

**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, September 6, 2006, in City Council Chambers at Torrance City Hall.

2. SALUTE TO THE FLAG

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Commissioner Gibson.

3. ROLL CALL

Present: Commissioners Browning, Gibson, Horwich, Uchima and Vice Chair Busch.

Absent: Chairperson Faulk.

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

MOTION: Commissioner Browning, seconded by Commissioner Gibson, moved to grant Chairperson Faulk an excused absence from this meeting; voice vote reflected unanimous approval.

4. REPORT ON POSTING OF THE AGENDA

Planning Manager Lodan confirmed that the agenda was posted on the Public Notice Board at 3031 Torrance Boulevard on 8/31/06.

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – None

6. REQUESTS FOR POSTPONEMENT – None.

*

Planning Manager Lodan reported that the City Council has decided to reserve 30 minutes at the beginning of Council meetings for oral communications from the public on topics not related to agenda items and questioned whether the Commission would like to follow the same format.

A brief discussion ensued, and it was the consensus of commissioners to delay consideration of this matter until the full Commission is present.

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

- 7. **TIME EXTENSIONS** – None.
- 8. **CONTINUED HEARINGS** – None.

9. **WAIVERS**

9A. **WAV06-00014: PATRICK FUREY**

Planning Commission consideration of a Waiver to allow a reduction in the side yard setback requirement in conjunction with a one-story addition to an existing one-story, single-family residence on property located in the R-1 Zone at 18716 Cranbrook Avenue.

Recommendation

Approval.

Planning Assistant Hurd introduced the request and noted supplemental material available at the meeting consisting of correspondence received subsequent to the completion of the agenda item.

Patrick Furey, 18716 Cranbrook Avenue, applicant, voiced his agreement with the recommended conditions of approval. He explained that the Waiver would allow the extension of the existing wall on the south side of his home for the length of the addition.

Referring to the supplemental material, Commissioner Horwich noted that the resident at 18807 Patronella Avenue has expressed concerns that the proposed addition is a “mother-in-law” unit even though plans clearly show that it is a master bedroom.

Mr. Furey confirmed for the record that the addition does not include cooking facilities.

MOTION: Commissioner Browning moved for the approval of WAV06-00014, 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 Chairperson Faulk).

Planning Assistant Hurd read aloud the number and title of Planning Commission Resolution No. 06-100.

MOTION: Commissioner Browning moved for the adoption of Planning Commission Resolution No. 06-100. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Gibson and passed by unanimous roll call vote (absent Chairperson Faulk).

10. **FORMAL HEARINGS**

10A. **PRE06-00018, WAV06-00015: STEVE AND JENNIFER GANALON**

Planning Commission consideration of a Precise Plan of Development to allow the construction of first and second-story additions to an existing two-story, single-family residence in conjunction with a Waiver to allow a reduced average

rear yard setback on property located within the Hillside Overlay District in the R-1 Zone at 4910 Calle de Arboles.

Recommendation

Approval.

Planning Assistant Hurd introduced the request and noted supplemental material available at the meeting reflecting a correction to the project's Floor Area Ratio (FAR).

Steve Ganalon, 4910 Calle de Arboles, applicant, reported that the project has been revised three times at considerable expense in an attempt to satisfy the neighbors to the south (4914 Calle de Arboles) and that these neighbors are currently objecting to the 12-inch increase in the first-story ridge height. He stated that he now feels that these neighbors will continue to raise objections no matter what he does, therefore, he has decided to bring the matter before the Commission. Submitting photographs to illustrate, he suggested that any existing view that would be blocked by the higher ridgeline would be obliterated within one year's time due to the growth of trees.

In response to Commissioner Browning's inquiry, Jeff Browning, project designer, confirmed that the silhouette of the ridgeline reflects the top cap of the tile roof.

Terry Eastley, 4914 Calle de Arboles, stated that she does not object to the two-story portion of the addition but was opposed to the 12-inch increase in the height of the ridgeline over the garage because it would take away her city-light view. She explained that while she and her husband initially indicated the revisions were acceptable, the silhouette revealed a much greater impact than she had suspected.

Jennifer Ganalon, 4910 Calle de Arboles, applicant, wanted to emphasize that each time the project was revised, the changes were thoroughly discussed with the Eastleys.

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

In response to Commissioner Horwich's inquiry, Examiner Noh advised that he knew of no practical way to reduce the ridge height by 12 inches.

MOTION: Commissioner Browning moved for the approval of PRE06-00018 and WAV06-00015, as conditioned, including all findings of fact set forth by staff. The motion was seconded by Vice Chair Busch and passed by unanimous roll call vote (absent Chairperson Faulk).

Planning Assistant Hurd read aloud the number and title of Planning Commission Resolution Nos. 06-98 and 06-101.

