

October 4, 2006

**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, October 4, 2006, in City Council Chambers at Torrance City Hall.

2. SALUTE TO THE FLAG

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Commissioner Busch.

3. ROLL CALL

Present: Commissioners Browning, Busch, Gibson, Horwich, Uchima and Chairperson Faulk.

Absent: None.

Also Present: Planning Manager Lodan, Planning Assistant Hurd, Sr. Planning Associate Chun, Planning Associate Joe, Plans Examiner Noh, Associate Civil Engineer Symons, Fire Marshal Kazandjian and Deputy City Attorney Whitham.

4. REPORT ON POSTING OF THE AGENDA

Planning Manager Lodan confirmed that the agenda was posted on the Public Notice Board at 3031 Torrance Boulevard on 9/28/06.

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION: Commissioner Gibson moved for the approval of the September 6, 2006 Planning Commission minutes as submitted. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Busch and passed by unanimous roll call vote, with Chairperson Faulk abstaining.

6. REQUESTS FOR POSTPONEMENT

None.

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Chairperson Faulk reviewed the policies and procedures of the Planning Commission, including the right to appeal decisions to the City Council.

7. TIME EXTENSIONS – None.

8. CONTINUED HEARINGS – None.

9. WAIVERS – None.

10. FORMAL HEARINGS

10A. PRE06-00024: STEVE AND JEAN SEKI (WILL BASILIO)

Planning Commission consideration of a Precise Plan of Development to allow the construction of first and second-story additions to an existing one-story, single-family residence with a detached garage on property located within the Hillside Overlay District in the R-1 Zone at 22629 Lupine Drive.

Recommendation

Approval.

Planning Assistant Hurd introduced the request.

Will Basilio, project architect, voiced his agreement with the recommended conditions of approval.

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

MOTION: Commissioner Busch moved for the approval of PRE06-00024, as conditioned, including all findings of fact set forth by staff, with the following modifications:

Add

- That the silhouette and "Public Notice" sign shall be removed within 30 days of the final public hearing.

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

Planning Assistant Hurd read aloud the number and title of Planning Commission Resolution No. 06-109.

MOTION: Commissioner Browning moved for the adoption of Planning Commission Resolution No. 06-109, as amended. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Uchima and passed by unanimous roll call vote.

10B. DIV06-00016: PENCO ENGINEERING (ARMSTAR GROUP, LLC)

Planning Commission consideration of a Division of Lot to allow the subdivision of one existing lot into three lots on property located in the M-2 Zone at 21081, 21061 and 21041 Western Avenue.

Recommendation

Approval.

Planning Assistant Hurd introduced the request.

Jeff Ludwig, leasing agent with Colliers International, voiced his agreement with the recommended conditions of approval.

In response to Commissioner Busch's inquiry, Mr. Ludwig confirmed that he was authorized to speak on the applicant's behalf.

Commissioner Busch indicated that he favored imposing the three additional conditions discussed in the staff report and was concerned about whether Mr. Ludwig had the authority to agree to them.

Deputy City Attorney Whitham advised that any conditions imposed on the project by the Commission would be binding on the applicant.

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

MOTION: Commissioner Busch moved for the approval of DIV06-000216, as conditioned, including all findings of fact set forth by staff, with the following modifications:

Add

- That reciprocal parking easements shall be established between the three resulting lots.
- That one property management company shall maintain all three lots.
- That the parking lot shall be re-slurried and re-stripped.

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

Planning Assistant Hurd read aloud the number and title of Planning Commission Resolution No. 06-110.

MOTION: Commissioner Uchima moved for the adoption of Planning Commission Resolution No. 06-110, as amended. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Browning and passed by unanimous roll call vote.

10C. CUP06-00014, TTM067326, PRE06-00021, DVP06-00001: PETER HAGIST

Planning Commission consideration of a Conditional Use Permit to allow an existing professional and service office complex to be converted into medical and professional condominium units, a Development Permit for exterior renovations to an existing building located within the Hawthorne Boulevard Corridor Specific Plan, a Precise Plan of Development for architectural elements over 14 feet in height, and a Tentative Tract Map for condominium purposes on property located within the Hillside Overlay District in the HBCSP-WT Zone at 25550 Hawthorne Boulevard.

