

**MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF
THE TORRANCE PLANNING COMMISSION**

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Torrance Planning Commission convened in a regular session at 7:06 p.m. on Wednesday, December 21, 2005, in City Council Chambers at Torrance City Hall.

2. SALUTE TO THE FLAG

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Commissioner Horwich.

3. ROLL CALL

Present: Commissioners Browning, Busch, Fauk, Horwich, and Chairperson Uchima.

Absent: Commissioner Drevno.

Also Present: Planning Manager Isomoto, Planning Assistant Hurd, Deputy City Attorney Whitham, Building Regulations Administrator Segovia, Fire Marshal Carter, and Associate Civil Engineer Symons.

4. POSTING OF THE AGENDA

MOTION: Commissioner Fauk, seconded by Commissioner Horwich, moved to accept and file the report of the secretary on the posting of the agenda for this meeting; voice vote reflected unanimous approval (absent Commissioner Drevno).

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Minutes were not available.

6. REQUESTS FOR POSTPONEMENT

Planning Manager Isomoto relayed a request to continue Agenda Item 8A (PRE05-00023, WAV05-00013: Les Arneson) to January 18, 2006.

MOTION: Commissioner Horwich, seconded by Commissioner Browning, moved to continue Agenda Item 8A (PRE05-00023 and WAV05-00013) to January 18, 2005; voice vote reflected unanimous approval (absent Commissioner Drevno).

Chairperson Uchima announced that the hearing would not be re-advertised because they were continued to a date certain.

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Chairperson Uchima 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**

8B. **PRE05-00009: ALAN KOSSOFF**

Planning Commission consideration for approval of a Precise Plan of Development to allow the construction of a new single family residence with a semi-subterranean garage on property located in the Hillside Overlay District in the R-1 Zone at 404 Camino De Las Colinas.

Recommendation

Approval.

Planning Assistant Hurd introduced the request.

Korey House, applicant, voiced her agreement with the recommended conditions of approval.

Commissioner Busch stated that he was pleased with the process and that a compromise was reached.

Harriet Feinberg, 408 Camino de las Colinas, stated that a satisfactory compromise has been reached with the applicant with the plan revisions. She thanked Planning staff and Commission for their objectivity, professionalism, and assistance in resolving a view reduction problem.

MOTION: Commissioner Faulk moved to close the public hearing. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Horwich; voice vote reflected unanimous approval (absent Commissioner Drevno).

MOTION: Commissioner Busch moved for the approval of PRE05-00009, as conditioned, including all findings of fact set forth by staff. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Faulk and passed by unanimous roll call vote (absent Commissioner Drevno).

Planning Assistant Hurd read aloud the number and title of Planning Commission Resolution No. 05-174.

MOTION: Commissioner Faulk moved for the adoption of Resolution No. 05-174. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Horwich and passed by unanimous roll call vote (absent Commissioner Drevno).

Commissioner Faulk expressed appreciation to both parties for their work on this project.

8C. PRE05-00035: STUDIO 9ONE2

Planning Commission consideration for approval of a Precise Plan of Development to allow the construction of a new two story single family residence with an attached garage on property located in the Hillside Overlay District in the R-1 Zone at 5251 Zakon Road.

Patrick Killen, architect, stated that the applicant initially tried to determine what would be an acceptable solution for all parties and worked with staff for five months prior to making a submittal. He gave a PowerPoint presentation demonstrating the initial evaluation as well as aerial photographs of the site and surrounding properties. He noted that a 52-foot rear yard setback was maintained in lieu of the required 20-foot setback. He presented diagrams depicting the two-story project designed, neighboring survey heights, views to and from neighboring properties, and silhouettes at the site. He noted that in revised plans the elevation of the residence was reduced from 125.76 feet to 123.21 feet. He stated that he submitted plans that he felt were a good compromise but that staff was using them as a negotiating point. He stated that he asked for a continuance to try to achieve a positive approval from staff and neighbors, but that it was not possible to lower the building another four or five feet and still maintain a two-story structure. He noted that there were 12 letters in support of the project and 4 letters of dissent included in the material of record. He stated that he has worked diligently with staff and neighbors to try to gain approval of the project.

