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TORRANCE PLANNING COMMISSION – AUGUST 17, 2016

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At 7:42 p.m., the meeting was adjourned to Wednesday, September 21, 2016 at 7:00 p.m.

August 17, 2016

**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, August 17, 2016, 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, Gobble, Rudolph, Polcari, and Chairperson Watson.

Absent: Commissioners D'anjou and Tsao.

Also Present: Planning Manager Lodan, Planning Assistant Oorts, Plans Examiner Noh, Sr. Fire Prevention Officer Kazandjian, Associate Civil Engineer Symons and City Attorney Fellows.

MOTION: Commissioner Gobble, seconded by Commissioner Gibson, moved to grant Commissioner Tsao and Commissioner D'anjou excused absences for this meeting, and hearing no objection, Chairperson Watson 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 August 12, 2016.

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: July 20, 2016

The July 20, 2016 Planning Commission minutes were held until the next meeting due to the lack of a quorum of Commissioners who were present at that meeting.

6. REQUESTS FOR POSTPONEMENTS

Planning Manager Lodan relayed the applicant's request to continue Agenda Item 12A, CUP16-00011, CUP16-00012, CUP16-00013, CUP16-00014, DIV16-00006, DIV16-00007: Ennio Schiappa Homes, Inc., to September 21, 2016 in order to address a storm drain issue.

MOTION: Commissioner Polcari moved to continue Agenda Item 12A to September 21, 2016. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Rudolph and passed by unanimous roll call vote.

Planning Manager Lodan announced that there would be no further public notice or advertising because the hearing was continued to a date certain.

7. **ORAL COMMUNICATIONS #1** – None.

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Chairperson Watson 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. **PRE15-00010: BEN AGARWAL (MONICA KHURANA)**

Planning Commission consideration for approval of a Precise Plan of Development to allow the construction of a two-unit residential development on property located within the Hillside Overlay District in the R3-PP Zone at 2602 Pacific Coast Highway. This project is Categorically Exempt from CEQA per Guidelines Section 15303 – New Construction.

Recommendation: Approval.

Planning Assistant Oorts introduced the request.

Commissioner Gobble announced that he was abstaining from consideration of this item because there was considerable dialogue about the project before he was appointed to the Commission and he was not able to review the tapes. He exited the Council Chamber.

Ben Agarwal, applicant, reported that as directed by the Commission, he met with neighbors following the last hearing and the project has been revised from 3 three-story units to 2 two-story units to address their concerns. He noted that even though the lot is zoned R-3, the project now complies with R-2 standards, which are more restrictive in terms of height and setback requirements. He stated that he made a lot of concessions and worked closely with staff to come up with a design which he believes is very reasonable for this site.

Chairperson Watson asked about the project's design, and Mr. Agarwal explained that he originally proposed a modern design, which the neighbors didn't like, so the units were redesigned to look like a typical two-story house in Torrance.

Richard Davenport, 2606 Pacific Coast Highway, voiced objections to the project. He expressed concerns that the proposed two-story apartment units would loom over his property, intrude on his privacy, block his view of the sunrise, and add to the parking congestion on his street. He submitted a petition in opposition to the project.

Michael Aguiar, 2609 Dalemead Street, expressed concerns about the project's impact on the privacy of his backyard and Jacuzzi. He reported that the units were changed from three-story to two-story by eliminating the underground parking and he hasn't noticed any difference in the height of the project. He explained that he has let the pine tree in his backyard become overgrown to provide privacy, but his neighbor has complained that roots are getting into his sewer lateral so he's going to have to do something. He stated that he wouldn't mind if someone was building their dream home, but the applicant was only trying to make a buck.

Planning Manager Lodan noted that staff has included a condition (No. 3) requiring that the height of the project be reduced by 4 feet, which is not reflected in the silhouette.

Mr. Agarwal agreed to reduce the height of the structure, explaining that he was not aware that Torrance measures height from the curb, while other cities measure from the existing grade.

In response to Commissioner Rudolph's inquiry, Mr. Agarwal reported that he plans to achieve the height reduction by lowering the grade two feet and reducing the pitch of the roof. He voiced his agreement with all the recommended conditions of approval and clarified that the units will be condominiums, not apartments.

Commissioner Polcari commended Mr. Agarwal for his efforts to work with neighbors and asked if anything more could be done to address privacy concerns.

Mr. Agarwal responded that if there's a particular window neighbors are concerned about he would willing to change it, but explained there are only a few windows facing their properties and balconies are oriented away from them. He suggested that the privacy impact would be the same as having a two-story house next door, which is common throughout Torrance, and doubted that anyone would build a single-story home on this lot because it would not make economic sense.

In response to Commissioner Rudolph's inquiry, Mr. Agarwal reported that his daughter has owned the property for 10-12 years, but rented it out when she moved to Redondo Beach.

Commissioner Rudolph asked if Planning Commission approval would be required if only one house was being built on the lot, and Planning Manager Lodan advised that the project would still be subject to review because it's in the Hillside Overlay.

Commissioner Rudolph asked about outreach efforts.