Recommendation

Approval.

Planning Assistant Hurd introduced the request and noted supplemental material available at the meeting.

Commissioner Browning noted for the record that he attended a homeowners' association meeting the previous evening at which this project was discussed; that the project was not on the agenda and he went to the meeting for another purpose; and that he did not participate in the discussion. He reported that approximately 25 people were in attendance, all of whom were in favor of the project.

Referring to renderings, John Kamus, representing Peninsula Medical LLC, briefly reviewed the proposed project, which would update the façade of an existing building and add a colonnade and two tower elements to create architectural interest. He voiced objections to Condition No. 3, requiring the towers to be reduced in height by 6 feet, explaining that such a reduction would make it impossible to maintain adequate clearance where the existing balcony/walkway extends into the towers.

In response to Commissioner Browning's inquiry, Mr. Kamus indicated that the towers could be reduced in height by 2½ feet and still maintain adequate clearance.

Commissioner Browning expressed concerns that exterior lighting from the building could impact residential neighbors to the east and suggested that there be no wall-mounted lighting on the upper stories.

Mr. Kamus advised that an exterior lighting plan for the entire site would be submitted to Planning staff for review to ensure that neighbors are not adversely impacted.

Commissioner Busch asked about the recommended condition discussed in the staff report which would require that if valet parking is offered, it must be free of charge.

Planning Manager Lodan advised that this condition was recommended for inclusion because the Commission has been reluctant to allow fees for parking at medical facilities in the past.

Doug Braun, representing the applicant, reported that there are currently no plans to offer valet service and agreed to submit a separate application in the future if they decide to do so.

Commissioner Busch voiced his opinion that more handicapped parking spaces are needed beyond the eight required by Code, since the building will house medical offices, and Deputy City Attorney Whitham confirmed that it was within the Commission's discretion to require additional handicapped parking.

In response to Commissioner Horwich's inquiry, Planning Manager Lodan provided clarification regarding parking requirements.

Commissioner Horwich expressed concerns about the adequacy of the parking, estimating that the project will be 5 -10 spaces short of the required parking after handicapped parking is increased and compact spaces are eliminated as discussed in the staff report.

Referring to renderings, Mr. Braun contended that adequate circulation would be maintained without eliminating the two compact parking spaces as mentioned in the staff report. He stated that the applicant was not seeking a parking variance and would comply with existing standards of 1 space for every 200 square feet of medical offices and 1 space for every 300 square feet of non-medical offices.

Planning Manager Lodan recommended that a condition be included requiring that the ratio of medical offices/non-medical offices be approved by Community Development staff after the parking plan has been finalized to ensure that parking complies with Code requirements.

Randy Reida, 3241 Singingwood Drive, stated that his only objection to the project is the two towers because they would block a major portion of his view, referring to photographs previously submitted to illustrate (of record). He noted that the towers are well above the existing roofline of this portion of the building and they will not be readily visible from either Hawthorne Boulevard or Rolling Hills Road, but instead will be mainly visible from residences on Singingwood Drive. He also expressed concerns about additional ambient light from the building.

Mr. Lin, 3232 Carolwood Drive, indicated that he shares Mr. Reida's concerns about the proposed project.

Chairperson Faulk questioned whether a 2½ foot reduction in the height of the towers would mitigate the impact, and Mr. Reida stated that he believed a height reduction of at least 6 feet was needed to eliminate the view impact.

Mr. Kamus noted that he prepared a diagram (supplemental material) demonstrating the line of site from properties on Singingwood Drive with a 2-foot reduction in the height of the towers. He explained that the primary objection to the towers is the obstruction of city-light views, however, this view did not exist until trees were trimmed by the applicant and it will likely be blocked by trees again within a year.

Mr. Braun expressed his willingness to compromise, but indicated that a 6-foot height reduction would not work architecturally.

In response to Chairperson Faulk's inquiry, Planning Manager Lodan reported that staff had reviewed the line-of-sight diagram submitted by the applicant and they still believe a 6-foot height reduction is necessary to preserve views.

