

**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, March 2, 2011 in City Council Chambers at Torrance City Hall.

2. SALUTE TO THE FLAG

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Commissioner Uchima.

3. ROLL CALL

Present: Commissioners Gibson, Polcari, Rizzo, Uchima, Weideman, Skoll and Chairperson Horwich.

Absent: None.

Also Present: Planning Manager Lodan, Planning Associate Gomez, Plans Examiner Noh, Associate Civil Engineer Symons, Sr. Fire Prevention Specialist Kazandjian and 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, February 24, 2011.

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – None.

6. REQUESTS FOR POSTPONEMENTS

Planning Manager Lodan relayed the applicant's request to continue Agenda Item 11C (CUP11-00003, DVP11-00002, DIV11-00001: El Pollo Loco Store 6094) to April 6, 2011.

MOTION: Commissioner Weideman moved to continue Agenda Item 11C to April 6, 2011. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Skoll and passed by unanimous voice vote.

7. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS #1 – None.

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

8. TIME EXTENSIONS – None.

9. CONTINUED HEARINGS

9A CUP10-00012: LUCKY STRIKE DEL AMO, LLC (DEL AMO FASHION CENTER OPERATING COMPANY, LLC)

Planning Commission consideration for approval of a Conditional Use Permit to allow live entertainment including disc jockey, karaoke, and dancing, on property located in the H-DA1 Zone at 3525 Carson Street, #77.

Recommendation: Approval.

Planning Associate Gomez introduced the request and noted supplemental material available at the meeting consisting of revisions to Condition Nos. 4 and 8 and correspondence received after the staff report was completed.

Bruce Evans, Solomon, Saltsman & Jamieson, legal counsel for the applicant, voiced his agreement with the recommended conditions of approval, with the exception of Condition No. 6, which requires a minimum of 6 clearly identifiable security guards for events involving fewer than 250 people and 8 security guards for events exceeding 250 people up to capacity. He explained that the applicant proposed an alternative condition that would require 1 security guard for every 50 patrons and the Police Department agreed to this ratio, as detailed in his letter dated February 21, 2011 (staff report – page 12). He commended Police Sergeant Brian O'Steen and Brian Sunshine, City Manager's Office, for their willingness to work with the applicant to mitigate the City's concerns about allowing this type of activity.

Commissioner Rizzo expressed concerns about having only 1 security guard for the first 50 patrons, relating his experience that it can be difficult for a single security guard to deal with someone who is intoxicated.

Police Lieutenant Jezulin noted his agreement with Commissioner Rizzo's remarks and proposed requiring 2 security guards for the first 50 patrons and 1 additional security guard for every 50 patrons after that. He reported that the Police Department supports this application with the revised conditions.

Mr. Evans indicated that the applicant was agreeable to having 2 security guards for the first 50 patrons.

Commissioner Gibson recalled that the Police Department was strongly opposed when a similar application (National Sports Grill) was recently brought forward.

Lieutenant Jezulin advised that there were noise issues because the National Sports Grill is located next to residences and in addition, the applicant had a history of not following the rules, including a couple of blatant violations, and there was a high level of activity requiring police response, which is not the case with this applicant. He explained that the new manager who took over Lucky Strike seven months ago has worked with the Police Department to address any concerns about the operation and has established a good track record during that time period.

In response to Commissioner Uchima's inquiry, Corey Overstreet, general manager of Lucky Strike Del Amo, provided clarification regarding the location of the dance floor; reported the company has 20 bowling alleys nationwide and 4 in California; and confirmed that some have entertainment/dancing as proposed.

Mr. Evans advised that the bowling alley held at least 8 events during November and December 2010 with live entertainment that were closely monitored by the police department and it was determined that the events were well-run and did not create any problems. He noted that all employees who serve alcohol go through the certification program offered by the ABC (Alcoholic Beverage Control) and that all security guards are properly trained and licensed.

Commissioner Gibson related her understanding that the bowling alley also caters to families. Mr. Overstreet explained that all minors must leave the facility by 8:00 p.m. unless they are part of a private party, noting that there will be security at the door checking the ID of everyone entering after 7:00 p.m. to verify that they are 21 years of age or older.

Chairperson Horwich expressed doubts as to whether bowling was still the focus of the business, and Mr. Overstreet explained that bowling is the most profitable aspect of the business as there is very little cost associated with it.

Mr. Evans stated that he expected the three-month review period to go smoothly and looked forward to returning to the Commission.

