

INDEX
TORRANCE PLANNING COMMISSION – JANUARY 15, 2014

<u>SUBJECT</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
<u>OPENING CEREMONIES</u>	
1. Call to Order	1
2. Flag Salute	1
3. Roll Call/Motions for Excused Absence	1
4. Posting of the Agenda	1
5. Approval of Minutes	1
6. Requests for Postponement	1
7. <u>ORAL COMMUNICATIONS #1</u>	1
8. <u>TIME EXTENSIONS</u>	2
9. <u>SIGN HEARINGS</u>	2
10. <u>CONTINUED HEARINGS</u>	
10A. WAV13-00008: Will Basilio (Clint and Yvonne Fisher) <i>Res. 13-054</i>	2
10B. PRE13-00008, PRE14-00001: Jeff Lyons (Wong) <i>Res. 13-049 & 14-004</i>	2-4
11. <u>WAIVERS</u>	4
12. <u>FORMAL HEARINGS</u>	
12A. PRE13-00011: Fabio Malek <i>Res. 14-001</i>	4-5
12B. PRE13-00012: Mr. & Mrs. G. Esparza <i>Res. 14-002</i>	5-6
12C. DIV13-00006: Continental Development Corporation <i>Res. 14-003</i>	6
13. <u>RESOLUTIONS</u>	
13A. PRE13-00004: Kelly Hamm (Yukimo Hayashida)	7
14. <u>PUBLIC WORKSHOP ITEMS</u>	8
15. <u>MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS</u>	
15A. PRE13-00004: Kelly Hamm (Yukimo Hayashida)	7, 8
15B. Community Development Director Weekly Summary Reports	8
16. <u>CITY COUNCIL ACTION ON PLANNING MATTERS</u>	8
17. <u>LIST OF TENTATIVE PLANNING COMMISSION CASES</u>	8
18. <u>ORAL COMMUNICATIONS #2</u>	8
19. <u>ADJOURNMENT</u>	8

At 8:20 p.m., the meeting was adjourned to Wednesday, February 5, 2014 at 7:00 p.m.

**MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF
THE TORRANCE PLANNING COMMISSION**

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Torrance Planning Commission convened in a regular session at 7:00 p.m. on Wednesday, January 15, 2014 in City Council Chambers at Torrance City Hall.

2. SALUTE TO THE FLAG

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Commissioner Polcari.

3. ROLL CALL/ MOTIONS FOR EXCUSED ABSENCE

Present: Commissioners D'anjou, Gibson, Polcari, Skoll, Watson and Chairperson Rizzo.

Absent: None.

Also Present: Planning Manager Lodan, Planning Assistant Fernandez, Plans Examiner Noh, Associate Civil Engineer Symons, Assistant City Attorney Sullivan.

4. POSTING OF THE AGENDA

Planning Manager Lodan reported that the agenda was posted on the Public Notice Board at 3031 Torrance Boulevard on Thursday January 9, 2014.

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION: Commissioner Polcari moved for the approval of the December 4, 2013 Planning Commission minutes as written. The motion was seconded by Commissioner D'anjou and passed by unanimous voice vote.

6. REQUESTS FOR POSTPONEMENTS – None.

7. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS #1

Don Pierce, Avis Rent-a-Car, reported that the Commission approved a Conditional Use Permit in October (CUP13-00019) allowing Avis to locate a car rental in Sears at Del Amo Fashion Center, which included a condition requiring Sears to grant an easement for a sidewalk, and expressed concerns that the project was being held up because the easement has not been secured. He explained that Sears is only one of 14 owners of the land in question; that Sears' engineer has estimated that 70 parking spaces would have to be eliminated for the sidewalk; and that the sidewalk is nowhere near the proposed auto rental. He stated that he would like to have an item placed on next month's agenda to address this issue otherwise he was going to have to look for another location.

Planning Manager Lodan recommended that Mr. Pierce set up a meeting with Community Development Director Gibson to see if this matter can be resolved administratively.

