

January 6, 2005

**MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE TORRANCE ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY AND ENERGY CONSERVATION COMMISSION**

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

The Torrance Environmental Quality and Energy Conservation Commission convened in a regular session at 7:03 p.m. on Thursday, January 6, 2005, in the West Annex meeting room at Torrance City Hall.

**2. ROLL CALL**

Present: Commissioners Castillo, Chim, Minter, Persaud and Vice Chairperson McCabe.

Absent: Commissioner Castillo and Chairperson Nishinaga.

Also Present: Environmental Administrator Cessna.

**3. FLAG SALUTE**

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Vice Chairperson McCabe.

**MOTION:** Vice Chairperson McCabe moved to grant excused absences to Commissioner Castillo and Chairperson Nishinaga from the meeting. Commissioner Minter seconded the motion and a voice vote reflected unanimous approval.

**4. AFFIDAVIT OF POSTING**

Commissioner Chim moved to accept and file the report of the City Clerk on the posting of the agenda for this meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Minter and a voice vote reflected unanimous approval (absent Commissioner Castillo and Chairperson Nishinaga).

**5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**MOTION:** Commissioner Minter moved for the approval of the October 7, 2004, Environmental Quality and Energy Conservation Commission minutes as written. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Chim and a roll call vote reflected unanimous approval (absent Commissioner Castillo and Chairperson Nishinaga.)

Vice Chairperson McCabe explained the policies and procedures of the Environmental Quality and Energy Conservation Commission including the right to appeal decisions to the City Council.

**6. SIGN HEARINGS**

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6a. **SNP04-0025 SAM ASH THE MUSICAL INSTRUMENT MEGASTORE:  
SUITE 228**

**Request:** A) One 8'5" high x 27'7" internally illuminated cabinet wall sign. Red background, white copy "Sam Ash". Second line on white background, black copy "THE MUSICAL INSTRUMENT MEGASTORE."

232.2 Square Feet

B) Secondary Copy in the form of illuminated channel letter wall signs on raceways. All signs have red copy as follows:

"GUITARS"	30" high x 16'4"
"DRUMS"	30" high x 13'9"
"KEYBOARDS"	30" high x 22'11"
"PA & DJ"	30" high x 14'8"

169.0 Square Feet

C) Face change two double-face ground sign tenant panels, 18" high x 10' and 24" high x 10'. Burgundy backgrounds with white copy, "Sam Ash Music".

70.0 Square Feet

**Total Request: 471.2 Square Feet**

**Recommendation:** The Environmental Division staff recommends denial of the request as submitted. Staff suggests that the request be revised to adhere to the existing sign program for the center, including reducing the overall height of the main sign to not more than 5' and incorporating individual channel letters instead of a cabinet. Staff also recommends complete removal of the secondary copy on raceways.

With the aid of slides, Environmental Administrator Cessna introduced the request and reviewed the staff recommendation. She stated that product names could not be approved for a channel sign but would be appropriate in the window and she recommended that individual channel letters be approved rather than the cabinet sign. She presented a slide of the Cerritos store which does use channel letters and noted that staff did not have a problem with the logo but felt that using the cabinet sign as the main sign would not be appropriate in the center.

In response to an inquiry from Commissioner Chim about product advertising at other stores, Environmental Administrator Cessna explained that when requests come through the Commission they are disallowed and product listing in the window is generally recommended.

Responding to Commissioner Minter, Environmental Administrator Cessna indicated that the maximum allowable square footage is 5 foot high individual channel letters and 2/3 of the store frontage.

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**MOTION:** At 7:13 p.m. Commissioner Minter moved to open the public hearing. Commissioner Persaud seconded the motion and a roll call vote reflected unanimous approval (absent Commissioner Castillo and Chairperson Nishinaga).

David Barberi, Vice President of Sam Ash Music, confirmed that the Cerritos Store has channel letters, but noted that in 2001 the company undertook a different type of sign to clarify that they are not a record store. He distributed a picture from the City of Industry store depicting the new sign that they would like to have that provides the additional support of block channel letters to explain what they sell and prevent confusion. He explained that the store started in New York in 1927 but is not well known on the West Coast and he expressed concern with visibility if they were limited to listing products sold on the windows.

Phil Garcia with Interstate Signcrafters reported that Sam Ash has a registered trademark logo that includes specifications of the logo and oval.

Commissioner Chim received clarification that the logo included “the musical instrument megastore” which delineates what they sell within it and Mr. Barberi explained that it was difficult to read the bottom part of the logo, especially during the day. He added that the distance from the street to the building is great and they need as much help as possible to establish that location.

Environmental Administrator Cessna explained that the problem was not with the trademark logo but in the fact that they did not want it used as the main sign. She reported that there were provisions for logos and suggested that a smaller logo be used over the canopies.