MOTION: Commissioner Gibson moved for the adoption of Planning Commission Resolution No. 06-98 and 06-101. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Browning and passed by unanimous roll call vote (absent Chairperson Faulk).

10B. PRE06-00019: ANTHONY AND MIYUKI SENA

Planning Commission consideration of a Precise Plan of Development to allow the construction of a new two-story, single-family residence on property located within the Hillside Overlay District in the R-1 Zone at 5403 Clearsite Street.

Recommendation

Approval.

Planning Assistant Hurd introduced the request.

Anthony Sena, 5403 Clearsite Street, voiced his agreement with the recommended conditions of approval.

In response to Commissioner Browning's inquiry regarding the Floor Area Ratio of other properties on this block, Planning Manager Lodan reported that City records indicate that 5415 Clearsite has an FAR of .50; 5503 Clearsite has an FAR of .34; and 5508 Clearsite has an FAR of .24.

Commissioner Browning stated that the three homes mentioned above were the largest he saw on this block, none of which come close to the proposed FAR of .60, and asked about the rationale for the statement in the application that there are "several similar properties around us." He also asked about the statement that elderly relatives will live in the home in the future.

Mr. Sena explained that he was referring to homes with similar Mediterranean-style architecture, not size, and reported that his aunt or his mother may live with him at some point in the future.

Commissioner Browning noted that one parking space on the street will be lost due to the driveway for the new two-car garage. Mr. Sena explained that the larger driveway will enable him to park on it without blocking his garage, which will make up for the lost street parking.

Commissioner Browning questioned whether Mr. Sena had reviewed the restrictions on the FAR with his architect before the project was designed.

Mr. Sena reported that he did the original drawings, which came in at 3500 square feet and he subsequently reduced the square footage several times, but can't fit what he needs into a smaller space.

Commissioner Browning voiced his opinion that the project was too large for the area.

Mr. Sena reported that neighbors are more concerned about the project's appearance than its size and they have specifically asked him not to build a box-like structure.

Miyuki Sena, 5403 Clearsite, applicant, noted that there is a trend toward building larger, two-story homes in this neighborhood.

Commissioner Horwich stated that he shared Commissioner Browning's concern about the project's FAR and would be more comfortable it is was closer to .55.

Vice Chair Busch stated that he believed the project's FAR of .60 was too high and he would not support it because he felt harmony with the neighborhood was an important factor.

After learning that the home at 5308 Clearsite is two-story, Planning Manager Lodan doubted that City records were accurate with regard to this property's FAR. He reported that there are two-story homes with FARs in the range of .58 to .60 near the intersection of Clearsite and Susana.

Voicing support for the project, Commissioner Gibson stated that she thought the design minimizes its size and noted that she observed some very large homes in this area.

Commissioner Uchima questioned whether the subject lot's size was consistent with other lots on the block. Planning Manager Lodan advised that City records indicate that all the lots on the block are the same size.

Mr. Sena reported on efforts to minimize the size of the project when viewed from the street, including providing a larger than required front yard setback and having a single-story roof over the garage.

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

Commissioner Horwich stated that inasmuch as there are large homes in the immediate area and none of the surrounding neighbors has objected, he would support the project as proposed.

MOTION: Commissioner Horwich moved for the approval of PRE06-00019, as conditioned, including all findings of fact set forth by staff. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Gibson and passed by a 3-2 roll call vote, with Commissioner Browning and Vice Chair Busch dissenting (absent Chairperson Faulk).

Planning Assistant Hurd read aloud the number and title of Planning Commission Resolution No. 06-102.

MOTION: Commissioner Horwich moved for the adoption of Planning Commission Resolution No. 06-102. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Uchima and passed by unanimous roll call vote (absent Chairperson Faulk).

10C. PRE06-00020, WAV06-00012: NEAL AND MARY ROBBINS (PETER RAHILL)

Planning Commission consideration of a Precise Plan of Development to allow the construction of a new two-story, single-family residence with a semi-subterranean garage in conjunction with a Waiver to allow the structure to exceed the maximum height requirement on property located within the Hillside Overlay District in the R-1 Zone at 22631 Draille Drive.

Recommendation

Approval.

Planning Assistant Hurd introduced the request.

Neal Robbins, 22631 Draille Drive, voiced his agreement with the recommended conditions of approval.

Geronimo Salonga, 22635 Draille Drive, stated that the Robbins have disregarded his concerns because he has already added a second story, however, when he built his second story he did not block anyone's view. He related his understanding that the applicant was falsely claiming that they had a gentleman's agreement not to oppose each other's addition. Submitting photographs to illustrate, he contended that the proposed project would block original and acquired views, intrude on his privacy, restrict airflow, and reduce the value of his property. He called for a larger side yard setback to mitigate the impact on his property.

