

**INDEX**  
**TORRANCE PLANNING COMMISSION – FEBRUARY 17, 2016**

<b><u>SUBJECT</u></b>	<b><u>PAGE</u></b>
<b><u>OPENING CEREMONIES</u></b>	
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. <b><u>ORAL COMMUNICATIONS #1</u></b>	1
8. <b><u>TIME EXTENSIONS</u></b>	1
9. <b><u>SIGN HEARINGS</u></b>	1
10. <b><u>CONTINUED HEARINGS</u></b>	1
11. <b><u>WAIVERS</u></b>	1
12. <b><u>FORMAL HEARINGS</u></b>	
12A. PRE15-00022, WAV15-00014: Nagy Bakhoun (Sathoff)	<i>Res. 16-014 &amp; -015</i> 2-4
12B. CUP15-00032: Tek Mehreteab (Hakimi)	<i>Res 16-016</i> 4-5
12C. CUP15-00033: Meher Dadi (FCI Holdings)	<i>Res. 16-017</i> 5-7
12D. CUP15-00034, DIV15-00010: Amir Abbasi	<i>Res. 16-018 &amp; -019</i> 7
12E. CUP15-00036: McGee Sharon Architects	<i>Res. 16-020</i> 7-8
13. <b><u>RESOLUTIONS</u></b>	
13A. PRE13-00013, CUP13-00029, DIV13-00007: Larry Peha (Nola Properties)	<i>Res. 14-005, -006 &amp; -007</i> 8-9
14. <b><u>PUBLIC WORKSHOP ITEMS</u></b>	9
15. <b><u>MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS</u></b>	
15A. Community Development Director Summary Reports	9
16. <b><u>CITY COUNCIL ACTION ON PLANNING MATTERS</u></b>	9
17. <b><u>LIST OF TENTATIVE PLANNING COMMISSION CASES</u></b>	9
18. <b><u>ORAL COMMUNICATIONS #2</u></b>	9
19. <b><u>ADJOURNMENT</u></b>	9

At 8:50 p.m., the meeting was adjourned to Wednesday, March 2, 2016 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, February 17, 2016, in City Council Chambers at Torrance City Hall.

**2. SALUTE TO THE FLAG**

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Commissioner Herring.

**3. ROLL CALL/ MOTIONS FOR EXCUSED ABSENCE**

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

Absent: None.

Also Present: Planning Manager Lodan, Planning Assistant Yumul, Sr. Fire Prevention Officer Kazandjian, Associate Civil Engineer Symons, Plans Examiner Noh 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 Friday, February 11, 2016.

**5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**MOTION:** Commissioner Polcari moved to approve the January 20, 2016 Planning Commission minutes as written. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Watson and passed by unanimous roll call vote, with Commissioners Gibson and Watson abstaining.

**6. REQUESTS FOR POSTPONEMENTS – None.**

**7. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS #1 – None.**

\*

Chairperson 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. PRE15-00022, WAV15-00014: NAGY BAKHOUM (TINA AND BLAKE SATHOFF)**

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, in conjunction with a Waiver of the front and side yard setback requirements, on property located within the Hillside Overlay District in the R-1 Zone at 410 Via San Sebastian. This project is Categorically Exempt from CEQA per Guidelines Sections 15301 – Existing Facilities and 15305 – Minor Alterations.

**Recommendation:** Denial without prejudice.

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

Commissioner Polcari announced that he was recusing himself from consideration of this item because he works with the applicants, and Commissioner Rudolph announced that he was also recusing himself because he has a business relationship with the architect and both Commissioners exited the dais.

Nagy Bakhom, project architect, reported that the project has undergone multiple revisions to try to address neighbors' concerns and he believes the proposed two-story design was the best solution because the same amount of square footage on a single level would have a greater impact on views.

Commissioner Herring asked about the substandard length of the driveway.

Mr. Bakhom explained that at staff's suggestion, he shifted the garage toward the street 5 feet, which allowed him to relocate 200 square feet from the second floor to the first floor in an area where it does not impact views.

Planning Manager Lodan confirmed that staff worked with the architect to try to find ways to reduce the square footage on the second floor.

Commissioner Herring requested clarification of the claim that a one-story project would have more impact on neighbors.

Mr. Bakhom explained that a one-story project would move the structure further north where it would have a greater impact on views from surrounding homes.

Jeannine Speros, 416 Via San Sebastian, voiced objections to the project, stating that the proposed two-story structure will close-in her house, darken her rooms and affect her view, property value and quality of life, submitting photos to illustrate. She noted that she and her late husband specifically bought their home in this area 29 years ago because of the protections of the Hillside Ordinance.

