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TORRANCE PLANNING COMMISSION – MARCH 4, 2015

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At 8:00 p.m., the meeting was adjourned to Wednesday, March 18, 2015 at 7:00 p.m.

March 4, 2015

**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, March 4, 2015 in City Council Chambers at Torrance City Hall.

2. SALUTE TO THE FLAG

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Commissioner Tsao.

3. ROLL CALL/ MOTIONS FOR EXCUSED ABSENCE

Present: Commissioners D'anjou, Herring, Skoll, Tsao, Watson and Chairperson Polcari.

Absent: Commissioner Gibson.

Also Present: Planning Manager Lodan, Planning Associate Martinez, Associate Civil Engineer Symons, Plans Examiner Noh, Fire Prevention Specialist Kazandjian, Assistant City Attorney Sullivan.

MOTION: Commissioner D'anjou moved to grant Commissioner Gibson an excused absence for this meeting. The motion was seconded by Commission Tsao and passed by unanimous voice vote.

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, February 27, 2015.

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION: Commissioner Skoll moved for the approval of the February 4, 2015 Planning Commission minutes as written. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Herring and passed by unanimous roll call vote (absent Commissioner Gibson).

6. REQUESTS FOR POSTPONEMENTS

Planning Manager Lodan relayed the applicant's request to continue Agenda Item 12B (PCR15-00001: Paragon Laboratories) to March 18, 2015 due to a scheduling conflict.

MOTION: Commissioner Watson moved to continue Agenda Item 12B to March 18, 2015. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Herring and passed by roll call vote (absent Commissioner Gibson).

7. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS #1 – None.

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Chairperson Polcari 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** – None.
11. **WAIVERS**
- 11A. **WAV15-00002:MUDASSAR AHMAD**

Planning Commission consideration for approval of a Waiver of the rear yard setback requirement in conjunction with a first-story addition on property located in the R-1 Zone at 4246 180th Street. The project is Categorically Exempt from CEQA per Guidelines Section 15305 – Existing Facilities.

Recommendation: Approval.

Planning Associate Martinez introduced the request.

Mudassar Ahmad, applicant, voiced his agreement with the recommended conditions of approval. He explained that the proposed addition will provide a little extra space to accommodate his parents who have moved from overseas. He noted that he discussed the project with neighbors to the east and south and they have no objection to it.

In response to Commissioner Herring's inquiry, Mr. Ahmad clarified that the project consists of enlarging an existing bedroom.

Commissioner Tsao noted that he drove by Mr. Ahmad's residence and observed that it was very well maintained.

Commissioner Herring disclosed that he also drove by the subject property.

MOTION: Commissioner Watson moved to close the public hearing. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Skoll and passed by unanimous voice vote (absent Commissioner Gibson).

MOTION: Commissioner D'anjou moved to approve WAV15-00002, as conditioned, including all findings of fact set forth by staff. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Skoll and passed by unanimous roll call vote (absent Commissioner Gibson).

Planning Associate Martinez read aloud the number and title of Planning Commission Resolution No. 15-014.

MOTION: Commissioner D'anjou moved to adopt Planning Commission Resolution No. 15-014. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Skoll and passed by unanimous roll call vote (absent Commissioner Gibson).

12. FORMAL HEARINGS

12A. CUP14-00027, EAS14-00005: GANAHL LUMBER CO.

Planning Commission consideration for adoption of a Mitigated Negative Declaration and approval of a Conditional Use Permit to allow the construction and operation of a lumber yard and building supplies store with electronic reader board signs on property located in the M-2 Zone at 2600 Del Amo Boulevard.

Recommendation: Approval.

Planning Associate Martinez introduced the request and noted supplemental material consisting of a revised resolution with modified conditions.

Peter Ganahl, CEO of Ganahl Lumber Co., voiced his agreement with the recommended conditions of approval. He provided background information about the company, noting that it is a family-owned, privately-held company that began in 1884. Sharing a photo circa 1904, he reported that the company is not new to the area and actually had a lumber yard overlooking the Redondo Beach wharf in the early 1900s. He noted that most employees also have ownership in the company and they are very committed to the communities in which they live and work.

With the aid of slides, Dale Malcolm, project architect, provided an overview of the project. He explained that the project features a design that is contemporary, but not trendy and it incorporates many sustainable elements, including a cistern that captures rainwater and a bio-swale. He noted that the applicant will be landscaping the frontage along Del Amo Boulevard all the way to Crenshaw Boulevard, including the area in front of American Styrenics and Dow Chemical. Using renderings to illustrate, he reported that the applicant has agreed to eliminate the electronic reader board signs from the tower in front of the building at staff's request and will instead incorporate a reader board sign into the monument sign near the corner of Del Amo and Crenshaw Boulevard. He shared photographs of the Ganahl Lumber store in Pasadena, which has a similar design.

Tom Barclay, general manager of the Torrance store, reported that he has worked for the company since 1980 and has been general manager of the Los Alamitos store for the last 16 years. He stated that the company spent two years looking for the ideal site in the South Bay and they believe this will be the best lumber yard ever built.

In response to Commissioner Skoll's inquiry, Mr. Barclay confirmed that there will be staff available to assist customers who need help locating a product and provided clarification regarding the location of the railroad spur.

Chairperson Polcari commented positively on the project and related his belief that it will be a real bonus for Torrance if Ganahl sets up shop here.

