

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

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Torrance Planning Commission convened in a regular session at 7:08 p.m. on Wednesday, May 5, 2004, in City Council Chambers at Torrance City Hall.

2. SALUTE TO THE FLAG

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Commissioner Muratsuchi.

3. ROLL CALL

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

Absent: Commissioner Horwich.

Also Present: Planning Manager Isomoto, Planning Associate Crecy, Deputy City Attorney Whitham, Fire Marshal Carter, Associate Civil Engineer Symons, Building Regulations Administrator Segovia and Planning Associate Chun.

MOTION: Commissioner Muratsuchi, seconded by Commissioner Botello, moved to grant Commissioner Horwich an excused absence from this meeting; voice vote reflected unanimous approval.

4. POSTING OF THE AGENDA

MOTION: Commissioner Muratsuchi, seconded by Commissioner Botello, 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 March 3, 2004 Planning Commission minutes as submitted. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Faulk and passed by unanimous roll call vote (absent Commissioner Horwich).

MOTION: Commissioner Muratsuchi moved for the approval of the March 17, 2004 Planning Commission minutes as submitted. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Botello and passed by unanimous roll call vote, with Commissioner Uchima abstaining (absent Commissioner Horwich).

6. REQUESTS FOR POSTPONEMENTS

Planning Manager Isomoto relayed the applicant's request to withdraw Agenda Item 8A, WAV04-00004: Chris and Tamara Morrow.

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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. WAV04-00004: CHRIS AND TAMARA MORROW

Planning Commission consideration for approval of a Waiver to allow a reduction of the side yard setback requirement in conjunction with the construction of first and second-story additions to an existing single-family residence on property located in the R-1 Zone at 24448 Winlock Drive.

Withdrawn.

8B. WAV04-00007: HANNIBAL PETROSSI

Planning Commission consideration for approval of a Waiver of the maximum height limit in association with the renovation of an existing shopping center on property located in the CR-PP Zone at 4509-4545 Sepulveda Boulevard.

Recommendation

Approval.

Planning Associate Crecy introduced the request.

Hannibal Petrossi, Petrossi & Associates, 3700 Campus Drive, #200, Huntington Beach, briefly described the proposal to renovate an existing shopping center, including changing the façade to match the Walgreen's building on the corner and adding two tower elements on which signage identifying the center would be placed. He voiced his agreement with the recommended conditions of approval with the exception of Condition No. 4, limiting the height of the tower elements to 26 feet instead of the 28 feet proposed. For purposes of comparison, he submitted renderings of the project with the tower elements at 27 and 26 feet and a rendering with the tower elements eliminated and requested that the Commission approve the 27-foot option.

Planning Manager Isomoto recommended that this item be continued if the Commission would like to consider the alternate plan submitted by Mr. Petrossi so that staff could review it.

In response to Commissioner Faulk's inquiry, Mr. Petrossi indicated that he would prefer the higher tower but would accept staff's recommendation.

Yvonne Tressel, 4558 Cathann Street, questioned whether there would be windows in the towers that would allow someone to look into neighbors' yards. Planning Manager Isomoto explained that the tower elements are a design feature to enhance the look of the center and they will not be functional. She noted that a condition was included (No 6) prohibiting floor area within the towers.

Oscar Ashford, 22304 Evalyn, voiced objections to the proposed tower elements, stating that there was no need for the extra height or the "Anza Center" signs, because everyone in the neighborhood knows where it is.

Mr. Petrossi confirmed that there would be no windows or floors in the tower elements. He stated that the center needs to have some kind of identification and the towers would help improve the center's visibility. He agreed to reduce their height to 26 feet but maintained that anything less would detract from the new façade.

MOTION: Commissioner Botello moved for the approval of WAV04-00007, as conditioned, including all findings of fact. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Faulk and passed by a 5-1 roll call vote, with Commissioner Muratsuchi dissenting (absent Commissioner Horwich).

