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TORRANCE PLANNING COMMISSION – JULY 15, 2015

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At 8:23 p.m., the meeting was adjourned to Wednesday, August 5, 2015 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, July 15, 2015, 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, Skoll, Tsao, Watson and Chairperson D'anjou.

Absent: None.

Also Present: Planning Manager Lodan, Planning Associate Kevin Joe, Associate Civil Engineer Symons, Plans Examiner Gorbin, Fire Prevention Manager 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, July 9, 2015.

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION: Commissioner Polcari moved for the approval of the May 20, 2015 Planning Commission minutes as written. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Tsao and passed by unanimous roll call vote, with Commissioners Watson and Gibson abstaining.

MOTION: Commissioner Polcari moved for the approval of the June 3, 2015 Planning Commission minutes as written. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Tsao and passed by unanimous roll call vote.

MOTION: Commissioner Polcari moved for the approval of the June 17, 2015 Planning Commission minutes as written. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Watson and passed by unanimous roll call vote, with Commissioner Skoll abstaining.

6. REQUESTS FOR POSTPONEMENTS

Planning Manager Lodan reported that the applicant has requested that Agenda Item 10A, CUP15-00009, ZON15-00002, DIV15-00004, WAV15-00006: Anastasi Development, be continued to August 19, but staff was recommending that it be continued indefinitely to ensure that the hearing is re-noticed as requested by a member of the public.

MOTION: Commissioner Skoll moved to continue Agenda Item 10A indefinitely. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Polcari and passed by unanimous roll call vote.

Planning Manager Lodan relayed the applicant's request to continue Agenda Item 12B, PRE15-00008: Kelly Hamm, to August 5, 2015.

MOTION: Commissioner Polcari moved to continue Agenda Item 12B to August 5, 2015. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Tsao and passed by unanimous roll call vote.

Planning Manager Lodan relayed the applicant's request to continue Agenda Item 15A, ADM15-00003: Phillip Pecord c/o Autozone, to August 19, 2015.

MOTION: Commissioner Watson moved to continue Agenda Item 15A to August 19, 2015. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Polcari and passed by unanimous roll call vote.

7. **ORAL COMMUNICATIONS #1** – None.

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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**

10A. **CUP15-00009, ZON15-00002, DIV15-00004, WAV15-00006: ANASTASI DEVELOPMENT (WILLIAM GARRETT)**

Planning Commission consideration for approval of a Conditional Use Permit to allow a 16-unit residential condominium development, in conjunction with a Zone Change from C-5 (Conditional Commercial District) to RP (Residential Professional District), a Tentative Tract Map to consolidate the existing parcels and for condominium purposes, and a Waiver of the RP Zone height limit, on properties located in the C-5 Zone at 23625-23649 Arlington Avenue. This project is Categorically Exempt from CEQA per Guidelines Sections 15332 – In-Fill Development, and Final Environmental Impact Report State Clearinghouse No. 2008111046 – 2009 Torrance General Plan Update.

Item was continued indefinitely.

10B. **CUP15-00007, ZON15-00001, DIV15-00003: MICHAEL ROTH**

Planning Commission consideration for approval of a Conditional Use Permit to allow a three-story, six-unit residential condominium development and to allow a Floor Area Ratio of 0.7, in conjunction with a Zone Change from A-1 (Light Agricultural District) to R-3 (Limited Multiple-Family Residential District), and a Tentative Tract Map for condominium purposes on property located in the A-1 Zone at 17502 Van Ness Avenue. This project is Categorically Exempt from CEQA per Guidelines Sections 15332 – In-Fill Development, and Final Environmental Impact Report State Clearinghouse No. 2008111046 - 2009 Torrance General Plan Update.

Recommendation: Approval.

Planning Associate Joe introduced the request.

Mike Roth, applicant, voiced his agreement with the recommended conditions of approval. He briefly described the proposed project, which consists of six 3-bedroom, 3-bath condominiums.

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

MOTION: Commissioner Skoll moved to approve CUP15-00007, ZON15-00001 and DIV15-00003, 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.

Planning Associate Joe read aloud the number and title of Planning Commission Resolution Nos. 15-044 and 15-045.

MOTION: Commissioner Skoll moved to adopt Resolution Nos. 15-044 and 15-045. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Tsao and passed by unanimous roll call vote.

Commissioner Skoll commented positively on the project.

11. **WAIVERS** – None.

