

**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, February 20, 2013 in City Council Chambers at Torrance City Hall.

2. SALUTE TO THE FLAG

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Commissioner D'anjou.

3. ROLL CALL/ MOTIONS FOR EXCUSED ABSENCE

Present: Commissioners D'anjou, Gibson, Polcari, Rizzo, Skoll, Watson and Vice Chair Weideman.

Absent: None.

Also Present: Planning Manager Lodan, Planning Assistant Graham, Plans Examiner Noh, Associate Civil Engineer Symons, Sr. Fire Prevention Officer Kazandjian, and 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, February 15, 2013.

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION: Commissioner Skoll moved for the approval of the January 16, 2013 Planning Commission minutes as submitted. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Gibson and passed by unanimous roll call vote.

6. REQUESTS FOR POSTPONEMENTS

Planning Manager Lodan requested that Item 11A (WAV13-00001: Chris Jensen) be continued to March 6, 2013 so design issues can be addressed.

MOTION: Commissioner Rizzo moved to continue Item 11A to March 6, 2013. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Gibson and passed by unanimous voice vote.

7. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS #1 – None.

Vice Chair Weideman 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. **WAV13-00001: CHRIS JENSEN**

Planning Commission consideration for approval of a Waiver to allow over-height retaining walls on property located within the Hillside Overlay District in the R-1 Zone at 210 Calle de Sirenas.

Continued to March 6, 2013.

12. **FORMAL HEARINGS**

12A. **CUP13-00003, DVP13-00002: BAIA ROSS LLC (WILLIAM NIKKEL)**

Planning Commission consideration for approval of a Conditional Use Permit and a Development Permit to allow the construction of a new car dealership with service on property located in the H-MP Zone at 23305 Hawthorne Boulevard.

Recommendation: Approval.

Planning Assistant Graham introduced the request.

Commissioner Skoll asked about the height of the block wall to the rear of the proposed project.

Planning Manager Lodan advised that the block wall to the rear of the project is not on the applicant's property and is not part of this request.

Commissioner Rizzo disclosed that he visited the site earlier in the day and walked around the property.

Commissioner Polcari disclosed that he drove by the site a couple of times to get a feel for the size of the lot.

Giacomo Mattioli, representing the applicant Baia Ross LLC, voiced his agreement with the recommended conditions of approval. He explained that the proposed Ferrari and Maserati dealership will be a "boutique" dealership as the on-site inventory will consist of only 10-12 vehicles, all of which will be displayed in a showroom, with no outdoor display or storage of vehicles. He reported that the dealership only services vehicles it sells so the service department will also be much smaller than a typical dealership. He noted that the building has a larger than required rear setback to minimize the impact on residential neighbors to the west of the site and the test drive route will be along Hawthorne Boulevard toward Palos Verdes so there will be no test driving on residential streets.

In response to Vice Chair Weideman's inquiry, Mr. Mattioli stated that the business will have approximately 10 employees initially, but he hopes it will grow. He reported that since only a few vehicles are delivered at a time, the dealership does not use large car carriers and an

area on the east side of Hawthorne Boulevard has been identified for the loading/unloading of vehicles.

Assistant City Attorney Sullivan advised that Condition No. 25 requires that all loading/unloading of vehicles be done on-site, and Mr. Mattioli stated that there is a large parking lot at the rear of the site so this will not be a problem.

In response to Commissioner Rizzo's inquiry, Mr. Mattioli reported that the dealership hopes to sell 10-15 vehicles per month and the usual delivery is 1 or 2 vehicles at a time, which can easily be accommodated on site.

Vincent Dyer, project architect, briefly described the proposed project, noting that they intend to seek LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certification.

Responding to Commissioner Rizzo's inquiry, Mr. Dyer confirmed that there will be no windows or balconies on the west side of the building and the only openings are roll-up doors that will remain closed except for brief periods when vehicles are entering or exiting.

Commissioner Watson asked about LEED certification for a car dealership, and Mr. Dyer explained that the focus is on selecting materials and installing mechanical systems that are environmentally friendly and energy efficient.

Clark Adams, Torrance resident and owner of the East West Bank property on Hawthorne Boulevard, expressed support for the project, relating his belief that it will be a great improvement to the area.

Dorothy Robley, 23334 Los Codona, voiced objections to the proposed project, contending that the dealership would reduce property values on Los Codona and detract from neighbors' quality of life. She related her understanding that there is no other place in Torrance where a car dealership is adjacent to single-family residences. She stated that she researched commissioners' addresses and learned that none of them would be impacted by this project.

Commissioner Gibson noted that her house backs up to Scott Robinson Honda.

Vice Chair Weideman explained that commissioners may not participate in a hearing if they are personally impacted by a project.

Ms. Robley reiterated her objections to the project, citing noise, increased alley traffic, and privacy issues.

In response to Vice Chair Weideman's inquiry, Planning Manager Lodan confirmed that the applicant will be required to provide a noise attenuation study to verify that the project will comply with the Torrance Noise Ordinance (Condition No 27).

