

August 1, 2007

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

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

The Torrance Planning Commission convened in a regular session at 7:02 p.m. on Wednesday, August 1, 2006, in City Council Chambers at Torrance City Hall.

**2. SALUTE TO THE FLAG**

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Planning Manager Gregg Lodan.

**3. ROLL CALL**

Present: Commissioners Browning, Faulk, Gibson, Uchima, Weideman and Chairperson Busch.

Absent: Commissioner Horwich (excused).

Also Present: Planning Manager Lodan, Planning Assistant Graham, Plans Examiner Noh, Associate Civil Engineer Symons, Fire Marshal Kazandjian and Deputy City Attorney Whitham.

**4. POSTING OF THE AGENDA**

Planning Manager Lodan reported that the agenda was posted on the Public Notice Board at 3031 Torrance Boulevard on July 27, 2007.

**5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Commissioner Browning noted scrivener's errors in the June 20, 2007 Planning Commission minutes.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Browning moved for the approval of the June 20, 2007 Planning Commission minutes as corrected. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Faulk and passed by unanimous roll call vote (absent Commissioner Horwich).

**6. REQUESTS FOR POSTPONEMENT – None.**

**7. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS #1 – None.**

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

**8. TIME EXTENSIONS**

**8A. MIS07-00183: ROSA VELAZQUEZ (CATHEDRAL OF LIFE)**

Planning Commission consideration for approval of a one-year time extension of a previously approved Tentative Parcel Map (DIV05-00007) to merge two parcels into one on property located in the Precise Plan Overlay in the R-3 Zone at 18090 Prairie Avenue.

**Recommendation**

Approval.

Planning Assistant Graham introduced the request.

Rosa Velazquez, project architect, and Nancy Johnson, representing Cathedral of Life Church, voiced their agreement to the recommended conditions of approval.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Browning moved for the approval of MIS07-00183. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Uchima and passed by unanimous roll call vote (absent Commissioner Horwich).

Planning Assistant Graham read aloud the number and title of Planning Commission Resolution No. 07-089.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Browning moved for the adoption of Planning Commission Resolution No. 07-089. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Uchima and passed by unanimous roll call vote (absent Commissioner Horwich).

**8B. MIS07-00207: ELIZABETH SROUR (ANTONIO TELLEZ)**

Planning Commission consideration for approval of a one-year time extension of a previously approved Tentative Parcel Map (DIV05-00008) for condominium purposes on property located in the R-2 Zone at 18424 Mansel Avenue.

**Recommendation**

Approval.

Planning Assistant Graham introduced the request.

Antonio Tellez, applicant, voiced his agreement to the recommended conditions of approval.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Faulk moved for the approval of MIS07-00207. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Gibson and passed by unanimous roll call vote (absent Commissioner Horwich).

Planning Assistant Graham read aloud the number and title of Planning Commission Resolution No. 07-090.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Weideman moved for the adoption of Planning Commission Resolution No. 07-090. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Gibson and passed by unanimous roll call vote (absent Commissioner Horwich).

**9. CONTINUED HEARINGS**

**9A. PRE07-00005, WAV07-00005: RICK SELLERS (KEN BERRYMAN)**

Planning Commission consideration for approval of a Precise Plan of Development to allow second-story additions in conjunction with a setback Waiver for an existing two-story, single-family residence on property located in the Hillside Overlay District in the R-1 Zone at 413 Via La Soledad.

**Recommendation**

Approval.

Planning Assistant Graham introduced the request.

Commissioner Uchima announced that he was abstaining from consideration of this item because he lives within the notification area and exited the dais.

Rick Sellers, project designer, voiced his agreement with the recommended conditions of approval and noted that the project has been revised to address neighbors' concerns.

Elane Polin, 409 Via La Soledad, requested clarification of the northerly side yard setback, and Planning Manager Lodan advised that the proposed addition is approximately two feet closer to Ms. Polin's property than the previous proposal.

Ms. Polin voiced objections to this change, contending that the addition would block sunlight from her home and intrude on her privacy.

