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TORRANCE PLANNING COMMISSION – APRIL 16, 2014

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At 7:52 p.m., the meeting was adjourned to Wednesday, May 7, 2014 at 7:00 p.m.

April 16, 2014

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, April 16, 2014 in City Council Chambers at Torrance City Hall.

2. SALUTE TO THE FLAG

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Commissioner Watson.

3. ROLL CALL/ MOTIONS FOR EXCUSED ABSENCE

Present: Commissioners D'anjou, Gibson, Griffiths, Polcari, Skoll, Watson and Chairperson Rizzo.

Absent: None.

Also Present: Planning Manager Lodan, Planning Assistant Yumul, Plans Examiner Noh, Associate Civil Engineer Symons, 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, April 11, 2014.

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION: Commissioner Polcari moved for the approval of the November 20, 2013 Planning Commission minutes as written. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Gibson and passed by unanimous voice vote, with Commissioner Griffiths abstaining.

MOTION: Commissioner Polcari moved for the approval of the February 19, 2014 Planning Commission minutes as written. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Gibson and passed by unanimous voice vote.

MOTION: Commissioner Polcari moved for the approval of the March 5, 2014 Planning Commission minutes as written. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Gibson and passed by unanimous voice vote.

MOTION: Commissioner Polcari moved for the approval of the March 19, 2014 Planning Commission minutes as written. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Gibson and passed by unanimous voice vote.

6. REQUESTS FOR POSTPONEMENTS – None.

7. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS #1 – None.

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Chairperson Rizzo 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. **PRE14-00001: TAREK ABDEL-GHAFFAR (CATHLEEN AND DON CLAY)**

Planning Commission consideration for approval of a Precise Plan of Development to allow additions and remodeling of an existing one-story, single-family residence on property located within the Hillside Overlay District in the R-1 Zone at 2617 Highcliff Drive. This project is Categorically Exempt from CEQA per Guidelines Section 15301 – Existing Facilities.

Recommendation: Approval.

Planning Assistant Yumul introduced the request.

Bogdan Tomalevski, project architect, voiced his agreement with the recommended conditions of approval. He briefly described the proposed project, using renderings to illustrate. He noted that the project is well within Hillside guidelines and it features sustainable, energy efficient elements, including a gray water system, solar panels and drought-tolerant landscaping. He reported that project was revised after meeting with neighbors to address their concerns and they no longer have any objections.

Commissioner Watson disclosed that she drove by the property prior to the March 5, 2014 meeting at which the item was continued. Chairperson Rizzo disclosed that she drove by the property and viewed the silhouette.

Responding to questions from the Commission, Mr. Tomalevski provided clarification regarding the site's location and terrain and further discussed "green" features incorporated in the design, including low-maintenance siding made from rice husks and no-mow grass.

Commissioner Skoll, echoed by Commissioner Gibson, commended the architect for a well-designed project and for working with neighbors to address their concerns.

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 for the approval of PRE14-00001, 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. 14-016.

MOTION: Commissioner Polcari moved to adopt Planning Commission Resolution No. 14-016. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Gibson and passed by unanimous roll call vote.

11. **WAIVERS** - None.

12. FORMAL HEARINGS

12A. MOD14-00002: STARBUCKS COFFEE (NORTH TORRANCE PLAZA, LLC)

Planning Commission consideration for approval of a Modification of a previously approved Conditional Use Permit (CUP99-0002) to allow on-sale beer and wine at an existing restaurant on property located in the C-2 Zone at 5050 190th Street. This project is Categorically Exempt from CEQA per Guidelines Section 15301- Existing Facilities.

Recommendation: Approval.

Planning Associate Yumul introduced the request.

Alicia Thueme, Valerio Architects, project architect, reported that this Starbucks location was recently expanded and remodeled and they would like to add the service of beer and wine from 4:00 p.m. to closing. She noted that the regular menu of coffees, teas, and pastries will still be available during this time along with an additional evening menu consisting of appetizers and desserts.

In response to Commissioner Skoll's inquiry, Ms. Thueme confirmed that employees must be at least 18 years of age to serve alcohol and they will undergo a training program before they are allowed to serve in this capacity.

Responding to questions from the Commission, Elizabeth Valerio, Valerio Architects, reported that this will be the only location in Torrance to serve alcohol; that the company is only offering alcohol at a few select locations; and that this location was chosen because of its proximity to vibrant residential, commercial and office districts.

Commissioner Watson expressed support for the proposal.

Commissioner Skoll recommended that a condition be included specifying that alcohol may only be served from 4:00 p.m. to closing.

Commissioner Gibson asked about measures to prevent customers from taking alcoholic beverages outside the building.

