

March 17, 2004

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

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

The Torrance Planning Commission convened in a regular session at 7:04 p.m. on Wednesday, March 17, 2004, in City Council Chambers at Torrance City Hall.

**2. SALUTE TO THE FLAG**

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Commissioner Faulk.

**3. ROLL CALL**

Present: Commissioners Botello, Faulk, Horwich, LaBouff, Muratsuchi and Chairperson Drevno.

Absent: Commissioner Uchima (excused).

Also Present: Planning Manager Isomoto, Sr. Planning Associate Lodan, Associate Civil Engineer Symons, Fire Marshal Fawcett, Building Regulations Administrator Segovia, Assistant City Attorney Pohl, Planning Manager Bihn, and Planning Associate Cutting.

Commissioner Faulk and Chairperson Drevno requested excused absences for the April 7, 2004 Commission meeting.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Horwich, seconded by Commissioner Botello, moved to grant Commissioner Faulk and Chairperson Drevno excused absences for the April 7 Commission meeting; voice vote reflected unanimous approval.

**4. POSTING OF THE AGENDA**

**MOTION:** Commissioner Muratsuchi, seconded by Commissioner Faulk, moved to accept and file the report of the secretary on the posting of the agenda for this meeting; voice vote reflected unanimous approval.

**5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**MOTION:** Commissioner Muratsuchi moved for the approval of the February 18, 2004 Commission minutes as submitted. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Botello; voice vote reflected unanimous approval, with Commissioner LaBouff abstaining.

**6. REQUESTS FOR POSTPONEMENTS**

None.

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

7. **CONTINUED HEARINGS**

None.

8. **WAIVERS**

8A. **WAV04-00003: WILLIAM AKIYAMA (ROBERT GOLDEN)**

Planning Commission consideration for approval of a Waiver to allow a reduction of the front yard setback requirement in conjunction with the construction of one-story additions to an existing single-family residence on property located in the R-1 Zone at 4833 Moresby Drive.

**Recommendation**

Approval.

Sr. Planning Associate Lodan introduced the request.

William Akiyama, 4833 Moresby Drive, applicant, voiced his agreement with the recommended conditions of approval.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Faulk moved for the approval of WAV04-00003, 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 Uchima).

Sr. Planning Associate Lodan read aloud the number and title of Planning Commission Resolution No. 04-026.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Muratsuchi moved for the adoption of Planning Commission Resolution No. 04-026. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Faulk and passed by unanimous roll call vote (absent Commissioner Uchima).

8B. **WAV04-00005: SCOTT McCANN AND JULIE McCLEWEE (BILL MASON)**

Planning Commission consideration for approval of a Waiver to allow a reduction of the front yard setback requirement in conjunction with the construction of one-story additions to an existing single-family residence on property located in the Hillside Overlay District in the R-1 Zone at 2741 Grand Summit Road.

**Recommendation**

Approval.

Sr. Planning Associate Lodan introduced the request.

Bill Mason, representing the applicant, voiced his agreement with the recommended conditions of approval.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Faulk moved for the approval of WAV04-00005, 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 Uchima).

Sr. Planning Associate Lodan read aloud the number and title of Planning Commission Resolution No. 04-027.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Horwich moved for the adoption of Planning Commission Resolution No. 04-027. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Muratsuchi and passed by unanimous roll call vote (absent Commissioner Uchima).

**9. FORMAL HEARINGS**

**9A. CUP04-00002: RICK GAUNT/ANTHONY ACCETTA**

Planning Commission consideration for approval of a Conditional Use Permit to allow the construction and operation of an automobile detail center on property located in the C-2 Zone at 2472 Pacific Coast Highway.

**Recommendation**

Approval.

Sr. Planning Associate Lodan introduced the request.

Rick Gaunt, 2812 W. 232<sup>nd</sup> Street, voiced his agreement with the recommended conditions of approval with the exception of Condition No. 21, requiring the closing of the westerly driveway on Pacific Coast Highway.

Planning Manager Isomoto explained that staff was recommending the closing of two of the four existing driveways to reduce conflict points with the intersection and to improve the flow of traffic.

Anthony Accetta reported that he details motor homes, as well as cars, and that the additional driveways would make it easier for them to enter/exit the property. He proposed restricting the Pacific Coast Highway driveways to "exit only."