In response to Commissioner Fauk's inquiry, Ms. Polin reported that the affected rooms are her dining and living room area and part of her kitchen.

Mr. Sellers explained that the project was shifted to the north to open up a view corridor for the neighbor across the street, who has an ocean view, and that Ms. Polin's privacy should not be impacted because there will be no additional windows facing her property.

Commissioner Browning expressed concerns about the possibility that the rear deck could impact the privacy of residents at 402 and 406 Via Mesa Grande.

Mr. Sellers explained that the existing master bedroom has large windows facing these properties and the deck would have the same view and, if anything, would improve the situation.

Commissioner Browning questioned whether the project has the support of neighbors to the south and the rear of the property (417 Via La Soledad and 406 Via

Mesa Grande). Mr. Sellers responded that he didn't know if the applicant had spoken with these neighbors.

Planning Manager Lodan advised that nothing has been submitted by these neighbors and confirmed that they were notified of the hearing.

Commissioner Browning noted that the proposed project has an FAR (floor area ratio) of 0.54 and in order to exceed 0.50, the applicant must demonstrate that being confined to this limit would constitute an unreasonable hardship.

Mr. Sellers explained that he stacked the second-story addition directly over bearing walls on the first floor in order to preserve as much of the existing house as possible and that dictated the size of the second story.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Browning moved to close the public hearing. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Gibson and passed by unanimous roll call vote.

Commissioner Weideman indicated that he would not support the project because the FAR exceeds 0.50 and he believed there could be an impact on light with regard to Ms. Polin's property.

Commissioner Browning stated that should the project be approved, he favored requiring confirmation that residents at 406 Via Mesa Grande and 417 Via La Soledad are in support of the rear deck due to the potential impact on the privacy. He also proposed a condition limiting the hours of construction to 7:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, and 9:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday, with no exterior work on weekends.

Commissioner Gibson noted that seeking confirmation from neighbors that they have no objections to a project could be problematic.

Planning Manager Lodan stated that it was staff's opinion that the silhouette and the noticing process are sufficient for eliciting comments and they assume when neighbors do not attend a hearing, that they have no concerns about a project. He noted that one of the neighbors in question has submitted his own Precise Plan application and has never expressed any concerns about this project to staff.

Commissioner Gibson stated that she would not support Commissioner Browning's suggestion because she agreed with staff that adequate notice had been given to neighbors.

Commissioner Faulk related his belief that requiring an applicant to obtain approval from people who have expressed no concerns about a project would set a dangerous precedent, noting that it was a fundamental change in the way the Commission operates.

The public hearing was reopened at Commissioner Faulk's request.

Commissioner Faulk questioned whether Mr. Sellers would like an opportunity to reduce the FAR or would prefer that the Commission vote on the project this evening.

Mr. Sellers agreed to continue the hearing to August 15, 2007.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Faulk moved to continue the hearing to August 15, 2007. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Weideman and passed by unanimous roll call vote (absent Commissioners Horwich and Uchima).

The Commission recessed at 7:40 p.m. and reconvened at 7:50 p.m., with Commissioner Uchima returning to the dais at that time.

10. **WAIVERS** – None.

11. **FORMAL HEARINGS**

11A. **PRE07-00008; MYUNG CHUNG (PATRICK HWANG)**

Planning Commission consideration for approval of a Precise Plan of Development to allow one-story additions to an existing one-story, single-family residence with a semi-subterranean garage on property located in the Hillside Overlay District in the R-1 Zone at 4918 Calle de Arboles.

**Recommendation**

Approval.

Planning Assistant Graham introduced the request.

Myung Chung, project architect, voiced his agreement with the recommended conditions of approval. He explained that the addition is very minor; that it would have no impact on neighbors; and that it would upgrade the existing residence by adding a stone veneer and new windows.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Browning moved to close the public hearing. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Gibson and passed by unanimous roll call vote.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Uchima moved for the approval of PRE07-00008, 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 Assistant Graham read aloud the number and title of Planning Commission Resolution No. 07-085.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Uchima moved for the adoption of Planning Commission Resolution No. 07-085. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Gibson and passed by unanimous roll call vote (absent Commissioner Horwich).

