

INDEX
TORRANCE PLANNING COMMISSION – SEPTEMBER 2, 2015

<u>SUBJECT</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
<u>OPENING CEREMONIES</u>	
1. Call to Order	1
2. Flag Salute	1
3. Roll Call/Motions for Excused Absence	1
4. Posting of the Agenda	1
5. Approval of Minutes	1
6. Requests for Postponement	1
7. <u>ORAL COMMUNICATIONS #1</u>	1
8. <u>TIME EXTENSIONS</u>	2
9. <u>SIGN HEARINGS</u>	2
10. <u>CONTINUED HEARINGS</u>	
10A. PRE13-00013, CUP-00029, DIV13-00007: Larry Pena (Nola Properties)	2
10B. PRE15-00004: Bizhan Khaleeli (Mohamad Chahine)	2-4
11. <u>WAIVERS</u>	4
12. <u>FORMAL HEARINGS</u>	
12A. CUP15-00013: Nathan Battle (Dino Crescentini)	<i>Res. 15-066</i> 4-5
12B. CUP15-00015, DIV15-00007: Riad Itani (Yousef)	<i>Res. 15-067 & -068</i> 5-6
12C. PRE15-00010: Ben Agarwal (Monica Khurana)	6-8
13. <u>RESOLUTIONS</u>	8
14. <u>PUBLIC WORKSHOP ITEMS</u>	8
15. <u>MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS</u>	
15A. Community Development Director Weekly Summary Reports	8
16. <u>CITY COUNCIL ACTION ON PLANNING MATTERS</u>	8
17. <u>LIST OF TENTATIVE PLANNING COMMISSION CASES</u>	9
18. <u>ORAL COMMUNICATIONS #2</u>	9
19. <u>ADJOURNMENT</u>	9

At 8:55 p.m., the meeting was adjourned to Wednesday, September 16, 2015 at 7:00 p.m.

**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, September 2, 2015, 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/ MOTIONS FOR EXCUSED ABSENCE

Present: Commissioners Gibson, Polcari, Skoll, Tsao, and Vice Chair Watson.

Absent: Commissioner Herring and Chairperson D'anjou.

Also Present: Planning Manager Lodan, Planning Associate Martinez,
Plans Examiner Noh, Associate Civil Engineer Symons,
City Attorney Fellows.

MOTION: Commissioner Polcari moved to grant Commissioner Herring and Chairperson D'anjou an excused absence for this meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Tsao and passed by unanimous roll call vote.

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, August 28, 2015.

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION: Councilmember Polcari moved for the approval of the August 5, 2015 Planning Commission minutes as written. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Tsao and passed by unanimous roll call vote, with Commissioner Gibson abstaining (absent Commissioner Herring and Chairperson D'anjou).

6. REQUESTS FOR POSTPONEMENTS

Planning Manager Lodan relayed the applicant's request to continue Agenda Item 10A, PRE13-00013, CUP13-00029, DIV13-00007: Larry Peha (Nola Properties LLC), indefinitely. He noted that the matter will be re-noticed once a new hearing date has been set.

MOTION: Commissioner Skoll moved to continue Agenda Item 10A indefinitely. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Polcari and passed by unanimous roll call vote (absent Commissioner Herring and Chairperson D'anjou).

7. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS #1 – None.

Vice Chair Watson 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**

10A. **PRE13-00013, CUP13-00029, DIV13-00007: LARRY PEHA (NOLA PROPERTIES)**

Planning Commission consideration for approval of a Precise Plan of Development and Conditional Use Permit to allow the construction of an eight-unit apartment complex in two separate buildings, in conjunction with a Division of Lot to merge two lots into one, on properties located within the Hillside Overlay District in the R-3 Zone at 147-151 Paseo de la Concha. This project is categorically exempt from CEQA per Guidelines Section 15332 – In-Fill Development and 15315 – Minor Land Divisions.

Item was continued indefinitely.

10B. **PRE15-00004: BIZHAN KHALEELI (MOHAMAD CHAHINE)**

Planning Commission consideration for approval of a Precise Plan of Development to allow the construction of a new two-story, single-family residence with a rooftop deck on property located within the Hillside Overlay District in the R-1 Zone at 5505 Riviera Way. This project is Categorically Exempt from CEQA per Guidelines Section 15303 – New Construction.

