



Minutes Regular Meeting
Planning Commission
August 20, 2026

**CITY OF REDONDO BEACH
PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES
Thursday, August 20, 2026**

REGULAR MEETING OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION – 6:30 PM

A. CALL TO ORDER

A regular meeting of the Planning Commission, held in the Redondo Beach Council Chambers at 415 Diamond Street, Redondo Beach, California was called to order by Chair Craig at 6:30 p.m.

B. ROLL CALL

Commissioners Present: Boswell, Gaddis, Hazeltine, Light, Young, Chair Craig

Commissioners Absent: Conroy

Officials Present: Marc Wiener, Community Development Director
Sean Scully, Planning Manager
Daniel Besinaiz, Associate Planner
Jamaal Brown, Planning Analyst

C. SALUTE TO THE FLAG AND INVOCATION

Commissioner Boswell led in the Salute to the Flag.

D. APPROVE ORDER OF AGENDA

Planning Manager Scully requested pulling Item No. J.2 from the agenda, as staff need to conduct further investigation and analysis of the project. It will be brought forward in the event staff brings the application back.

Motion by Commissioner Gaddis, seconded by Commissioner Hazeltine, and approved by voice vote, the order of the agenda, as amended.

The motion carried, 6-0, with Commissioner Conroy absent.

E. BLUE FOLDER ITEMS – ADDITIONAL BACK UP MATERIALS

E.1. RECEIVE AND FILE BLUE FOLDER ITEMS

Motion by Commissioner Gaddis, seconded by Commissioner Hazeltine, and approved by voice vote, to receive and file all Blue Folder Items.

The motion carried, 6-0, with Commissioner Conroy absent.

F. CONSENT CALENDAR

F.1. APPROVE THE AFFIDAVIT OF POSTING FOR THE PLANNING COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING OF AUGUST 20, 2026.

F.2. APPROVE MINUTES FOR THE PLANNING COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING OF JUNE 18, 2026

There were no public comments regarding the Consent Calendar.

Motion by Commissioner Gaddis, seconded by Commissioner Hazeltine, and approved by voice vote, the Consent Calendar, as presented.

The motion carried, 6-0, with Commissioner Conroy absent.

G. EXCLUDED CONSENT CALENDAR ITEMS - None

H. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

H.1. RECEIVE AND FILE PUBLIC WRITTEN COMMENTS ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Chair Craig invited public comments.

Jim Mueller, District 5, talked about promises made regarding projects along Artesia Boulevard; mentioned rising costs and higher interest rates; maintained the city has invested a lot of money to plan a development scenario that will not happen for years, if ever; opined that the scope of the project needs to change; felt that revitalization does not have to start with grandiose, expensive projects and noted the new Farmers Market as an example of events that build community. Additionally, he suggested that the city needs to encourage civic groups to do more of those types of projects to get people and their money flowing into the Artesia corridor stated that catering to developers with big business plans in this environment is a losing strategy.

Mark Nelson referenced a PCUP filed by Beach Cities Health District in 2022; noted the project is 51.5 feet tall to the top of the parapet walls on the four-story hospital; listed basic information regarding the site including heights, setbacks, the FAR, the penthouse, massing, the EIR and the natural terrain and elevations of the site. He added that there is \$1.2 billion worth of residential property within a quarter mile and estimated that \$70 million is the net loss to those homes if they were anywhere else other than Beach Cities. He noted that neighbors will be back to check in on the project.

There were no other public comments.

I. EX PARTE COMMUNICATION

Commissioners Light and Young reported speaking with members of the public regarding Item No. J.1.

Commissioner Gaddis reported receiving comments forwarded by Chair Craig.

Commissioner Hazeltine reported speaking with members of the public and Chair Craig.

Chair Craig reported speaking with Commissioner Hazeltine and reported he forwarded an email from Councilmember Obagi to all the members of the Planning Commission.