Commissioner Herring noted that the architect has claimed that a one-story project would have a greater impact on neighbors.

Ms. Speros responded that she is the one most affected by the project as it keeps getting shifted more and more to the south to appease neighbors above.

Bill Lavoie, 423 Via Mesa Grande, stated that he is not affected by the project, but opposes it because it blocks views and he does not want to see the area turn into another Manhattan Beach.

Bunne Renhult, 425 Avenida de Jose, voiced objections to the project citing view impact.

Karen O'Neill, 211 Calle de Arboles, stated that the proposed project is McMansion that will ruin Ms. Speros' view and take away her privacy and the applicants have ignored the project's impact on Ms. Speros and have bullied and threatened her.

Commissioner Gibson asked about her claim that Ms. Speros had been threatened, and Ms. O'Neill clarified that she did not mean it in the criminal sense.

Roger Tashima, 403 Via San Sebastian, expressed concerns that the proposed project will block neighbors' views and intrude on their privacy.

Russell Love, 332 Via San Sebastian, voiced objections to the project, explaining that he can clearly see the silhouette from his backyard so his privacy will definitely be impacted. He suggested that there are other options that should be considered such as a semi-subterranean design.

Bryan Tsunoda, 419 Via San Sebastian, also voiced objections to the project. Submitting photos to illustrate, he estimated that it would block 20% of the ocean view from his bedroom, as well as reduce the view from another bedroom and the kitchen. He echoed concerns about the project's impact on Ms. Speros.

Neal Kamibayashi, 423 Via San Sebastian, disputed the claim in the staff report that the project would not significantly impact his view and related his belief that the applicants should not be able to expand their home at the expense of neighbors' views.

Fred Toppel, 415 Via San Sebastian, reported that the proposed project would impact the view from his driveway, which he hopes to eventually convert to living space, submitting photos to illustrate. He expressed concerns that the project, which would double the size of the existing house, was too large for the neighborhood and that it would set a precedent because it would be the only two-story house on that side of the block.

John Salas, 425 Via Malaga, voiced objections to the project, suggesting that it was too ambitious.

Norma Taylor, 219 Calle de Arboles, stated that the applicants should have purchased somewhere else if they wanted a large home because this is a small home area.

Mr. Bakhom reiterated his position that the two-story project as proposed was the best solution for this site. He explained that a semi-subterranean design is typically used for sloping lots and this lot is relatively flat so such a design would involve digging a big hole and building large retaining walls, which would also impact neighbors' views. He disputed the idea that the project was too large, noting that the house is only approximately 3,000 square feet. He suggested that the stair-stepped topography in this area makes it impossible to avoid privacy impacts and pointed out that just because someone can see the silhouette from their backyard does not mean that their privacy will be affected because windows will be well below the roofline.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Watson move to close the public hearing. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Herring and passed by unanimous voice vote (absent Commissioners Rudolph and Polcari).

Chairperson D'anjou stated that she agreed with Mr. Salas that the project was too ambitious and while she appreciated the architect's efforts, she felt he was trying to jam a square peg into a round hole.

Commissioner Watson indicated that she could not support the project because she believes it would disrupt the flow and pattern of this area and change the character of the neighborhood.

Commissioner Gibson stated that she found the photos submitted by Ms. Speros to be very compelling and could not support the project as proposed.

Commissioner Tsao reported that he was also concerned about the project's impact on Ms. Speros and could not support it.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Herring moved to deny PRE15-00022 and WAV15-00014 without prejudice. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Tsao and passed by unanimous roll call vote (absent Commissioners Rudolph and Polcari).

Planning Assistant Yumul read aloud the number and title of Planning Commission Resolution Nos. 16-014 and 16-015.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Tsao moved to adopt Planning Commission Resolution Nos. 16-014 and 16-015. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Gibson and passed by unanimous roll call vote (absent Commissioners Rudolph and Polcari).

Commissioner Rudolph and Commissioner Polcari returned to the dais at this time.

**12B. CUP15-00032: TEK MEHRETEAB (KAMRAN HAKIMI)**

Planning Commission consideration for approval of a Conditional Use Permit to allow the partial conversion of an existing food market to restaurant use and the use of off-site parking spaces on property located in the Downtown Torrance District Commercial Sector at 1303 El Prado Avenue. This project is Categorically Exempt from CEQA per Guidelines Sections 15301 – Existing Facilities.

**Recommendation:** Approval.

Planning Assistant Yumul introduced the request.

Tek Mehreteab, applicant, voiced his agreement with the recommended conditions of approval and briefly described the proposed project, which consists of a tea room restaurant (Chado Tea Room) and a gourmet food market.