8. TIME EXTENSIONS- None.

9. **SIGN HEARINGS**- None.

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Chairperson Rizzo reviewed the policies and procedures of the Planning Commission, including the right to appeal decisions to the City Council.

10. **CONTINUED HEARINGS**

10A. **WAV13-00008: WILL BASILIO (CLINT AND YVONNE FISHER)**

Planning Commission consideration for approval of a Waiver of the side yard setback requirement to allow a first-story addition on property located within the Hillside Overlay District in the R-1 Zone at 22228 Redbeam Avenue. The project is Categorically Exempt from CEQA per Guidelines Section 15305(a) – Minor Alterations and 15301(e) - Existing Facilities.

Recommendation: Approval.

Planning Assistant Fernandez introduced the request.

Yvonne Fisher, 22228 Redbeam Avenue, applicant, reported that she would like to improve the existing house and expand the one-car garage to an oversize two-car garage. She voiced her agreement with the recommended conditions of approval.

MOTION: Commissioner Polcari moved to close the public hearing. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Gibson and passed by unanimous voice vote.

MOTION: Commissioner Polcari moved to approve WAV13-00008, as conditioned, including all findings of fact set forth by staff. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Gibson and passed by unanimous roll call vote.

Planning Assistant Fernandez read aloud the number and title of Planning Commission Resolution No. 13-054.

MOTION: Commissioner Polcari moved for the adoption of Planning Commission Resolution No. 13-054. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Gibson and passed by unanimous roll call vote.

10B. **PRE13-00008, WAV14-00001: JEFF LYONS (WAY AND WENDY WONG)**

Planning Commission consideration for approval of a Precise Plan of Development to allow first and second-story additions to an existing single-family residence, in conjunction with a Waiver of the rear and side yard setback requirements for a detached accessory structure on property located within the Hillside Overlay District in the R-1 Zone at 5714 Clearsite Avenue. The project is Categorically Exempt from CEQA per Guidelines Section 15301(e) – Existing Facilities and 15305 – Minor Alterations.

Recommendation: Approval.

Planning Assistant Fernandez introduced the request and noted supplemental material available at the meeting.

Chairperson Rizzo disclosed that he drove by the location and viewed the revised silhouette from various locations on Clearsite Avenue and Sharynne Lane.

Commissioner Polcari disclosed that he drove by the project site shortly before Christmas and observed that there are other two-story homes along this street.

Way Wong, 5714 Clearsite, applicant, reported that the garage has been relocated to comply with restrictions on a utility easement and the second-story addition has been shifted six feet to the north in an effort to address concerns of adjacent neighbors on Sharynne Lane.

Jeff Lyons, project architect, detailed the revisions made to the project, referring to renderings and photographs submitted, which contrasted the impact of the original plans versus the revised plans. Using a diagram to illustrate, he pointed out that there is at least 126 feet between the applicant's house and houses on Sharynne Lane.

Eloy Retamal, 5465 Sharynne Lane, stated that the revisions made to the project were minimal and he believes a lot more could be done to mitigate his concerns about massing and privacy. He maintained that he was being pressured to accept a solution without adequate time to review it since the revised silhouette was only completed last weekend.

Commissioner Skoll doubted that there would be a privacy impact given the distance between Mr. Retamal's and the applicant's house.

Mr. Retamal contended that the applicant would have a birds-eye view into his backyard where his family spends a lot of time and called for the project to be shifted further north.

Mark Forney, 5473 Sharynne Lane, stated that the change in the silhouette was barely noticeable and it did not do anything about the massiveness of the structure. He explained that due to the difference in elevation, the proposed two-story structure will look like a three or four-story apartment complex and destroy the sense of nature in his backyard. He noted that he spends a lot of time in the backyard and considers it an extension of his living space.

Chairperson Rizzo disclosed that he went to high school with Mr. Forney and has known him for many years, but this would not affect his decision.