Responding to an inquiry from Commissioner Chim, Mr. Barberi explained that they were not happy about the size of the sign at the Cerritos store as they were limited and he added that Sam Ash competes with Guitar Center which has a large signature sign that is easily identifiable. He expressed concern that their business would be greatly affected by not being allowed to list the products sold as their targeted customer base is mostly families who may not be aware that they sell musical instruments.

Commissioner Minter reported that the Sunset Store had an inverted logo with an oval.

**MOTION:** At 7:28 p.m. Commissioner Minter moved to close the public hearing. Commissioner Persaud seconded the motion and a roll call vote reflected unanimous approval (absent Commissioner Castillo and Chairperson Nishinaga).

Commissioner Persaud felt the Sunset Store sign was acceptable and Environmental Administrator Cessna reported similar signs in Torrance although staff would still prefer a smaller logo and straight channel letters with another logo over the doorway containing “musical instrument megastore” in 24 or 30 inch channel letters to provide some instrument identification.

Responding to an inquiry from Commissioner McCabe regarding awnings, Environmental Administrator Cessna indicated that none of the other stores had anything on their awnings and staff would prefer to conform to the existing sign program

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for the complex. She added that since "musical instrument megastore" is part of their name that can be added over the door instead of listing instruments sold.

Commissioner Minter expressed support for the applicant and felt their logo was more attractive than channel letters but felt the sign should still be consistent with the others in the center as making an exception might lead to further complications.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Minter moved to concur with the staff recommendation on case SNP04-00025, Sam Ash The Musical Instrument Superstore that the request for an internally illuminated cabinet wall sign be denied, that the secondary copy also be denied with a note that "the musical instrument megastore" be replaced in the same channel letter size, and that the ground sign be approved as recommended by staff.

Environmental Administrator Cessna questioned whether the Commission would approve a wall sign with channel letters with a logo.

Commissioner Minter added to the motion a caveat that the applicant work with staff to replace the illuminated cabinet wall sign with a channel letter sign with their logo.

Commissioner Chim seconded the motion and a roll call vote reflected unanimous approval (absent Commissioner Castillo and Chairperson Nishinaga).

Environmental Administrator Cessna suggested that Mr. Barberi speak with staff on Monday to work out details of the channel letter sign.

**6b. SNP04-00026 LAURELS FINE FURNITURE: 3832 SEPULVEDA BOULEVARD**

**Request:** A time extension to display one temporary banner for one (1) year. The banner is 3'4" high x 30' long, green background with white copy, "*Laurels Fine Furniture*". The banner will be located above the store entrance on the north facing building wall.

**Total Request: 100.0 Square Feet**

**Recommendation:** The Environmental Division staff recommends approval of the request with the following conditions:

- 1) That the banner shall be kept in good condition at all times and must be replaced with the same size and color banner if it becomes deteriorated.
- 2) That the banner shall be removed by not later than January 6, 2006 or when Laurel's Fine Furniture vacates this location.

Environmental Administrator Cessna explained that one request is the banner extension and the other is a request for a painted wall sign which technically is not part of the program but as it is temporary and will be removed staff recommends approval. She indicated that they had a large frontage and the main sign looked like the painted sign at the previous location.

**MOTION:** At 7:37 p.m. Commissioner Persaud moved to close the public hearing. Commissioner Minter seconded the motion and a voice vote reflected unanimous approval (absent Commissioner Castillo and Chairperson Nishinaga).

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Pamela Minford, Laurel's Fine Furniture, explained that it was twice as expensive to put the oval logo on the banner, it would not be as nice as painting and the owner had no problem with a painted sign. She added that since the banner was narrow it would be easier to secure and they hoped to go back to the old store on September 1, 2005.

Environmental Administrator Cessna suggested the Commission could make a finding of fact for hardship since the store had burned down.

**MOTION:** At 7:41 p.m. Commissioner Persaud moved to close the public hearing. Commissioner Minter seconded the motion and a roll call vote reflected unanimous approval (absent Commissioner Castillo and Chairperson Nishinaga).

**MOTION:** Commissioner Minter moved to concur with the staff recommendation for SNP04-00026 Laurels Fine Furniture, to approve the request for the time extension with a finding of fact of extenuating conditions due to a fire, a painted sign as approved with a recommendation that the banner be kept in good condition, be replaced if deteriorated and removed by January 6, 2006 or when Laurel's vacates, whichever is earlier.

Commissioner Persaud seconded the motion and a roll call vote reflected unanimous approval (absent Commissioner Castillo and Chairperson Nishinaga).

**6c. SNP04-00026 AMERICA'S CUT: 4342 REDONDO BEACH BOULEVARD**

**Request:** Consideration of a request for an internally illuminated individual channel letter wall sign 1'8" high x 11'. Copy, "America's Cut" in blue and red. The sign will be located above the storefront entrance.