Commenting on his vote, Commissioner Muratsuchi voiced his opinion that a waiver of the height limit to allow for center identification was not justified and that it would tend to encourage taller buildings.

Planning Associate Crecy read aloud the number and title of Planning Commission Resolution No. 04-044.

MOTION: Commissioner Faulk moved for the adoption of Planning Commission Resolution No. 04-044. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Uchima and passed by a 5-1 roll call vote, with Commissioner Muratsuchi dissenting (absent Commissioner Horwich).

9. FORMAL HEARINGS

9A. PRE04-00003: ANTHONY AND DEIRDRE LOPILATO (ROSA VELAZQUEZ)

Planning Commission consideration for approval of a Precise Plan of Development to allow 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 20313 Tomlee Avenue.

Recommendation

Approval.

Planning Associate Crecy introduced the request.

Anthony Lopilato, 20313 Tomlee Avenue, applicant, voiced his agreement with the recommended conditions of approval.

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

MOTION: Commissioner Muratsuchi moved for the approval of PRE04-00003, as conditioned, including all findings of fact set forth by staff. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Faulk and passed by unanimous roll call vote (absent Commissioner Horwich).

Planning Associate Crecy read aloud the number and title of Planning Commission Resolution No. 04-045.

MOTION: Commissioner Muratsuchi moved for the adoption of Planning Commission Resolution. No. 04-045. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Faulk and passed by unanimous roll call vote (absent Commissioner Horwich).

9B. CUP04-00010: LOMITA PARTNERS II, LLC

Planning Commission consideration for approval of a Conditional Use Permit to allow medical uses within two existing office buildings on property located in the M-2 Zone at 2990 Lomita Boulevard.

Recommendation

Approval.

Planning Associate Crecy introduced the request.

Anthony O'Carroll, 433 N. Camden Drive, #820, Beverly Hills, representing the applicant, voiced his agreement with the recommended conditions of approval.

Commissioner Faulk stated that he liked the project but questioned the decision to eliminate a landscaped area at the front of the property for parking when the project more than meets parking requirements.

Mr. O'Carroll stated that he thought the applicant has been very sensitive to landscaping issues while at the same time trying to ensure that there will be adequate parking, noting the landscaped area that was being preserved to create a lunch area for employees. He voiced his opinion that it was more important to have landscaping along Lomita Boulevard where it would be more visible.

A brief discussion ensued, and Commissioners expressed an interest in reducing the number of parking spaces in order to retain mature landscaping. Planning Manager Isomoto suggested eliminating 7 parking spaces in front that cut into both sides of a landscaped area.

Commissioner Faulk voiced support for Ms. Isomoto's suggestion, noting that if parking becomes a problem in the future, the applicant could request modification of the Conditional Use Permit to allow additional parking spaces.

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

MOTION: Commissioner Faulk moved for the approval of CUP04-00010, as conditioned, including all findings of fact set forth by staff, with the following modification:

Add

- That 7 parking spaces shall be eliminated to the satisfaction of the Community Development Director.

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

Planning Associate Crecy read aloud the number and title of Planning Commission Resolution No. 04-046.

MOTION: Commissioner Faulk moved for the adoption of Planning Commission Resolution. No. 04-046 as amended. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Uchima and passed by unanimous roll call vote (absent Commissioner Horwich).

9C. CUP04-00012: NATHAN BATTLE (JOHN CATALDO, INC.)

Planning Commission consideration for approval of a Conditional Use Permit to allow the construction of a warehouse building with office and mezzanine storage on property located in the Industrial Redevelopment Project Area in the M-2 Zone at 1907 Abalone Avenue and 1910 Border Avenue.

Recommendation

Approval.

Planning Associate Crecy introduced the request and noted supplemental material available at the meeting consisting of amended Code requirements.

