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TORRANCE PLANNING COMMISSION – JANUARY 21, 2015

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At 8:18 p.m., the meeting was adjourned to Wednesday, February 4, 2015 at 7:00 p.m.

January 21, 2015

**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 21, 2015 in City Council Chambers at Torrance City Hall.

2. SALUTE TO THE FLAG

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Commissioner Gibson.

3. ROLL CALL/ MOTIONS FOR EXCUSED ABSENCE

Present: Commissioners Gibson, Skoll, Tsao, Watson and Vice Chair D'anjou.

Absent: Chairperson Polcari and Commissioner Herring.

Also Present: Planning Manager Lodan, Sr. Planning Associate Gomez,
Associate Civil Engineer Symons, Plans Examiner Noh,
Fire Prevention Specialist Hastings, Assistant City Attorney Sullivan.

MOTION: Commissioner Skoll, seconded by Commissioner Tsao, moved to grant Chairperson Polcari and Commissioner Herring excused absences for this meeting; hearing no objection, Vice Chair D'anjou so ordered.

4. POSTING OF THE AGENDA

Planning Manager Lodan reported that the agenda was posted on the Public Notice Board at 3031 Torrance Boulevard on Friday, January 16, 2015.

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION: Commissioner Skoll moved for the approval of the December 3 and December 17, 2014 Planning Commission minutes as written. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Tsao and passed by unanimous roll call vote, with Commissioner Skoll and Commissioner Gibson abstaining on the December 17 minutes (absent Chairperson Polcari and Commissioner Herring).

6. REQUESTS FOR POSTPONEMENTS

Planning Manager Lodan relayed a request from the property manager of the North Torrance Plaza to continue Agenda Item 12B (CUP14-00026: Jose Ponce/North Torrance Plaza, LLC) indefinitely to allow time to meet with neighbors to address their concerns.

MOTION: Commissioner Gibson moved to continue Agenda Item 12B. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Watson and discussion continued.

Peb Conrad, Arvada Street, requested that he and other neighbors present at the meeting be allowed to speak.

Commissioner Skoll indicated that he was inclined to allow neighbors to comment.

Assistant City Attorney Sullivan noted that it has been the Commission's practice to grant a continuance when requested by an applicant and advised that should the Commission wish to allow testimony, the public hearing should be opened at the appropriate time, however, this could create due process issues because the applicant was not present at this meeting.

A brief discussion ensued, and it was the consensus of the Commission to continue the hearing to February 4, 2015.

MOTION: Commissioner Gibson moved to continue Agenda Item 12B to February 4, 2015. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Watson and passed by a 4-1 roll call vote with Commissioner Skoll dissenting.

Planning Manager Lodan announced that there will be no additional notification because the item was continued to a date certain. He invited anyone who has questions to contact him or Planning Assistant Fernandez at 310-618-5990.

7. **ORAL COMMUNICATIONS #1** – None.

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Vice Chair D'anjou reviewed the policies and procedures of the Planning Commission, including the right to appeal decisions to the City Council.

8. **TIME EXTENSIONS**- None.

9. **SIGN HEARINGS**- None.

10. **CONTINUED HEARINGS** – None.

11. **WAIVERS** – None.

12. **FORMAL HEARINGS**

12A. **PRE14-00011: BOB OSCAR LEE**

Planning Commission consideration for approval of a Precise Plan of Development to allow the construction of a new two-unit project on property located in the R2-PP Zone at 3521 Newton Street. This project is Categorically Exempt from CEQA per Guidelines Section 15030- New Construction.

Recommendation: Approval.

Planning Associate Gomez introduced the request.

Sina Khajavi, SK Architects, project architect, voiced his agreement with the recommended conditions of approval. He reported that there is an existing house on the property that will be demolished and replaced with a two-unit rental building and the project fully complies with all development standards and building codes.

Commissioner Tsao asked about the timeline for construction, and Mr. Khajavi estimated that the project would take approximately nine months to complete.

Noting that the site is adjacent to an elementary school, Commissioner Tsao requested that the applicant be respectful of the school with regard to noise and the safety of school children.

Mr. Khajavi offered his assurance that the applicant would do so.

MOTION: Commissioner Skoll moved to close the public hearing. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Watson and passed by unanimous roll call vote (absent Chairperson Polcari and Commissioner Herring).