Ms. Valerio explained that signs will be posting informing customers that they may not take alcoholic beverages beyond the confines of the building; that alcoholic beverages will be served in re-usable glassware and not "to-go" cups; and that staff will monitor customers to ensure they don't take drinks outside. She emphasized that the beer and wine would simply be a supplement to other menu items and Starbucks was not seeking to become a bar, noting that other locations serving beer and wine in Orange County and San Diego have not had any problems.

Commissioner Griffiths asked about enforcement, and Assistant City Attorney Sullivan advised that typically the (ABC) Alcoholic Beverage Control will conduct "sting" operations on new businesses to ensure that they are not selling to minors and the Police Department is also charged with monitoring the sale of alcohol. Additionally, he noted that Code Enforcement would become involved if there are violations of the CUP and Starbucks' permit could be revoked if violations occur.

Commissioner Gibson questioned whether alcohol would be allowed in the patio area, and Ms. Valerio reported that alcohol can only be consumed in outdoor patio areas if the area is enclosed, which is not the case at this location.

Commissioner Polcari expressed concerns that there are already quite a few places selling alcohol in the area and other stores may seek to do the same thing should this application be approved.

Ms. Valerio reiterated that Starbucks is not trying to become a bar and the service of beer and wine is just intended as an enhancement to the existing menu.

Commissioner Gibson stated that she was concerned about this application, which would allow the sale of alcohol seven days a week from 4:00 p.m. to midnight, due to the location's proximity to a residential neighborhood with elementary, middle and high schools nearby.

Ms. Valerio clarified that the closing time changes depending on the season and midnight is the latest Starbucks would be open.

Chairperson Rizzo stated that he was aware of this type of establishment in Seattle and the intent is to provide a place for people to congregate in a relaxed atmosphere as an alternative to bars, relating his observation that college students of drinking age study at this Starbucks. He reported that while there are several bars in the area, including the Anza Inn which opens at 6:00 a.m., there have not been a lot of problems and he felt this would be a good addition as long as alcohol sales are limited to after 4:00 p.m. and appropriate signage is posted.

Commissioner Skoll indicated that he was willing to give this a chance, noting that Starbucks risks losing its permit to operate if it does not abide by the rules, which is a strong incentive.

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

MOTION: Commissioner Skoll moved to approve MOD14-00002, as conditioned, including all findings of fact, with the following added conditions:

No. 10 That the sale of alcohol shall be limited to from 4:00 p.m. to midnight.

No. 11 That the applicant shall post "No alcohol beyond this point" signage at all entrance and exit doors.

The motion was seconded by Commissioner D'anjou and passed by a 5-2 roll call vote with Commissioners Gibson and Polcari dissenting.

Planning Assistant Yumul read aloud the number and title of Planning Commission Resolution No. 14-021.

MOTION: Commissioner Skoll moved to adopt Planning Commission Resolution No. 14-021 as amended. The motion was seconded by Commissioner D'anjou and passed by a 5-2 roll call vote, with Commissioners Gibson and Polcari dissenting.

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 March 28 and April 3, 2014 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 May 7, 2014 Planning Commission meeting.

18. **ORAL COMMUNICATIONS #2**

18A. Commissioner Gibson wished Commissioner Skoll a happy Passover.

18B. Commissioner Skoll requested that Commissioners be provided with a schedule of weekend events being run by Chef Shafer in the downtown plaza.

Planning Manager Lodan agreed to do so, noting that one event was held, which resulted in a complaint from the nearby homeowners association.

18C. Commissioner Skoll reported that he attended a meeting of the ExxonMobil Community Advisory Panel prior to this meeting and learned that Refinery Manager Pablo Borgnino is going to be transferred to Alberta, Canada where he will oversee 15,000 employees at the Fort McMurray refinery. He explained that oil is extracted from sand at that refinery, which requires no drilling, and then the land is reclaimed for other uses. He noted that there was also a discussion about ExxonMobil's involvement in education, including Common Core and the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) program. He related his understanding that Mr. Borgnino's replacement will be coming from an ExxonMobil facility in China.

18D. Commissioner Watson wished everyone a happy Easter.

18E. Commissioner Griffiths noted that this Saturday, April 19, is Earth Day and Toyota will be hosting a recycling event, which includes free paper shredding.

18F. Chairperson Rizzo extended Easter and Passover greetings.

19. **ADJOURNMENT**

At 7:52 p.m., the meeting was adjourned to Wednesday, May 7, 2014 at 7:00 p.m.

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Approved as submitted May 7, 2014 s/ Sue Herbers, City Clerk
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