Planning Manager Isomoto noted that Transportation Planning staff evaluated the site and recommended the closing of the two driveways and that it was especially important to eliminate the westerly driveway on Pacific Coast Highway because the backing out area for one of the parking spaces conflicts with this driveway.

In response to Commissioner Horwich's inquiry, Mr. Accetta indicated that he details motor homes approximately once a week and that he also details classic cars, which are trailered in rather than driven.

Dean Haskell, 25814 Hillworth, requested that a condition be included requiring that lighting be shielded from his property.

Planning Manager Isomoto advised that Condition No. 13 requires that a lighting plan be submitted for approval of the Community Development Director and additionally, under Code requirements, the Environmental Division has noted that lighting must be directed away from residential uses.

Commissioner Botello stated that he was inclined to grant the request to retain the existing driveways because auto detailing is not a high volume business and he did not recall there being a problem with traffic backing up going eastbound on Pacific Coast Highway at this intersection.

Planning Manager Isomoto reported that approximately a year ago, following a hearing for approval of a tire store on the opposite side of Pacific Coast Highway, a "keep clear zone" was established at this intersection at the request of residents who were having problems exiting Hillworth because of vehicles blocking the intersection.

Commissioner Muratsuchi indicated that he would defer to Transportation Planning staff's professional judgment with regard to this issue, especially since traffic tends to be a problem at the intersection of Pacific Coast Highway and Crenshaw.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Horwich, seconded by Commissioner Fauk, moved to close the public hearing; voice vote reflected unanimous approval.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Muratsuchi moved for the approval of CUP04-00002, as conditioned, including all findings of fact set forth by staff, with the following modification:

**Add**

- That lighting shall be shielded from adjacent residences.

The motion was seconded by Commissioner Botello and passed by unanimous roll call vote (absent Commissioner Uchima).

Sr. Planning Associate Lodan read aloud the number and title of Planning Commission Resolution No. 04-028.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Horwich moved for the adoption of Planning Commission Resolution No. 04-028 as amended. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Muratsuchi and passed by unanimous roll call vote (absent Commissioner Uchima).

**9B. CUP04-00005, DIV04-00004: ROBERT AND ANGELO DIGENOVA (SROUR & ASSOCIATES/ ELIZABETH SROUR)**

Planning Commissioner consideration for approval of a Conditional Use Permit to allow the construction of a two-unit condominium development and a Division of Lot for condominium purposes on property located in the R-2 Zone at 1632 Hickory Avenue.

**Recommendation**

Approval.

Sr. Planning Associate Lodan introduced the request.

Elizabeth Srour, project architect, voiced her agreement with the recommended conditions of approval.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Muratsuchi, seconded by Commissioner Faulk, moved to close the public hearing; voice vote reflected unanimous approval.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Botello moved for the approval of CUP04-00005 and DIV04-00004 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 Uchima).

Sr. Planning Associate Lodan read aloud the number and title of Planning Commission Resolution Nos. 04-029 and 04-030.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Muratsuchi moved for the adoption of Planning Commission Resolution Nos. 04-029 and 04-030. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Faulk and passed by unanimous roll call vote (absent Commissioner Uchima).

Commissioner Faulk commended the applicant for a well thought out design, which meets all Code requirements and standards.

**9C. MOD04-00001, MOD04-00002, MOD04-00003, MOD04-00004, MIS04-00069:  
DEL AMO MILLS LIMITED PARTNERSHIP (STEPHEN WENDEROTH)**

Planning Commission consideration for approval of a Modification of a previously approved Development Permit and Modifications of previously approved Conditional Use Permits and Variance to allow changes to a previously approved renovation and expansion of the Del Amo Fashion Center and a Miscellaneous Permit to approve a proposed Development Agreement on properties bordered by Fashion Way to the north, Sepulveda Boulevard to the south, Madrona Avenue and Del Amo Circle East to the east, and Hawthorne Boulevard to the west in the Hawthorne Boulevard Corridor Specific Plan Del Amo Business Sub-District One.

**Recommendation**

Approval.

Sr. Planning Associate Lodan introduced the request and noted supplemental material available at the meeting consisting of the resolutions for the project.