Cathy Walter, 23342 Los Codona, reported on problems that she has experienced with Martin Chevrolet due to early morning trash pick-up and deliveries and urged the Commission to include preventative measures in this approval so she will not have to resort to confronting truck drivers or calling the police.

Andrea Matrai, 23210 Los Codona, expressed concerns that the project will lead to an increase in truck traffic in the adjacent alley, explaining that her whole house shakes when a truck goes by and her back wall is coming apart.

In response to Vice Chair Weideman's inquiry, Associate Civil Engineer Symons confirmed that the applicant will be required to repair/reconstruct the easterly half of the alley for the length of the property.

Commissioner Polcari asked about the possibility of installing a 12-foot high bar across the entry to the alley to prevent large vehicles from using it.

Sr. Fire Prevention Officer Kazandjian advised that this was not feasible because it would hinder access for fire department apparatus.

Arun Bhumitra, owner of Arjay Plaza, 23211 Hawthorne Boulevard, voiced support for the project. He suggested restricting deliveries, trash pick-up and gardeners to after 8:00 or 9:00 a.m. to ensure that neighbors are not disturbed.

Christina Perparas, 23338 Los Codona, expressed concerns that the dealership's outdoor lighting would spill-over into adjacent residences.

Planning Manager Lodan advised that the applicant will be required to submit a lighting plan for approval and light standards may be no taller than 15 feet and must be shielded to prevent light spillage to adjacent properties (Condition No. 8).

Ms. Perparas related her understanding that the medical building currently under construction on Hawthorne Boulevard was also subject to this condition, however lighting from this site is a nuisance to nearby residences.

Planning Manager Lodan offered to contact the property owner to discuss this concern.

Sherif Khattab, owner of the medical building referred to by Ms. Perparas, reported that lights were installed by the contractor because there has been a lot of vandalism at the site. He suggested that residents will be more secure as vacant properties are redeveloped.

Returning to the podium, Mr. Mattioli stated that he understands residents' concerns and takes them very seriously, noting that he has operated a dealership in Beverly Hills for the past 15 years in a residential neighborhood without a single complaint. He explained that the dealership will not be using the alley because of its condition which is more suitable for off-road vehicles. He reported that unlike most dealerships, this dealership is not open on Sundays and the service department is only open Monday through Friday. He disputed the claim that the project would negatively impact property values.

The Commission briefly discussed including a condition prohibiting early morning deliveries.

Planning Manager Lodan advised that the Code prohibits deliveries, lot sweeping and trash removal before 7:00 a.m. and after 10:00 p.m.

Mr. Mattioli reported that the dealership, including the service department, does not open until 8:00 a.m. and would not accept deliveries before that time.

In response to Commissioner Skoll's inquiry, Mr. Mattioli confirmed that all repair work will be done inside the building with the doors closed so as not to disturb nearby residents.

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

Commissioner Skoll stated that he was originally concerned that neighbors would be impacted by noise from the dealership, but was now satisfied that this will not be a problem. He related his belief that the dealership will be a welcome addition to Torrance.

Vice Chair Weideman voiced support for the project, noting that it will generate only a fraction of the traffic generated by the restaurant that was formerly on this site and will completely upgrade the property. He expressed the hope that the applicant will be mindful of residents' concerns.

MOTION: Commissioner Polcari moved to approve CUP13-00003 and DVP13-00002, as conditioned, including all findings of fact set forth by staff. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Watson and passed by unanimous roll call vote.

Planning Assistant Graham read aloud the number and title of Planning Commission Resolution Nos. 13-003 and 13-004.

MOTION: Commissioner Polcari moved for the adoption of Planning Commission Resolution Nos. 13-003 and 13-004. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Rizzo and passed by unanimous roll call vote.

12B. CUP13-00001, WAV13-00002: CABRILLO FAMILY APARTMENTS, LP (AARON MANDEL)

Planning Commission consideration for approval of a Conditional Use Permit to allow the construction of a mixed-use workforce housing development consisting of 44 dwelling units and approximately 3,700 square feet of commercial floor area, in conjunction with a Waiver of the front setback requirement on property located in the Downtown Project Area, Commercial Sector at 1640 Cabrillo Avenue.

Recommendation: Approval.

Planning Assistant Graham introduced the request.

Aaron Mandel, representing Cabrillo Family Apartments, LP, voiced his agreement with the recommended conditions of approval. He briefly described the proposed project, noting that he has worked closely with staff for the past few months to refine it. He stated that the project will be very "green" and will be rated as LEED gold or the equivalent.

Vice Chair Weideman stated that he was pleased that the first-floor retail space will not include a restaurant because having people living above a restaurant has created problems in the past.

Mr. Mandel related his understanding that restaurants are not prohibited, but there is not enough parking to accommodate a full-scale restaurant.

Commissioner Rizzo disclosed that he walked around the property and drove the neighborhood earlier in the day. He requested clarification regarding what appears to be a storage area accessed from outside the unit and questioned whether the unsightly utility poles at the rear of the property are going to be removed.

