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TORRANCE PLANNING COMMISSION – SEPTEMBER 21, 2016

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At 9:00 p.m., the meeting was adjourned to Wednesday, October 5, 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, September 21, 2016, in City Council Chambers at Torrance City Hall.

2. SALUTE TO THE FLAG

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Commissioner Rudolph.

3. ROLL CALL/ MOTIONS FOR EXCUSED ABSENCE

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

Absent: None.

Also Present: Planning Manager Lodan, Planning Associate Martinez, Plans Examiner Noh, Fire Prevention Manager Kazandjian, Associate Civil Engineer Symons 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 September 15, 2016.

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

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

MOTION: Commissioner Polcari moved to approve the August 3, 2016 Planning Commission minutes as written. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Rudolph and passed by unanimous roll call vote.

MOTION: Commissioner Polcari moved to approve the August 17, 2016 Planning Commission minutes as written. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Rudolph and passed by unanimous roll call vote, with Commissioners D'anjou and Tsao abstaining.

6. REQUESTS FOR POSTPONEMENTS – None.

7. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS #1

A resident (no name given/no speaker card) expressed concerns about the removal of mature sycamore trees on Emerald Street just west of Hawthorne Boulevard.

Planning Manager Lodan explained that the land is being cleared because additional parking is required for the adjacent building since it is being converted to medical offices and some of the trees also interfere with the installation of curbs, gutters and sidewalk.

*

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. **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.

Recommendation: Approval.

Planning Associate Martinez introduced the request.

Assistant City Attorney Sullivan disclosed that he knows the applicant Ennio Schiappa because their sons used to play club soccer together but this will not affect his legal advice.

Commissioner Rudolph disclosed that Ennio Schiappa is an acquaintance of his, therefore he was recusing himself from this hearing and exited the dais.

Ennio Schiappa, applicant, briefly described the proposed project and voiced his agreement with the recommended conditions of approval. He confirmed that the storm drain issue that caused the hearing on this matter to be continued on August 17, 2016 has been resolved.

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

MOTION: Commissioner Polcari moved to approve CUP16-00011, CUP16-00012, CUP16-00013, CUP16-00014, DIV16-00006 and DIV16-00007 conditioned, including all findings of fact set forth by staff. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Gibson and passed by a 6-0 roll call vote, absent Commissioner Rudolph (recused).

Planning Associate Martinez read aloud the number and title of Planning Commission Resolution Nos. 16-069, 16-070, 16-071, 16-072, 16-073 and 16-074.

MOTION: Commissioner Polcari moved to adopt Planning Commission Resolution Nos. 16-069, 16-070, 16-071, 16-072, 16-073 and 16-074. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Gibson and passed by a 6-0 roll call vote, absent Commissioner Rudolph (recused).

Commissioner Rudolph returned to the dais at this time.

10B. CUP16-00005, DIV16-00004, WAV16-00009, ZON16-00002: ROBERT STRINGFIELD (WAYNE ANASTASI)

Planning Commission consideration for approval of a Zone Change from ML (M1-PP) (Limited Manufacturing District with Light Manufacturing – Precise Plan Overlay) to R-3 (Limited Multiple Family Residential District), in conjunction with a Conditional Use Permit to allow a 25-unit multiple-family residential community, a Waiver to allow a reduction of the window separation requirement, and a Tentative Tract Map for subdivision purposes, on property located in the ML (M1-PP) Zone at 20411 Earl Street. This project is Categorically Exempt from CEQA per Guidelines Sections 15332 – In-Fill Development and Final Environmental Impact Report State Clearinghouse No. 20081110146 – 2009 Torrance General Plan Update.

Recommendation: Approval.

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

Scott Anastasi, applicant, discussed community outreach efforts and modifications made to address neighbors' concerns and related his belief that this process has made for a better project. He noted that some of the neighbors wanted fewer units and more on-site parking, but overall the meetings were positive. He reported that he contacted the Torrance Unified School District as directed by Commission and learned that Victor Elementary School is at capacity and not accepting new students therefore students from this development will be placed in the nearest school with space available and this information will be disclosed to home buyers so they will be aware of this prior to purchasing a home.

Randy Morris, project architect, referring to renderings, detailed the revisions made to the project. He reported that the number of units was decreased from 25 to 21; that they are all single-family residences to be more in keeping with the adjacent residential neighborhood; that the setback along the north property line has been increased to 10 feet; that the height of the houses has been reduced 2 feet for a maximum height of 24 feet; and that another guest parking space was added. He explained that the grade along the northern property line has been lowered so the eave-line of the new houses will be essentially the same height as the existing tennis court fence so the project will not impose on adjacent residences on Michelle Drive and windows facing Michelle Drive were located so as to avoid any privacy impact. He related his belief that everything possible had been done from an architectural standpoint to mitigate the impact on neighbors.