John Cataldo, 805 Mission Street, South Pasadena, voiced his agreement with the recommended conditions of approval with the exception of Condition Nos. 12 and 23. With regard to Condition No. 12 (requiring that a lot-tie agreement be recorded for the three properties located at 1907 and 1915 Abalone Avenue and 1910 Border Avenue) he explained that the applicant would like to retain 1915 Abalone as a separate property with no openings to 1907 Abalone and 1910 Border as previously proposed.

Planning Associate Chun indicated that staff had no objections to eliminating 1915 Abalone from the lot tie agreement as long as there are no openings to the adjacent properties.

With regard to Condition No. 23 (requiring that the applicant record a lot-tie agreement providing that multiple lots underlying this property shall not be sold, leased or financed separately and that a parcel map be recorded prior to occupancy), he explained that recording a parcel map is a time-consuming, expensive process and, in

this case, unnecessary because the building will be constructed over the two properties making it impossible to sell the lots separately.

Douglas Mockett, owner of the subject property, maintained that recording a parcel map would be redundant because he could not sell part of a building.

Planning Manager Isomoto advised that the recording of a parcel map is a Code requirement because buildings may not be constructed over a property line.

Associate Civil Engineer Symons explained that while recording a parcel map typically takes from 6 to 8 months, the applicant could move forward with construction once the lot-tie agreement has been recorded and the parcel map does not need to be recorded until prior to occupancy.

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

MOTION: Commissioner Faulk moved for the approval of CUP04-00012, as conditioned, including all findings of fact set forth by staff, with the following modification:

Modify

- No. 12 That a Lot-Tie Agreement shall be recorded for the ~~three~~ two properties located at 1907 ~~and 1915~~ Abalone Avenue and 1910 Border Avenue prior to the issuance of building permits.

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

Planning Associate Crecy read aloud the number and title of Planning Commission Resolution No. 04-047.

MOTION: Commissioner Muratsuchi moved for the adoption of Planning Commission Resolution. No. 04-047 as amended. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Faulk and passed by unanimous roll call vote (absent Commissioner Horwich).

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Agenda Items 10A and 10B were considered out of order at this time.

10. RESOLUTIONS

10A. DIV04-00009: CITY OF TORRANCE

Planning Commission consideration of a resolution to deny a Division of Lot to allow a lot line adjustment involving Zamperini Way (Aero Way) and Lot 51 of Official Map No. 2 as per map filed in Book 5, pages 44 to 52 on property located in the C-3 Zone at 3233 Pacific Coast Highway.

Planning Associate Crecy read aloud the number and title of Planning Commission Resolution No. 04-042.

MOTION: Commissioner Faulk moved for the adoption of Planning Commission Resolution No. 04-042. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Muratsuchi and passed by unanimous roll call vote, with Chairperson Drevno abstaining (absent Commissioner Horwich).

**10B. CUP04-00006: EVERGREEN RETAIL GROUP, LLC
(RUSSELL PERKINS)**

Planning Commission consideration of a revised resolution for an approved Conditional Use Permit to allow the construction of a pharmacy with drive-through services on property located in the C-2 Zone at 4124 Pacific Coast Highway.

Planning Associate Crecy read aloud the number and title of Planning Commission Resolution No. 04-040.

MOTION: Commissioner Uchima moved for the adoption of Planning Commission Resolution No. 04-040. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Muratsuchi and passed by unanimous roll call vote, with Chairperson Drevno abstaining (absent Commissioner Horwich).

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The Commission recessed from 8:03 p.m. to 8:17 p.m.

**9D. CUP03-00053, PRE03-00038, TTM60807, VAR03-00007, WAV03-00024
EAS03-00015: RIVIERA COLONY, LLC (DOUG MAUPIN)**

Planning Commission consideration for adoption of a negative Declaration and approval of a Conditional Use Permit and Precise Plan of Development to allow the construction of a 16-unit townhome condominium development, a Tentative Tract Map for condominium purposes, a Variance to allow tandem parking for a portion of the required parking, and a Waiver of the height requirement on property located in the Hillside Overlay District in the R-3 Zone at 6226 Pacific Coast Highway.

Recommendation

Approval.