Recommendation: Approval.

Planning Associate Martinez introduced the request and noted supplemental material consisting of correspondence received after the agenda item was completed.

Commissioner Gibson and Commissioner Tsao disclosed that they drove by the property but did not speak with anyone.

Bizhan Khaleeli, project architect, voiced his agreement with the recommended conditions of approval. He reported that he met with neighbors before designing the project and took their comments into account. He briefly described the proposed new residence, noting that the massing was similar to the house to the east, with a one-story section on west side of the structure and a two-story section on the east. He stated that he worked with Planning staff to further minimize the impact on neighbors and has agreed to widen the planter bordering the rooftop deck from four to six feet, which eliminates any privacy impact as illustrated by the drawing included in the supplemental material.

Commissioner Polcari noted that the Commission believes neighbor outreach is very important and commended the architect for doing his due diligence.

Paul Barrere, 5434 Riviera Way, stated that he lives almost directly across the street from the project and the architect did not contact him. Noting that he just purchased his home last December, he expressed concerns that the proposed project would block his ocean view and contended that none of the neighbors support this project.

Commissioner Skoll noted that Mr. Barrere's letter (agenda material) states that the project would negatively impact his property value and asked him to quantify his view loss.

Mr. Barrere responded that while he only has a partial ocean view, he believes his property value could be affected if it is blocked.

Commissioner Tsao related his observation that there is a very large tree in Mr. Barrere's front yard that appears to block any views from his house.

Mr. Barrere explained that his ocean view is from the top of the slope in his backyard, which is above his roofline. He noted that the tree in question is a City tree and he has tried without success to get it trimmed.

Judy Brunetti, co-president of Riviera Homeowners Association, voiced objections to the proposed rooftop deck, stating that she drove by the property and it appeared to her that it would intrude on neighbors' privacy. She stated that she lives next door to a rooftop deck and it is very intrusive, noting that there are no restrictions on what can be placed on decks in terms of lawn furniture, lighting and sound equipment.

Donna Bobb, 23618 Susana Avenue, contended that the proposed rooftop deck would invade the privacy of her master bedroom and her side yard where she and her family spend a lot of time. She also expressed concerns that allowing the rooftop deck would set a precedent and submitted letters from two neighbors in opposition to the project.

Ray Sanders, 23627 Susana Avenue, voiced objections to the project due the impact on his privacy, suggesting that the planters surrounding the rooftop deck could easily be turned into seating.

Mr. Khaleeli explained that the rooftop deck is nested entirely within the structure so it is much less intrusive than other decks in the neighborhood; that the enlarged planters direct the line of sight over properties on Susana, not into them; and that the deck is not spacious enough for large parties.

In response to Commissioner Watson's inquiry, Planning Manager Lodan confirmed that the required planters may not be turned into seating.

Commissioner Polcari stated that contrary to the architect's earlier remarks, there appears to have been a lack of outreach to neighbors and voiced his opinion that Mr. Khaleeli needs to go back to the drawing board and work with neighbors to resolve their concerns.

Mr. Khaleeli reported that he communicated with the two neighbors directly across the street and with neighbors at 5511 and 5437 Riviera Way, as well as the son of an elderly neighbor on Susana after he became aware of their concerns. He stated that he had done his best to mitigate the real impacts of this project and felt that some of neighbors' concerns were not valid. He suggested that the rooftop deck has prompted a "knee jerk" reaction from neighbors, but Planning staff recognizes that the impact has been effectively mitigated and has therefore recommended approval.

Commissioner Skoll indicated that he also favors a continuance and suggested that it would be helpful if the applicant provides photographs of and from the property itself at the next hearing.

MOTION: Commissioner Gibson moved to close the public hearing. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Polcari and passed by unanimous roll call vote (absent Commissioner Herring and Chairperson D'anjou).

MOTION: Commissioner Polcari moved to continue the hearing indefinitely. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Skoll and passed by a 4-1 roll call vote, with Commissioner Gibson dissenting (absent Commissioner Herring and Chairperson D'anjou).

Planning Manager Lodan announced that the hearing will be re-advertised and re-noticed when the matter comes back to the Commission.