Commissioner Polcari suggested that the problem stems from the fact that properties on Sharynne Lane are at a much lower elevation than adjacent properties on Clearsite and related his belief that it would be unfair to deprive the applicant of the right to build a second story because of the topography.

Mr. Forney responded that he wasn't asking that the second story be eliminated, only that it be moved further away from his property.

Mr. Lyons reported that he made a considerable effort to try to address neighbors' concerns when revising the project. He noted that he wasn't able to have the silhouette completed any earlier due to the holidays.

MOTION: Commissioner Polcari moved to close the public hearing. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Gibson and passed by unanimous voice vote.

Commissioner Watson asked how far the addition could be shifted to the north. Planning Manager Lodan estimated that the addition could be shifted a maximum of 10 feet, but pointed out that the applicant must consider impacts to the neighbors on either side of the project, as well as those to the rear.

Voicing support for the project, Commissioner Skoll related his belief that Mr. Lyons had done a good job of revising the project, as evidenced by the lack of objections from neighbors on either side.

MOTION: Commissioner Skoll moved to approve PRE13-00008 and WAV14-00001, as conditioned, including all findings of fact set forth by staff. The motion was seconded by Commissioner D'anjou and passed by unanimous roll call vote.

Planning Assistant Fernandez read aloud the number and title of Planning Commission Resolution Nos. 13-049 and 14-004.

MOTION: Commissioner Skoll moved for the adoption of Planning Commission Resolution Nos. 13-049 and 14-004. The motion was seconded by Commissioner D'anjou and passed by unanimous roll call vote.

11. **WAIVERS** – None.

12. **FORMAL HEARINGS**

12A. **PRE13-00011: FABIO MALEK**

Planning Commission consideration for approval of a Precise Plan of Development to allow the construction of a new two-story, single-family residence on property located within the Hillside Overlay District in the R-1 Zone at 5210 Vanderhill Road. This project is Categorically Exempt from CEQA per Guidelines Section 15303(a) – New Construction.

Recommendation: Approval.

Planning Assistant Fernandez introduced the request.

Chairperson Rizzo disclosed that he had driven by the location to view the site.

Blake Stephens, project architect, voiced his agreement with the recommended conditions of approval. He reported that he used to live on Doris Way and has designed approximately 18 homes in the Hillside Overlay so he is very familiar with the area. He explained that the new residence was designed to have a lot of articulation, including seven different wall planes on the façade and six different roof planes, in order to minimize the project's mass and respect the scale of the neighborhood. He noted that energy conserving features were incorporated that are far beyond Code requirements.

Commissioner Skoll asked if the plans were shared with neighbors, and Mr. Stephens reported that the property owner, who has lived in the home for 27 years, discussed the project with neighbors and they had mixed reactions.

Commissioner Skoll noted that the agenda item includes a letter from Harlene Maloney, 5214 Vanderhill Road, expressing concerns that the project would block light from her home.

Submitting photographs to illustrate, Mr. Stephens pointed out that the neighbor in question already has large trees that block sunlight to her residence. Additionally, he noted that the proposed residence has a one-story portion adjacent to this neighbor with a down-sloping roof to minimize the impact.

Harlene Maloney, 5214 Vanderhill Road, stated that the applicant did not share the plans or discuss the project with her and she believes it will impact her light and privacy. She related her belief that one neighbor should not be allowed to build to the detriment of another.

Mr. Stephens emphasized that he tried to design a project that was respectful of the neighborhood and voiced his opinion that the new residence would be a great improvement.

MOTION: Commissioner Polcari moved to close the public hearing. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Gibson and passed by unanimous voice vote.

MOTION: Commissioner Polcari moved to approve PRE13-00011, as conditioned, including all findings of fact set forth by staff. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Gibson and passed by unanimous roll call vote.

Planning Assistant Fernandez read aloud the number and title of Planning Commission Resolution No. 14-001.