MOTION: Commissioner Skoll moved for the approval of PRE14-00011, 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 (absent Chairperson Polcari and Commissioner Herring).

Planning Associate Gomez read aloud the number and title of Planning Commission Resolution No. 15-003.

MOTION: Commissioner Skoll moved for the adoption of Planning Commission Resolution No. 15-003. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Gibson and passed by unanimous roll call vote (absent Chairperson Polcari and Commissioner Herring).

12B. CUP14-00026: JOSE PONCE (NORTH TORRANCE PLAZA, LLC)

Planning Commission consideration for approval of a Conditional Use Permit to allow the operation of a small collection recycling facility within the western parking area of the existing shopping center on property located in the C-2 Zone at 4848 190th Street. This project is Categorical Exempt for CEQA per Guidelines Section 15301 – Existing Facilities.

Item was continued to February 4, 2015.

12C. CUP14-00028: JEREMY ANTHONY (FREEDOM CHURCH SOUTH BAY)

Planning Commission consideration for approval of a Conditional Use Permit to allow the operation of a church at an existing church building and allow for an off-site reciprocal parking agreement on property located in the R-3 Zone at 1750 Manuel Avenue. This project is Categorical Exempt for CEQA per Guidelines Section 15301 – Existing Facilities.

Recommendation: Approval.

Planning Associate Gomez introduced the request and noted supplemental material consisting of correspondence received after the agenda item was completed.

Jeremy Anthony, representing the applicant Freedom Church South Bay, voiced his agreement with the recommended conditions of approval. He reported that the church plans to take over an existing church building that has been vacant for several months.

Commissioner Watson noted that supplemental material contains correspondence in support of the project.

In response to Commissioner Skoll's inquiry, Mr. Anthony reported that the church currently has 60-80 members and confirmed that the church has obtained a reciprocal parking agreement with the Torrance Unified School District allowing parking on school property for church services and a copy has been provided to staff.

Noting that he drove by the site, Commissioner Tsao commented that he was pleased this beautiful historic structure will soon be in use again as a church.

MOTION: Commissioner Watson moved to close the public hearing. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Tsao and passed by unanimous voice vote (absent Chairperson Polcari and Commissioner Herring).

MOTION: Commissioner Tsao moved for the approval of CUP14-00028, 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 (absent Chairperson Polcari and Commissioner Herring).

Planning Associate Gomez read aloud the number and title of Planning Commission Resolution No. 15-005.

MOTION: Commissioner Tsao moved for the adoption of Planning Commission Resolution No. 15-005. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Gibson and passed by unanimous roll call vote (absent Chairperson Polcari and Commissioner Herring).

12D. CUP14-00029: 4 US IMAGE INC (PLAZA MAYOR, LLC)

Planning Commission consideration for approval of a Conditional Use Permit to allow the operation of a small collection recycling facility within the rear parking lot of the existing shopping center on property located in the C-2 Zone at 5035 Pacific Coast Highway. This project is Categorically Exempt for CEQA per Guidelines Section 15301 – Existing Facilities.

Recommendation: Approval.

Planning Associate Gomez introduced the request and noted supplemental material consisting of correspondence received after the agenda item was completed.

Avraham Farzan, 4 US Image Inc., briefly described the recycling center, noting that the center accepts aluminum, glass, plastic and e-waste and assists the nearby high school with fundraisers.

Indicating that he would not support the project, Commissioner Skoll voiced his opinion that recycling centers should not be located where there are residences nearby due to the long litany of problems associated with them and that they should be confined to industrial or commercial centers far away from residential areas.

Mr. Farzan stated that there is a California code which requires every shopping center with a grocery store with revenues of \$2 million or more per year to have a recycling center. He explained that his company does not operate like other recycling companies as they support the surrounding community and their facilities are kept clean and have generated no complaints. He reported that they operate the first recycling center approved by the City of Los Angeles in

40 years and neighbors, as well as the city, are very happy with their facility. He noted that this is a state-of-the-art facility and the façade alone cost \$60,000 and includes solar panels.

Commissioner Gibson expressed concerns that this recycling center has been operating without benefit of a permit.

Planning Manager Lodan advised that this application was filed as a result of a complaint that it was operating without a permit, however, there have been no other complaints about the operation.