11. **WAIVERS** – None.

12. **FORMAL HEARINGS**

12A. **CUP15-00013: NATHAN BATTLE (DINO CRESCENTINI)**

Planning Commission consideration for approval of a Conditional Use Permit to allow the operation of an exotic car hobby facility at an existing warehouse building and to allow a mezzanine addition on property located in the M-2 Zone at 20405 Gramercy Place. This project is Categorically Exempt from CEQA per Guidelines Section 15332 – In Fill Development Projects.

Recommendation: Approval.

Planning Associate Martinez introduced the request.

Nathan Battle, project architect, voiced his agreement with the recommended conditions of approval. He explained that this permit is necessary because the owner of the building, which is currently under construction, decided that he needed more space and would like to add a mezzanine. He noted that the building includes solar panels and many sustainable features.

Responding to questions from the Commission, Mr. Battle reported that the building's owner is Dino Crescentini, a formula one race car driver, and his fleet of vehicles includes rare Ferraris and Alpha Romeos. He clarified that this will not be a repair facility open to the public, but it will provide for the repair and maintenance of the owner's vehicles. He explained that the building is split into two units and the second unit will be a bakery operated by Mr. Crescentini's daughter, who has a contract with Whole Foods for her cookies, and confirmed that it is a wholesale operation and there will be no bakery sales on-site.

In response to Commissioner Gibson's inquiry, Planning Manager Lodan confirmed that it was permissible to have both a bakery and an automotive facility under one roof.

MOTION: Commissioner Polcari moved to close the public hearing. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Tsao and passed by unanimous roll call vote (absent Commissioner Herring and Chairperson D'anjou).

MOTION: Commissioner Polcari moved to approve CUP15-00013, as conditioned including all findings of fact set forth by staff. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Gibson and passed by unanimous roll call vote (absent Commissioner Herring and Chairperson D'anjou).

Planning Associate Martinez read aloud the number and title of Planning Commission Resolution No. 15-066.

MOTION: Commissioner Polcari moved for the adoption of Planning Commission Resolution No. 15-066. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Gibson and passed by unanimous roll call vote (absent Commissioner Herring and Chairperson D'anjou).

12B. CUP15-00015, DIV15-00007: RIAD ITANI (MOHAMMAD YOUSEF)

Planning Commission consideration for approval of a Conditional Use Permit to allow a two-unit residential condominium development, in conjunction with a Division of Lot for condominium purposes on property located in the R-2 Zone at 18545 Amie Avenue. This project is Categorically Exempt from CEQA per Guidelines Section 15303 – New Construction.

Recommendation: Approval.

Planning Associate Martinez introduced the request and noted supplemental material consisting of additional code conditions from the Engineering Division.

Riad Itani, project architect, voiced his agreement with the recommended conditions of approval. He briefly described the proposed two-unit detached condominium development, noting that improvements to the public right-of-way will be made in conjunction with the project, including the construction of sidewalks, gutters and curbs with ramping to meet ADA requirements.

Jim Tarvin, 18513 Bailey Avenue, expressed concerns about traffic and pedestrian safety. He explained that this stretch of 186th Street is heavily traveled due to the nearby park and day care center and because South Bay BMW and Penske Cadillac use the street for test drives. He suggested that a stop sign at the 186th Street/Amie Avenue intersection might be helpful as it is currently uncontrolled. He recommended that there be no driveway on 186th Street because vehicles in the driveway could block pedestrian traffic and force them out into the street.

Vice Chair Watson explained that it was not within the Planning Commission's purview to deal with traffic issues.

Commissioner Skoll stated that while he agrees there are traffic issues that need to be looked at by City staff or another commission, he did not believe this applicant should have to bear the brunt of existing traffic problems and related his belief that this was a good project.

Planning Manager Lodan reported that the project will improve safety for pedestrians because there are currently no sidewalks, and Vice Chair Watson noted that there is designated parking for residents so their vehicles will not be blocking the sidewalk.

Allen Deshler, 18437 Amie Avenue, stated that his only concern about the project was the re-zoning of the property to allow two units.

Planning Manager Lodan explained that the site was not being rezoned as the existing R-2 zoning allows for two units.

