

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

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Torrance Planning Commission convened in a regular session at 7:05 p.m. on Wednesday, April 5, 2006, in City Council Chambers at Torrance City Hall.

2. SALUTE TO THE FLAG

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Commissioner Browning.

3. ROLL CALL

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

Absent: Commissioner Faulk (excused).

Also Present: Sr. Planning Associate Lodan, Planning Associate Crecy, Deputy City Attorney Whitham, Deputy City Attorney Sullivan, Fire Marshal Carter, Associate Civil Engineer Symons and Building Regulations Administrator Segovia.

4. POSTING OF THE AGENDA

MOTION: Commissioner Horwich, seconded by Commissioner Browning, 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 Faulk).

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION: Commissioner Browning moved for the approval of the December 21, 2005 Planning Commission minutes as submitted. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Horwich and passed by unanimous roll call vote, with Commissioners Drevno and Gibson abstaining (absent Commissioner Faulk).

MOTION: Commissioner Busch moved for the approval of the February 15, 2006 Planning Commission minutes as submitted. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Browning and passed by unanimous roll call vote (absent Commissioner Faulk).

6. REQUESTS FOR POSTPONEMENT

Sr. Planning Associate Lodan relayed requests to continue Agenda Item 8B (DIV07-00003: Del Amo Fashion Center) and 8C (EAS06-00001, MOD06-00002: American Honda Motor Co.) to May 3, 2006.

MOTION: Commissioner Horwich, seconded by Commissioner Gibson, moved to continue Agenda Items 8B and 8C to May 3, 2006; voice vote reflected unanimous approval (absent Commissioner Faulk).

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

7. TIME EXTENSIONS

7A. MIS06-00063: SROUR AND ASSOCIATES (WESTERN GB CONTRACTING)

Planning Commission consideration for approval of a Time Extension of a previously approved Tentative Tract Map to allow a 20-unit condominium development on property located in the R-3 Zone at 1021 Cravens Avenue.

Planning Associate Crecy introduced the request.

Elizabeth Srour, applicant, explained that a Time Extension was necessary because of the backlog in the Los Angeles County Recorder's office for processing final tract maps.

Commissioner Browning asked about the project's completion date, noting that he visited the site and observed very little construction activity. Ms. Srour reported that the project is expected to be completed by July or August 2006.

MOTION: Commissioner Busch, seconded by Commissioner Gibson, moved to close the public hearing; voice vote reflected unanimous approval.

MOTION: Commissioner Busch moved for the approval of MIS06-00063. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Browning and passed by unanimous roll call vote (absent Commissioner Faulk).

Planning Associate Crecy read aloud the number and title of Planning Commission Resolution No. 06-051.

MOTION: Commissioner Busch moved for the adoption of Planning Commission Resolution No. 06-051. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Browning and passed by unanimous roll call vote (absent Commissioner Faulk).

8. CONTINUED HEARINGS

8A. PRE05-00050, WAV05-00032: DON WORTMAN

Planning Commission consideration for approval of a Precise Plan of Development to allow the construction of first and second-story additions to an existing one-story, single-family residence in conjunction with a Waiver to allow a reduction in the side yard setback requirements on property located in the Hillside Overlay District in the R-1 Zone at 273 Via Linda Vista.

Recommendation

Approval.

Planning Associate Crecy introduced the request.

Richard Gould, project architect, reported that his client, Don Wortman, has agreed to reduce the size of the balcony to a maximum depth of 3 feet and a maximum width of 8 feet and to use frosted glass for the westerly second-floor bathroom window in order to address privacy concerns.

Carol Laumen, 269 Via Linda Vista, thanked Commissioner Drevno, Commissioner Horwich and Chairperson Uchima for visiting her home. She voiced objections to the balcony, explaining that someone standing on it would have a direct line-of-site into her master bedroom, backyard and deck and that reducing its size doesn't solve this problem. She proposed a "faux" balcony with a depth of 4 to 6 inches and submitted photographs of homes where this has been done with aesthetically pleasing results. She stated that Mr. Wortman has a large backyard deck with plenty of room for entertaining, so the balcony is unnecessary.

Commissioner Browning reported that he made a reasonable effort to contact Ms. Laumen, but was unsuccessful, and that he visited the site and made observations from where he could gain access.