MOTION: Commissioner Polcari moved for the adoption of Planning Commission Resolution No. 14-001. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Gibson and passed by unanimous roll call vote.

12B. PRE13-00012: MR. & MRS. G. ESPARZA

Planning Commission consideration for approval of a Precise Plan of Development to allow first and second-story additions to an existing one-story, single-family residence on property located within the Hillside Overlay District in the R-1 Zone at 5014 Pacific Coast Highway. This project is Categorically Exempt from CEQA per Guidelines Section 15301(a) – Existing Facilities.

Recommendation: Approval.

Planning Assistant Fernandez introduced the request.

Jacky Sbarounis, project designer, reported that the property owners would like to remodel their house so their parents can move in with them and they can all have some measure of privacy. She expressed the applicants' willingness to record a covenant prohibiting the new in-law suite from being used as a rental because they have no intention of doing so.

Chairperson Rizzo disclosed that he recognized Ms. Sbarounis from when he worked at the Police Department.

Planning Manager Lodan advised that it was not necessary to record a covenant because Conditions No. 8, 9 and 10 prohibit the conversion of the in-law suite into rental space.

MOTION: Commissioner Polcari moved to close the public hearing. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Gibson and passed by unanimous voice vote.

Commissioner Skoll commented positively on the idea of converting a residence to accommodate aging parents.

MOTION: Commissioner Polcari moved to approve PRE13-00012, as conditioned, including all findings of fact set forth by staff. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Gibson and passed by unanimous roll call vote.

Planning Assistant Fernandez read aloud the number and title of Planning Commission Resolution No. 14-002.

MOTION: Commissioner Polcari moved for the adoption of Planning Commission Resolution No. 14-001. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Gibson and passed by unanimous roll call vote.

12C. DIV13-00006: CONTINENTAL DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION (CONTINENTAL 3640 LOMITA CORP)

Planning Commission consideration for approval of a Division of Lot to allow a Lot Line Adjustment between 3640 Lomita Boulevard and APNs 7378-015-050 and 7378-015-053 on properties located in the HMD and SRP Zones. This project is Categorically Exempt from CEQA per Guidelines Section 15305(a) – Minor Alterations.

Recommendation: Approval.

Planning Assistant Fernandez introduced the request.

Bruce Dejong, representing Continental Development Corporation, voiced his agreement with the recommended conditions of approval. He explained that the Lot Line Adjustment will allow for parking lot improvements for the renovated medical office building at 3640 Lomita Boulevard, including enlarging the fire lane to meet Code requirements and changing the angled parking to 90-degree parking, which will add 29 more parking spaces.

Commissioner Skoll noted that these will be welcome improvements for people visiting these medical offices.

MOTION: Commissioner Polcari moved to close the public hearing. The motion was seconded by Commissioner D’anjou and passed by unanimous voice vote.

MOTION: Commissioner Polcari moved to approve DIV13-00006, as conditioned, including all findings of fact set forth by staff. The motion was seconded by Commissioner D’anjou and passed by unanimous roll call vote.

Planning Assistant Fernandez read aloud the number and title of Planning Commission Resolution No. 14-003.

MOTION: Commissioner Polcari moved for the adoption of Planning Commission Resolution No. 14-003. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Gibson and passed by unanimous roll call vote.

Item 15A was considered out of order at this time.

15A. PRE13-00004: KELLY HAMM (YUKIMO HAYASHIDA)

Planning Commission discussion of a request to reconsider their decision to deny without prejudice a Precise Plan of Development to allow the construction of a new two-story, single-family residence on property located within the Hillside Overlay District in the R-1 Zone at 310 Calle de Arboles.

Planning Manager Lodan reported that this item was placed on the agenda in response to a request at the December 18, 2013 Planning Commission meeting that Commissioners reconsider their decision to deny PRE13-00004 without prejudice. He emphasized that

discussion should be limited to whether or not a new public hearing should be scheduled in the future to assess the plans and this was not a discussion of the merits of the project itself.