Dorinda Lugo, 18538 Regina Avenue, expressed concerns that the proposed project would intrude on her privacy and block light from the living area at the back of home where her mother spends much of her time.

Returning to the podium, Mr. Itani stated that he believes Mr. Tarvin's concerns are well-founded and he supports the addition of a stop sign at this intersection, however traffic issues are beyond his control. He noted that the unit facing 186th Street has a large front setback so vehicles parked in the driveway will not intrude on the sidewalk.

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 Herring and Chairperson D'anjou).

Commissioner Skoll indicated that he was sympathetic to Ms. Lugo's concerns, but saw no solution other than not building at all because even a single-story home would affect her property.

Commissioner Polcari noted that the site is not located in the Hillside Overlay so the same protections to view, light, air and privacy do not apply.

MOTION: Commissioner Skoll moved to approve CUP15-00015 and DIV15-00007, as conditioned including all findings of fact set forth by staff. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Tsao and passed by unanimous roll call vote (absent Commissioner Herring and Chairperson D'anjou).

Planning Associate Martinez read aloud the number and title of Planning Commission Resolution Nos. 15-067 and 15-068.

MOTION: Commissioner Polcari moved for the adoption of Planning Commission Resolution Nos. 15-067 and 15-068. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Tsao and passed by unanimous roll call vote (absent Commissioner Herring and Chairperson D'anjou).

12C. PRE15-00010: BEN AGARWAL (MONICA KHURANA)

Planning Commission consideration for approval of a Precise Plan of Development to allow the construction of a three-unit apartment development on property located within the Hillside Overlay District in the R3-PP Zone at 2602 Pacific Coast Highway. This project is Categorical Exempt from CEQA per Guidelines Section 15303 – New Construction.

Recommendation: Denial without prejudice.

Planning Associate Martinez introduced the request.

Manuel Gorge, project architect, expressed concerns that due to the City's requirement that five feet of property frontage be dedicated for street widening, the project no longer complies with setback requirements and exceeds the maximum FAR (floor area ratio) and requested a 30-day continuance so he could revise the project to bring it back into compliance.

Commissioner Polcari noted that there is considerable opposition to this project from neighbors to the extent that it might be hard for the Commission to approve anything on this site.

Vice Chair Watson doubted that one month would be sufficient to make the necessary changes.

Commissioner Skoll stated that he saw no evidence that the applicant had done any outreach to neighbors and related his belief that minor revisions would not address their concerns.

Mr. Gorge responded that Mr. Agarwal contacted the adjacent neighbor and was not allowed on the property to view the impact.

Commissioner Skoll recommended that the applicant schedule a neighborhood meeting and work with neighbors to alleviate their concerns.

Mr. Gorge conceded that he needed more than a 30-day continuance based on Commissioners' comments, but requested that neighbors be allowed to give their testimony so he would have a better understanding of their concerns.

Ben Agarwal, applicant, reported that when he last discussed the project with Planning staff, there were only two letters from immediate neighbors in opposition to the project. He explained that he contacted the neighbor to the rear (2609 Dalemead Street) so he could personally view the impact but was told he could not come onto the property and he felt that the neighbor next door (2606 Pacific Coast Highway) would be opposed to any two-story building on this site. He stated that he was surprised to learn that the property was within the Hillside Overlay because it is on Pacific Coast Highway across from a shopping center and the entire block is zoned R-3. He noted that one of the letters mentioned parking problems, but the only people parking on this dead-end street would be residents so they must have a lot more people living in these houses than allowed by Code. He expressed concerns that he cannot develop the site to its full potential because of the five-foot dedication being required by the City.

In response to Commissioner Gibson's inquiry, City Attorney Fellows advised that the City is allowed to impose reasonable requirements on construction projects and that it was not unusual for the City to require a five-foot dedication for street widening and when that occurs, the FAR is calculated based the size of the remaining parcel.

Kamya Aguiar, 2609 Dalemead Street, offered her apologies to Mr. Agarwal, explaining that she believed the photograph she submitted along with her letter clearly showed the impact so there was no need for him to visit her property. She expressed concerns that the project, which appears to be only 10 feet away from their shared property line, would loom over her property and intrude on her privacy.