12. **FORMAL HEARINGS**

12A. **MOD15-00006: JOHN TRIPODIS (WOLFGANG MUELLER)**

Planning Commission consideration for approval of a Modification of a previously approved Conditional Use Permit (CUP96-00039) to allow the construction of an approximately 45,000 square-foot warehouse and manufacturing addition to an existing manufacturing, office, and warehouse facility on properties located in the M-2 Zone at 1750 214th Street and 1600 Abalone Avenue. A Negative Declaration (EA86-18) has been adopted for CUP86-71, the master Conditional Use Permit for the Torrance Center II that conceptually approved this project and Final Environmental Impact Report State Clearinghouse No. 2008111046 – 2009 Torrance General Plan Update.

Recommendation: Approval.

Planning Associate Joe introduced the request.

John Tripodis, applicant, voiced his agreement with the recommended conditions of approval. He briefly described the proposed project, noting that new 45,000 square-foot warehouse/manufacturing building will be joined with two existing buildings on this site.

Commissioner Skoll asked if thought had been given to making this a “green building,” and Mr. Tripodis indicated that he did not plan to pursue green building status.

Planning Manager Lodan advised that the City only requires that projects comply with the California Building Code, which mandates fairly high standards with regard to energy efficiency and green technology, and there are additional requirements to have a building designated as “green” per LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) standards. He noted that this building will be more energy efficient than the prior phases of this development.

In response to Commissioner Watson's inquiry, Mr. Tripodis reported that the site is the corporate headquarters for Sakura Finetek U.S.A., and the company will be utilizing all of the buildings.

Commissioner Tsao disclosed that he visited Sakura Finetek 10 years ago when he was president of the Torrance Area Chamber of Commerce and drives by it on a regular basis; that he observed that it was a nice facility with plenty of parking; and that he was proud to have the company in Torrance and would like to see more medical-related businesses.

Chairperson D'anjou commented that she was pleased that Phase 3 of the company's expansion project was finally going to be completed as it is a sign of the company's growth.

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

MOTION: Commissioner Herring moved to approve MOD15-00006, as conditioned including all findings of fact set forth by staff. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Polcari and passed by unanimous roll call vote.

Planning Associate Joe read aloud the number and title of Planning Commission Resolution No. 15-049.

MOTION: Commissioner Tsao moved to adopt Resolution No. 15-049. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Polcari and passed by unanimous roll call vote.

12B. PRE15-00008: KELLY HAMM (DAVE GAUVREAU)

Planning Commission consideration for approval of a Precise Plan of Development to allow a new two-story, single-family residence on property located within the Hillside Overlay District in the R-1 Zone at 117 Paseo de las Delicias. This project is Categorically Exempt from CEQA per Guidelines Section 15303 – New Construction.

Item was continued to August 5, 2015.

12C. CUP15-00011, DIV15-00005: JULIA TAM (HARRY TAM)

Planning Commission consideration for approval of a Conditional Use Permit to allow the construction of 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 18307 Grevillea Avenue. This project is Categorically Exempt from CEQA per Guidelines Section 15303 – New Construction.

Recommendation: Approval.

Planning Associate Joe introduced the request and noted supplemental material consisting of a memo from the Engineering Division requesting the addition of three code requirements and the deletion of Condition No. 23 in Resolution No. 15-051.

Harry Tam, applicant, reported that he acquired the property at the beginning of this year and would like to replace the existing 850 square-foot house built in the 1950s with two new townhomes. He noted that the project is consistent with newer construction in the area and that his father built a similar development in this neighborhood 10 years. He voiced his agreement with the recommended conditions of approval.

Commissioner Herring disclosed that he drove by the property, but did not speak with anyone.

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

MOTION: Commissioner Polcari moved to approve CUP15-00011 and DIV15-00005, 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 Associate Joe read aloud the number and title of Planning Commission Resolution Nos. 15-051 and 15-052.

MOTION: Commissioner Polcari moved to adopt Resolution Nos. 15-051 and 15-052. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Gibson and passed by unanimous roll call vote.

12D. MOD15-00001: NIGEL HEATH (LA SHOJI PARTNERS LLC)

Planning Commission consideration for approval of a Modification of a previously approved Conditional Use Permit (CUP13-00026) to extend the hours of the tasting room operation and to allow the operation of food vendor service, private events, and live entertainment, in conjunction with an existing brewery, on property located in the M-2 Zone at 2878 Columbia Street. This project is Categorically Exempt from CEQA per Guidelines Section 15301 – Existing Facilities.

Recommendation: Approval.

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

Nigel Heath, CEO of Absolution Brewery, applicant, requested that the Commission reconsider staff's recommendation that the brewery not be allowed to operate its tasting room on Mondays and Tuesdays. He explained that he would like to be able to operate the tasting room seven days a week to remain competitive with breweries in Redondo Beach and El Segundo that have no such restriction. He noted that according to the staff report, the Police Department has no objection to the extended hours. He reported that Absolution has been a good corporate citizen since the brewery opened 18 months ago; that it has supported non-profit and charitable organizations; that it has actively promoted Torrance even naming a beer in honor of the city; and that the company was recently featured in *Fortune* magazine. Additionally, he requested approval of live music. He explained that a bible study group that meets regularly at the tasting room would like to be able to have guitar music and emphasized that the music would not be amplified. He urged the Commission to approve the request so he can continue to grow his business in Torrance.