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

MOTION: Commissioner Weideman moved for the approval of CUP10-00012, as conditioned, including all findings of fact set forth by staff, with the following modifications:

Modify

- No. 4 That the live entertainment and dancing events open to the public shall be restricted to three (3) nights per week, unless approved in advance by the Special Event Committee or Community Development Director.
- No. 6 That the establishment shall retain in-house security, or contract with a private security firm and provide two (2) security guards for the first 50 patrons and one (1) additional security guard for every 50 patrons thereafter. Security staff must be clearly identifiable as security; at least two (2) security guards shall be stationed at the front entrance during all events; all security guards shall be licensed by the California Department of Consumer Affairs, Bureau of Security and Investigative Service.
- No. 8 That the live entertainment and dancing events open to the public shall be monitored by the Community Development Department and Police Department and that the operation shall be reviewed by the Planning Commission after three (3) months of operation to ensure compliance with code and special conditions.

The motion was seconded by Commissioner Skoll and passed by unanimous roll call vote.

Commissioner Skoll stated that he was initially concerned about this proposal, but was now comfortable approving it after hearing from the police department.

Commissioner Gibson stated that she had serious reservations about approving this application and will be looking for a very good report in three months.

Planning Associate Gomez read aloud the number and title of Planning Commission Resolution No. 11-012.

MOTION: Commissioner Weideman moved for the adoption of Planning Commission Resolution No. 11-012 as amended. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Gibson and passed by unanimous roll call vote.

10. WAIVERS

10A. WAV11-00003: TOM AND KAREN CARMODY

Planning Commission consideration for approval of a Waiver of the required rear yard setback and the minimum front yard setback required for a front-facing garage, in conjunction with first and second-story additions on property located in the R-1 Zone at 4503 Sharynne Lane.

Recommendation: Approval.

Planning Associate Gomez introduced the request and noted supplemental material available at the meeting consisting of correspondence received after the staff report was completed.

Robert Vanderhoof, Vanderhoof Burchfield, representing the applicants, voiced his agreement with the recommended conditions of approval.

In response to Commissioner Weideman's inquiry, Mr. Vanderhoof reported that the applicants gained property in conjunction with the development of Seaside Heroes Park.

Commissioner Polcari announced that he was recusing himself from consideration of this item because he lives within 500 feet of the site and exited the dais.

Commissioner Uchima noted the two letters of support from neighbors contained in the supplemental material.

MOTION: Commissioner Uchima moved to approve WAV11-00003, 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 Polcari).

Planning Associate Gomez read aloud the number and title of Planning Commission Resolution No. 11-013.

MOTION: Commissioner Uchima moved for the adoption of Planning Commission Resolution No. 11-013. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Gibson and passed by unanimous roll call vote (absent Commissioner Polcari).

Commissioner Polcari returned to the dais.

11. FORMAL HEARINGS

11A. CUP11-00004: DEAN REUTER (DEL AMO FINANCIAL CENTER, LP)

Planning Commission consideration for approval of a Conditional Use Permit to allow the operation of an after-school, weekend and summer science educational facility for K-12th grade on property located in the Hawthorne Boulevard Corridor Specific Plan Zone Del Amo 1 Sub District at 21605 Hawthorne Boulevard.

Recommendation: Approval.

Dean Reuter, applicant, provided an overview of the proposed science educational facility, which will offer advanced courses in biology and chemistry taught by professorial-level staff. He reported that they hope to open up the program to students in the Torrance Unified School District and eventually offer scholarships to students in surrounding communities.

Commissioner Gibson noted that the staff report mentions that because the second-floor tenant space is not equipped with fire sprinklers, services cannot be provided to children who are K-2nd grade.

Mr. Reuter stated that the applicant has been working with the Building and Safety Department on this issue and believes it can be resolved because each floor has on-grade exits.

Planning Manager Lodan recommended amending Condition No. 7 to state that no instruction to K-2nd grade children will be permitted "without prior approval of the Building and Safety Department."

Sr. Fire Prevention Specialist Kazandjian confirmed that the project must comply with Fire Code regulations and there would be no exemptions.

Commissioner Rizzo asked about the safety certification required for biology/chemistry labs.

Mr. Reuter offered his assurance that the lab would comply with all safety requirements. He explained that the use of chemicals would be very limited and none would be explosive, for example one of the chemistry experiments involves the baking of bread. He reported that a list of the chemicals has been submitted to Building and Safety and the Fire Department and they have no problems with them.

Plans Examiner Noh advised that neither the type of chemical nor the quantity to be used in the labs would be considered highly hazardous.