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

MOTION: Commissioner Busch moved for the approval of CUP06-00014, TTM067326, PRE06-00021 and DVP06-00001, as conditioned, including all findings of fact set forth by staff, with the following modifications:

Add

- That a minimum of 12 handicapped parking spaces shall be provided.
- That the ratio of medical office space/non-medical office space shall be approved by Community Development staff after the parking plan has been finalized to ensure compliance with parking standards.

The motion was seconded by Commissioner Gibson, and discussion briefly continued.

Commissioner Browning asked about the applicant's claim that the towers would not work architecturally with a 6-foot height reduction and expressed concerns that the additional handicapped parking spaces would make it difficult to comply with parking standards.

Planning Manager Lodan stated that staff believes a different design should be explored that does not impact views and noted that the ratio of medical offices/non-medical offices could be adjusted to ensure that parking requirements are met.

The motion passed by unanimous roll call vote.

Planning Assistant Hurd read aloud the number and title of Planning Commission Resolution Nos. 06-111, 06-112, 06-113, and 06-114.

MOTION: Commissioner Gibson moved for the adoption of Planning Commission Resolution Nos. 06-111, 06-112, 06-113, and 06-114, as amended. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Uchima and passed by unanimous roll call vote.

10D. CUP06-00013, PCR06-00005: JEFF BERGSMA (MAKENA GREAT AMERICA)

Planning Commission consideration of a Conditional Use Permit and a Planning Commission Review to allow the construction and operation of a retail center with a total of 1,326 square feet of restaurant with seating, 6,616 square feet of retail, 1,222 square feet of office, and 1,200 square feet of take-out only restaurant on an adjacent commercial parcel, on property located in the C-2 Zone at 17405 and 17419 Crenshaw Boulevard.

Recommendation

Approval.

Planning Assistant Hurd introduced the request.

Jeff Bergsma, project architect, voiced his agreement with the recommended conditions of approval and briefly described the proposed project. He reported that the building on the corner of Artesia and Crenshaw Boulevard will be pushed forward to block noise for residences to the rear of the project; that the existing rear wall and planter will be plastered to match the building; and that the area will be planted with trees and shrubs to create a better buffer for residential neighbors and discourage anyone from hopping the fence.

Bret Blanchard, Makena Great American, noted that this is the company's sixth project in Torrance and thanked staff for their efforts.

In response to Chairperson Faulk's inquiry, Mr. Blanchard reported that no tenants have been secured for the project at this time.

Chairperson Faulk asked about parking problems at another project at Artesia and Prairie, which was also developed by Mr. Blanchard's company. Mr. Blanchard conceded that there are parking problems at certain times of day, but noted that they had to work around existing conditions at that site and in this case, they will be starting from scratch.

Roy Murphy, 17420 Delza Avenue, noted that his garage is in line with the existing take-out restaurant, which will remain. He requested that the size of the outdoor storage area be reduced; that the trash enclosure facing his garage be reoriented to face the street; that parking lot lighting be improved to discourage illicit behavior; and that shrubs be planted along the backside of the project to soften its appearance. He suggested that drainage for the site include provisions to ensure that restaurant waste does not flow into storm drains. He expressed concerns about people peering over his fence and indicated that he hopes to increase its height to 8 feet in the future.

Planning Manager Lodan advised that staff would look into reorienting the trash enclosure away from residences and that landscaping would be provided wherever possible. He noted that the City participates in the NPDES (National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System) program which requires that the best management practices be employed to avoid polluting the environment. He recommended that a condition be included requiring the applicant to submit a lighting plan for approval prior to the issuance of building permits.

In response to Commissioner Busch's inquiry, Planning Manager Lodan confirmed that restaurants on this site would not be able to serve alcoholic beverages without returning to the Commission for approval and advised that hours of operation were not included in the conditions because the tenants are unknown at this time.

Chairperson Faulk suggested that the hours could be set and tenants could come back to the Commission to request a change if they are not acceptable.

Richard Matsueda, who operates a dental practice at 17511 Crenshaw Boulevard, expressed concerns that overflow parking from the project will block the alley and make it difficult to access his parking lot. He commented on problems with the recycling center to the south of the proposed project.

The Commission briefly recessed from 8:30 p.m. to 8:40 p.m.

