

April 17, 2013

**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, April 17, 2013 in City Council Chambers at Torrance City Hall.

**2. SALUTE TO THE FLAG**

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Commissioner Rizzo.

**3. ROLL CALL/ MOTIONS FOR EXCUSED ABSENCE**

Present: Commissioners D'anjou, Gibson, Polcari, Rizzo, Skoll, and Chairperson Weideman.

Absent: Commissioner Watson (excused).

Also Present: Planning Manager Lodan, Planning Associate Gomez, Plans Examiner Noh, Associate Civil Engineer Symons, 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, April 12, 2013.

**5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**MOTION:** Commissioner Polcari moved for the approval of the March 6, 2013 Planning Commission minutes as submitted. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Skoll and passed by unanimous roll call vote, with Commissioner Rizzo abstaining.

**MOTION:** Commissioner D'anjou moved for the approval of the March 20, 2013 Planning Commission minutes as submitted. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Skoll and passed by unanimous roll call vote, with Commissioner Gibson abstaining.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Rizzo moved for the approval of the April 3, 2013 Planning Commission minutes as submitted. The motion was seconded by Commissioner D'anjou and passed by unanimous roll call vote.

**6. REQUESTS FOR POSTPONEMENTS - None.**

**7. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS #1 – None.**

Chairperson 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** – None.
12. **FORMAL HEARINGS**
- 12A. **PCR13-00001: BENJAMIN ARCHER**

Planning Commission consideration for approval of a Planning Commission Review to allow a two-unit project to exceed a 0.50 Floor Area Ratio on property located within the Small Lot, Low-Medium Overlay District in the R-2 Zone at 2031 Andreo Avenue.

**Recommendation:** Approval.

Planning Associate Gomez introduced the request.

Commissioner Skoll asked if this site was located in a historical area. Planning Manager Lodan advised that Torrance has no formally designated historical areas, however, one of the goals in creating the Small Lot, Low-Medium Overlay District was to preserve the character of the older homes in this neighborhood.

Chairperson Weideman disclosed that he drove by the house and went through the alley to the rear of the property.

Benjamin Archer, 2031 Andreo Avenue, voiced his agreement with the recommended conditions of approval. He explained that the lot is zoned for a duplex, therefore he would like to add a new two-car garage with a unit above it at the rear of the property.

In response to Chairperson Weideman's inquiry, Mr. Archer reported that the large pine tree at the southwest corner of the property will have to be removed to allow for the construction. He confirmed that he was aware that he will be required to make improvements to the public alley per Condition No. 7.

Chairperson Weideman commended the applicant for preserving the existing house on this site. Mr. Archer stated that he and his wife have a great appreciation for craftsman-style architecture and the new addition will mimic this style.

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

**MOTION:** Commissioner Polcari moved to approve PCR13-00001, 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 Watson).

Planning Associate Gomez read aloud the number and title of Planning Commission Resolution No. 13-015.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Polcari moved for the adoption of Planning Commission Resolution No. 13-015. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Gibson and passed by unanimous roll call vote (absent Commissioner Watson).

**12B. PRE13-00002: KBR & ASSOCIATES (CHERN YWH HUNG)**

Planning Commission consideration for approval of a Precise Plan of Development to allow the construction of a new two-story, single-family residence with attached garage on property located within the Hillside Overlay District in the R-1 Zone at 5264 Zakon Road.

**Recommendation:** Approval.

Planning Associate Gomez introduced the request.

Commissioner Polcari disclosed that he had visited the site and walked around to view the silhouette.

Chairperson Weideman disclosed that he visited neighbors across the street at 5267 Zakon Road and observed the silhouette from three different areas, but did not discuss the project with them.

Rick Yeh, project architect, voiced his agreement with the recommended conditions of approval. He reported that the existing house, which has unpermitted structures, will be demolished and a new two-story home will be built on the site.

In response to Commissioner Skoll's inquiry, Mr. Yeh confirmed that his clients intend to sell the new home after it is built, noting that the property is currently vacant.

Robert Reed, 5267 Zakon Road, stated that he supports the project, but would like some minor changes to help preserve his view of the Palos Verdes hillside: 1) Shift the structure to the rear of the property by a couple of feet; 2) Adjust the profile of the roof; and 3) Change the height and/or width of the structure.

Commissioner Skoll asked about the feasibility of the changes proposed by Mr. Reed.

Planning Manager Lodan advised that the structure probably could be shifted toward the rear of the property and the height could be reduced by changing the roof pitch and/or lowering plate heights, but changing the width of the structure would be much more involved.

In response to Chairperson Weideman's inquiry, Plans Examiner Noh estimated that the height of the structure could be reduced approximately 12-18 inches by changing the roof pitch and lowering plate heights.