J. PUBLIC HEARINGS

J.1. DISCUSSION, CONSIDERATION, AND POSSIBLE ACTION ON AN EXEMPTION DECLARATION AND VARIANCE TO EXCEED THE 30-FOOT MAXIMUM BUILDING HEIGHT REQUIREMENT FOR THE INSTALLATION OF FOUR (THREE INITIALLY) BULK CRYOGENIC STORAGE TANKS WITH A PROPOSED HEIGHT OF APPROXIMATELY 38 FEET AT AN EXISTING MANUFACTURING FACILITY ON PROPERTY LOCATED WITHIN AN INDUSTRIAL-COMMERCIAL (IC-1) ZONE.

RECOMMENDATION

- 1. Open public hearing, receive and file all documents and correspondence on the proposed project;**
- 2. Accept all testimony from staff, applicant, and the public and deliberate;**
- 3. Close public hearing;**
- 4. Adopt a Resolution by title only approving an Exemption Declaration and granting a Variance to exceed the 30-foot maximum building height requirement for the installation of four bulk cryogenic storage tanks with a proposed height of approximately 38 feet at an existing manufacturing facility on property located within an Industrial-Commercial (IC-1) Zone.**

Motion by Commissioner Gaddis, seconded by Commissioner Hazeltine, and approved by voice vote, to open the public hearing.

The motion carried, 6-0, with Commissioner Conroy absent.

Community Development Director Wiener introduced new Associate Planner Daniel Besinaiz and the item; provided a brief background regarding the applicant, Impulse Space and deferred to Associate Planner Besinaiz for a report.

Associate Planner Besinaiz narrated a PowerPoint presentation addressing the project overview, site background and existing conditions, proposed project and variance

request, renderings, safety analysis, noise analysis, findings and special circumstances and recommendations.

Community Development Director Wiener noted a representative from the Redondo Beach Fire Department is available to respond to questions from the Commission.

Division Chief and Fire Marshall Brian Reagan and Senior Fire Inspector and Plan Checker Randy Scoville addressed review of the project and height variance, the plan check process and meetings with Impulse Space and reported the Fire Department has no safety concerns as the project meets with all California Fire Code requirements. They responded to questions from the Commission regarding the pressure explosive potential of the tanks and Division Chief Reagan stated there is low potential for explosions and it would be an unlikely scenario. He added that all projects will go through the plan check review process to ensure Fire Code is met.

Discussion followed regarding the types of chemicals to be stored, the height variance request, tank capacities and issues related to the proximity to residential uses, other locations in the city using similar tanks storing similar gases and no incidences with existing tanks in other locations.

Commissioner Hazeltine confirmed that the gases are inert and non-combustible and in response to her question, Division Chief Reagan referenced safety protocols and evacuation procedures should an emergency arise.

Discussion followed regarding other buildings in the area, project renderings and existing conditions.

Commissioner Boswell commented on the proximity of a telephone pole; noted the tanks are pressure vessels and alleged they tend to explode when there is a failure. He wondered about the blast radius and Division Chief Reagan reiterated there is low potential for explosion, and it would be an unlikely scenario.

Commissioner Boswell referenced comparisons of other structures and asked about comparisons of height or of height and content.

Associate Planner Besinaiz explained that the comparisons are strictly related to height and noted the request is specific to height.

Community Development Director Wiener added that the height is tied to the findings and noted a 100-foot height limit on an adjacent site. He added that zoning in the area should be reviewed and explained the applicant wants to expand their existing operation.

Discussion followed regarding the site plan, properties across Manhattan Beach Boulevard, proximity to the nearest residential property, separation distances included in the Fire Code, hazardous materials protocols handled by L.A. County Fire, periodic inspections and inspection cycles.

Commissioner Young noted that most of the documentation states that liquid oxygen is going to be stored in the tanks and Planning Manager Scully stated it will not be stored in any of the tanks, that information was provided by the applicant, who can speak to that, and was included in the safety report which covered oxygen tanks and the information was imported into the staff report. He assured there will be no oxygen stored in the tanks.

Commissioner Hazeltine suggested making it a condition that no oxygen is to be stored in the tanks.

Chair Craig administered the oath and the applicants agreed.