Chairperson Horwich expressed concerns about the adequacy of the parking should classes overlap. Mr. Reuter reported that there is more than enough parking since the parking lot was designed to accommodate a full build-out of the financial center.

Planning Manager Lodan confirmed that the parking provided exceeds requirements.

Mr. Reuter urged approval of the project.

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

Commissioner Skoll related his belief that the project would be a welcome addition to Torrance.

MOTION: Commissioner Skoll moved to approve CUP11-00004, as conditioned, including all findings of fact set forth by staff, with the following modification:

Modify

No. 7 That no instruction to K-2nd grade children shall be permitted without prior approval of the Building and Safety Department.

The motion was seconded by Commissioner Weideman and passed by unanimous roll call vote.

Planning Associate Gomez read aloud the number and title of Planning Commission Resolution No. 11-014.

MOTION: Commissioner Weideman moved for the adoption of Planning Commission Resolution No. 11-014 as amended. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Uchima and passed by unanimous roll call vote.

11B. VAR11-00001, WAV11-00002: CHRIST OUR SAVIOR ANGLICAN CHURCH

Planning Commission consideration for approval of a Variance to allow a church use with less than the required lot size in conjunction with a Waiver of the required setbacks on property located in the C-1 Zone at 1108 Sartori Avenue.

Recommendation: Denial without prejudice.

Planning Associate Gomez introduced the request.

Father Dale Smith, Christ Our Savior Anglican Church, provided background information about Christ Our Savior Anglican Church. He explained that the congregation consists of approximately 20 members who are active in various ministries, including outreach to military personnel, counseling for drug and alcohol addiction, and community health services. He stated that while it does not look like a traditional church, the office building at 1108 Sartori Avenue is well suited for their purposes. He reported that activities that cannot be accommodated within the facility will be held off-site, noting that prayer breakfasts are held at local restaurants.

Dr. Val Finnell, Junior Warden of Christ Our Savior Anglican Church and Air Force Lieutenant Colonel stationed at Los Angeles Air Force Base, submitted a packet of information to the Commission. He explained that the subject property meets the needs of the church because it would provide office space for administrative purposes and gathering space for the small congregation. He noted that it is not the church's goal to grow into a large church at this location, but rather to create smaller off-shoot churches in surrounding communities. He discussed the church's various outreach programs, including providing assistance to military personnel and their families and helping people who cannot afford healthcare.

Commissioner Weideman expressed concerns that the size of the facility would severely limit the growth of the church.

Dr. Finnell stated that if the church grew larger than 40 or 50 people, they would spin-off congregations to other locations, relating his belief that small groups are more conducive to an active ministry.

Commissioner Gibson requested information about the bus shown in a photograph submitted by Dr. Finnell.

Dr. Finnell explained that the bus is a mobile medical clinic used to provide medical services to those who do not have health insurance. He reported that he is in discussions with Torrance Memorial Hospital about partnering with the church so that there would be provisions in place in case someone visiting the clinic needs acute care.

Joan Waddell, member of Christ Our Savior Anglican Church and Torrance resident, provided background information about her qualifications as a licensed drug and alcohol addiction counselor, noting that she currently works at the National Council on Alcohol and Drug Dependence in downtown Torrance. She explained that her ministry focuses on people who are struggling with various addictions and includes a religiously-based program similar to a 12-step program. She noted that there is a great need for counseling for veterans with alcohol and drug issues, as well as Post Traumatic Stress Syndrome.

Donald Mitchell, W. 166th Street, urged the Commission to approve the project, noting that he is a member of the Christ Our Savior Anglican Church and has lived in Torrance for over 75 years.

Father Smith wanted to clarify that the mobile medical clinic is not owned by the church and is based in Thousand Oaks; that it moves from place to place providing low cost medical services; and that it is a resource that the church would like to bring to Torrance when they can find an appropriate place to park it.

Planning Manager Lodan advised that parking the mobile medical clinic in a parking lot would be considered a special event, which requires City approval, and encouraged the applicant to contact staff when they find a suitable location.

Rick Capellino, Cap Brothers Construction Co, reported that his company owns and developed the subject property and will be moving into one of the suites. He stated that the company has made a concerted effort to attract quality businesses to the downtown core of Torrance and they believe Christ Our Savior Anglican Church will be a

compatible use for this building. He noted that having the building occupied in the evening and on weekends will cut down on vandalism and in addition, the church will bring people to the area thereby generating business for shops and restaurants.