Commissioner Gibson noted that she was unable to visit the site because her mother-in-law passed away and she had to make a trip to Nebraska.

Russell Pierson, 275 Via Linda Vista, expressed concerns that east-facing second story windows would look directly into his children's bedroom and bathroom and requested that their sill height be raised and/or that frosted glass be used.

Commissioner Browning pointed out that frosted glass serves little purpose if the window is open. Mr. Pierson felt it would still be helpful to have the windows frosted.

Anna Bui Calderan, 664 Calle Miramar, voiced support for the project, noting that the Floor Area Ratio of .30 is half of the maximum allowed and the second-story side yard setbacks greatly exceed the minimum required. She reported that it took almost two years to get her remodeling project approved due to the objections of neighbors and expressed concerns about the animosity the approval process creates. She recommended that the Hillside Overlay Ordinance be amended to clearly define what is permissible, including some way to objectively measure view impact and sunlight blockage, thereby eliminating the subjectivity that fuels emotional debates.

Commissioner Busch recommended that Ms. Calderan consider addressing the City Council under "Orals" on this issue as only the Council has the authority to change the Hillside Ordinance.

Chairperson Uchima noted that the issue in this case is privacy, which requires that Commissioners make a subjective judgment.

Ms. Calderan voiced her opinion that people are responsible for their own privacy, noting that it is not unusual to be able to look into neighbors' yards and windows in the hillside area and privacy can be protected through the use of window coverings and other means.

Mr. Gould maintained that the privacy issue was addressed by the larger than required setbacks. He contended that balconies do not have a great impact on privacy because they are rarely used, noting that he had a balcony on his home in Manhattan Beach and the only time he went out on it was to paint the railing.

Commissioner Browning stated that since Mr. Gould has indicated that the balcony would serve no real purpose, he favored eliminating it and replacing it with a guardrail that meets building code requirements, and that he also favored raising the sill height and frosting east and west-facing second-story windows to protect the privacy of the applicant as well as neighbors.

Commissioner Horwich stated that he saw no reason to have the balcony and favored allowing only a decorative railing, which would still allow Mr. Wortman to look out over his backyard and to open the French doors for air.

Commissioner Drevno noted her agreement with her colleagues' comments.

Chairperson Uchima reported that he visited the affected properties and observed that the modest-sized addition would not impact view, light or air, but did observe an impact on privacy. He stated that he believed neighbors on either side had legitimate concerns about privacy, therefore, he favored the elimination of the balcony and the use of frosted glass for some, if not all, of the east and west-facing second-story windows.

Mr. Gould explained that Mr. Wortman was not present but had indicated that he would like a balcony with a minimum depth of three feet to allow for potted plants. He proposed enclosing the balcony with a roof and wing walls on either side so the privacy of neighbors would be protected.

Chairperson Uchima pointed out that one of the photographs submitted by Ms. Laumen shows a faux balcony with potted plants.

Mr. Gould estimated that the balcony in question has a depth of at least 18 inches and suggested that the 36 inches he has proposed is not much different.

Commissioner Horwich stated that he believed there was a difference because someone could not stand on an 18-inch balcony and indicated he was inclined to support limiting the balcony to this depth.

Chairperson Uchima asked if Mr. Gould would like to continue the hearing so he could consult with his client, and Mr. Gould related his preference that the Commission make a decision at this time.

Commissioner Gibson questioned whether Mr. Gould's proposal to build wing walls was acceptable to neighbors. Ms. Laumen, echoed by her husband Mr. Rankovic,

stated that the walls wouldn't solve the problem because someone could still hang over the balcony and peer directly into their home and yard.

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

MOTION: Commissioner Horwich moved for the approval of PRE05-00050 and WAV05-00032, as conditioned, including all findings of fact, with the following modification:

Add

- That the sill height shall be raised and frosted glass shall be used for all west and east-facing second-story windows.
- That the balcony shall have a maximum depth of 18 inches.

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

Planning Associate Crecy read aloud the number and title of Planning Commission Resolution Nos. 06-040 and 06-041.

MOTION: Commissioner Drevno moved for the adoption of Planning Commission Resolution Nos. 06-040 and 06-041 as amended. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Horwich and passed by unanimous roll call vote (absent Commissioner Faulk).