Michael Gillway and Jeff DeFazio, Impulse Space, introduced themselves, noted safety is their priority and narrated a PowerPoint with details of the organization, history in Redondo Beach, enabling infrastructure for all sectors, launch providers, transporting payloads in space, the proposed liquid nitrogen and liquid argon tanks, uses of the gases, engineering and sizing for operational needs and use of the proven certified technology.

Michael Gillway compared the GKN Aerospace tanks and leaking incident compared with the Impulse Space tanks and confirmed there is no explosion risk with the latter.

Discussion followed regarding minimizing the amount of fills to avoid disruptions to the neighborhood, frequency of fillings and time to complete and the typical time of the day for fills.

In reply to Commissioner Boswell's question about the possibility of sinking the tanks to compensate for the height, Michael Gillway stated the tanks are designed to be stored outside, in the open air, at floor-level and per manufacturer's recommendations. Commissioner Boswell suggested specifying the vessel so that it can be sunk into the ground. Michael Gillway mentioned the desire to maintain as much parking as possible.

Jeff DeFazio added that the tanks are standard size and off-the-shelf.

In reference to parking, Commissioner Light asked about the number of parking spaces needed for construction, for employees and during operations and Jeff DeFazio stated he does not have the exact numbers at this time but added that they are exploring options to provide further parking for their employees.

Chair Craig felt that with the millions in investments, employee parking, security and safety would be of tantamount concern.

Jeff DeFazio announced they will be available after the meeting to respond to questions from the Commission and the public.

Motion by Commissioner Gaddis, seconded by Commissioner Hazeltine, and approved by voice vote, to receive public comment.

The motion carried, 6-0, with Commissioner Conroy absent.

Katherine Strohlele stated she supports technological innovation, but her neighborhood is already carrying a significant industrial burden; listed examples such as Northrup Grumman gas storage tanks that are regularly filled and vented and indicate that residents know firsthand how loud and disruptive that venting can be. She spoke about industrial lighting from Northrup that spills into the neighborhood and other impacts to her quality of life; commented on the proximity of the proposed tanks to residential uses and believed the city should not only consider the application, but also the cumulative impact on the surrounding neighborhood. She requested that the Commission continue the item and require that the applicant and city staff to address four concerns through legally binding enforceable conditions of appeal:

- 1) PHYSICAL SAFETY – We request that the city require a formal, quantitative risk assessment addressing potential blast and oxygen displacement zones along with an independent seismic and structural review appropriate for the 38-foot tanks and their proximity to residential property.
- 2) TRUCK DELIVERIES AND OPERATIONS - Filling these tanks will require large industrial trucks and the transfer of cryogenic liquids which can involve truck noise, idling, backup alarms and significant venting noise. We request an enforceable condition prohibiting cryogenic deliveries, transfers and related operations between 6:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m.
- 3) CUMULATIVE NOISE – Residents already experience significant noise from Northrup's industrial gas operations. We ask the city to evaluate the combined impact of Northrup and Impulse and require continuous real-time noise monitoring with enforcement if Impulse exceeds city noise limits.
- 4) LIGHT TRESPASS – Given the existing impact of Northrup's lighting, we request conditions requiring all security and operational lighting to be fully-shielded and directly away from residential properties with no direct glare or trespass across property lines.

She added the community is not against development but is asking that the city to ensure that the project can operate safely and responsibly alongside an established residential neighborhood.

Shail Versfelt spoke in opposition to the proposed project; felt that changing the building to cryogenics introduces severe, life-threatening risks to the community; listed reasons for her opposition including environmental and physical risks; mentioned Boyle Heights incidents and urged the Commission to deny the application.

Dr. Lori Zaremski expressed extreme concern about the tanks and urged the Commission to deny the variance request; questioned the presentation from the Fire Department claiming that the tanks are safe; felt that the request has been minimized as just a height variance; opined they are in attendance to obtain permission to ruin the neighborhood; listed questionable claims and alleged it seems the company is doing the city a favor

because there will be fewer deliveries; referenced the term “SpaceX” and asserted that Elon Musk does not want what is best for Redondo Beach.

