare. Vice-Chair Lomeli also acknowledged the miscommunication, as well as a lack of the realtor's and homeowner's knowledge regarding the leasing process. Vice-Chair Lomeli noted that while she appreciates Chances for Change's vision and supports what they are trying to do, she also acknowledged the lack of understanding regarding where the facility would be situated. Chair Medina closed the discussion by stating that he empathizes with the services provided by Chances for Change and that he understands the responsibility to the community to help reintegrate people. Chair Medina further stated he recognizes that Montebello is a city where you can build community and get to know your neighbor, however, this proves difficult with the project because it is hard to get to know your neighbor when the project deals with transitional housing, and program participants at the facility can change monthly. Chair Medina noted that DMH stands to take this instance as a learning moment, change their policies, and implement a better system that vets and reviews the type of permits being discussed so they can avoid a similar situation in the future. Chair Medina motioned to adopt Resolution No. 10-25 and deny the CUP request to allow the operation of an interim housing facility within an existing multi-family residential property located at 2645 W. Via Corona. Commissioner Morales seconded the motion. Ms. Esparza conducted a roll call vote, and the item was approved unanimously 5-0.

PLANNING COMMISSION ORALS – None.

ADJOURNMENT

November 04, 2025: Planning Commission Meeting Minutes

The meeting was adjourned at 8:31 p.m. to the next regularly scheduled meeting that will be held on November 18, 2025.



Joseph Palombi, Planning Commission Secretary