Planning Associate Crecy introduced the request and noted supplemental material available at the meeting.

Doug Maupin, representing the applicant, provided background information about the developer, noting that Don Wilson Builders has been in business for over 50 years and has built many of the homes in Torrance and owns several apartment buildings and industrial properties.

With the aid of slides, Dan Withee, Withee Malcolm Architects, 1993 W. 190th Street, #200, project architect, briefly described the proposed project. He reported that in response to neighbors' concerns, the applicant has agreed to preserve the trees along the south side of the property; eliminate the roof deck on Unit 9, which is adjacent to 111

Camino de las Colinas; and increase the height of the wall around the roof deck adjacent to the apartment building at 108 Palos Verdes Boulevard to protect tenants' privacy.

Responding to questions from the Commission, Planning Manager Isomoto provided clarification regarding guest parking requirements and the Floor Area Ratio (FAR) of nearby multi-family developments.

Jim Kilroy, owner of 112 Palos Verdes Boulevard, stated that he supports the project, but would like the roof decks eliminated because of concerns about noise, privacy and view impact. He reported that the project would block the view from the top two units of his building and asked that it be modified to mitigate this impact.

In response to Commissioner Botello's inquiry, Planning Manager Isomoto stated that Mr. Kilroy did not inform the Planning Department of his concerns, therefore, staff had not visited his property.

Commissioner Botello indicated that he was inclined to continue this hearing so that Commissioners would have an opportunity to visit Mr. Kilroy's property. Chairperson Drevno suggested that the Commission first allow those present to give testimony.

Edmond Thompson, owner of 108 Palos Verdes Boulevard, voiced support for the project, noting that his property is the one that would be most affected by it. He reported that Mr. Maupin and Mr. Withee have been very accommodating and that they have agreed to modify one of the roof decks to ensure his tenants' privacy. Referring to concerns that the roof decks would be too noisy, he reminded neighbors of the noise generated by the motel that formerly operated on this site.

James Pruitt, 111 Camino de las Colinas, indicated that he was not opposed to the project but had the following concerns: 1) The tree barrier on the south side of the subject property – he felt this was very important to preserve; 2) The roof decks – he would like them eliminated because sound is amplified when it is elevated and the stair towers needed to provide access increase the project's height; and 3) The location of the driveways on side streets – he preferred that the driveway to this property remain on Pacific Coast Highway (PCH) due to concerns about additional traffic on Camino de las Colinas.

Associate Civil Engineer Symons explained that the potential for conflict is much greater on PCH because it has a larger volume of traffic moving at higher speeds, therefore, staff recommended that the driveways for this residential project be located on residential streets. He noted that the project is not expected to cause a significant increase in traffic.

Submitting photographs to illustrate, Christine Norris, 110 Camino de las Colinas, stated that the proposed project would block her view, intrude on her privacy, affect her quality of life, and decrease the value of her property. She requested that the height of the project be reduced; that roof decks be eliminated; that an arborist be retained to ensure the preservation of the tree barrier; and that restrictions be placed on the property to ensure that trees will be maintained in the future.

Bob Howard, 118 Palos Verdes Drive, voiced support for the project but maintained that the driveway should be located on PCH because of the potential impact on traffic and parking in the neighborhood.

Kent Madenwald, 122 Camino de las Colinas, stated that he objected to the bulkiness of the project and urged the Commission to enforce the established criteria in the Hillside Ordinance.

Robert Keller, 139 Camino de las Colinas, noted that nearby multi-family developments with an FAR exceeding .50 were built prior to the adoption of the Hillside Ordinance; maintained that the proposed project should be limited to an FAR of .50 because the applicant has not demonstrated that to do so would constitute an unreasonable hardship; and expressed concerns about the domino effect should this project be approved. He voiced objections to the roof decks and to locating a driveway on Camino de las Colinas, explaining that this street is much more heavily traveled than other streets in the vicinity.