Chair Craig noted receipt of a card for Mark Nelson but announced that he had to leave the meeting.

Planning Analyst Brown announced there were seven eComments received, five opposed and two neutral.

Motion by Commissioner Gaddis, seconded by Commissioner Young, and approved by voice vote, to receive and file eComments.

The motion carried, 6-0, with Commissioner Conroy absent.

Nick Biro stated he was surprised this project came in as a variance request; mentioned the need for a rigorous community review process; listed issues that have not been presented such as a detailed site plan including the location of the tanks, the placement of the tanks, specifications, a safety plan, set hours of operation and noted the differences in proximity to residential between Northrup tanks and the proposed Impulse Space tanks and mentioned that none of the exhibits show how close the tanks will be to the residents. He requested that the Commission continue the item as there is a lot of information that still needs to be clarified.

Jim Mueller, District 5, talked about needing to consider alternatives as this project has upset a lot of residents in Redondo Beach.

Mark Nelson, retired V.P. and Director of Planning and Generation for Edison, talked about reviewing many plans and stated he would not approve of the messy application. He discussed the “boilerplate” safety plan; asserted that residents need more information than what has been presented; mentioned he would like to have a list of all of the permitting agencies and that apparently there is no lead agency and felt the application needs to be continued, cleaned up and brought back with robust public input.

Commissioner Boswell felt that eComments should be read into the record.

Chair Craig reviewed the protocol as followed be City Council.

In response to Commissioner Young’s question regarding why the project was presented as a variance request and not a CUP, Community Development Director Wiener reported that the operation is permitted, by right, in the zone and does not require a CUP. He added there is a provision that provides staff with the ability to deny the application and then it would go on to a CUP but in this case, staff did not have the justification to deny this application. He confirmed that the variance, once granted, runs with the land.

Replying to Chair Craig's question, Community Development Director Wiener stated that if the tanks were 30 feet, there would be no need to come before the Planning Commission with this item. He reiterated that this item concerns the height of the tanks.

Commissioner Boswell suggested considering using six shorter tanks and mentioned it seems the real issue is protecting parking spaces and allowing Impulse Space to pressure standardized pressure vessels as opposed to customized pressure vessels.

Community Development Director Wiener stated it has more to do with keeping a minimal footprint to avoid impacts on parking and with reducing the frequency of deliveries.

Commissioner Boswell noted the applicant will have to provide a much larger parking solution in the future and felt they could add those few extra parking spaces in that mitigation that they will have to do, anyways.

Chair Craig felt the main concern is not the tanks, but rather the content and mentioned that with more tanks, there will be more times to unhook and hook for fills.

Commissioner Boswell asserted that if the risks are so small, there should be no issue with placing the tanks on their sides and it is not a height issue.

Chair Craig mentioned it is a height issue and commented on the contents.

Commissioner Light spoke about his role, as a Commissioner, to ensure the quality of life in Redondo Beach is maintained; asserted that if the project comes before the Planning Commission, members need to look at all the things that may be detrimental to the community and stated he is not comfortable approving a variance that the city may regret someday in the future. He wondered why the report is missing hazmat information and a safety plan and why the project is being passed through so quickly without appropriate due diligence.

Chair Craig invited the applicants to the podium.

Impact Space representatives Gillway and DeFazio responded to questions from the Commission; mentioned that the tanks have been sized with engineering; talked about a proven playbook which has been reviewed by different disciplines throughout the permitting process and involves standard operations and the disruption would increase by increasing the number of tanks.

Commissioner Hazeltine commented nearby building that is also 38 feet tall; felt that if the Commission can approve six small tanks, it could easily approve the proposed 38-foot tanks and in reply to her question regarding whether there is any other location on the property to locate the tanks, Jeff DeFazio confirmed that they assessed the entire land and the tanks have to be in those locations which will put them close to where they will be used.

Commissioner Boswell said there is not enough information to make a proper decision and opined that Impact Space could accommodate a layout to install tanks on their sides.