Commissioner Skoll asked if other brewery tasting rooms in Torrance are open on Mondays and Tuesdays.

Planning Manager Lodan reported that Monkish Brewery is allowed to have special events on Mondays and Tuesdays and it currently has the most liberal tasting room hours. He advised that staff had reservations about allowing tasting rooms to operate seven days a week due to concerns about taprooms becoming more of a bar and was therefore seeking the Commission's input on this issue.

Commissioner Skoll indicated that he was in favor of allowing the Absolution tasting room to operate seven days a week and as a matter of fairness, he felt other breweries in Torrance should be also be allowed to do the same thing.

Assistant City Attorney Sullivan clarified that the other breweries would have to apply for a Modification of their Conditional Use Permit in order to operate seven days a week.

In response to Commissioner Watson's inquiry, Mr. Heath confirmed that the tasting room may only dispense products manufactured on-site. He noted that Absolution also produces cream soda and root beer so the tasting room has become a popular pre-game/post-game gathering spot for families.

Commissioner Watson related her belief that this application should be judged on its own merits and asked if the brewery has complied with all local, state and federal codes.

Planning Manager Lodan reported that all of the breweries in Torrance have operated their businesses very responsibly and stressed the need to treat all of them in a consistent manner. He explained that staff's reservations about allowing tasting rooms to operate seven days a week are based on the fact that a tasting room is supposed to be ancillary to the brewery's operation and staff felt it was important to get the Commission's input before crossing this threshold.

Commissioner Skoll noted that information from the applicant mentions the service of wine.

Mr. Heath explained that occasionally there is a special event where not all guests drink beer and the brewery is able to obtain a one-day license from the ABC (Alcoholic Beverage Control) that allows the service of wine in accordance with ABC regulations. He offered his assurance that the brewery has no intention of turning its tasting room into a bar.

Lloyd Brown, Torrance, reported that breweries initially requested tasting room hours Thursday through Sunday because they were not sure they could sustain even four days a week and suggested that extending the hours to seven days a week is a natural progression as the craft brewery industry has grown and Torrance has become a craft beer destination. He noted that tasting rooms operate based on public demand so just because extended hours are approved does not mean that tasting rooms will be open seven days a week and breweries are requesting the maximum number of hours so they do not have to request another Modification in the future.

Don Murphy, board member of Torrance Matrix Property Owners Association, expressed concerns that the association's board received no information about the brewery's request and has not approved the extended hours, noting that there are 23 other owners in this business park affected by this action.

Commissioner Skoll asked if there was a possibility the board would deny the extended hours, and Mr. Murphy responded that he could not say one way or the other and would like to poll the other owners before commenting.

Commissioner Tsao asked if there had been any complaints or problems associated with the brewery's operation. He disclosed that he drove by the site, but did not speak with anyone.

Mr. Murphy stated that there was initially an issue about parking, but the problem was quickly rectified and Absolution has been a great neighbor and has done everything that has been asked of them. He explained that his concern is bringing the public onto the site, which is a business park and not designed for retail operations, due to potential security issues. He related his understanding that another brewery is interested in locating in the business park, which could exacerbate the problem.

Mr. Heath requested that live music without amplification be allowed for special events.

Planning Manager Lodan advised that there is a special events process that allows live entertainment, however, such events are limited to four per year.

Commissioner Skoll asked about the implementation of the extended hours.

Mr. Heath reported that he likely will start with limited hours on Monday and Tuesday afternoons to attract trade that is currently going elsewhere.

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

Voicing support for the application, Commissioner Polcari stated that the brewery has been a good citizen of the community and he would not want to see it move to El Segundo.

Commissioner Watson also expressed support for the application, noting that the brewery appears to be anticipating future growth with this application, which she believes is a sound business practice.

Commissioner Skoll noted his concurrence with his colleagues' remarks and indicated that he would support the same extended hours for other breweries if they request them.

Assistant City Attorney Sullivan advised that if the Commission was willing to give up some of its control, there's a provision in TMC Section 92.28.3 – Minor Modifications that would allow the Commission to delegate the authority to approve extended hours for breweries to the Community Development Director.

Commissioner Skoll indicated that he would support delegating this authority.

Chairperson D'anjou questioned whether the public would be notified of a brewery's intention to seek extended hours as part of the administrative approval process, and Planning Manager Lodan advised that there would only be public notice if the Community Development Director's decision was appealed.