Donald Ford, 5346 Bindewald Avenue, expressed support for the project, noting that the property has been in disrepair since 2003 and has become a neighborhood eyesore. He reported that the applicant shared the plans with him and they appear to comply with the Hillside Ordinance and the impact on his property is fairly minor. He related his understanding that there was some dispute about the size of lot and requested assurance that the property line will be identified during the construction process and required setbacks will be maintained.

Commissioner Rizzo questioned whether Mr. Ford would object if the structure was shifted to the rear by two feet.

Mr. Ford expressed concerns that shifting it back could create a privacy impact, explaining that it was difficult to tell for sure because some of the flags on the silhouette reflect an earlier project that was proposed in 2009.

Chairperson Weideman requested clarification as to what part of the silhouette was from an earlier project.

Planning Manager Lodan stated that he was hesitant to comment when he had not seen the silhouette. He advised that typically old flags are removed when a project is re-silhouetted and noted that the silhouette was certified to accurately reflect the plans as required.

In response to Commissioner Skoll's inquiry, Planning Manager Lodan confirmed that property lines will be identified during the construction process; that the structure will be required to comply with the setbacks shown on the plans; and that the height of the structure will be verified after framing.

Returning to the podium, Mr. Reed reported that he observed the silhouette being installed and the flags in the front were redone and appear to be accurate. He noted that the applicant did not share the plans with him.

Mr. Yeh offered to lower the height of the project by 1 foot by reducing the plate height of both floors from 9 feet 6 inches to 9 feet, but stated that he did not believe the structure should be shifted to the rear because it would affect Mr. Ford's privacy.

In response to Commissioner Polcari's inquiry, Mr. Yeh reported that his clients intend to begin construction as soon as possible after the project has been approved.

Commissioner Skoll requested staff's assessment of Mr. Yeh's offer, and Planning Manager Lodan advised that the reduction in height would further reduce any potential view impact, however staff did not feel there was a significant impact as proposed.

Commissioner Rizzo stated that he was not in favor of requiring the structure to be moved back due to testimony that it would impact Mr. Ford's privacy and that he appreciated the architect's willingness to reduce the height of the project to address Mr. Reed's concerns.

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

Chairperson Weideman stated that he also appreciated the architect's willingness to do what he could to mitigate the project's impact.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Polcari moved to approve PRE13-00002, as conditioned, including all findings of fact set forth by staff with the following modifications:

**Modify**

- No. 4 That the maximum height of the residence at the highest point shall not exceed a height of ~~25~~ 24 feet 4 inches as represented by the survey elevation of ~~125.40~~ 124.40 for the highest ridge point...
- No. 5 That the height of the structure shall be certified by a licensed surveyor/engineer prior to requesting a framing or roof-sheathing inspection and shall not exceed a survey elevation of ~~125.40~~ 124.40 based on the benchmark elevation of 96.65 feet...

**Add**

- That plate heights shall be reduced 6 inches to the satisfaction of the Community Development Department.

The motion was seconded by Commissioner D'anjou and passed by unanimous roll call vote (absent Commissioner Watson).

Planning Associate Gomez read aloud the number and title of Planning Commission Resolution No. 13-016.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Polcari moved for the adoption of Planning Commission Resolution No. 13-016 as amended. The motion was seconded by Commissioner D'anjou and passed by unanimous roll call vote (absent Commissioner Watson).

13. **RESOLUTIONS** – None.

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 March 29 and April 4, 2013 were provided to the Commission.

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 May 1, 2013 Planning Commission meeting.

18. **ORAL COMMUNICATIONS #2**

18A. Commissioner Rizzo noted that it was recently announced that the Fresh & Easy market chain was being sold, which was probably a factor in the agenda item they brought forward at last month's meeting.

18B. Commissioner Gibson expressed sympathy for those who had been injured and killed in the bombing at the Boston Marathon earlier this week.

**18C.** Commissioner Skoll asked about the status of the Rock & Brews restaurant, and Planning Manager Lodan advised that they plan to hold a grand opening in the next few weeks, but must secure off-site parking for eight vehicles.

**18D.** In response to Commissioner Skoll's inquiry, Planning Manager Lodan reported that there have been no additional approvals at Del Amo Fashion Center since the issue was discussed at the March 6 meeting.

**18E.** Commissioner Gibson expressed dismay that rocker Gene Simmons had mentioned on television that he planned to visit the new Rock & Brews restaurant, but misidentified it as being in Redondo Beach instead of Torrance.

**18F.** Chairperson Weideman commented on the proliferation of donation bins in Torrance and asked that staff provide an information item on them as earlier requested even if the Angel Bin item is not on the May 1 agenda as scheduled.

**19. ADJOURNMENT**

At 7:50 p.m., the meeting was adjourned to Wednesday, May 1, 2013 at 7:00 p.m.

Approved as Submitted May 15, 2013 s/ Sue Herbers, City Clerk
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