Jeff DeFazio reported the tanks are physically different in design and the tanks that are available to them are designed to stand up straight.

Michael Gillway clarified that they have opted to use the most standard type of design, tanks, and arrangements and to follow the manufacturer's recommendations.

Commissioner Young said that this piece of property has changed hands a lot in the last decade; suggested that more public outreach could have gotten the project a lot further and felt that there may issues other than the height.

Motion by Commissioner Young, to close the public hearing.

The motion died for lack of a second.

In reply to Chair Craig's inquiry, Community Development Director Wiener reported that the applicant is planning on doing public outreach and confirmed meeting with the applicant and several concerned residents.

Discussion followed regarding whether it would be beneficial to continue the item to obtain additional information and do outreach.

Community Development Director Wiener was not sure how much more can be gleaned by continuing the item; felt the primary benefit would be adding time for public engagement and noted there will be outreach opportunities for the project moving forward.

Commissioner Gaddis talked about leaving the public hearing open and continuing it to the next Planning Commission meeting.

Planning Manager Scully confirmed the procedure for continuance.

Jeff DeFazio stated that if the intent of continuing the item is to provide additional public outreach, that can be done independent of the vote approving the height variance and added that if the Planning Commission were to continue it, they would like detailed direction in terms of what to bring back for the Planning Commission to approve or deny the item.

Commissioner Gaddis said the objective is for the public to understand the tanks, contents and potential dangers as there seems to be a broad misunderstanding and to provide an opportunity to address things like noise limits and lighting and provide possible alternatives to the tank.

Jeff DeFazio asked that the Commission provide for the item to be returned as soon as possible. He added that if the Planning Commission denied it, it would negatively impact their business.

Commissioner Hazeltine did not feel the item needed to be brought back to the Planning Commission as she trusts staff and the Fire Department; noted that similar tanks exist in the area and pointed out that if the tanks were eight feet shorter, the project would not need to come before the Commission. She added that the Commission could include additional requirements in the motion.

Commissioner Light noted that CEQA does not apply here and expressed concerns that safety has not been addressed adequately; mentioned a lack of an evacuation route plan and safety plan and reiterated that he does not feel comfortable enough to approve it.

Commissioner Boswell asked about the community walkthrough; talked about welcoming more manufacturing in Redondo Beach, needing to further understand operation and safety, hazmat protocols and evacuation plans and commented on the elimination of regulations, derailments and a recent case won by a community group regarding Metro Rail. He claimed that as regulations are eliminated, more accidents are prone to happen and supported continuing it.

Commissioner Young expressed disappointed in the report, especially as what the public had to reference was inaccurate (liquid oxygen); pointed out that it comes down to money and cutting expenses; felt that currently, Impact Space is not being a good neighbor and that public outreach should have started much earlier in the process and mentioned there is room for improvement.

Motion by Commissioner Gaddis, seconded by Commissioner Boswell, and carried by roll call vote, to continue this item to the September meeting of the Planning Commission.

The motion carried 4-2-1, as follows:

AYES: Boswell, Gaddis, Light, Young
NOES: Hazeltine, Chair Craig
ABSENT: Conroy

J.2. This item was pulled from the agenda per staff request.

K. ITEMS CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS AGENDAS - None

L. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION PRIOR TO ACTION - None

M. ITEMS FROM STAFF - None

N. COMMISSION REFERRALS TO STAFF - None

O. ADJOURNMENT – 8:42 p.m.

Motion by Chair Craig, seconded by Commissioner Young, and approved by voice vote, to adjourn the meeting at 8:42 p.m.

The motion carried, 6-0, with Commissioner Conroy absent.

The next meeting of the Redondo Beach Planning Commission will be a regular meeting to be held at 6:30 p.m. on September 17, 2026, in the Redondo Beach Council Chambers, at 415 Diamond Street, Redondo Beach, California.

All written comments submitted via eComment are included in the record and available for public review on the City website.

Respectfully submitted,



Marc Wiener
Community Development Director