Responding to Commissioner Browning's inquiry, he stated that there was a five-foot setback from the property line with a clearance of approximately 4' 6".

When Commissioner Browning asserted that in looking at the silhouette he came up with a maximum of 3' 8" to the lower retaining wall, Mr. Killen stated that the silhouette was probably inaccurate.

Planning Manager Isomoto advised that a five-foot setback was required and referred him to the silhouette survey map on page 68 showing that the wall was entirely on the subject property and not on the property line itself.

Commissioner Busch stated that he visited the site and that after modifications he still sees a "looming effect" over 5261 Zakon Road and privacy concerns of 5243 Zakon Road. He asked if the applicant was willing to consider proposals made by staff.

Mr. Killen responded that he made a model of what the specifications would entail in developing the building. He stated that dropping the height another 30" would result in no positive drainage and that the "threshold of pain" was an additional 15" or 18" in order not to have a flat roof.

Robert Reed, 5267 Zakon Road, asserted that the project was not in harmony or compatible with the surrounding neighborhood. He expressed concern that he would lose Palos Verdes hillside views and that his home would be subjected to perpetual wind and sun shadow. He distributed photographs taken from the second story of his home. He contended that the subject property has an exaggerated front terraced yard and that the rear yard was artificially raised. He recommended that the construction site be excavated down to a level that is compatible with the neighborhood home profile.

Allen Lee, 5261 Zakon Road, distributed photographs showing the impacted view and privacy to his property and stated that the project was designed to be as intrusive as possible. He stated that the actual full height of the roof extended right to the edge of the property. He voiced concern that the garage on the site was illegally converted to a sound studio and that the proposed design included a studio, sound room, and vocal booth on the ground floor. He noted that several letters of support for the plans were outside the 500-foot notification area.

Commissioner Horwich stated that the Commission was concerned with view, light, and privacy issues and not how the rooms would be used inside the house.

Commissioner Busch noted that staff recommendation states that, if approved, the proposed recording studio could not be used for commercial operation.

Planning Manager Isomoto clarified that this condition would be an additional request for the Commission to consider if it approved the project.

Mario Obejas, 5265 Bindewald Road, discussed the importance of allocating rights equally and expressed hope that the applicant would mold varying opinions into the design.

Don Pratt, 5232 Zakon Road, stated that he was in support of the subject property and distributed correspondence that was not included in the material of record. He expressed concern that some audience members voicing dissent do not actually live on their properties and commented that everyone should be able to build their dream home in compliance with all applicable laws and regulations.

C. H. Pan, 5243 Zakon Road, stated that he initially supported the applicant's proposal but was stunned when he saw the blueprints. He contended that this large of structure does not fit in with the surrounding neighborhood and suggested that the applicant go somewhere else to build his dream home.

Dr. J. Grinker, 5224 Zakon Road, discussed the special character of the hillside and expressed concern about potential loss of view and light. She suggested that the applicant remove his swimming pool and expand backwards.

Mr. Killen responded to resident concerns. Referring to Mr. Reed's concern, he stated that the subject property was lower than his ridge height by approximately 14" and asserted that the site was too far away to possibly block the sunlight. Referring to his next door neighbor's remarks, he stated that he has eliminated the roof deck from the first proposal in the interest of trying not to have views down into his yard area. In response to Mr. Pan's concerns, he advised that balconies were intentionally planned to look toward rear yards. He concluded that the proposal was fair and just, and that he was willing to work with the Commission to address its concerns.

Commissioner Faulk received clarification from Mr. Killen that the sight line of the balcony was looking towards Long Beach and that the balcony size was 25' x 5'. At his request, Mr. Killen described placement of windows on the south elevation of the building, overall plate heights for the building, and roof articulation.

Commissioner Horwich stated that he was encouraged that applicant was willing to work with staff and reviewed staff's suggestions to make the impacted view less severe.

Mr. Killen responded that the building has been set back 32' from code requirement but that 18" was the minimum elevation without creating the lower level to read like a basement.