8B. DIV06-00003: DEL AMO FASHION CENTER OPERATING COMPANY LLC

Planning Commission consideration for approval of a Division of Lot to allow a lot line adjustment between APN 7366-019-085 and APN 7366-019-088 on property located in the Hawthorne Boulevard Corridor Specific Plan Zone, Del Amo Business Sub-District One at 3525 Carson Street.

Continued to May 3, 2006.

8C. EAS06-00001, MOD06-00002: AMERICAN HONDA MOTOR CO.

Planning Commission consideration for adoption of a Negative Declaration and approval of a Modification to a previously approved Conditional Use Permit (CUP83-7) to allow the construction of an approximately 50,000 square-foot research and design building on an existing corporate headquarters facility on property located in the Industrial Redevelopment Project Area at 1900 Harpers Way.

Continued to May 3, 2006.

8D. PRE06-00005, WAV06-00004: TIM AND TRACY BYER

Planning Commission consideration for approval of a Precise Plan of Development to allow one-story additions to an existing one-story, single-family residence on property located in the Hillside Overlay District in the R-1 Zone at 22711 Draille Drive.

Recommendation

Approval.

Planning Associate Crecy introduced the request.

Tim Byer, applicant, voiced his agreement with the recommended conditions of approval.

MOTION: Commissioner Busch, seconded by Commissioner Browning, moved to close the public hearing; voice vote reflected unanimous approval.

MOTION: Commissioner Busch moved for the approval of PRE06-00005 and WAV06-00004, as conditioned, including all findings of fact set forth by staff. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Drevno and passed by unanimous roll call vote (absent Commissioner Faulk).

Planning Associate Crecy read aloud the number and title of Planning Commission Resolution Nos. 06-044 and 06-045.

MOTION: Commissioner Drevno moved for the adoption of Planning Commission Resolution Nos. 06-044 and 06-045. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Browning and passed by unanimous roll call vote (absent Commissioner Faulk).

9. **WAIVERS** – None.

10. **FORMAL HEARINGS**

10A. **TTM53873: TOM FREDERIKSEN**

Planning Commission consideration for approval of a Tentative Tract Map for condominium purposes in conjunction with a nine-unit residential condominium project located within the City of Lomita as the rear 25 feet of the lot is located in the City of Torrance – site address: 2215 W. 241st Street, Lomita.

Recommendation

Approval.

Planning Associate Crecy introduced the request.

Tom Frederiksen, applicant, voiced his agreement with the recommended conditions of approval.

In response to Commissioner Busch's inquiry, Mr. Frederiksen reported that all the condominiums will have Lomita addresses and that he did not know if Torrance would receive any property taxes for the rear 25 feet.

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

MOTION: Commissioner Busch moved for the approval of TTM53873 as conditioned, including all findings of fact set forth by staff. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Browning and passed by unanimous roll call vote (absent Commissioner Faulk).

Planning Associate Crecy read aloud the number and title of Planning Commission Resolution No. 06-046.

MOTION: Commissioner Horwich moved for the adoption of Planning Commission Resolution No. 06-046. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Drevno and passed by unanimous roll call vote (absent Commissioner Faulk).

10B. CUP06-00003, DIV06-00004: YOON KO

Planning Commission consideration for approval of a Conditional Use Permit to allow the construction of two detached condominium units and a Division of Lot for condominium purposes on property located in the R-2 Zone at 18535 Ashley Avenue.

Recommendation

Approval.

Planning Associate Crecy introduced the request.

Yoon Ko, applicant, briefly described the proposed project, noting that the detached units were designed to look like single-family homes and have private backyards. He voiced his agreement with the recommended conditions of approval.

Commissioner Busch commented positively on the project and asked about the disparity between the FAR shown on the plans (.644) and the FAR in the staff report (.649).

Sr. Planning Associate Lodan explained that it is not unusual to have a slight discrepancy in the FAR when staff scales the plans and the higher of the two numbers is listed in the staff report.

Commissioner Horwich pointed out that the staff report cites the fact that the project does not appear to cause any significant intrusion on the view, light, air or privacy of adjacent properties as one of the reasons staff was recommending approval of the project. He noted that these protections apply only to properties in the Hillside Overlay area; expressed concerns that a dangerous precedent could be set by citing them; and asked that this statement be stricken from the staff report.