Commissioner Gibson questioned whether the Development Impact Fees the developer must pay for schools would go to create more space at nearby schools.

Assistant City Attorney Sullivan explained that the fees go to the school district for use as they see fit and they are not allocated to a specific school. He confirmed that the developer was

meeting his obligation by disclosing to homebuyers that there is no guarantee that their children will be able to attend nearby schools.

Chairperson Watson invited public input.

Patrick Kim, 4204 Michelle Drive, reported on his attendance at the community meetings and contended that Mr. Anastasi had misinformed residents when he stated that a Waiver would not be needed. He expressed his opposition to the project, maintaining that it will loom over his property and take away his view of open space. Additionally, he asserted that there are many existing conditions that need to be addressed before any residential project goes forward, including the lack of a continuous sidewalk on the west side of Earl Street. He reported that approximately a year ago, the Planning Commission gave approval for a vitamin laboratory to work late into the night and as a result, truck traffic and manufacturing activities have caused the area to become even more noisy and congested. He called for all development to be put on hold until safety and quality of life concerns are addressed.

Jeannie Fuller, 4133 Konya Drive, voiced objections to the project, noting that she submitted a letter detailing her concerns and offering suggestions should the project be approved (supplemental material). She reported that motorists can get stuck on Earl Street for several minutes while big rigs maneuver in and out of businesses and suggested that this delay could be catastrophic for ambulances transporting patients to the nearby hospital. She maintained that conditions on Earl Street are very dangerous for pedestrians and they will only get worse with the building of this project.

Ellen Jung, 4489 Spencer Street, expressed concerns that safety issues have not been addressed and Mr. Anastasi claimed at the community meeting that they were not his problem. She related her belief that the 21-unit project was too massive for this area. She reported on a recent traffic accident on Earl Street that involved a fatality and echoed concerns about pedestrian safety.

Commissioner Gibson asked what number of units Ms. Jung thought would be appropriate for the site, and Ms. Jung responded that she thought there should be five units, but understands that wouldn't work if someone is trying to make money.

Irma Chiota, 4206 Konya Drive, stated that she's very much against the project because of the number of units and has suggested that there should be only 10. She expressed concerns that other developments will follow should this project be approved and Earl Street will end up being just like Anza Avenue.

Walter Gonzalez, 4124 Konya Drive, voiced his opinion that R-3 standards are too dense for this site and it should be developed according to the R-1 or R-2 standards.

Returning to the podium, Mr. Anastasi stated that his remarks about safety issues were taken out of context and offered to do whatever he can to address neighborhood safety concerns.

Mr. Morris provided clarification regarding the requested Waiver, noting that it is necessary for the small windows in garages and they can be eliminated if the Commission would prefer.

Commissioner Rudolph asked about the decision to orient the project so front yards are on Earl Street instead of creating a walled development with a private entrance.

Mr. Anastasi voiced his opinion that having the development open to the community was preferable to being walled off. He emphasized that traffic problems are existing and the proposed residential project will generate much less traffic than any other use that could be proposed for this site.

Commissioner Gobble expressed concerns that vegetation in front yards along Earl Street could block sight lines for motorists, noting that he visited the site and observed the heavy school traffic in the morning.

Mr. Anastasi proposed adding a condition limiting the height of vegetation to protect sight lines and Mr. Morris noted that the entrance/exit to the development was specifically located at the high point on Earl Street so those entering/exiting would be able to see in both directions.

Commissioner Gobble asked if there was some way to address the missing sidewalk on Earl Street.

Associate Civil Engineer Symons advised that the applicant is only required to install sidewalk along the project's frontage. He explained that when there are missing sidewalks, the City generally waits until that property is developed or there is a capital improvement project in the area and as far as he knows, nothing is planned for this area.

Planning Manager Lodan offered to refer the matter to the Public Works Department, but noted that the City will most likely require a dedication for street improvements when the corner property that's lacking a sidewalk is developed, so if a sidewalk is installed, it will have to be torn out in the future.

Noting that she regularly travels Earl Street, Commissioner Gibson reported that there is a large population of Indian immigrants in the area who do not understand the traffic patterns and expressed concerns about the danger posed to school children due to the lack of crosswalks.

Planning Manager Lodan suggested that this is also a matter that should be referred to Public Works.

Commissioner Gibson asked if the number of units could be further reduced, and Mr. Anastasi responded that 21 units was the minimum number of units to make the project work.

Commissioner Tsao recommended eliminating five units to provide more on-site parking and Mr. Anastasi maintained that the project already has plenty of parking.