MOTION: Commissioner Faulk, seconded by Commissioner Busch, moved to close the public hearing; voice vote reflected unanimous approval (absent Commissioner Drevno).

Commissioner Faulk stated that he did not see privacy and light impacts to the property at 5243 Zakon Road, view impacts to the residence at 5261 Zakon Road, or sun and air impacts to the property at 5267 Zakon Road. He stated that the view of the Palos Verdes hills would be impacted to the corner residence, but with the reduced flags there was still somewhat a view of the trees.

Commissioner Browning objected to silhouettes that were not precise and would like to see property line setbacks and silhouettes where they were supposed to be.

MOTION: Commissioner Horwich, seconded by Commissioner Faulk, moved for approval of PRE05-00035 with the added condition that the height be brought down another 18" per the architect's offer.

Commissioner Busch made an amendment to the motion requiring a two-foot increase in the front yard set back per staff recommendation.

A roll call vote reflected approval, with Commissioner Browning opposing (absent Commissioner Drevno).

Planning Assistant Hurd advised that resolutions would be brought back to the January 18, 2006 Planning Commission meeting.

Commissioner Horwich cautioned the applicant that there were strict rules regarding home-based businesses.

The Commission was in recess from 8:35 p.m. to 8:50 p.m.

9. WAIVERS

9A. WAV05-00029: JOHN SANDERSON (KYLE SMITH)

Planning Commission consideration for approval of a Waiver to allow reductions in the side yard setback requirements for the construction of a new second unit above a new four car garage on property located in the R-3 Zone at 1230 Portola Avenue.

Recommendation

Approval.

Planning Assistant Hurd introduced the request.

John Sanderson, 1230 Portola Avenue, voiced his agreement with the recommended conditions of approval.

MOTION: Commissioner Horwich moved for the approval of WAV 05-00029, as conditioned, including all findings of fact set forth by staff. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Busch and passed by unanimous roll call vote (absent Commissioner Drevno).

Planning Assistant Hurd read aloud the number and title of Planning Commission Resolution No. 05-185.

MOTION: Commissioner Faulk moved for the adoption of Resolution No. 05-185. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Horwich and passed by unanimous roll call vote (absent Commissioner Drevno).

10. FORMAL HEARINGS

10A. PCR05-00005, DIV05-00020: LOYD MARTIN

Planning Commission consideration for approval of a Planning Commission Review to allow the construction of additions to an existing retail and office center in conjunction with a Division of Lot to merge two underlying lots on property located in the C-2 Zone at 1611 Crenshaw Boulevard.

Recommendation

Approval.

Planning Assistant Hurd introduced the request.

Jerome Julian, project architect, voiced his agreement with the recommended conditions of approval.

William Shannon, 1611 Crenshaw Boulevard, tenant, stated that the landlord was attempting to charge him for property taxes, utilities, and maintenance for the adjacent lot and requested a continuance to allow him to consult with his attorney.

Deputy City Attorney Whitham advised that his concern was a civil matter and not within the Commission's purview or jurisdiction.

MOTION: Commissioner Horwich, seconded by Commissioner Faulk, moved to close the public hearing; voice vote reflected unanimous approval (absent Commissioner Drevno).

MOTION: Commissioner Horwich moved for the approval of PCR05-00005 and DIV05-00020, as conditioned, including all findings of fact set forth by staff. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Busch and passed by unanimous roll call vote (absent Commissioner Drevno).

Planning Assistant Hurd read aloud the number and title of Planning Commission Resolutions Nos. 05-186 and 05-187.

MOTION: Commissioner Busch moved for the adoption of Resolution No. 05-186 and Resolution No. 05-187. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Horwich and passed by unanimous roll call vote (absent Commissioner Drevno).

10B. CUP05-00036; IGNACIA OCHOA

Planning Commission consideration for approval of a Conditional Use Permit to allow the operation of a new take-out only pizza restaurant in an existing shopping center on property located in the CR-PP Zone at 4509 Sepulveda Boulevard.

Recommendation:

Approval.