Planning Manager Isomoto advised that the proposal before the Commission requests changes to a previously approved expansion and renovation of Del Amo Fashion Center, which are largely due to a change in ownership of the mall. She

explained that the previous owner, the Torrance Company, obtained a series of entitlements to allow the renovation of the north end of the mall in conjunction with the construction of a new entertainment wing, which included a new 16-screen theater and restaurant uses, as well as construction of a new department store and parking structures to accommodate the additional floor area. She stated that the entitlements allowed for a total of 369,845 square feet of leasable area to be added to the mall and that in addition to the expansion plans, the Torrance Company prepared a Master Plan for the shopping center. She noted that these approvals stemmed from the 1996 adoption of the Hawthorne Boulevard Corridor Specific Plan, which set forth the development standards for the area and was designed to implement the City's General Plan.

Planning Manager Isomoto reported that the Torrance Company's project was reviewed by the City's Environmental Review Board (ERB) on January 15, 1997, and that after considering the Initial Study and testimony from the public, the Board determined that a Negative Declaration was appropriate and no further environmental analysis was necessary. She explained that on appeal, the City Council considered related environmental issues at a public hearing on February 18, 1997; that the Council determined that many of issues raised by the public were valid, but were more appropriately addressed in the project review; and that the Council denied the appeal and approved a Negative Declaration.

Planning Manager Isomoto stated that the project was subsequently presented to the Planning Commission and later to the City Council for review; that a number of construction and design issues were discussed; and that approval included restrictions on hours of construction, grading and hauling restrictions, and the buffering of noise and light from parking areas to minimize the potential impact on the single-family residential neighborhood to the east. She noted that the approvals required that certain elements of the Master Plan be brought back to the Council for approval, including an architectural design plan, a landscaping plan, an interior improvement plan, and a circulation/mobility plan, and that these items were ultimately approved by the Council on February 22, 2000.

Planning Manager Isomoto explained that the Mills Corporation was seeking to modify the previously approved entitlements to revise the plans and create an upscale identity in order to recapture customers who now shop as far away as South Coast Plaza. She stated that the revised plan is consistent with the 1998 approval and consists of the same elements, such as a new department store, cinema and parking structures, noting that it would result in an overall reduction of 283,722 square feet in the northeast portion of the mall versus the existing entitlement.

Planning Manager Isomoto advised that since the City's prior approval, there have been no substantial changes to the project or the circumstances under which the project is being undertaken that would require major revisions to the previous environmental analysis, nor has the City identified new information of substantial importance that would require revisions to the previous environmental analysis, therefore, the City relied upon its previously certified Environmental Impact Report (EIR) and its findings in EAS96-0012. She noted that the Commission's review of the project includes a proposed Development Agreement between the City of Torrance and Del Amo Mills to facilitate the construction of the project.

Kevin Kudlo, Fashion Group Vice President for the Mills Corporation, 3 Del Amo Fashion Center, voiced his agreement with the recommended conditions of approval and thanked staff for their assistance on this project. He provided background information about the Mills Corporation, a self-managed real estate investment trust based in Arlington, Virginia. He stated that the company is constantly looking for opportunities to build new retail centers or enhance existing ones; that the company still owns and operates its first project, which was completed in 1985; and that the company puts a lot of time, money and effort into its projects.

Referring to renderings, Steve Loken, lead designer for the Mills Corporation, briefly described the project, which calls for the demolition of the vacant Montgomery Ward building and the construction of a two-level plaza area featuring dining and entertainment in a sheltered outdoor environment. He noted that the project also includes the construction of a new three-story department store and parking structures to accommodate the increased demand for parking. He reported that the company has met with Southwood and Madrona Homeowners Associations and will continue to update them as the project progresses.

In response to Commissioner Faulk's inquiry, Mr. Loken stated that while no definite timeline has been set, the company hopes to start the project sometime this year and eventually extend renovations throughout the mall. Commissioner Faulk commented favorably on the project and stated that he thought the idea of including an upscale grocery store was rather unique.

Commissioner Muratsuchi stated that while South Coast Plaza was mentioned, he found the design more reminiscent of The Grove in Los Angeles. Mr. Loken explained that there are elements of both in the design and that the company hopes to recapture customers who are currently bypassing Del Amo for these centers.

Commissioner Botello noted that included in the agenda material was a report from the Police Department detailing recommendations to enhance mall security and questioned whether the applicant would be amenable to including at least some of those items as conditions of approval.

