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TORRANCE PLANNING COMMISSION – FEBRUARY 4, 2015

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At 7:55 p.m., the meeting was adjourned to Wednesday, February 18, 2015 at 7:00 p.m.

February 4, 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, February 4, 2015 in City Council Chambers at Torrance City Hall.

2. SALUTE TO THE FLAG

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Commissioner D'anjou.

3. ROLL CALL/ MOTIONS FOR EXCUSED ABSENCE

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

Absent: Commissioner Herring.

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

MOTION: Commissioner Watson moved to grant Commissioner Herring an excused absence for this meeting. The motion was seconded by Commission Gibson and passed by unanimous voice vote.

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 30, 2015.

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – None.

6. REQUESTS FOR POSTPONEMENTS

Planning Manager Lodan relayed a request from the property manager of the North Torrance Plaza to continue Agenda Item 10A (CUP14-00026: Jose Ponce/North Torrance Plaza, LLC) to February 18, 2015.

MOTION: Commissioner Gibson moved to continue Agenda Item 10A to February 18, 2015. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Tsao and passed by roll call vote (absent Commissioner Herring).

7. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS #1 – None.

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Chairperson Polcari 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**

10A. **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 Categorically Exempt for CEQA per Guidelines Section 15301 – Existing Facilities.

Item was continued to February 18, 2015.

11. **WAIVERS** – None.

12. **FORMAL HEARINGS**

12A. **DIV14-00015: CONTINENTAL DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION (CONTINENTAL SKYPARK, LLC/ CONTINENTAL 23248 HAWTHORNE BLVD. CORPORATION)**

Planning Commission consideration for approval of a Division of Lot to allow a Lot Line Adjustment between two properties located at 23220 and 23240 Hawthorne Boulevard (APN 7378-014-032 and APN 7378-015-058) on properties located in the HMP and HSP Zones. This project is Categorically Exempt from CEQA per Guidelines Section 15305 – 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 provide additional parking for the commercial center at 23240 Hawthorne Boulevard and bring it into compliance with parking requirements, which have increased because there are now two restaurants in the center instead of one restaurant as originally planned.

In response to Commissioner Skoll's inquiry, Mr. DeJong reported that the two restaurants – Five Guys and Einstein's Bagels – are already in operation.

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

MOTION: Commissioner Skoll moved for the approval of DIV14-00015, 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 (absent Commissioner Herring).

Planning Assistant Fernandez read aloud the number and title of Planning Commission Resolution No. 15-008.

MOTION: Commissioner Skoll moved for the adoption of Planning Commission Resolution No. 15-008. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Tsao and passed by unanimous roll call vote (absent Commissioner Herring).

12B. CUP14-00031: FITNESS FANATICS, LLC. (3720 PCH, LLC)

Planning Commission consideration for approval of a Conditional Use Permit to allow the operation of a fitness facility within an existing commercial center on property located in the H-PCH Zone at 3720 Pacific Coast Highway. This project is Categorically Exempt from CEQA per Guidelines Section 15305 – Minor Alterations.

Recommendation: Approval.

Planning Assistant Fernandez introduced the request.

Riley LeBrun, representing the applicant, voiced his agreement with the recommended conditions of approval. He reported that the fitness facility will be an Orange Theory franchise, which focuses on getting a client's heart rate up to a target zone that is optimal for working out and stimulating metabolism, and clients are equipped with heart-rate monitors that allow them to track their heart rate on a computer screen using color-coded graphics.

Noting that he goes to cardiac therapy three times a week, Commissioner Skoll expressed an interest in this concept. Referring to a summary provided by the applicant, he asked about Orange Theory's requirement that a facility have at least 200 members before opening.

Mr. LeBrun explained that there will be a presale of memberships while the facility is under construction and the company has set a 200-member minimum to ensure that a franchise will be successful.

Commissioner Skoll questioned whether employees are trained to handle a medical emergency in case a client should have a heart attack.

Mr. LeBrun reported that the State requires that all employees obtain Red Cross certification and confirmed that there will be a defibrillator on-site.

Commissioner Tsao questioned whether clients make appointments or if there are set hours.

Mr. LeBrun explained that classes, which last about one hour, are scheduled based on demand and posted on the website; that a new facility typically starts with 7 classes per day, with 4 in the morning and 3 in the evening; and that members may attend any of these classes.

Commissioner Gibson asked about the hours of operation, which are listed as 5:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. daily.