Planning Assistant Hurd introduced the request.

Marcus Min, 4509 Sepulveda Boulevard, representing the applicant, voiced his agreement with the recommended conditions of approval.

Commissioner Busch received clarification from Mr. Min that hours of operation were 11:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m., Monday through Sunday.

Commissioner Browning clarified that the Conditional Use Permit was for take-out only and Mr. Min stated that an application for a dining permit might be pursued at a later date.

Responding to Commissioner Horwich's inquiry, Mr. Min stated that there were seven parking spaces and that customers could not drive up to a window to pick up the product.

MOTION: Commissioner Horwich, seconded by Commissioner Busch, moved to close the public hearing; voice vote reflected unanimous approval (absent Commissioner Drevno).

MOTION: Commissioner Busch moved for the approval of CUP05-00036, as conditioned, including all findings of fact set forth by staff. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Horwich and passed by unanimous roll call vote (absent Commissioner Drevno).

Planning Assistant Hurd read aloud the number and title of Planning Commission Resolution No. 05-188.

MOTION: Commissioner Faulk moved for the adoption of Resolution No. 05-188. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Horwich and passed by unanimous roll call vote (absent Commissioner Drevno).

Commissioner Faulk wished applicant success with the new business.

10C. CUP05-00037, DIV05-00021: ANDY AND CAROLINE WIDJAJA (MIKE CHAMBERLAIN)

Planning Commission consideration for approval of a Conditional Use Permit to allow the construction of three new condominiums in conjunction with a Division of Lot for condominium purposes on property located in the R-3 Zone at 1824 Martina Avenue.

Recommendation

Approval.

Planning Assistant Hurd introduced the request and noted that supplemental material was available for review.

Mike Chamberlain, South Prospect Avenue, designer, voiced his agreement with the recommended conditions of approval.

Bonnie Mae Barnard, Gramercy Avenue, Save Historic Old Torrance, requested assurance that the design was more Spanish than eclectic.

Mike Chamberlain stated that the design was Spanish colonial revival and would fit into the neighborhood.

MOTION: Commissioner Horwich, seconded by Commissioner Faulk, moved to close the public hearing; voice vote reflected unanimous approval (absent Commissioner Drevno).

MOTION: Commissioner Faulk moved for the approval of CUP05-00037 and DIV05-00021, as conditioned, including all findings of fact set forth by staff. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Horwich and passed by unanimous roll call vote (absent Commissioner Drevno).

Planning Assistant Hurd read aloud the number and title of Planning Commission Resolution Nos. 05-189 and 05-190.

MOTION: Commissioner Busch moved for the adoption of Resolution Nos. 05-189 and 05-190. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Horwich and passed by unanimous roll call vote (absent Commissioner Drevno).

10D. PRE05-00042: MAJID BAKSH (LEE SMITH)

Planning Commission consideration for approval of a Precise Plan of Development to allow a second story addition in conjunction with first floor remodeling to an existing one story single family residence on property located in the Hillside Overlay District in the R-a Zone at 283 Call de Madrid.

Recommendation

Approval.

Planning Assistant Hurd introduced the request.

Lee Smith, Marine Avenue, Lawndale, voiced his agreement with the recommended conditions of approval.

Bill Sun, Paseo de Granada, Redondo Beach, questioned how the Planning Commission determined the height of two-story buildings. He stated that he was unable to determine the height of the proposed improvement by the silhouette and expressed concern that the building would be five or six feet higher than his home. He noted that the applicant's street level was 1 to 1-1/2 feet higher than his street of residence and hoped that it would not be out of scale relative to the street level.

Planning Manager Isomoto responded that height is measured from the lowest adjacent grade to the highest point of the ridgeline of the proposed house, noting that they do not measure from an adjoining property's height.

Chairperson Uchima stated that the silhouette appeared to be consistent with the neighborhood.

Responding to Commissioner Horwich's inquiry, Mr. Sun stated that his home was built to 27'.

Commissioner Horwich advised that the applicant's home would not be over 27' and the difference would be substantially the difference of the height of the lots.