Mr. Agarwal reported that after the first hearing, he met with the two neighbors who spoke at this meeting and they initially said that they'd be happy with 2 two-story units, but later indicated that they would oppose anything but a one-story, single-family house. He stated that he could further reduce the project's height by using a modern design, but neighbors don't want this.

Commissioner Rudolph noted that the Commission has had other cases where the property's R-3 zoning has come into conflict with neighbors.

Mr. Agarwal stated that he had tried very hard to work with neighbors to find a happy medium and he believes the proposed project does this.

MOTION: Chairperson Watson, seconded by Commissioner Gibson, moved to close the public hearing, and hearing no objection, so ordered.

Commissioner Polcari voiced support for the project, noting that Mr. Agarwal tried to work with neighbors, but they were not very helpful.

Indicating that he was also inclined to support the project, Commissioner Rudolph related his observation that this project is at the end of the street next to a high density development and it does not appear to create any view obstruction.

Chairperson Watson noted her agreement with her colleagues' remarks.

MOTION: Commissioner Polcari moved to approve PRE15-00010, as conditioned, including all findings of fact set forth by staff. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Gibson and passed by 4-0 roll call vote, with Commissioner Gobble abstaining, and Commissioners D'anjou and Tsao absent.

Planning Assistant Oorts read aloud the number and title of Planning Commission Resolution No. 15-069.

MOTION: Commissioner Polcari moved to adopt Planning Commission Resolution No. 15-069. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Gibson and passed by 4-0 roll call vote, with Commissioner Gobble abstaining, and Commissioners D'anjou and Tsao absent.

Commissioner Gobble returned to the dais at this time.

11. **WAIVERS** – None.

12. **FORMAL HEARINGS**

12A. **CUP16-00011, CUP16-00012, CUP16-00013, CUP16-00014, DIV16-00006, DIV16-00007: ENNIO SCHIAPPA HOMES, INC.**

Planning Commission consideration for approval of Conditional Use Permits to allow a two-unit residential condominium development on each of the four parcels, in conjunction with Division of Lots for condominium purposes, on properties located in the R-2 Zone at 18512 Grevillea Avenue and APNs 4083-004-011, 4083-004-021 and 4083-004-022. The project is Categorically Exempt from CEQA per Guidelines Sections 15332 – In-Fill Development, and 15315 – Minor Land Divisions.

Item was continued to September 21, 2016.

12B. **CUP16-00010, DIV16-00005, PCR16-00001: MIKE CHAMBERLAIN (SZU CHIANG KING)**

Planning Commission consideration for approval of a Conditional Use Permit to allow a two-unit residential development, in conjunction with a Division of Lot for condominium purposes, and a Planning Commission Review to allow the development on property located with the Torrance Tract Overlay in the R-2 Zone at 1729 Arlington Avenue. This project is Categorically exempt from CEQA per Guidelines Sections 15303 – New Construction, and 15315 – Minor Land Divisions.

Recommendation: Approval.

Chairperson Watson announced that she was recusing herself from consideration of this item because she lives across the street from the subject property and exited the Council Chamber. Vice Chair Rudolph took over as chair for this item.

Mike Chamberlain, project designer, reported that the project has a similar design to other Craftsman-style homes in this neighborhood; voiced his agreement with the recommended conditions of approval; and reported that the owner of the property will live in the front unit and the owner's daughter will live in the back unit.

Commissioner Polcari commented that it was too bad the applicant couldn't save this house because it has historical value.

Acknowledging that the house is historic, Commissioner Gibson stated that sometimes changes need to be made and she thought this project looks very nice.

Commissioner Gobble reported that he reviewed the project's design and it appears to conform to other newer construction in the area and he believes the project will enhance the neighborhood. He noted that he also enjoys history and old buildings, but understands the challenges of trying to fit what the property owner wants on the property that's available.

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 CUP16-00010, DIV16-00005, PCR16-00001, as conditioned, including all findings of fact. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Gibson and passed by 4-0 roll call vote, with Chairperson Watson recused, and Commissioners D'anjou and Tsao absent.

Planning Assistant Oorts read aloud the number and title of Planning Commission Resolution Nos. 16-075, 16-076 and 16-077.

MOTION: Commissioner Polcari moved to adopt Planning Commission Resolution Nos. 16-075, 16-076 and 16-077. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Gobble and passed by 4-0 roll call vote, with Chairperson Watson recused, and Commissioners D'anjou and Tsao absent.

Chairperson Watson returned to the dais at this time.

13. **RESOLUTIONS** – None.

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 Reports for July 29 and August 4, 2016 were distributed to the Commission.

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

Planning Manager Lodan reported that the City Council considered an appeal of the Commission's approval of the project at 202 Via Anita on August 9 and after much discussion, denied the appeal and approved the project.

17. LIST OF TENTATIVE PLANNING COMMISSION CASES

Planning Manager Lodan reported that the September 7, 2016 Planning Commission meeting will be cancelled due to the Labor Day holiday so the next meeting will be on September 21, 2016.

18. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS #2

Commissioner Polcari spoke.

19. ADJOURNMENT

At 7:42 p.m., the meeting was adjourned to Wednesday, September 21, 2016 at 7:00 p.m.

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Approved as submitted September 21, 2016 s/ Rebecca Poirier, City Clerk