**11B. PRE07-00009: JAMES AND LORI DISNEY**

Planning Commission consideration for approval of a Precise Plan of Development to allow a second-story addition to an existing one-story, single-family residence on property located in the Hillside Overlay District in the R-1 Zone at 157 Paseo de las Delicias.

**Recommendation**

Approval.

Planning Assistant Graham introduced the request.

Greg Schneider, project architect, voiced his agreement with the recommended conditions of approval.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Faulk moved to close the public hearing. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Browning and passed by unanimous roll call vote.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Gibson moved for the approval of PRE07-00009, 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 Horwich).

Planning Assistant Graham read aloud the number and title of Planning Commission Resolution No. 07-086.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Gibson moved for the adoption of Planning Commission Resolution No. 07-086. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Browning and passed by unanimous roll call vote (absent Commissioner Horwich).

**11C. PRE07-00010: TOM AND MARY GAHAN**

Planning Commission consideration for approval of a Precise Plan of Development to allow the construction of a new two-story, single-family residence on property located in the Hillside Overlay District in the R-1 Zone at 22322 Susana Avenue.

**Recommendation**

Approval.

Planning Assistant Graham introduced the request.

Greg Schneider, project architect, voiced his agreement with the recommended conditions of approval. He noted that the applicants have reviewed the project with neighbors and letters of support were included in the agenda packet.

Commissioner Browning noted that there were no letters of support from neighbors on either side of the proposed project.

Mary Gahan, 24326 Lucille Avenue, Lomita, owner of the subject property, explained that these neighbors do support the project, however, she wrote the wrong street name on their letters, which are on pages 18 and 23 of the agenda packet.

Commissioner Browning asked about justification for the FAR, which exceeds 0.50.

Mr. Schneider responded that the lot is rather small; that the applicants need room for their three children; and that he did not think 2400 square feet of living space was excessive.

Chris Hansen, 22308 Susana Avenue, stated that he has a nice view of Palos Verdes from his backyard that would be completely blocked by the proposed project. He further stated that he believed the project would block sunlight from immediate neighbors and that he did not think it would be good for the neighborhood.

Commissioner Browning questioned whether the applicants had discussed the project with him, and Mr. Hansen recalled that they approached him a few years ago, however, the plans were smaller at that time.

Returning to the podium, Mr. Schneider stated that he believed this was a good project that would add value to the neighborhood.

Commissioner Browning expressed concerns that a project with an FAR of 0.56 on this small of a lot could be too massive for the area and asked if the applicants would consider revising the project to reduce the FAR.

Mr. Schneider stated that they would do so reluctantly and related his understanding that the home at 22321 Susana has a similar FAR.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Faulk moved to close the public hearing. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Browning and passed by unanimous roll call vote.

Commissioner Browning stated that he would not support the project due to the excessive FAR.

Commissioner Weideman stated that he also would not support the project for the same reason.

In response to Commissioner Uchima's inquiry, Planning Manager Lodan advised that the subject lot, at 5,150 square feet, is well under the current minimum of 6,000 square feet and that the project would have an FAR of .48 on a 6,000 square-foot lot.

Commissioner Uchima voiced support for the project, stating that he believed there was a hardship due to the undersized lot and he did not feel a 2400 square-foot house was unreasonable by today's standards.

Commissioner Faulk stated that he believed staff had made a compelling argument and he would support the project as proposed.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Uchima moved for the approval of PRE07-00010, as conditioned, including all findings of fact set forth by staff. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Faulk and failed to pass as reflected in the following roll call vote:

AYES: Commissioners Faulk and Uchima.  
NOES: Commissioners Browning, Gibson, Weideman and  
Chairperson Busch.  
ABSENT: Commissioner Horwich.