Mr. Farzan stated that he took plans to the City, but the employee who reviewed them took 8 months to give him the green light to formally submit them and he also had a problem getting his landlord to sign off on the project because the landlord was more interested in another project at the shopping center involving a restaurant and that took priority.

In response to Commissioner Watson's inquiry, Mr. Farzan reported that recyclables are kept in sealed containers, which are picked up when they become full, approximately once a week, and they are then processed at another location.

Noting that he drove by the location twice, Commissioner Tsao questioned whether it would be possible to relocate the facility to another area of the shopping center further away from residences.

Mr. Farzan explained that the landlord believes this is the most suitable place for the facility and the most convenient for users. He emphasized that the facility has been in operation for many months and there have been no complaints about it.

Vice Chair D'anjou asked about the delay in obtaining a permit since the complaint was filed in 2011.

Planning Manager Lodan advised that the applicant mistakenly believed that no further action was required after he dropped off the plans for review so there was a delay in the filing of a formal application and there was further delay because the property owner was reluctant to commit to this project at the time because another project was under consideration which would have required additional parking. He reported that Code Enforcement staff who visited the site observed that the facility was very clean and well maintained and the only problem was the lack of permit.

In response to Vice Chair D'anjou's inquiry, Mr. Farzan reported that the facility has been in operation for 2½ years.

MOTION: Commissioner Watson moved to close the public hearing. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Gibson and passed by unanimous voice vote (absent Chairperson Polcari and Commissioner Herring).

Commissioner Watson stated that she is very much in favor of recycling, but had reservations about this project because while there is plenty of parking at this shopping center, the entrances/exits near the recycling facility are often congested.

Commissioner Gibson expressed concerns that the facility is located next to a very busy alley, which provides access to South High School.

Commissioner Skoll reiterated his position that recycling facilities should not be located anywhere near residential areas.

Assistant City Attorney Sullivan reviewed the California code sections alluded to by Mr. Farzan - Public Resources Code Sections 14526.5 and 14526.6, which require a supermarket with sales of \$2 million or more to have a certified recycling center in the parking lot or within a convenience zone which is defined as within a half mile of the supermarket.

Vice Chair D'anjou related her understanding that there is also a provision that allows recycling facilities to be housed within the supermarket so there are other potential options besides this location. She indicated, however, that she would support this project because she has driven by on numerous occasions and observed that the facility is kept very clean and there have been no complaints from neighbors.

MOTION: Commissioner Tsao moved for the approval of CUP14-00029, as conditioned, including all findings of fact set forth by staff. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Watson and passed by 3-2 roll call vote, with Commissioners Gibson and Skoll dissenting (absent Chairperson Polcari and Commissioner Herring).

Planning Associate Gomez read aloud the number and title of Planning Commission Resolution No. 15-006.

MOTION: Commissioner Tsao moved for the adoption of Planning Commission Resolution No. 15-006. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Watson and passed by 3-2 roll call vote, with Commissioners Gibson and Skoll dissenting (absent Chairperson Polcari and Commissioner Herring).

12E. CUP14-00030: SAMMY SON (CHERYL C. JOW, TRUSTEE)

Planning Commission consideration for approval of a Conditional Use Permit to allow the operation of a new shaved-ice restaurant on property located in the C-2 Zone at 2108-2110 Redondo Beach Boulevard. This project is Categorically Exempt for CEQA per Guidelines Section 15301 – Existing Facilities.

Recommendation: Approval.

Planning Associate Gomez introduced the request.

Jae Choi, representing Sammy Son, applicant, voiced his agreement with the recommended conditions of approval. He reported that he has a successful shaved-ice restaurant on Sepulveda Boulevard and another in Los Angeles, and wants to open a third location on Redondo Beach Boulevard.

Commissioner Skoll expressed concerns that Condition No. 6 requires the applicant to remove concrete and tile from the planter east of the driveway and provide/implement a planting plan, which he believes should be the responsibility of the property owner, not this tenant.

Planning Manager Lodan advised that it is standard practice to add conditions requiring improvements to address shortcomings on a commercial property when an application for a new

business is brought forward because this is the City's only opportunity to do so and typically the tenant and the property owner work cooperatively to accomplish the necessary improvements.

Commissioner Skoll suggested that the hearing be continued to ensure that the property owner was willing to assist the tenant with these improvements, and Mr. Choi indicated that the property owner was present at the meeting.