Commissioner Weideman expressed concerns about the adequacy of the parking since the building was designed for office use and there is a shortage of parking in this area. He questioned whether the Mr. Capellino had explored leasing off-site parking.

Mr. Capellino reported that he has had discussions with the Switzer Center about potentially purchasing their parking lot.

Peter Lao, 1001 Sartori Avenue, reported that speeding traffic poses a danger to pedestrians trying to cross Sartori Avenue and requested that the City consider installing stops signs on Sartori at either Cravens or Engracia.

Planning Manager Lodan offered to relay the stop sign request to traffic engineering staff for review and to forward their findings to the City Council along with the project if the Commission decides to recommend approval of the Variance.

Chairperson Horwich questioned whether the applicant would like to continue this matter so that Mr. Capellino could complete negotiations with the Switzer Center regarding off-site parking since parking seems to be the major issue with this project.

Mr. Capellino clarified that the purchase of the Switzer Center parking lot would be in conjunction with future projects that he's exploring and related his belief that the proposed project would not impact street parking because adequate on-site parking is provided.

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

Commissioner Skoll stated that after carefully reviewing the staff report and listening to the testimony, he had decided to support the project as proposed. He further stated that he was very much in favor of the church's outreach to military personnel and believed this was a very worthy endeavor. He commended Mr. Capellino on the design of the building.

Commissioner Rizzo indicated that he was also supportive of the church's outreach efforts but was concerned about the adequacy of the parking, particularly when there are large-scale events such as a wedding or baptism. He recommended that clothing banks be prohibited along with food banks in the event the project is approved.

Commissioner Uchima related his understanding that the size of a gathering would be limited by the size of the sanctuary and Plans Examiner Noh reported that the maximum occupancy of the 1260 square-foot sanctuary would be 84 people.

Commissioner Uchima asked if the on-site parking could accommodate 84 people on a weekend when other businesses in the building would be closed, and Planning Manager Lodan advised that there would need to be more than one person per car since only 36 parking spaces are allocated for this use.

Commissioner Weideman explained that although he was impressed by Father Smith and Dr. Finnell and would like to support the project, he could not get past the parking situation because he believes it will be a problem and he had hoped that something would be done to mitigate it, such as the leasing of off-site parking.

MOTION: Commissioner Skoll moved for the approval of WAV11-00002 and to recommend that the City Council approve VAR11-00001. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Gibson and passed as reflected in the following roll call vote:

AYES: Commissioner Gibson, Polcari, Skoll and Uchima

NOES: Commissioners Rizzo and Weideman and Chairperson Horwich

Commenting on his vote, Commissioner Uchima noted that Father Smith mentioned that activities that cannot be accommodated at this location will be held off-site and large weddings and baptisms would fall in this category. He related his belief that the property owner would control the parking situation since his company will be located in the building and suggested that Mr. Capellino consider including a provision in the church's lease prohibiting large gatherings. He voiced his opinion that the church will be an asset to the community due to the services provided to veterans and others.

Commissioner Weideman wished the church good luck with the project and strongly encouraged the property owner to look for more parking.

Planning Manager Lodan noted that a resolution reflecting the Commission's action would be brought back for approval at a later date.

The Commission briefly recessed from 8:30 p.m. to 8:40 p.m.

11C. CUP11-00003, DVP11-00002, DIV11-00001: EL POLLO LOCO STORE 6094 (SMBD INVESTMENTS LLP)

Planning Commission consideration for approval of a Conditional Use Permit and a Development Permit to allow the construction and operation of a new drive-through restaurant with patio seating, in conjunction with a Division of Lot to allow a Lot Line Adjustment between two existing parcels, on property located in the H-NT Zone at 4373 182nd Street and 18120 Hawthorne Boulevard.

Continued to April 6, 2011.

12. RESOLUTIONS – None.

13. PUBLIC WORKSHOP ITEMS – None.

14. MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS – None.

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

16. LIST OF TENTATIVE PLANNING COMMISSION CASES

Planning Manager Lodan reviewed the agenda for the March 16, 2011 Planning Commission meeting.

17. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

17A. Chairperson Horwich invited everyone to attend the annual kick-off dinner for the Special Olympics on Friday, March 11, from 6:00-9:00 p.m. in Toyota Meeting Hall.

18. ADJOURNMENT

At 8:43 p.m., the meeting was adjourned to Wednesday, March 16, 2011 at 7:00 p.m.

Approved as Submitted March 16, 2011 s/ Sue Herbers, City Clerk