Commissioner Skoll asked about the ramifications should the board of the property owners association object to Absolution's extended hours.

Assistant City Attorney Sullivan explained that the property owners association could potentially block the extended hours if they violate provisions of the business park's CC&Rs, but that is a private matter between the applicant and property owners association and not something in which the City would become involved.

Chairperson D'anjou stated that while she would support this application, she was very concerned that tasting rooms were quickly evolving into something beyond what was originally envisioned when the first one was first approved 2 or 3 years ago, and she felt that with the addition of food trucks and extended hours of operation they were becoming more like a bar.

Commissioner Gibson stated that she believes Absolution is a great company but she does not appreciate veiled threats that a company will move to another city if its application is not approved.

Commissioner Skoll agreed that craft breweries have evolved beyond what was originally envisioned, however he views this in a positive light and likes the fact that Torrance is gaining a reputation for having great craft breweries and hopes the craft brewing industry will continue to grow.

A brief discussion ensued and it was the consensus of the Commission not to modify Condition No. 6, which allows live entertainment only with the approval of a Special Events Permit.

MOTION: Commissioner Herring moved for the approval of MOD15-00001, as conditioned, including all findings of fact, with the following modifications:

Modify

No. 4 That the tasting room hours of operation shall be limited to Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday from 3:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m., Friday and Saturday from 10:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m., Sunday from 12:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m., federal holidays from 12:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m., and New Year's Eve and days before a federal holiday from 12:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.

Delete

No. 5 That hosting special/private events shall be limited to Monday and Tuesday.

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

Planning Associate Joe read aloud the number and title of Planning Commission Resolution No. 15-053

MOTION: Commissioner Skoll moved to adopt Resolution No. 15-053 as amended. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Polcari and passed by unanimous roll call vote.

The Commission directed staff to bring back an item for consideration regarding the possibility of delegating the authority to approve extended tasting room hours to the Community Development Director.

13. **RESOLUTIONS** – None.

14. **PUBLIC WORKSHOP ITEMS** – None.

15. **MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS**

15A. ADM15-00003: PHILLIP PECORD C/O AUTOZONE (FRANKLIN REAL ESTATE)

Planning Commission consideration of an appeal of a Community Development Director denial of a Planning Administrative Action to allow exterior modifications to an existing storefront on property located in the C-3 Zone at 4675 Torrance Boulevard. This project is Categorically Exempt from CEQA per Guidelines Section 153011 – Existing Facilities.

Item was continued to August 19, 2015.

15B. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR WEEKLY SUMMARY REPORTS

Planning Manager Lodan noted that the Community Development Director Weekly Summary Reports for June 11, June 19, June 25, and July 2, 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 August 5, 2015 Planning Commission meeting.

18. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS #2

18A. Commissioner Tsao commented that he was pleased to see Commissioner Skoll at the meeting after his recent surgery.

18B. Commissioner Polcari commended Chairperson D'anjou for doing a great job chairing the meeting.

18C. Commissioner Watson invited everyone to attend "Rock Around the Block," on Thursday, July 17, in downtown Torrance. She noted that the 50s themed event commemorates the year 1957 when Torrance received the All American City Award and includes bubble-gum blowing and hula hoop contests and a display of classic cars.

18D. Commissioner Watson noted that an article in the current *Planning* magazine about city parks mentions Frederick Olmsted, the renowned landscape architect who designed the layout of the city of Torrance, and the Historical Society will offer a presentation on Mr. Olmsted in August, which will include a discussion of his contributions to the Torrance park system.

18E. Commissioner Herring requested an excused absence for the August 5 meeting.

MOTION: Commissioner Skoll, seconded by Commissioner Tsao, so moved and voice vote reflected unanimous approval.

18F. Commissioner Gibson welcomed back Commissioner Skoll. She noted that City Councilman Rizzo spent the day with her relatives in North Carolina.

18G. Commissioner Skoll asked about the status of the Costco project, and Planning Manager Lodan related his understanding that they had hoped to begin construction in July, but they were delayed because the plans taken from a building in Nebraska did not comply with California standards.

18H. Commissioner Skoll questioned why staff reports are printed on only one side of the paper, and Planning Manager Lodan advised that one-sided staff reports are printed for the Commission and those distributed to staff and the public are double-sided.

Commissioners related their preference that all reports be double-sided.

18I. Commissioner Skoll thanked everyone for their care and concern after his recent surgery.

19. ADJOURNMENT

8:23 p.m., the meeting was adjourned to Wednesday, August 5, 2015 at 7:00 p.m.

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Approved as submitted August 19, 2015 s/ Rebecca Poirier, City Clerk
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