Nancy Langdon, 119 Camino de las Colinas, submitted a report from the University of Southern California Marshall School of Business entitled *The Effects of Green Space on Housing Prices* in support of her contention that this project would be detrimental to the public welfare. She noted that she detailed her concerns about traffic, parking, and aesthetic issues in correspondence submitted for the record. She voiced objections to size of the project, both height and girth, maintaining that it would disrupt the character of the neighborhood. She reported that she reviewed TMC Section 95.3.28 pertaining to the Conditional Use Permit; related her understanding that it generously loosens height and density restrictions in the R-3 Zone just for condominiums; and doubted that there was anything unique about condominiums that would warrant this special treatment. She indicated that supported the project in concept and expressed the hope that the applicant would underground the garages on the Camino de las Colinas side in order to reduce the project's height.

Dick Norris, 110 Camino de las Colinas, referring to Planning Commission Resolution No. 04-049 (PRE03-00038: Riviera Colony LLP), disputed findings "a" through "l." He stated that, contrary to these findings, the proposed project would affect views and privacy; that its height and size is not consistent with the neighborhood; that it was not planned to create the least intrusion on neighboring properties; that reducing the size of project would not constitute an unreasonable hardship because the developer would still make a big profit; that its Spanish style was not in harmony with homes in the neighborhood; and that it would diminish the value of his property. He voiced his opinion that only the space on the ground between buildings should be counted as open space, not outdoor space on decks.

Doug Gore, 126 Camino de las Colinas, expressed concerns about the project's impact on traffic and parking on Camino de las Colinas and about setting a precedent with regard to the project's height and density.

Mark Schrader, 346 Camino de las Colinas, stated that he was not personally impacted by the project but was concerned that over-development was causing a deterioration of the quality of life in Torrance.

Returning to the podium, Mr. Withee stated that there is a conflict in the zoning code with respect to R-3 standards and provisions of the Hillside Overlay Ordinance. He suggested that it was unreasonable to expect an R-3 property on a busy highway to conform to the same standards as a single-family residence on an R-1 property and explained that the parcel was zoned for more intense development to provide a buffer between the highway and single-family residences. He maintained that the impact on traffic would be minimal, noting that traffic engineers project a total of 94 trips daily, which divided by the 2 driveways, amounts to 47 trips each on Camino de las Colinas and Palos Verdes Boulevard. He stated that the Norrises' view amounts to an 8% arc between a three-story apartment building and a barrier of trees, which is not in direct line with the subject property, and noted that the closest building would be approximately 120 feet away.

Commissioner Botello noted that the applicant cited marketplace factors to justify an FAR in excess of .50 (page 47 of staff report), but related his understanding that the price paid for the property was \$3.4 million and reducing the number of units from 16 to 13 would result in only a slight variance in the cost per unit.

Mr. Maupin explained that there are several fixed costs involved in developing the site, including demolition, grading, streets and sidewalks, and that reducing the number units means that there would be fewer units to spread these costs among, which increases the cost per unit proportionately, while at the same time reducing revenue from the project because there would be fewer units to sell.

Mr. Maupin voiced his opinion that the project would benefit the City by providing an opportunity for homeownership not offered by the motel that formerly occupied the site, as well as buffering R-1 properties from the noise and traffic of PCH. He stated that the project would fit in well with edge conditions along PCH and that it is in conformance with the site's General Plan Designation and Zoning.

Asked by Commissioner Muratsuchi to address the hardship provision of TMC Section 94.4.11, Mr. Maupin stated that this property, which is in an intensely developed area, was purchased in good faith, knowing that the City has allowed much higher FARs than .50 for R-3 zoned properties. He suggested that requiring an FAR that is half that of nearby developments would be a fiscal hardship.

Commissioner Muratsuchi stated that he understood the unique challenge posed by this site due to tension between the R-3 zoning and the Hillside Overlay Ordinance, however, it was his sense that the ordinance was meant to promote more modest development in the hillside area and he did not believe a project with an FAR of .93 was being sensitive to the spirit of the ordinance.