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

MOTION: Commissioner Busch moved for the approval of CUP06-00003 and DIV06-00004, as conditioned, including all findings of fact set forth by staff. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Drevno and passed by unanimous roll call vote (absent Commissioner Faulk).

Planning Associate Crecy read aloud the number and title of Planning Commission Resolution Nos. 06-047 and 06-048.

MOTION: Commissioner Drevno moved for the adoption of Planning Commission Resolution Nos. 06-047 and 06-048. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Browning and passed by unanimous roll call vote (absent Commissioner Faulk).

10C. PRE06-00004, WAV06-00001: LOERA DESIGN/ AL LOERA (TOM AND MARSHA COOPER)

Planning Commission consideration for approval of a Precise Plan of Development to allow first and second-story additions to an existing one-story, single-family residence in conjunction with a Waiver to allow less than the required setback for a front-facing garage on property located in the Hillside Overlay District in the R-1 Zone at 5516 Linda Drive.

Recommendation

Approval.

Planning Associate Crecy introduced the request and noted supplemental material at the meeting consisting of an additional condition of approval requiring that the driveway elevation/grade be modified to comply with maximum driveway grades per Code requirements.

Marsha Cooper, applicant, voiced her agreement with the recommended conditions of approval.

Commissioner Browning expressed concerns that the 17-foot driveway would not be long enough to allow the parking of larger SUVs and suggested the possibility of moving the garage back 3 feet to meet Code requirements.

Ms. Cooper explained that the driveway will be on an angle with a large area for parking vehicles.

Sr. Planning Associate Lodan advised that the supplemental condition will require that the finished floor elevation of the garage be lowered by approximately 3 feet, therefore, a Waiver of the height requirement is necessary due to the way structures are measured. He confirmed that the overall height of the project would not change.

Commissioner Browning stated that he was pleased that the grade of the driveway was addressed in the supplemental condition because the existing driveway is quite steep.

In response to Chairperson Uchima's inquiry, Sr. Planning Associate Lodan provided clarification regarding the parkway easement along the front of the property, noting that the applicant will be required to install a sidewalk.

MOTION: Commissioner Drevno moved for the approval of PRE06-00004 and WAV06-00001, as conditioned, including all findings of fact set forth by staff, incorporating a Waiver of height requirements. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Horwich and passed by unanimous roll call vote (absent Commissioner Faulk).

Planning Associate Crecy read aloud the number and title of Planning Commission Resolution Nos. 06-049 and 06-050.

MOTION: Commissioner Busch moved for the adoption of Planning Commission Resolution Nos. 06-049 and 06-050 as amended. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Browning and passed by unanimous roll call vote (absent Commissioner Faulk).

11. **RESOLUTIONS** – None.

12. **PUBLIC WORKSHOP ITEMS** – None.

13. **MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS** – None.

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

None.

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

Sr. Planning Associate Lodan reviewed the agenda for the May 3, 2006 Planning Commission meeting, noting that the April 19, 2006 Planning Commission meeting has been cancelled.

16. **ORAL COMMUNICATIONS**

16A. Sr. Planning Associate Lodan discussed the agenda for the General Plan Workshop scheduled for April 26, 2006.

16B. Chairperson Uchima requested an excused absence from the April 26 meeting because he will be out of town.

Commissioner Drevno, seconded by Commissioner Horwich, so moved; voice vote reflected unanimous approval.

16C. Commissioner Busch offered condolences to Commissioner Gibson on the loss of her mother-in-law.

16D. Commissioner Busch requested that staff contact the watch commander for pertinent information when Conditional Use Permits for the sale of alcoholic beverages are considered, instead of detectives.

16E. Sr. Planning Associate Lodan invited Commissioners to attend a SCAG workshop on housing issues on April 20, 2006.

16F. Deputy City Attorney Whitham noted that Patrick Sullivan would be filling in for her at the May 3 meeting.

17. ADJOURNMENT

At 8:25 p.m., the meeting was adjourned to Wednesday, April 26, 2006 at 7:00 p.m. for a General Plan Workshop in City Council Chambers.

Approved as Submitted May 17, 2006 s/ Sue Herbers, City Clerk