Cheryl Jow, owner of the subject property, stated that she really wants this tenant in her center and will do whatever is necessary.

Assistant City Attorney Sullivan advised that Ms. Jow's assurance that she will make the necessary improvements was not binding since the condition is imposed on the applicant's Conditional Use Permit.

Mr. Choi indicated that he was comfortable with the condition and was confident that he can work out the details with the property owner.

Ms. Jow voiced objections to Condition No. 7, which restricts the buildings at 2112 or 2114 Redondo Beach Boulevard to professional office uses only, with no retail, service or medical uses permitted. She explained that she plans on relocating an existing tenant who operates a massage business into one of these buildings.

Planning Manager Lodan advised that this condition is necessary to ensure that the center remains in compliance with parking requirements, however it can be amended to restrict a certain amount of square footage to professional office uses, rather than specifying a particular building.

Noting that he drove by the site, Commissioner Tsao related his belief that the restaurant will be a great addition to the neighborhood and suggested that it might be helpful to add signage alerting customers that there is additional parking in the rear.

Vice Chair D'anjou stated that she understood Commissioner Skoll's concern about the condition requiring improvements to be made to the shopping center, however, she believes such conditions are necessary because they ultimately help beautify the city and prevent shopping centers from becoming outdated and rundown.

MOTION: Commissioner Watson moved to close the public hearing. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Gibson and passed by unanimous voice vote (absent Chairperson Polcari and Commissioner Herring).

MOTION: Commissioner Skoll moved for the approval of CUP14-00030, as conditioned, including all findings of fact set forth by staff, with the following modification:

Modify

No. 7 That ~~2112 or 2114 Redondo Beach Boulevard~~ 1088 square feet shall be restricted to professional office uses only and no retail, service or medical uses shall be permitted.

The motion was seconded by Commissioner Watson and passed by unanimous roll call vote (absent Chairperson Polcari and Commissioner Herring).

Planning Associate Gomez read aloud the number and title of Planning Commission Resolution No. 15-007.

MOTION: Commissioner Skoll moved for the adoption of Planning Commission Resolution No. 15-007 as amended. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Tsao and passed by unanimous roll call vote (absent Chairperson Polcari and Commissioner Herring).

13. **RESOLUTIONS** – None.

14. **PUBLIC WORKSHOP ITEMS** – None.

15A. **COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR WEEKLY SUMMARY REPORTS**

Planning Manager Lodan noted that the Community Development Director Weekly Summary Report for January 2, 2015 was 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 4, 2015 Planning Commission meeting.

18. **ORAL COMMUNICATIONS #2**

18A. Commissioner Gibson reported that Ralph's supermarket on Pacific Coast Highway has removed all of the shopping cart corrals, and Planning Manager Lodan offered to have staff check into this.

18B. Commissioner Gibson expressed dismay that Rock & Brews restaurant in Riviera Village identifies itself as being in Redondo Beach, not Torrance.

Assistant City Attorney Sullivan suggested that this may be because the restaurant has a Redondo Beach mailing address.

18C. Commissioner Skoll recommended that the Commission's monthly agenda be modified so that the explanation under Agenda Item No. 7 – Oral Communications is consistent with the explanation provided on the City Council agenda for Oral Communications, and staff concurred with this recommendation.

18D. Commissioner Skoll reported that he heard a rumor that the new Costco has been delayed due to the discovery of contaminated soil and the opening has been postponed until April 2016, instead of December 2015.

Planning Manager Lodan indicated that he hadn't heard this and related his understanding that the project has almost completed the plan check process and is close to having building permits issued.

18E. Commissioner Skoll expressed an interest in having more frequent reports on the status of projects approved by the Planning Commission rather than just an annual report.

Planning Manager Lodan advised that staff prepares a quarterly report that is posted on-line, which may provide the information Commissioner Skoll is seeking, and offered to send Commissioners a link to it.

18F. Commissioner Watson noted for the record that she voted to approve the minutes for the December 3, 2014 Planning Commission meeting, but was absent from that meeting.

19. ADJOURNMENT

At 8:18 p.m., the meeting was adjourned to Wednesday, February 4, 2015 at 7:00 p.m.

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Approved as submitted February 18, 2015 s/ Rebecca Poirier, City Clerk
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