**Total Request: 18.4 Square Feet**

**Recommendation:** The Environmental Division staff recommends approval of the request with the following conditions:

- 1) The maximum height of the letters shall not exceed 1'6".
- 2) The letter shall be white, Helvetica capital style copy.
- 3) The tenant may have a 2' high logo, color of their choice.
- 4) The maximum length of the sign shall not exceed 2/3<sup>rd</sup>s of the tenant frontage.
- 5) If tenant panels are added to the ground sign, a permit must be obtained and the panels must have white backgrounds with copy color to tenant's choice.

With the aid of slides, Environmental Administrator Cessna introduced the request and reviewed the staff recommendation noting that all the signs in the center are very uniform. She reported that the Recycler had wanted a red sign but were approved with a white sign with a smaller logo with red on it.

**MOTION:** At 7:48 p.m. Commissioner Minter moved to open the public hearing. Commissioner Persaud seconded the motion and a roll call vote reflected unanimous approval (absent Commissioner Castillo and Chairperson Nishinaga).

Mohammed Kahn, Redondo Beach Boulevard, distributed materials to the Commission and reported receiving approval for the sign from the landlord before signing the lease. He requested that they be allowed to stay with the theme that they

have filed for their trademark and pointed out that many signs in the center, including Curves, SavOn and Countrywide use different fonts and colors.

Mr. Kahn indicated that he understood that landlord approval was necessary before submitting to the City and a sign permit from Building and Safety was also required but he reiterated that the landlord had approved the sign with their font of choice and colored letters.

Environmental Administrator Cessna reported that there are a number of centers with owners who do not adhere to the sign program and she indicated that she would send a reminder note to the landlord in question. She clarified that larger tenants in the center do use different colors but the minor tenants in this area are all uniform.

Responding to Commissioner Minter, Mr. Kahn reported that the letter A in American's Cut is their logo and he added that he was starting this chain and has approvals for Fullerton and other locations. He indicated that the company is in direct competition with Supercuts and Direct Cut and he pointed out that the sign is only 11 feet long because the column takes up much of the room with the frontage on other side of post for the cleaners.

**MOTION:** At 7:57 p.m. Commissioner Minter moved to close the public hearing. Commissioner Persaud seconded the motion and a roll call vote reflected unanimous approval (absent Commissioner Castillo and Chairperson Nishinaga).

Environmental Administrator Cessna reported that those signs in the center that are not in compliance belong to major tenants and came through the Commission for approval, and she clarified that the applicant is entitled to a 2 foot logo and channel letters in white.

The Commission and applicant discussed various options with the Commission acknowledging the desire of the applicant to have a distinctive sign but reiterating the importance of adhering to the sign program and the uniform look of the center.

Commissioner Minter indicated that he did not mind if the font was changed slightly and he noted that the font might need to be condensed or narrow because the pillar limits the available space. He wanted to see conformance with the sign program and felt that a logo might enhance their space.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Minter moved that SNP04-00026: America's Cut, be denied but a sign would be allowed if it meets the sign program for the center with a recommendation that the tenant meet with staff about the possibility varying the font slightly and using a logo sign that would enhance their space. Commissioner Chim seconded the motion and a roll call vote reflected unanimous approval.

## **7. INFORMATION MATTERS**

Commissioner Minter asked staff to follow up on the Lazy Boy Gallery which came before the Commission 4-5 months ago and were instructed to remove their ground sign on two posts next to the street.

Commissioner Minter also asked about seasonal permits and Environmental Administrator Cessna explained that permits were generally not issued for Happy Holidays signs like the one Toyota had displayed.

The Commission discussed the sign at the Maria's restaurant on Pacific Coast Highway and Anza, and Environmental Administrator Cessna observed that was a big center with little frontage.

Commissioner Minter pointed out that there are tenant spaces in centers that are less desirable because there are limitations with the space and signage options, but the tenant should be aware that the Commission is not responsible for providing that visibility to them.

Responding to Commissioner Chim, Environmental Administrator Cessna explained that when a shopping center opens the City asks for a sign program for the center as a whole. Many of the newer centers are implementing programs with more flexibility so that if the tenant fits within the basic framework then the permit goes over the counter and does not have to come before the Commission.

Environmental Administrator Cessna indicated that the code specified how much signage per frontage and noted that small centers have small frontage so they actually get more than the code. She added that each tenant gets a certain amount of signage and she felt that the program was useful for centers.

**8. NEW BUSINESS**

None.

**9. ORALS/ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Environmental Administrator Cessna encouraged Commissioners to spread the word that there were vacancies on the Commission.

Responding to an inquiry from Vice Chairperson McCabe, Environmental Administrator Cessna reported that the Cultural Arts Center recycling program was in the works, but not up and running yet.

The Commission discussed the possibility of having Len Wood provide Commission training and Commissioner Chim wished everyone Happy New Year.

**11. ADJOURNMENT**

At 8:35 p.m., the meeting was formally adjourned to Thursday, February 3, 2005 at 7:00 p.m. in the West Annex meeting room at Torrance City Hall.

Approved as Written February 3, 2005 s/ Sue Herbers, City Clerk
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