Ryan Yanagita, project architect, explained that there will be storage above each parking space and an additional area has been identified on the plans if needed to meet the required 100 square feet of storage per unit, otherwise it will be used to enlarge the closet.

With regard to the utility poles, Planning Manager Lodan advised that staff will look into whether it is feasible to eliminate the power poles.

Commissioner Watson disclosed that she went around the front of the existing building and regularly walks this street. She questioned whether there was environmental clean-up to be done due to the termite company that formerly occupied the site. She recommended that more than two bicycle racks be installed because this is a prime area for bicycling.

Mr. Mandel responded that there is only minor environmental clean-up to be done and it has been budgeted for. He indicated that more bicycle racks will be added if there is room once the design has been finalized.

Commissioner Skoll stated that he was pleased that two parking spaces will be provided for two and three-bedroom units and one space for one-bedroom units since parking is critical in the downtown area, but requested clarification of the tandem parking arrangement.

Mr. Yanagita explained that the second parking space for the two and three-bedroom units will be tandem. He noted that there will be 13 parking spaces designated for the commercial use and this will also serve as guest parking.

Commissioner D'anjou noted a scrivener's error in Condition No. 16.

Commissioner Rizzo suggested that consideration be given to installing a pedestrian signal control at Double Street and Cabrillo Avenue since most of the foot traffic will be headed to the downtown area and residents are not likely to use the signal-controlled crosswalk at Carson Street and Cabrillo Avenue because it's in the opposite direction.

Planning Manager Lodan offered to relay the suggestion to the Transportation Engineering Division.

Vice Chair Weideman asked when the project will break ground, and Mr. Mandel reported that they will be applying for competitive financing and state tax credits, and if all goes well, they hope to begin construction before the end of the year. He explained that the units will be income and rent restricted at a variety of levels, which will be determined based on federal and state regulations.

In response to Commissioner Skoll's inquiry, Planning Manager Lodan confirmed that the units will apply toward the City's RHNA (Regional Housing Needs Assessment) number for affordable housing.

MOTION: Commissioner Gibson moved to approve CUP13-00001 and WAV13-00002, as conditioned, including all findings of fact set forth by staff. The motion was seconded by Commissioner D'anjou and passed by unanimous roll call vote.

Planning Assistant Graham read aloud the number and title of Planning Commission Resolution Nos. 13-005 and 13-006.

MOTION: Commissioner Polcari moved for the adoption of Planning Commission Resolution Nos. 13-005 and 13-006. The motion was seconded by Commissioner D'anjou and passed by unanimous roll call vote.

13. **RESOLUTIONS** – None.

14. **PUBLIC WORKSHOP ITEMS** – None.

15. **MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS**

15A. **COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR WEEKLY SUMMARY REPORTS**

Planning Manager Lodan noted that Community Development Director Weekly Summary Reports were distributed to the Commission for the following dates:

1. January 18, 2013
2. January 24, 2013
3. February 1, 2013
4. February 7, 2013
5. February 15, 2013

15B. **APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRPERSON AND VICE CHAIRPERSON**

Following a brief discussion, Vice Chair Weideman was appointed as chair and Commissioner Rizzo was appointed as vice chair, with both terms to end on June 30, 2013.

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 March 6, 2013 Planning Commission meeting.

18. **ORAL COMMUNICATIONS #2**

18A. Carolyn Chun and Kevin Joe introduced Nina Lang, who was recently hired as a Planning Assistant.

18B. Commissioners welcomed Jamie Watson to the Planning Commission.

18C. Referring to the project site for Item 12A, Commissioner Skoll questioned why the Loft restaurant closed, and Planning Manager Lodan reported that the restaurant has another location in north Torrance.

18D. Commissioner Skoll asked about plans for Del Amo Fashion Center, and Assistant City Attorney Sullivan advised that staff was not allowed to comment on this matter due to ongoing litigation.

18E. Commissioner Skoll asked about the status of the project at the corner of Pacific Coast Highway and Hawthorne Boulevard. Planning Manager Lodan reported that the project was delayed in order to resolve funding issues, but will be moving forward. He noted that staff has met with Caltrans regarding intersection improvements to be completed in conjunction with this project and construction is expected to begin within 6 months.

18F. Commissioner Skoll questioned whether the second restaurant tenant at the corner of Lomita Boulevard and Hawthorne Boulevard has been identified, and Planning Manager Lodan advised that discussions concerning a lease agreement were underway, but the name of the restaurant was not public information.

18G. Commissioner Watson stated that she was looking forward to attending the upcoming League of California Cities conference.

18H. Commissioner D'anjou thanked staff for making the arrangements for commissioners to attend the conference.

18I. Chairperson Weideman welcomed Commissioner Watson and asked City staff present at the meeting to introduce themselves for her benefit.

19. ADJOURNMENT

At 8:27 p.m., the meeting was adjourned to Wednesday, March 6, 2013 at 7:00 p.m.

Approved as Submitted March 20, 2013 s/ Sue Herbers, City Clerk