James Scholerman, owner of commercial building at 17515 Crenshaw Boulevard, echoed concerns about the alley being blocked by overflow parking from the new development, noting that the alley provides the only access to his property. He suggested that this matter be continued so he could have an opportunity to discuss his concerns with the developer.

In response to Chairperson Faulk's inquiry, Planning Manager Lodan confirmed that the project makes no changes to the entrance to the alley.

Mr. Bergsma related his understanding that neighboring property owners were concerned about overflow parking blocking the alley due to problems with the Pizza Hut restaurant that formerly occupied the site, and pointed out that there were only 5 parking spaces for Pizza Hut and the proposed project will provide 15. He explained that the outdoor storage area was proposed because of concerns that if this area were

landscaped it could become a “bum park,” and discussed the possibility of narrowing the storage area and shifting parking closer to the building. He agreed to turn the small trash enclosure 45 degrees to mitigate the impact on Mr. Murphy’s property. He requested that the hours of operation be 5:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m., because he hopes to have a Starbuck’s type coffee house for a tenant and this is consistent with their hours of operation at other locations in Torrance.

Commissioner Browning suggested cutting the outdoor storage area in half and using the remaining space for tandem parking for employees.

Mr. Bergsma voiced support for Commissioner Browning’s suggestion, noting that Planning staff had objected to tandem parking for customers but it should work fine for employees.

Commissioner Browning asked about deliveries, and Planning Manager Lodan advised that the TMC limits the hours during which deliveries may take place.

In response to Commissioner Browning’s inquiry, Mr. Bergsma confirmed that the project meets ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) requirements, noting that an elevator is not required for the second-floor office space. He also confirmed that the required documentation would be provided to the Fire Department indicating that the site is free of soil contamination before new construction begins.

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

Planning Manager Lodan advised that staff had no objection to a tandem parking arrangement as long as the spaces are in addition to the required parking.

MOTION: Commissioner Busch moved for the approval of CUP06-00013 and PCR06-00005, as conditioned, including all findings of fact set forth by staff with the following modifications:

Modify

No. 4 That the applicant shall reduce the size of outdoor storage proposed to be located west of the take-out only restaurant on Lot 2 and ~~plant additional landscaping~~ create tandem parking for employees to the satisfaction of the Community Development Director.

Add

- That the hours of operation shall be 5:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m.
- That a lighting plan shall be submitted for approval prior to the issuance of building permits.

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

Planning Assistant Hurd read aloud the number and title of Planning Commission Resolution Nos. 06-115 and 06-116.

MOTION: Commissioner Busch moved for the adoption of Planning Commission Resolution Nos. 06-115 and 06-116, as amended. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Browning and passed by unanimous roll call vote.

- 11. **RESOLUTIONS** – None.
- 12. **PUBLIC WORKSHOP ITEMS** – None.
- 13. **MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS** – None.

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

Planning Manager Lodan reviewed recent City Council action on Planning matters, noting that the project at 1804 Andreo Avenue was denied without prejudice at the September 26 Council meeting due to concerns about the Floor Area Ratio and the project at 210 Via El Toro was denied without prejudice at the October 3 meeting because of view issues.

15. **LIST OF TENTATIVE PLANNING COMMISSION CASES**

Planning Manager Lodan reviewed the agenda for the Planning Commission meeting of October 18, 2006.

16. **ORAL COMMUNICATIONS**

16A. Commissioner Browning asked about what appears to be un-permitted construction taking place at 3203 Carolwood.

Planning Manager Lodan reported that he went by the site earlier in the day, but couldn't see the construction from the street and indicated that Code Enforcement staff would be sent out to check on this matter.

16B. Chairperson Faulk commented on the increasingly common practice of marketing projects before they have been approved.

Planning Manager Lodan confirmed that developers may market projects prior to approval, but cannot complete any sales or contracts.

Deputy City Attorney Whitham noted that developers who do this are proceeding at their own risk.

17. **ADJOURNMENT**

At 9:20 p.m., the meeting was adjourned to Wednesday, October 18, 2006, at 7:00 p.m.

Approved as Submitted November 1, 2006 s/ Sue Herbers, City Clerk