Commissioner Watson related her belief that the tea room will be a great addition to the downtown area, noting that she has been to the Chado Tea Room in Pasadena and is a fan of it.

Commissioner Herring expressed concerns about the adequacy of the parking since some of it is off-site.

Mr. Mehreteab reported that tea room has three locations in downtown Pasadena, none of which have as much parking as this location, and it has not been a problem.

Responding to questions from the Commission, Mr. Mehreteab reported that he expects the tea room to be in operation in 45 to 60 days and the proposed hours of operation are 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. seven days a week, but they may be shortened based on customer demand.

Commissioner Rudolph asked how customers would learn about off-site parking, and Mr. Mehreteab reported that this information will be included on business cards, flyers and the tea house's website.

In response to Commissioner Rudolph's inquiry, Planning Manager Lodan confirmed that the lease for the off-site parking must remain in effect as long as the tea house is open.

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

**MOTION:** Commissioner Polcari moved to approve CUP15-00032, 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.

Planning Assistant Yumul read aloud the number and title of Planning Commission Resolution No. 16-016.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Polcari moved to adopt Planning Commission Resolution No. 16-016. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Tsao and passed by unanimous roll call vote.

**12C. CUP15-00033: MEHER DADI (FCI HOLDINGS, INC.)**

Planning Commission consideration for approval of a Conditional Use Permit to allow the operation of a banquet hall use, in conjunction with a shared-use parking arrangement, within an existing shopping center on property located within the HBCSP-MP Zone at 22761-22763 Hawthorne Boulevard.

**Recommendation:** Denial without prejudice.

Planning Assistant Yumul introduced the request.

Meher Dadi, applicant, provided background information about the project, noting that she initially proposed a restaurant use for this site but was informed that she could not do so because there is no kitchen so she came up with the idea of a banquet hall. She maintained that staff had overestimated the number of required parking spaces because the banquet area will not be as large as listed in the staff report. She explained that this shopping center has 320 parking spaces and many of the businesses are closed by 6:00 p.m. so the parking should be more than adequate.

Planning Manager Lodan explained that staff has recommended denial of this application because it does not meet parking requirements and there are already a number of restaurants in this center creating a demand for parking.

Commissioner Rudolph noted that the plans also show a beauty salon and an international market within this tenant space.

Ms. Dadi reported that the beauty salon operates under a separate license and the international market is allowed under the current retail business license.

Commissioner Rudolph asked if the applicant could put in more stores and turn this space into a swap meet.

Planning Manager Lodan advised that the applicant could offer a variety of retail items under the umbrella of the existing license, but staff would not support dividing this tenant space into more businesses.

Commissioner Rudolph stated that he did not see any synergy with regard to these three businesses and Planning Manager Lodan reported that staff was also concerned about having such disparate operations within this tenant space.

Noting that the staff report indicates that all food service will be catered, Commissioner Gibson asked if there were restrictions on the caterers that can be used.

Plans Examiner Noh reported that catering companies are subject to L.A. County Health Department requirements.

In response to Commissioner Watson's inquiry, Ms. Dadi reported that china and other serve-ware can be rented for catered events or she may decide to have it available on-site.

Plans Examiner Noh advised that should the applicant decide to provide serve-ware, it will have to be handled according to health department requirements.

Chairperson D'anjou asked how the salon, retail space and banquet hall will be separated, and Ms. Dadi indicated that curtains and backdrops will be used for this purpose.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Herring move to close the public hearing. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Tsao and passed by unanimous voice vote.

Commissioner Gibson stated that she could not support this application because it involves too many different operations and has too many loopholes.

Commissioner Watson related her belief that the applicant needs a more fully developed business plan.

Commissioner Polcari noted his agreement with Commissioner Gibson's and Commissioner Watson's remarks.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Herring moved to deny CUP15-00033 without prejudice. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Gibson and passed by unanimous roll call vote.

Planning Assistant Yumul read aloud the number and title of Planning Commission Resolution No. 16-017.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Herring moved to adopt Planning Commission Resolution No. 16-017. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Polcari and passed by unanimous roll call vote.

**12D. CUP15-00034, DIV15-00010: AMIR ABBASI**

Planning Commission consideration for approval of a Conditional Use Permit to allow a two-unit residential condominium development, in conjunction with a Division of Lot for condominium purposes on property located in the R-2 Zone at 18512 Roslin Avenue. This project is Categorically Exempt from CEQA per Guidelines Sections 15303 – New Construction and 15315 – Minor Land Divisions.