Commissioner Browning asked about the side yard setbacks on Mr. Robbins and Mr. Salonga's properties. Planning Manager Lodan reported that the setback on the south side of the applicant's property would be 6 feet on the first floor and 10-12 feet on the second floor. Mr. Salonga reported that his side yard setback is 5 feet for both the first and second story.

Ray Cruz, 22719 Draille Drive, voiced support for the proposed project, stating that he believes it is a well-designed home that will increase the value of his property. He reported that he would have opposed Mr. Salonga's remodel had he lived in the neighborhood at the time it was approved because it is not in harmony with other homes on the block.

Scott Brown, 22718 Draille Drive, also voiced support for the project and reported that Mr. and Mrs. Robins made a concerted effort to share the plans and renderings with neighbors.

In response to Commissioner Horwich's inquiry, Mr. Robbins provided clarification regarding the project's height in relation to Mr. Salonga's home and the sill height of south-facing windows.

Vice Chair Busch voiced support for the project, noting that he reviewed the plans and visited the site.

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

MOTION: Commissioner Browning moved for the approval of PRE06-00020 and WAV06-00012, 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 Chairperson Fauk).

Planning Assistant Hurd read aloud the number and title of Planning Commission Resolution Nos. 06-103 and 06-104.

MOTION: Commissioner Browning moved for the adoption of Planning Commission Resolution No. 06-103 and 06-104. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Gibson and passed by unanimous roll call vote (absent Chairperson Faulk).

11. **RESOLUTIONS** – None.

12. **PUBLIC WORKSHOP ITEMS** – None.

13. **MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS** – None.

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

Planning Manager Lodan reported that the City Council will appoint a new Planning Commissioner to replace Gene Drevno at the November 7 Council meeting.

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

Planning Manager Lodan reviewed the agenda for the September 20, 2006 Planning Commission meeting.

16. **ORAL COMMUNICATIONS**

16A. Planning Manager Lodan reported that commissioners have been invited to attend the grand opening of the lifestyle wing of Del Amo Fashion Center on September 14, 2006 at 11:00 a.m.

16B. Planning Manager Lodan advised that Sunrise Senior Living has offered to take commissioners on a tour of one of their facilities and he would place this item on a future agenda for discussion if commissioners were interested in a group tour.

Commissioner Browning, echoed by Vice Chair Busch, indicated that he would only be interested if the facility to be toured was an exact duplicate of the project being proposed.

Commissioner Uchima stated that his concerns about the project were not related to the operation of the facility, therefore, he was not interested in the tour.

Commissioner Horwich stated that he would like to take the tour because he was interested in seeing how well Sunrise's facilities are maintained, and Commissioner Gibson also expressed an interest in visiting one of their facilities.

Deputy City Attorney Whitham advised that if four or more commissioners wished to take the tour, it would have to be noticed as a public meeting, but since only two commissioners were interested, they could take the tour at their convenience. She noted that commissioners should disclose that they have taken a tour when the project is brought before the Commission and report anything they observed that factors into their decision.

16C. Commissioner Browning noted for the record that he is not related to Jeff Browning, the project designer for Item 10A.

16D. Commissioner Browning thanked Planning Manager Lodan and his staff and Deputy City Attorney Whitham for being so responsive to his requests for information.

16E. Commissioner Horwich, echoed by Commissioner Uchima, commended Vice Chair Busch for doing a great job of chairing the meeting.

16F. Commissioner Horwich asked if any cases had been appealed from the last meeting, and Planning Manager Lodan related his understanding that the Popovich case was appealed (VAL06-00001).

16G. Commissioner Horwich reported that Commissioner Faulk's mother was seriously injured in an accident and is currently hospitalized at Little Company of Mary Hospital.

16H. Commissioner Uchima noted that he is not available on the dates scheduled for the new commissioner training class.

Deputy City Attorney Whitham advised that the training is only mandatory for those who are seeking appointment to a commission, although current commissioners may be asked to go through the program in the future.

16I. Commissioner Uchima related his understanding that the City Council has expressed an interest in holding a joint meeting with each commission.

Planning Manager Lodan reported that the first joint meeting will be with the Environmental Quality and Energy Conservation Commission and that a date has not been set for a joint meeting with the Planning Commission.

16J. In response to Vice Chair Busch's inquiry, Planning Manager Lodan reported on the status of the Sunrise assisted living project and the Paseo de la Playa condominium project and discussed the timeline for the recruitment process to fill vacant positions in the Planning Department.

16K. Commissioner Busch stated that he has served on several commissions at both city and county level and he is the most impressed with the staff representatives for this commission.

16L. Commissioner Busch introduced his father and his wife who were present at the meeting and thanked them for coming.

17. ADJOURNMENT

At 8:42 p.m., the meeting was adjourned to Wednesday, September 20, 2006, at 7:00 p.m.

| |
|--|
| Approved as Submitted October 4, 2006 s/ Sue Herbers, City Clerk |
|--|