Richard Davenport, 2606 Pacific Coast Highway, clarified that neighbors at the other end of the block park near his house because street parking and driveways are often full. He related his belief that the proposed three-unit project was much too large for this lot even though it is zoned R-3 and indicated that he would not object to a two-unit apartment building. He noted that the project will impact his privacy, as well as neighbors living in the mobile home park on the other side of the proposed development.

Michael Aguiar, 2609 Dalemead Street, stated that this project seems like overkill because all the homes nearby are single-family residences, and questioned how a three-unit, three-story project could be built on a lot that is almost half the size of his lot. He expressed concerns that the balcony of the rear unit will overlook his backyard and Jacuzzi thereby

eliminating any privacy. He explained that his wife declined Mr. Agarwal's request to visit their property because she felt a little threatened.

Commissioner Polcari questioned why lots on Pacific Coast Highway are R-3, while lots to the south are R-1.

Planning Manager Lodan explained that it's not uncommon to have higher density housing along a major corridor to act as a buffer for the lower density housing behind it.

Mr. Agarwal expressed his willingness to listen to neighbors' concerns, but suggested that there are some constraints when designing an R-3 project and requested direction from the Commission.

Vice Chair Watson noted that the project as presently designed exceeds the allowable FAR and does not meet setback requirements.

Mr. Agarwal reported that the project will be revised to comply with all requirements and agreed to work with Planning staff and neighbors to try to resolve their concerns.

MOTION: Commissioner Polcari moved to close the public hearing. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Skoll and passed by unanimous roll call vote (absent Commissioner Herring and Chairperson D'anjou).

Commissioner Skoll indicated that he was strongly opposed the project in its present form and felt that anything other than a single-story project would be out of place.

Commissioner Polcari agreed that the proposed three-story building would look completely out of place in this single-family neighborhood and voiced his opinion that the project needs to be scaled back.

MOTION: Commissioner Polcari moved to continue the hearing on PRE15-00010 indefinitely. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Tsao and passed by unanimous roll call vote (absent Commissioner Herring and Chairperson D'anjou).

Planning Manager Lodan announced that the hearing will be re-advertised and re-noticed when the matter comes back to the Commission.

13. **RESOLUTIONS** – None.

14. **PUBLIC WORKSHOP ITEMS** – None.

15A. **COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR WEEKLY SUMMARY REPORTS**

Planning Manager Lodan noted that the Community Development Director Weekly Summary Reports for August 14 and August 20, 2015 were distributed 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 September 16, 2015 Planning Commission meeting.

18. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS #2

18A. Commissioner Gibson thanked City Attorney Fellows for attending tonight's meeting.

18B. Commissioner Skoll asked about the status of the Costco project. Planning Manager Lodan reported that a grading permit has been issued, but there has been no indication as to when the project will be completed.

18C. Vice Chair Watson asked about activity at the AT&T building in downtown Torrance. Planning Manager Lodan reported that the company is installing a fuel cell generator to help reduce power costs and provide a more sustainable source of energy.

18D. Commissioner Tsao reported that he had heard that residents in West Torrance were being asked to grant an easement.

Planning Manager Lodan responded that Edison is installing new power poles in the area, but he was not aware of any request for easements and recommended that residents contact the Community Development Department if they have concerns about this.

18E. Commissioner Tsao requested that the Commission be provided with statistics about rooftop decks when Item 10B (PRE15-0004) is brought back, including how many decks have been approved in the Hollywood Riviera area.

Commissioner Skoll recalled that the Commission was working on a rooftop deck ordinance at one time, and Planning Manager Lodan advised that staff prepared a draft ordinance, but it was never forwarded to the City Council because Planning Commissioners were unable to reach a consensus.

Commissioner Skoll suggested that the Commission may wish to revisit this issue.

Planning Manager Lodan noted that there have not been a lot of problems associated with rooftop decks lately.

City Attorney Fellows recommended that staff check with the City Council to see if they want the Commission to spend time on this issue before undertaking this task.

19. ADJOURNMENT

At 8:55 p.m., the meeting was adjourned to Wednesday, September 16, 2015 at 7:00 p.m.

###

Approved as submitted October 7, 2015 s/ Rebecca Poirier, City Clerk
--