Mr. LeBrun stated that these hours were requested to allow some flexibility, noting that the first class usually begins at 5:30 a.m. and on Saturday and Sunday, classes end 11:00 a.m.

Gary Birks, 242nd Street, requested clarification of parking requirements, which was provided by Planning Manager Lodan.

Mr. Birks expressed concerns about the project's impact on traffic and parking, suggesting that the facility could have many more members than the 200 minimum.

Planning Manager Lodan advised that occupancy is limited by the size of the facility, so it was unlikely that it would have a great impact on traffic and parking.

Mr. LeBrun explained that peak hours are early in the morning when no other businesses in the center are open and classes usually have 12-15 members in attendance.

In response to Chairperson Polcari's inquiry, Mr. LeBrun reported that the facility will open in May or June.

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

MOTION: Commissioner Skoll moved for the approval of CUP14-00031, 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 Commissioner Herring).

Planning Assistant Fernandez read aloud the number and title of Planning Commission Resolution No. 15-009.

MOTION: Commissioner Tsao moved for the adoption of Planning Commission Resolution No. 15-009. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Gibson and passed by unanimous roll call vote (absent Commissioner Herring).

12C. CUP14-00032: NATHAN BATTLE, CATALDO ARCHITECTS, INC. (GHT AL, LLC)

Planning Commission consideration for approval of a Conditional Use Permit to allow the construction of an approximately 31,000 square-foot industrial building on property located in the M-2 Zone at 570 Alaska Avenue. This project is Categorically Exempt from CEQA per Guidelines Section 15302 – Replacement or Reconstruction.

Recommendation: Approval.

Planning Assistant Fernandez introduced the request.

John Cataldo, Cataldo Architects, project architect, voiced his agreement with the recommended conditions of approval and noted that he greatly enjoys working in Torrance due to City's exceptional staff. He explained that the existing building on this site has become functionally obsolete so the property owner has decided to demolish it and construct a new state-of-the-art industrial building, which will incorporate many "green" components, including solar panels. He reported that there will be five loading docks at the rear of the structure well screened from the street. He noted that the project was designed to complement the building across the street, which he also designed, and related his belief that it will be a great addition to the area.

In response to Commissioner Tsao's inquiry, Mr. Cataldo reported that the building is a "spec" building and was designed to accommodate both warehouse and manufacturing uses.

Commissioner Gibson requested clarification regarding truck traffic, and Mr. Cataldo explained that the loading docks were designed to allow the movement of products/materials via semi-trucks and that the path of travel will likely be Maricopa Street to Crenshaw Boulevard.

Commissioner Watson asked if any problems were encountered due to the irregular shaped lot, and Mr. Cataldo responded that he felt the lot's shape actually worked to the project's advantage.

Chairperson Polcari pointed out that the site's location near the new transit center could be a selling point.

Commissioner Skoll commented positively on the project.

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

MOTION: Commissioner D'anjou moved for the approval of CUP14-00032, as conditioned, including all findings of fact set forth by staff. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Tsao and passed by unanimous roll call vote (absent Commissioner Herring).

Planning Assistant Fernandez read aloud the number and title of Planning Commission Resolution No. 15-010.

MOTION: Commissioner D'anjou moved for the adoption of Planning Commission Resolution No. 15-010. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Gibson and passed by unanimous roll call vote (absent Commissioner Herring).

12D. CUP14-00033, DIV14-00016: ELIZABETH SROUR (DREAM HOMES, LLC)

Planning Commission consideration for approval of a Conditional Use Permit to allow the construction of a new three-unit condominium development, in conjunction with a Division of Lot for condominium purposes on property located in the R-3 Zone at 2443 Border Avenue. This project is Categorically Exempt from CEQA per Guidelines Section 15303 – New Construction.

Recommendation: Approval.

Planning Assistant Fernandez introduced the request.

Commissioner D'anjou, Commissioner Watson, and Commissioner Tsao disclosed that they had visited the site.

Jan Trobaugh, project architect, voiced his agreement with the recommended conditions of approval. He briefly described the proposed three-unit condominium project, noting that each unit has an oversize garage with room for trash bins, a washer and dryer and additional storage.

Chairperson Polcari expressed concerns that the parcel appears to be crowded with three units on it, noting that most of the other R-3 zoned lots on this block have only two units.

Mr. Trobaugh explained that the other lots cannot accommodate three units due to access issues and it's only possible on this lot because of its corner location.