Commissioner Rudolph asked about staff's position on having units fronting on Earl Street and how this will affect future development on Earl Street.

Planning Manager Lodan explained that staff encourages this arrangement because it creates a more walkable community and staff believes it's preferable to have the development open to the surrounding residential neighborhood instead of being walled off. He reiterated staff's position that this project as proposed is an appropriate use for the site.

MOTION: Commissioner Polcari moved to close the public hearing. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Tsao and hearing no objection, Chairperson Watson so ordered.

Commissioner D'anjou stated that she will vote to deny the project because she believes it's way too dense for this site, pointing out that while the developer reduced the number of units from 25 to 21 the FAR (floor area ratio) was only slightly reduced from 0.64 to 0.60.

Commissioner Rudolph indicated that he had not made up his mind on the project, but thought the number and size of the units was appropriate.

MOTION: Commissioner Polcari moved to approve CUP16-00005, DIV16-00004, ZON16-00002 and WAV16-00009, and the motion died for lack of a second.

Commissioner Gobble explained that he would like to see the number of units reduced by 2 or 3 in order to provide more open space/greenery and extra parking for guests to avoid spillover parking on neighborhood streets in this highly congested area.

Chairperson Watson indicated that she would like to see more green space and the elimination of the Waiver and suggested that slightly reducing the number of units would make the development feel a little more gracious.

The Commission briefly discussed the possibility of continuing the hearing so the project could be further revised and the public hearing was reopened so Mr. Anastasi could comment.

Mr. Anastasi requested that Commissioners provide clear direction as to what they would find acceptable should there be a continuance.

Referring to the plans, Commissioner Gobble suggested the elimination of units No. 8 and No. 13.

Mr. Anastasi requested that the Commission make a decision this evening, explaining that the property is in escrow so he does not yet own it and at the density being discussed, it won't be worth the purchase price.

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

MOTION: Commissioner Gobble moved to deny CUP16-00005, DIV16-00004, ZON16-00002 and WAV16-00009. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Tsao and passed by a 5-2 roll call vote, with Commissioners Polcari and Rudolph voting no.

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

11. **WAIVERS** – None.

12. **FORMAL HEARINGS**

12A. **PRE16-00012: OBELISK ARCHITECTS (LARRY JOHNSON)**

Planning Commission consideration for approval of a Precise Plan of Development to allow one and two-story additions to an existing two-story, single-family residence on property located within the Hillside Overlay District in the R-1 Zone at 5321 Linda Drive. This project is Categorically Exempt from CEQA per Guidelines Section 15301 – Existing Facilities.

Recommendation: Approval.

Planning Associate Martinez introduced the request.

Commissioner Rudolph announced that he was recusing himself from this hearing because he has a business relationship with the architect and exited the dais.

Nagy Bakhoun, project architect, briefly described the proposed project, noting that the additions do not exceed the height of the existing house. He voiced his agreement with the recommended conditions of approval with exception of Condition No. 7, which requires the existing exterior stairway to be demolished. He explained that the stairway was built before the current owners purchased the property and they would like to retain it because it is the quickest way to access the backyard due to the sloping lot.

Planning Manager Lodan advised that the Code prohibits exterior stairways in order to prevent property owners from creating a bootlegged second unit, however, the project as proposed does not create much of an opportunity for this and the Commission has allowed such stairways to remain in the past.

In response to Chairperson Watson's inquiry, Mr. Bakhoun confirmed that the lot will be surveyed to verify its size per Condition No. 3.

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

MOTION: Commissioner Polcari moved to approve PRE16-00012, as conditioned, including all findings of fact set forth by staff, deleting Condition No. 7. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Gobble and passed by a 6-0 roll call vote, absent Commissioner Rudolph (recused).

Planning Associate Martinez read aloud the number and title of Planning Commission Resolution No. 16-078.

MOTION: Commissioner Polcari moved to adopt Planning Commission Resolution No. 16-078 as amended. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Gibson and passed by a 6-0 roll call vote, absent Commissioner Rudolph (recused).

Commissioner Rudolph returned to the dais at this time.

**12B. CUP16-00016, CUP16-00017, DIV16-00008: CHARLES BELAK-BERGER
(LEE ROSEN)**

Planning Commission consideration for approval of a Conditional Use Permit to allow a two-unit residential condominium development on each of the two parcels, in conjunction with a Division of Lot for Condominium purposes on properties located in the R-2 Zone at 3918 and 3922 242nd Street. This project is Categorical Exempt from CEQA per Guidelines Sections 15303 – New Construction, and 15315 – Minor Land Divisions.

Recommendation: Approval.

Planning Associate Martinez introduced the request.

Charles Belak-Berger, project architect, briefly described the proposed project and voiced his agreement with the recommended conditions of approval.