Kelly Hamm, project architect, stated that after the hearing on December 4, 2013 he had an informal meeting with Ms. Terre and other neighbors in the lobby to discuss their objections, which are: 1) the balcony, 2) the Floor Area Ratio, and 3) the proximity of the second floor to Ms. Terre's home, and he was able to dispel concerns about the balcony and provided clarification regarding the second floor offset, which was not clear from the silhouette. He reported that Ms. Terre subsequently allowed him to come to her home to further discuss her concerns and he has been working diligently with Ms. Terre and other neighbors to try to find a solution that works for everyone.

Mathilde "Mike" Terre, 314 Calle de Arboles, expressed concerns that the plans call for a wall only 10 feet away from her window, but indicated that she would be willing to reconsider her opposition if the wall can be moved back to restore light and air to her home.

Chairperson Rizzo asked if there was a likelihood that Ms. Terre's concerns could be resolved if the Commission decides to grant the applicant's request to rehear this application.

Ms. Terre stated that she was not opposed to giving the applicant "another shot."

John Salas, 425 Via Malaga, expressed concerns that Ms. Terre did not understand what she was agreeing to.

Chairperson Rizzo clarified that Ms. Terre was only agreeing to give the applicant another chance to try to address her concerns and was not agreeing to the project.

MOTION: Commissioner Polcari moved to close the public hearing. The motion was seconded by Commissioner D'anjou and passed by unanimous voice vote.

MOTION: Commissioner Polcari moved to reconsider PRE13-00004 and to direct staff to calendar a new hearing when the applicant is prepared to move forward with a revised plan. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Watson and passed by unanimous roll call vote.

13. RESOLUTIONS

13A. PRE13-00004: KELLY HAMM (YUKIMO HAYASHIDA)

Planning Commission consideration of adoption of a resolution reflecting their decision to deny without prejudice a Precise Plan of Development to allow the construction of a new two-story single-family residence on property located within the Hillside Overlay District in the R-1 Zone at 310 Calle de Arboles. This project is Categorically Exempt from CEQA per Guidelines Section 15303(a) – New Construction of Small Structures.

Item was withdrawn due to action taken under Agenda Item 15B.

14. PUBLIC WORKSHOP ITEMS – None.

15. MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS

15A. PRE13-00004: KELLY HAMM (YUKIMO HAYASHIDA)

Considered out of order, see page 7.

15B. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR WEEKLY SUMMARY REPORTS

Planning Manager Lodan noted that the Community Development Director Weekly Summary Reports for December 12, December 20, December 26, 2013 and January 3, 2014 were distributed to the Commission.

16. REVIEW OF CITY COUNCIL ACTION ON PLANNING MATTERS – None.

17. LIST OF TENTATIVE PLANNING COMMISSION CASES

Planning Manager Lodan reviewed the agenda for the February 5, 2014 Planning Commission meeting.

18. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS #2

18A. Commissioners commented on their activities over the holidays.

18B. Commissioner Skoll asked about the status of the Sunrise project on Hawthorne Boulevard.

Planning Manager Lodan reported that the company's finances are improving and there's a possibility that construction may resume and no action would be necessary on the part of the Planning Commission because building permits for the project have been maintained.

18C. Commissioner Watson announced upcoming events at the Torrance Historical Museum, including a presentation by a man who piloted the blimp for over 30 years on Sunday, January 19, at 2:00 p.m.; a meet the author/book signing by Alex Areyan author of *Beach Mexican* on Sunday, January 26, at 2:00 p.m.; and "Tea for Two - a Valentine's Tea and Program" on Sunday, February 9, at 2:00 p.m.

19. ADJOURNMENT

At 8:20 p.m., the meeting was adjourned to Wednesday, February 5, 2014 at 7:00 p.m.

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Approved as submitted February 19, 2014 s/ Sue Herbers, City Clerk
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