**Recommendation:** Approval.

Planning Assistant Yumul introduced the request and noted supplemental material consisting of additional Code requirements and an additional condition of approval.

Amir Abbasi, applicant, voiced his agreement with the recommended conditions of approval, including the condition in the supplemental material. He briefly described the proposed project, noting that he and his wife intend to live in one unit and his parents will live in the other to help with childcare.

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

**MOTION:** Commissioner Polcari moved to approve CUP15-00034 and DIV15-00010, as conditioned, including all findings of fact set forth by staff. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Herring and passed by unanimous roll call vote.

Planning Assistant Yumul read aloud the number and title of Planning Commission Resolution Nos. 16-018 and 16-019.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Polcari moved to adopt Planning Commission Resolution Nos. 16-018 and 16-019. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Tsao and passed by unanimous roll call vote.

**12E. CUP15-00036: McGEE SHARON ARCHITECTS (INSPIRED VENTURES, LLC)**

Planning Commission consideration for approval of a Conditional Use Permit to allow the operation of a veterinary hospital on property located in the M-2 Zone at 2545 190<sup>th</sup> Street. This project is Categorically Exempt from CEQA per Guidelines Sections 15301 – Existing Facilities.

**Recommendation:** Approval.

Planning Assistant Yumul introduced the request.

Rich Mills, DVM, reported that he currently operates veterinary emergency/specialty hospitals in Culver City and Woodland Hills and would like to open one in Torrance due to the demand for these services in the South Bay area. He noted that his hospitals are staffed with board certified specialists and have specialized equipment such as MRI machines that are not available at general veterinary hospitals.

Responding to questions from the Commission, Dr. Mills stated that the hospital will treat animals on an emergency basis, but most of his business is from referrals and that the hospital treats a variety of small and exotic animals, but does not treat large animals like horses.

In response to Commissioner Rudolph's inquiry, Cliff Damavandi, representing Inspired Ventures, LLC, provided information about the two other tenants in the subject building, a church and a self-storage facility. He reported that there is plenty of parking on the site and a certain number of spaces will be reserved for the hospital near its entrance; that a new monument sign will be installed for the hospital; and that the hospital has a 10-year lease, with two 5-year options.

Dr. Mills explained that there are windows along the front of the building where the hospital will be located and there will be changes to the façade to distinguish it from the other tenants in the building.

Commissioner Gibson voiced support for the project.

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

**MOTION:** Commissioner Polcari moved to approve CUP15-00036, 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 Yumul read aloud the number and title of Planning Commission Resolution No. 16-020.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Polcari moved to adopt Planning Commission Resolution No. 16-020. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Herring and passed by unanimous roll call vote.

### 13. **RESOLUTIONS**

#### 13A. **PRE13-00013, CUP13-00029, DIV13-00007: LARRY PEHA (NOLA PROPERTIES)**

Planning Commission adoption of resolutions reflecting their decision to deny without prejudice a Precise Plan of Development and Conditional Use Permit to allow the construction of an eight-unit apartment complex in two separate buildings, in conjunction with a Division of Lot to merge two lots into one, on properties located within the Hillside Overlay District in the R-3 Zone at 147-151 Paseo de la Concha.

Planning Assistant Yumul read aloud the number and title of Planning Commission Resolution Nos. 14-005, 14-006 and 14-007.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Polcari moved to adopt Planning Commission Resolution Nos. 14-005, 14-006 and 14-007. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Watson and passed by unanimous roll call vote, with Commissioner Gibson abstaining.

14. **PUBLIC WORKSHOP ITEMS** – None.

15. **MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS**

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

Planning Manager Lodan noted that the Community Development Director Weekly Summary Report for February 4, 2016 was distributed to the Commission.

16. **REVIEW OF CITY COUNCIL ACTION ON PLANNING MATTERS**

Planning Manager Lodan reported that the City Council approved the project at 5207 Paseo de las Tortugas by a split vote of 4-3 at the February 9 Council meeting, noting that the project underwent significant revisions since the Planning Commission hearing.

17. **LIST OF TENTATIVE PLANNING COMMISSION CASES**

Planning Manager Lodan reviewed the agenda for the March 2, 2016 Planning Commission meeting.

18. **ORAL COMMUNICATIONS #2**

Commissioners Herring, Tsao and Chairperson D'anjou spoke.

Commissioner Watson requested an excused absence for the March 2 Planning Commission meeting.

19. **ADJOURNMENT**

8:50 p.m., the meeting was adjourned to Wednesday, March 2, 2016 at 7:00 p.m.

Approved as submitted March 16, 2016 s/ Rebecca Poirier, City Clerk
---