Commissioner Herring welcomed the Ganahl family back to the South Bay and commended them on the design of the project. He noted that there was an incident at the ExxonMobil refinery a couple of weeks ago and as a result, some people were told to shelter in place and asked what would happen if a similar event occurs while people are shopping at the lumber yard. He also asked about traffic control should an emergency arise and streets are closed off.

Mr. Barclay stated that the proximity to the refinery was also a concern for the company, therefore they hired a risk management consultant to conduct a study, which confirmed that this is a safe place for a retail store. He reported that the consultant will help them devise an emergency action plan that includes provisions for sheltering in place and the plan will be practiced on a regular basis. With regard to traffic control, he explained that drop arms will be installed in driveways and they will be come down if street barriers are activated to avoid reintroducing traffic on Del Amo Boulevard. He noted that the company will be working closely with the fire department on emergency protocols.

Commissioner Tsao asked about the number of employees and the timeline for the project.

Mr. Barclay explained that the business will open with approximately 120 employees, but since the construction industry is cyclical, there could be as many as 165 employees at the high point based on statistics from other locations. He reported that the business is expected to open in the late third quarter or early fourth quarter of 2016.

Noting that he drove by the site, Commissioner Tsao voiced his opinion that this is a good location for a lumber yard and it will be a great improvement for the area. He questioned whether there might be a need for a dedicated right-turn lane for southbound traffic at the Del Amo/Crenshaw Boulevard intersection.

Traffic Engineering Manager Semaan reported that the traffic study indicates that that turning movement will not be impacted by the project, however, as a separate project, staff is seeking the dedication of land to allow the creation of a right-turn only lane at that location.

In response to Commissioner Watson's inquiry regarding employee parking, Mr. Barclay reported that there will be 163 covered parking spaces on the roof of the building and he expected that ground level parking at the east end of the lot will also be used for employees since it was not convenient for customers.

Commissioner Watson asked about bus service for employees since bus stops are not allowed on Del Amo Boulevard, and Planning Manager Lodan advised that the nearest bus stop will be on Crenshaw Boulevard or the new transit center.

Commissioner Watson voiced her opinion that this project was very appropriate for the site and a good use of traditional resources, noting that Torrance was originally a railroad town.

Returning to the podium, Mr. Ganahl stated that the company looks forward to renewing its relationship with Torrance.

Commissioner Skoll asked about the source of the company's lumber, and Mr. Ganahl reported that most of the company's sales are from framing wood, which comes from the northwest; that OSB (oriented strand board) comes from the south; and that furniture grade hardwood is imported.

MOTION: Commissioner Watson moved to close the public hearing. The motion was seconded by Commissioner D'anjou and passed by unanimous voice vote (absent Commissioner Gibson).

MOTION: Commissioner D'anjou moved to adopt a Mitigated Negative Declaration. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Watson and passed by unanimous roll call vote (absent Commissioner Gibson).

MOTION: Commissioner D'anjou moved to approve CUP14-00005, as conditioned, including all findings of fact set forth by staff. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Skoll and passed by unanimous roll call vote (absent Commissioner Gibson).

Planning Associate Martinez read aloud the number and title of Planning Commission Resolution No. 15-015.

MOTION: Commissioner Herring moved to adopt Planning Commission Resolution No. 15-015 as amended per supplemental material. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Skoll and passed by unanimous roll call vote (absent Commissioner Gibson).

12B. PCR15-00001: PARAGON LABORATORIES (VICTOR & CLAIRE KAUFMAN FAMILY TRUST)

Planning Commission consideration for approval of a Planning Commission Review to allow operating hours between 10:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m. at an existing manufacturing facility on property located in the ML (M1-PP) Zone at 20433 Earl Street. This project is Categorically Exempt from CEQA per Guidelines Section 15301 – Existing Facilities.

Item was continued to March 18, 2015.

13. RESOLUTIONS

13A. CUP14-00026: JOSE PONCE (NORTH TORRANCE PLAZA, LLC)

Planning Commission consideration for adoption of a resolution reflecting their decision to deny a Conditional Use Permit to allow the operation of a small collection recycling facility within the western parking area of the existing shopping center on property located in the C-2 Zone at 4848 190th Street. This project is Categorically Exempt from CEQA per Guidelines Section 15301 – Existing Facilities.

Planning Associate Martinez read aloud the number and title of Planning Commission Resolution No. 15-004.

MOTION: Commissioner D'anjou moved to adopt Planning Commission Resolution No. 15-004. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Tsao and passed by unanimous roll call vote (absent Commissioner Gibson).

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 February 13 and February 19, 2015 were distributed to the Commission.

16. REVIEW OF CITY COUNCIL ACTION ON PLANNING MATTERS

Planning Manager Lodan reported that the City Council considered AMC Del Amo's request to allow the service of alcohol at their movie theaters on February 24 and ultimately decided to continue the hearing so the applicant could explore modifying the proposal to restrict alcohol service to certain theaters in a more controlled environment.

Assistant City Attorney Sullivan reported that on March 3, the City Council considered draft ordinances that would allow the raising of chickens and bees on single-family residential properties; that their comments were generally favorable; and that staff was directed to revise the ordinances and bring them back for adoption.

17. LIST OF TENTATIVE PLANNING COMMISSION CASES

Planning Manager Lodan reviewed the agenda for the March 18, 2015 Planning Commission meeting.

18. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS #2 – None.

19. ADJOURNMENT

At 8:00 p.m., the meeting was adjourned to Wednesday, March 18, 2015 at 7:00 p.m.

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Approved as submitted April 1, 2015 s/ Rebecca Poirier, City Clerk