Mr. Withee stated that he felt view loss was the primary focus of the Hillside Ordinance and that one of the determining factors in the decision to purchase this property was the fact that it was not directly in front of anyone's view.

Commissioner Faulk stated that he liked the project, but was concerned about the lack of sufficient parking for guests due to the limited parking on adjacent streets. He questioned how many parking spaces could be gained by eliminating Unit No. 9, and Mr. Withee indicated that 2-3 spaces would be gained.

Commissioner Faulk expressed his preference that the Commission delay taking action until Commissioners have an opportunity to visit the adjacent apartment building to determine whether the project would significantly impact views.

Mr. Maupin stated that he had no objections to a continuance and expressed his willingness to make modifications to address concerns discussed at this hearing.

For the benefit of the applicant, Commissioner Botello indicated that his areas of concern were the roof decks, the height of the project, and the FAR.

Noting that he visited the Norrises' home, Commissioner Uchima stated that he would characterize their view as a "peek-a-boo" view, however, he did believe the rooftop deck nearest them could have an impact on their privacy. He expressed concerns about the height of the project and the impact on neighborhood parking, but stated that he would be inclined to support it if these issues were addressed. He stated that he did not believe the project would significantly impact traffic, noting that he has lived in the area for over 20 years and never experienced any serious traffic impact from a nearby condominium complex with well over 100 units.

Commissioner Faulk commented that he was very pleased to see that the project offers a mix of two- and three-bedroom units.

Chairperson Drevno, echoed by Commissioner Muratsuchi and Commissioner Botello, indicated that she favored the elimination of the rooftop decks and associated stairwell towers.

MOTION: Commissioner Uchima moved to continue the hearing to June 2, 2004. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Botello and passed by unanimous roll call vote (absent Commissioner Horwich).

Commissioner Botello questioned whether the silhouette would be reconstructed, and a suggestion was made that different colored flags be used to represent the revisions using the existing poles.

Planning Manager Isomoto announced that the hearing would not be re-advertised because it was continued to a date certain.

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The Commission recessed from 10:27 p.m. to 10:32 p.m.

11. PUBLIC WORKSHOP ITEMS

None.

12. MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS

None.

13. REVIEW OF RECENT CITY COUNCIL ACTION ON PLANNING MATTERS

Planning Manager Isomoto reviewed recent City Council action on Planning matters, noting that at the April 27, 2004 Council meeting, the Council rejected the proposal to vacate the southeast side of Zamperini Way by a vote of 4-3 and voted unanimously to deny the appeal and approve the project at 131 Camino de las Colinas.

14. LIST OF TENTATIVE PLANNING COMMISSION CASES

Planning Manager Isomoto reviewed the agenda for the Planning Commission meeting of May 19, 2004.

15. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

15A. Commissioner Botello noted that a letter had been received from Joseph Buck requesting that an item be placed on the agenda so that he could discuss issues related to the Hillside Overlay Ordinance.

A brief discussion ensued, and it was the consensus of the Commission to invite Mr. Buck to speak under Orals rather than placing an item on the agenda.

15B. In response to Commissioner Botello's inquiry, Planning Manager Isomoto provided an update on the project underway on Maricopa Street and the proposed projects near Del Amo Financial Center and Del Amo Fashion Center.

15C. Commissioner Faulk requested an excused absence for the meeting of May 19, 2004. Commissioner Botello, seconded by Commissioner Muratsuchi so moved; voice vote reflected unanimous approval.

15D. Responding to questions from the Commission, Deputy City Attorney Whitham provided clarification regarding TMC Sections 91.41.10 and 91.4.11.

15E. Chairperson Drevno reported that SCROC would like to enlarge the road leading into the facility and requested information regarding whom they should contact.

16. ADJOURNMENT

At 10:59 p.m., the meeting was adjourned to Wednesday, May 19, 2004, at 7:00 p.m.

Approved as Written July 7, 2004 s/ Sue Herbers, City Clerk