A brief discussion ensued, and it was the consensus of the Commission to continue the hearing to allow the applicant an opportunity to redesign the project to reduce the FAR.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Gibson moved to continue the hearing indefinitely. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Faulk and passed by unanimous roll call vote (absent Commissioner Horwich).

Planning Manager Lodan noted that the hearing would be re-advertised once a date has been set.

**11D. PRE07-00012: PETER RAHILL (CHRIS AND MIYUKI ROSSBERG)**

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 241 Via Pasqual.

**Recommendation**

Approval.

Planning Assistant Graham introduced the request and noted supplemental material available at the meeting consisting of a letter from Harrison Burris, 620 Via Monte D'Oro, received after the agenda item was completed.

Peter Rahill, project designer, voiced his agreement with the recommended conditions of approval and submitted photographs of the silhouette taken from 620 Via Monte D'Oro.

Voicing support for the project, Commissioner Browning commended Mr. Rahill for complying with the Hillside Overlay with regard to the project's FAR and for keeping the profile as low as possible.

Commissioner Faulk asked if Mr. Burris knew about tonight's hearing.

Planning Manager Lodan noted that Mr. Burris' letter included the map that was part of the public notice so he was aware of the hearing. He reported that staff visited Mr. Burris' property and did not observe a view impact.

Commissioner Faulk indicated that he would be supporting the project.

Chairperson Busch commented that while Commissioners take note when someone sends a letter, it's best to attend the meeting if at all possible. He stated that he would also support the project.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Browning moved to close the public hearing. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Faulk and passed by unanimous roll call vote.

Commissioner Weideman complimented Mr. Rahill on the design of the project, noting that it preserves the sight lines of upslope neighbors by maintaining a one-story profile.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Browning moved for the approval of PRE07-00012, as conditioned, including all findings of fact set forth by staff. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Uchima and passed by unanimous roll call vote (absent Commissioner Horwich).

Planning Assistant Graham read aloud the number and title of Planning Commission Resolution No. 07-088.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Browning moved for the adoption of Planning Commission Resolution No. 07-088. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Gibson and passed by unanimous roll call vote (absent Commissioner Horwich).

12. **RESOLUTIONS** – None.
13. **PUBLIC WORKSHOP ITEMS** – None.
14. **MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS** – None.
15. **REVIEW OF CITY COUNCIL ACTION ON PLANNING MATTERS** – None.
16. **LIST OF TENTATIVE PLANNING COMMISSION CASES**

Planning Manager Lodan reviewed the agenda for the August 15, 2007 Planning Commission meeting.

17. **ORAL COMMUNICATIONS #2**

17A. Gerri Yarborough, 22719 Fern Avenue, related her understanding that the Commission will be discussing changes to permitted hours of construction at an upcoming meeting and urged that the Commission consider the impact on nearby neighbors when construction workers leave with heavy equipment early in the morning.

Planning Manager Lodan offered to add Ms. Yarborough to the mailing list for the upcoming hearing.

17B. Commissioner Gibson thanked Fire Marshal Kazandjian for teaching her about fire safety in her new home.

**17C.** Commissioner Browning reported that construction is beginning earlier than 7:00 a.m. at the Sunrise project and that dust from vehicles is not being adequately controlled.

Planning Manager Lodan agreed to have staff look into this matter.

**17D.** Commissioner Browning requested an excused absence from the August 15, 2007 Commission meeting.

Hearing no objection, Chairperson Busch so ordered.

**17E.** Commissioner Weideman stated that he was touched by the dignity of the groundbreaking ceremony at the Miyako Hotel and was pleased to have been invited.

**17F.** Chairperson Busch echoed Commissioner Weideman's comments about the Miyako Hotel groundbreaking ceremony.

**17G.** Chairperson Busch thanked Planning Manager Lodan for being so responsive to his questions and asked that staff notify Commissioners if they become aware of concerns about a project in advance of a meeting.

**18. ADJOURNMENT**

At 8:42 p.m., the meeting was adjourned to Wednesday, August 15, 2007 at 7:00 p.m.

Approved as Submitted September 5, 2007 s/ Sue Herbers, City Clerk
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