Commissioner Watson indicated that she shared Chairperson Polcari's concerns about having three units on this parcel. She asked about the claim that trash bins could be stored in garages since most multi-unit developments in the area use large shared bins.

Mr. Trobaugh explained that developments with three units or less are serviced by the City's regular trash pick-up so each unit will have its own bins.

In response to Commissioner Watson's inquiry, Mr. Trobaugh provided clarification regarding the location of garages and guest parking.

Commissioner Watson noted that she had reached the same conclusions in Mary Letendre's letter (Attachment 5 – agenda material) before she ever read the letter.

Mary Letendre, 1880 Lincoln Avenue, expressed concerns that the proposed project will exacerbate existing parking problems in this area and urged that it be downsized to two units in conformance with other developments on the block. She noted that she was also representing elderly neighbors who live on either side of her.

In response to Commissioner Gibson's inquiry, Ms. Letendre confirmed that a two-unit project would be acceptable to her.

Doug Petersen, 2607 Border Avenue, stated that he also believes the project should be limited to two units, with the rear unit taking access from the alley and the front unit taking access from Border Avenue. He echoed concerns about the project's impact on parking and doubted that driveways on Lincoln Avenue could accommodate a vehicle without encroaching on the sidewalk.

Responding to comments, Mr. Trobaugh explained that units would be larger and considerably more expensive if two units are built on the site rather than three. He noted that R-2 standards would allow 2 four-bedroom units to be built with the same two parking spaces per unit. He reported that he worked with Engineering staff to position curb cuts on Lincoln Avenue so as to preserve as much street parking as possible and confirmed that there will be adequate space to park a vehicle in the driveway without encroaching on the sidewalk. He stated that parking problems in this area are due to developments that were built with substandard parking and this will not change regardless of what is built on this site.

Planning Manager Lodan advised that R-2 standards allow an FAR (floor area ratio) up to 0.65 whereas R-3 standards limit the FAR to 0.60 so a two-unit building could be larger than the three-unit building currently proposed.

Commissioner Skoll indicated that he did not object to the three units and felt the project was well designed, but was concerned about parking.

Planning Manager Lodan explained that a lot of the parking problems can be attributed to a large complex at the corner of Plaza del Amo and Border Avenue that was built at a time when only one parking space per unit was required. He noted that staff would not allow a curb cut on Border Avenue as was suggested by Mr. Petersen.

Voicing support for the project, Commissioner D'anjou related her belief that the architect had made good use of the space available and had worked to mitigate the project's impact on the neighborhood.

Chairperson Polcari indicated that he had not known that a two-unit project could have an FAR up to 0.65 as opposed to 0.60 for a three-unit project.

In response to Commissioner Skoll's inquiry, Mr. Trobaugh clarified that the Division of Lot is for condominium purposes only and the parcel will not be divided into three separate lots.

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

MOTION: Commissioner D'anjou moved for the approval of CUP14-00033 and DIV14-00016, as conditioned, including all findings of fact set forth by staff. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Tsao and passed by a 5-1 roll call vote, with Commissioner Watson dissenting (absent Commissioner Herring).

Planning Assistant Fernandez read aloud the number and title of Planning Commission Resolution Nos. 15-011 and 15-012.

MOTION: Commissioner D'anjou moved for the adoption of Planning Commission Resolution Nos. 15-011 and 15-012. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Tsao and passed by a 5-1 roll call vote, with Commissioner Watson dissenting (absent 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 Reports for January 16 and January 22, 2015 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 18, 2015 Planning Commission meeting.

18. **ORAL COMMUNICATIONS #2**

18A. Chairperson Polcari reported that he was reappointed to the Commission for another four years at the January 27 City Council meeting, and Commissioners offered their congratulations.

18B. Commissioner D'anjou noted that Girl Scouts will be out selling cookies and encouraged everyone to support them.

18C. Commissioner Watson reported that there will be a presentation by Anna Sklar, NPR reporter and author of *Brown Acres – An Intimate History of L.A. Sewers* on Saturday, February 14, at 10:00 a.m. in the Zamperini Field community room at Torrance Airport.

18D. Commissioner Tsao wished everyone a happy Valentine's Day.

19. ADJOURNMENT

At 7:55 p.m., the meeting was adjourned to Wednesday, February 18, 2015 at 7:00 p.m.

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Approved as submitted March 3, 2015 s/ Rebecca Poirier, City Clerk
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