Building Regulations Administrator Segovia explained that Condition #3 established a benchmark of where the existing grade line was and that was where all measurements were taken from.

Planning Manager Isomoto reviewed the silhouette certification on page 16 and clarified that the house pad could be as much as two feet above the street but not more than that. She stated that it would be within approximately two feet of the street level nearest Mr. Sun's house.

MOTION: Commissioner Horwich, seconded by Commissioner Faulk, moved to close the public hearing; voice vote reflected unanimous approval (absent Commissioner Drevno).

MOTION: Commissioner Faulk moved for the approval of PRE05-00042, as conditioned, including all findings of fact set forth by staff. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Horwich and passed by unanimous roll call vote (absent Commissioner Drevno).

Commissioner Horwich agreed with the assessment that it was flat land and not a hillside issue.

Planning Assistant Hurd read aloud the number and title of Planning Commission Resolution No. 05-191.

MOTION: Commissioner Horwich moved for the adoption of Resolution Nos. 05-191. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Busch and passed by unanimous roll call vote (absent Commissioner Drevno).

10E. PRE05-00041: RODGER AND VIRGINIA C. BARCLAY

Planning Commission consideration for approval of a Precise Plan of Development to allow the construction of a new two story single family residence on property located in the Hillside Overlay District in the R-1 Zone at 5609 Avenue A.

Recommendation

Approval.

Planning Assistant Hurd introduced the request.

Rodger Barclay, applicant, voiced his agreement with the recommended conditions of approval.

Responding to Commissioner Horwich's inquiry, Mr. Barclay clarified that the FAR was .57.

Commissioner Faulk noted the large wrap around balcony in the design and stated that the view would be affected if the house on the corner one day proposed a second story.

MOTION: Commissioner Horwich, seconded by Commissioner Faulk, moved to close the public hearing; voice vote reflected unanimous approval (absent Commissioner Drevno).

MOTION: Commissioner Busch moved for the approval of PRE05-00041, as conditioned, including all findings of fact set forth by staff. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Browning; a roll call vote reflected unanimous approval (absent Commissioner Drevno).

Planning Assistant Hurd read aloud the number and title of Planning Commission Resolution No. 05-192.

MOTION: Commissioner Horwich moved for the adoption of Planning Commission Resolution No. 05-192. The motion was seconded by Chairperson Busch and passed by unanimous roll call vote (absent Commissioner Drevno).

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

14. REVIEW OF CITY COUNCIL ACTION ON PLANNING MATTERS

Planning Manager Isomoto reviewed recent City Council action on Planning matters. She reported that there was a two-hour hearing on the Ridgeland Road appeal at the December 20, 2005 City Council meeting that was continued until February 7, 2006.

Responding to Chairperson Uchima's inquiry regarding FAR, Deputy City Attorney Whitham clarified that the Hillside Overlay did not define what hardship is and can be interpreted very broadly.

15. LIST OF TENTATIVE PLANNING COMMISSION CASES

Planning Manager Isomoto reported that the January 4, 2006 Commission meeting was cancelled and reviewed the agenda for the Planning Commission meeting of January 18, 2006.

A Planning Commission recognition dinner to honor Commissioners Muratsuchi and La Bouff was scheduled for Tuesday, January 31, 2006.

16. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

16A. Staff and Commissioners wished each other a happy holiday season.

16B. Bonnie Mae Barnard, Save Historic Old Torrance, Gramercy Avenue, invited Commissioners to the Save Historic Old Torrance Preservation Extravaganza on February 26, 2006 at the Depot.

16C. Commissioner Browning noted that the new Torrance Roster of Public Officials listed his address inaccurately.

16D. Chairperson Uchima thanked the staff for their efforts throughout the year.

16E. Planning Manager Isomoto informed Commissioners that the public counter would be closed on open Fridays beginning January 13, 2006.

17. ADJOURNMENT

At 9:40 p.m., the meeting was adjourned to Wednesday, January 18, 2006 at 6:00 p.m.

Approved as Submitted April 5, 2006 s/ Sue Herbers, City Clerk
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