Mr. Kudlo expressed his willingness to work with the Police Department on security issues. He noted that it is to the company's benefit to have a safe and secure mall; explained that the company has a national safety program, which encompasses all of its projects, both new and existing; and reported that the mall's crime rate has decreased by 46% since the company took ownership last summer.

Voicing support for the Police Department's recommendations, Commissioner Faulk questioned whether the Mills Corporation utilizes surveillance cameras and a centralized location for monitoring them at its other projects. Mr. Kudlo indicated that this type of surveillance is commonly used.

Referring to another of the Police Department's recommendations, Commissioner Botello asked about the location of queuing for movie theaters. Mr. Kudlo explained that the applicant does not yet have a theater operator; that the location of the queuing depends on the theater's footprint; and that the applicant will work with the Police Department to minimize the distraction that could be caused by long theater lines.

Guillermo Rubiano, 3246 El Dorado Street, expressed concerns that the project could encourage cut-through traffic in his neighborhood. He noted that Madrona Middle School is located on his street but there are no speed limit or school zone signs to warn of the presence of school children. He suggested that signage and/or speed bumps be installed.

Paul Green, 3228 El Dorado Street, stated that he shared Mr. Rubiano's concerns and questioned whether a traffic study was done for this project.

Elizabeth Stevenson, 3217 Antonio Street, indicated that she was concerned about being inundated with dust/dirt from the project and the removal of toxic waste.

Tom Parker, 3313 Antonio Street, voiced concerns that his neighborhood would be impacted by noise from the outdoor entertainment area.

Referring to concerns about noise, Planning Manager Isomoto noted that the new construction will be approximately 300 feet further away from residents than current approvals would have allowed and explained that any outdoor activities would have to comply with provisions of the City's noise ordinance, which places limits on decibel levels as measured at the property line. With regard to traffic, she reported that Del Amo Circle East will be put through between Carson Street and Fashion Way, which will provide another way into the mall and should relieve some of the traffic on Madrona. She offered to relay the request for signage on El Dorado Street to Transportation Planning staff to see if that could be taken care of right away.

Responding to concerns about dirt and dust, Planning Manager Isomoto advised that a condition was included (Condition No. 19) restricting construction activities in order to protect the adjacent neighborhood, which among other things requires that dirt/fill material be covered when being transported and limits on-site vehicles to a speed of 15 mph. She noted that standard dust control measures will also be in effect, such as wetting down the construction site to keep dust from becoming airborne. She related her understanding that the Mills Corporation conducted a number of studies before purchasing the property and determined that it contains no toxic waste. She indicated that a phone number would be posted on the site for residents to call if problems develop.

Commissioner Botello suggested the possibility of eliminating the left-turn pocket on Madrona Avenue near El Dorado to discourage cut-through traffic. Planning Manager Isomoto related her understanding that the left-turn pocket was retained at residents' request.

Commissioner Botello stated that he believed residents had a legitimate concern about cut-through traffic and that he hoped the Commission could provide some direction rather than passing the matter off to staff or another commission.

Planning Manager Isomoto advised that a traffic study was prepared in conjunction with the previously approved project and that specific traffic improvements were proposed to mitigate the impact, all of which either have been completed or soon will be. She noted that the project on which the analysis was done had considerably more square footage than the one before the Commission. She indicated that she would discuss concerns about cut-through traffic with the Transportation Planning Manager to

determine whether this issue has already been addressed or if further action was warranted. She commented on the need to consider traffic issues in the context of the entire area so that problems are not just shifted from one street to another.

Commissioner Muratsuchi questioned whether any analysis had been done to determine whether the proposed project would be likely to draw a greater number of people than the one previously approved.

Planning Manager Isomoto stated that it was staff's belief that the new project would not generate any more traffic or attract greater crowds than the previously approved project, noting that the earlier project featured all the same elements and more square footage.

For Mr. Parker's benefit, Commissioner Faulk clarified that the plaza area does not contain an amphitheater or concert stage.

Mr. Kudlo reported that the plaza area would consist mainly of restaurants and outdoor seating and related his understanding that a City permit would be required for any live entertainment and that issues, such as noise, safety and the consumption of alcohol, would be addressed during the permitting process.

Commissioner Botello noted that noise would be buffered if a housing complex were built to the east of Del Amo Circle as has been rumored.

Mr. Parker stated that he liked the project but was very concerned about noise from the open-air portion because of the way sound carries.