In response to Chairperson Watson's inquiry, Mr. Belak-Berger confirmed that a laundry area will be incorporated into the plans for each unit as required by Condition No. 9.

Commissioner Polcari asked about the project's timeline, and Mr. Belak-Berger estimated that it will take 3-4 months to get all of the approvals.

In response to Commissioner Polcari's inquiry about parking issues, Mr. Belak-Berger reported that the project provides a two-car garage for each of the four units and two guest parking spaces and there's also parking in the alley. He related his belief that the project will create a nice transition from single-family residences to the south and the commercial corridor to the north.

Robert Kunesh, 4002 242nd Street, voiced objections to the project. He explained that parking on 242nd Street is very congested and recently enacted parking restrictions on street sweeping days have exacerbated the problem. He disputed the claim that there was room to park in the alley. He expressed concerns that developers are making money at the expense of residents, affecting the value of their property and quality of life.

Cheryl Lafay, 4002 242nd Street, contended that the project would take away her view and make existing problems much worse.

Mr. Belak-Berger clarified that the owner of the property has owned it for 18-19 years and has never developed another property. He maintained that the project would actually help resolve parking issues rather than create them since ample parking is provided on-site and explained that project is designed to make it possible to park in the alley without blocking it. He reported that he's been to the site 15-16 times and has never had a problem finding parking.

In response to Commissioner Rudolph's inquiry, Mr. Belak-Berger provided clarification regarding the configuration of the parking.

MOTION: Commissioner Rudolph moved to close the public hearing. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Tsao and passed by unanimous roll call vote.

Voicing support for the project, Commissioner Rudolph stated that he believed it would have no adverse effects on the area.

MOTION: Commissioner Rudolph moved to approve CUP16-00016, CUP16-00017 and DIV16-00008, as conditioned, including all findings of fact set forth by staff. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Gobble and passed by unanimous roll call vote.

Planning Associate Martinez read aloud the number and title of Planning Commission Resolution Nos. 16-079, 16-080 and 16-081.

MOTION: Commissioner Rudolph moved to adopt Planning Commission Resolution Nos. 16-079, 16-080 and 16-081. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Gobble and passed by unanimous vote.

12C. CUP16-00018: CRAFT BEER CELLAR TORRANCE (CNK INVESTMENT CO.)

Planning Commission consideration for approval of a Conditional Use Permit to allow instructional tastings at an existing craft beer retail store on property located in the P-D Zone at 24667 Crenshaw Boulevard Suites E and F. This project is Categorically Exempt from CEQA per Guidelines Section 15301 – Existing Facilities.

Recommendation: Approval.

Planning Associate Martinez introduced the request.

Brent Bates, co-owner/operator of Craft Beer Cellar Torrance, reported that they would like to offer instructional tastings of up to two 4-ounce portions of beer one to three times a week. He voiced his agreement with the recommended conditions of approval.

Commissioner Gobble noted that the parking lot at this shopping center is very busy.

Mr. Bates responded that while finding parking can be difficult at times, the business benefits from being near Home Depot where there is a high turnover of customers and that he did not believe the tastings would have a great impact on parking.

In response to Commissioner Polcari's inquiry, Mr. Bates reported that the tastings will begin as soon as he receives ABC (Alcoholic Beverage Control) approval, which will take approximately 3-4 weeks.

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

MOTION: Commissioner Polcari moved to approve CUP16-00018, including all findings of fact set forth by staff. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Gibson and passed by unanimous roll call vote.

Planning Associate Martinez read aloud the number and title of Planning Commission Resolution No. 16-082.

MOTION: Commissioner Polcari moved to adopt Planning Commission Resolution No. 16-082. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Gibson and passed by unanimous vote.

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 August 12, August 18, August 26, September 1, and September 9, 2016 were distributed to the Commission.

16. REVIEW OF CITY COUNCIL ACTION ON PLANNING MATTERS

Planning Manager Lodan reported that the City Council approved the Precise Plan at 410 Via San Sebastian at the September 20 Council meeting, noting that it was revised from a two-story to a one-story project.

17. LIST OF TENTATIVE PLANNING COMMISSION CASES

Planning Manager Lodan reported the agenda for the next meeting has not been finalized.

18. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS #2

Commissioner Gibson requested that the meeting be adjourned in memory of Park and Recreation Commissioner Ray Uchima's father.

19. ADJOURNMENT

At 9:00 p.m., the meeting was adjourned to Wednesday, October 5, 2016 at 7:00 p.m.

***Adjourned in Memory of
Ansho Masuru Uchima***

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Approved as submitted October 19, 2016 s/ Rebecca Poirier, City Clerk