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

**MOTION:** Commissioner Horwich moved for the approval of MOD04-00001, MOD04-00002, and MOD04-00003, as conditioned, including all findings of fact set forth by staff, and discussion briefly continued.

Commissioner Botello questioned whether Condition No. 44 (That all conditions of other City departments received prior to or during the meeting shall be met) covers the recommendations in the report from the Police Department.

Planning Manager Isomoto explained that Condition No. 23 requires the applicant to work with the Police Department and the Community Development Department to develop a Safety Enhancement Plan in response to the Police Department Plan Review analysis and recommendations. She reported that staff has had lengthy discussions with representatives of the Mills Corporation and they have indicated that they are more than willing to enhance security at the mall and welcome the Police Department's involvement.

Commissioner Horwich commented that he thought Condition No. 22 (requiring details of proposed valet service to be submitted to the Community Development Department for approval) and Condition No. 23 were particularly applicable.

The motion was seconded by Commissioner Faulk and passed by unanimous roll call vote (absent Commissioner Uchima).

Sr. Planning Associate Lodan read aloud the number and title of Planning Commission Resolution Nos. 04-031, 04-032 and 04-033.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Faulk moved for the adoption of Planning Commission Resolution Nos. 04-031, 04-032 and 04-033. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Horwich and passed by unanimous roll call vote (absent Commissioner Uchima).

**MOTION:** Commissioner Horwich moved to recommend that the City Council approve MOD04-00004 and MIS04-00069. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Faulk and passed by unanimous roll call vote (absent Commissioner Uchima).

Commissioner Faulk stated that he looked forward to the revitalization of the mall.

**9D. GPA04-00001: CITY OF TORRANCE**

Planning Commission consideration for approval of a General Plan Amendment to allow medical offices in the Industrial Business Park land use designation.

**Recommendation**

Approval.

Sr. Planning Associate Lodan introduced the request.

Planning Manager Bihn reported that while medical offices are conditionally permitted in the M-1, M-2 and ML industrial zones, the General Plan Land Use Element does not allow medical offices under the Industrial Business Park designation. He explained that there are several medical office facilities located within the Industrial Business Park designation, which have co-existed with industrial and other professional office uses without any major complaints, and that the proposed General Plan Amendment would bring the General Plan into conformance with zoning and practice.

In response to Commissioner Muratsuchi's inquiry, Planning Manager Bihn stated that staff reviewed the files but could not find any information as to why medical offices were excluded from this designation.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Botello, seconded by Commissioner Faulk, moved to close the public hearing; voice vote reflected unanimous approval.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Faulk moved to recommend that the City Council approve GPA04-00001. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Horwich and passed by unanimous roll call vote (absent Commissioner Uchima).

**10. RESOLUTIONS**

None.

**11. PUBLIC WORKSHOP ITEMS**

None.

**12. MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS**

None.

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

Planning Manager Isomoto reviewed recent City Council action on Planning matters, noting that Ordinances approving the rezoning of properties in North Torrance from A-1 to R-1, and allowing the required third parking space for multiple-family residential units to be in tandem were adopted at the March 16 Council meeting

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

Planning Manager Isomoto reviewed the agenda for the Planning Commission meeting of April 7, 2004.

**15. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS**

**15A.** Planning Manager Isomoto introduced intern Aquilla Hurd, and Commissioners welcomed Ms. Hurd.

**15B.** Commissioner Muratsuchi noted that he may not be able to attend Planner's Institute conference because of a scheduling conflict and asked if anyone would be able to fill in for him on short notice.

**15C.** Referring to the weekly report on administrative actions, Commissioner Horwich stated that he was pleased that the Community Development Director denied Leeds Mattress Store's request to change the awnings on its building.

**15D.** Commissioner Horwich commented positively on the proposed renovation of Del Amo Fashion Center, noting that his wife was president of the Merchants' Association of Del Amo at the time the two malls were joined over Carson Street.

**15E.** Commissioner Muratsuchi indicated that he would not be able to attend the orientation for commissioners and asked if written materials would be available.

**15F.** Chairperson Drevno stated that she looked forward to the revitalization of the mall.

**16. ADJOURNMENT**

At 9:00 p.m., the meeting was adjourned to Wednesday, April 7, 2004, at 7:00 p.m.

Approved as Written May 5, 2004 s/ Sue Herbers, City Clerk
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