

October 3, 2005

**MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF
THE TORRANCE REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY**

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Torrance Redevelopment Agency convened in regular session on Tuesday, October 3, 2005, at 9:35 p.m. in the City Council Chambers at Torrance City Hall.

ROLL CALL

Present: Members Brewer, McIntyre, Nowatka, Sutherland, Witkowsky and Chairman Scotto.

Absent: Member Drevno.

Also Present: Agency Director Jackson, Agency Attorney Fellows, Agency Secretary Herbers and other staff representatives.

2. AFFIDAVIT OF POSTING

Agency Secretary Herbers reported that the agenda was posted on the Public Notice Board at 3031 Torrance Boulevard on Thursday, September 28, 2006.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

None.

4. COMMUNICATIONS AND OTHER BUSINESS

4A. MOD06-00005: CONTINENTAL SKYPARK CORPORATION

Recommendation

The Deputy Executive Director recommends that the Redevelopment Agency adopt a Resolution approving a modification of previously approved Conditional Use Permits to allow removal of the perimeter berm on Hawthorne Boulevard and the westerly portion of Skypark Drive, landscaping modifications and reconfiguration of the parking lot on property located in the Skypark Redevelopment Project Area, in the Planned Development District, in the Hawthorne Boulevard Corridor Specific Plan Overlay Zone.

Redevelopment Manager Semaan reported that the Resolution was prepared in accordance with the Agency's direction at the September 12, 2006 meeting.

Agency Attorney Fellows advised that this was not a public hearing and not an opportunity for additional discussion on the merits of the project. He explained that remarks should be confined to the proposed Resolution and whether it accurately reflects the Agency's action at the September 12 meeting, however, conditions of approval could be added if necessary to clarify the action taken.

Alex Rose, Vice President of Development for Continental Skypark Corporation, reported that the Modification approved at the September 12 meeting, which includes the removal of the perimeter berm and reconfiguration of the parking, will allow for the expansion of the parking lot in order to accommodate the increasing number of medical uses in the complex. He explained that 397 trees will be removed in the process, but they will be replaced with over 400 trees and that the trees around the perimeter will be specimen-sized. He noted that the project will result in a 30% reduction in water use, primarily due to a reduction in run-off.

Chairman Scotto recalled that during discussion of this item at the previous hearing, the applicant offered to donate and plant 50 trees at other locations in Torrance, and suggested that this be added as a condition of approval.

Mr. Rose agreed to this condition.

Walt Warriner, 370 Palos Verdes Boulevard, objected to the removal of mature trees, which provide shade and help filter the air. He called for the Agency to protect the interests of residents, not developers.

Frank Rizzardi, 23544 Carlow Road, disputed the idea that additional parking is needed, relating his experience that there are numerous parking spaces available at this complex at all times of day.

Marianne Strehler, 5225 Paseo de las Tortugas, expressed disappointment that the Agency had approved this project and voiced support for staff's original recommendation that the Modification be denied because it does not comply with the General Plan. She commended Member McIntyre for voting "no" on the project.

Vanessa Poster requested that the Agency consider amending the conditions of approval to require: 1) That replacement trees be 72-inch box trees and a species that will provide an equivalent reduction in greenhouse gases as the existing trees; 2) That the applicant plant more than 50 trees at other locations in the City and deposit funds in an escrow account for their maintenance; 3) That permeable paving be installed in the parking lot to reduce run-off; 4) That solar lighting be used in the parking lot; and 5) That bike paths be constructed along with walkways to encourage this mode of transportation.

Agency Attorney Fellows advised that items not discussed at the original hearing, such as permeable paving, solar lighting, and bike paths, may not be included as conditions at this time.

Deputy Executive Director Gibson noted that a lighting plan must be submitted and approved by staff and energy efficient lighting is always encouraged.

Jean Adelsman, 482 Palos Verdes Boulevard, related her experience that there is a great need for additional parking at this complex. She noted that Continental Skypark Corporation has done an excellent job of renovating and maintaining medical complexes at other locations and took issue with those who have characterized the company as a "developer."

Gail Church, Executive Director of Tree Musketeers, an organization that promotes the planting of trees, stated that while she is saddened to lose mature trees, she believes the tree replacement plan will mitigate the impact and urged approval of the project. She noted Continental Skypark's history of supporting her organization's efforts.

Dean Francois, Redondo Beach, voiced his opposition to the project and urged the Agency to delay taking action on this issue and require that alternatives be explored to provide additional parking without eliminating all of the mature trees.

Todd Lowenstein, Redondo Beach, expressed concerns about the potential impact the removal of landscaped areas would have on drainage and the infrastructure.

William Mason, 19797 Redbeam Lane, voiced support for the project. He commented on the difficulty he has had finding parking in this complex while undergoing treatment for cancer; noted the increase in medical facilities in the area surrounding Torrance Memorial Hospital; and voiced his opinion that the benefits of additional parking far outweigh the temporary loss of greenery as the new trees will grow rapidly and the lush landscaping will be restored.

Newt Young, 22637 Hickory Avenue, urged the Agency to delay action so that a constructive solution could be found that does not destroy one of the few remaining beautiful areas in Torrance.

Jane Aull, 3908 Newton Street, stated that she just learned of the proposal to remove these trees and was able to gather 200 signatures in opposition to the project in the past four hours (submitted petition). She expressed concerns about the removal of trees throughout this area, which is contrary to past efforts to beautify Torrance.

Monte McElroy, 108 Via Mesa Grande, noted that she was part of the Redevelopment team that helped design the Skypark Redevelopment Project Area; that it was meant for general office use, not medical facilities; and that the design was very carefully planned with an interior parking structure and a landscaped berm along Hawthorne Boulevard to screen the parking lot from view. She urged the Agency to reconsider the project and to preserve the original design.

Peggy Kramer, Gardena, suggested that Europeans do a better job of preserving their history and expressed concerns about the trend in America to destroy everything for the sake of modernization.

Jack Mitchell, 22509 Redbeam Avenue, voiced objections to the removal of mature trees, stating that residents deserve an opportunity to have their say about this project, which has been ramrodded through the approval process.

Joe Komjathy, 808 Fonthill Avenue, reported that he is a postal employee who drives through this parking lot on a daily basis and there is always plenty of parking available. He urged the Agency to take more time before approving the project, which would greatly detract from the area.

Cheryl Guterrez, 3869 Bluff Street, noted past efforts to preserve eucalyptus trees along Torrance Boulevard at considerable expense and contended that these trees should be given the same consideration. She related her experience that there is no

shortage of parking at this site; recommended that a survey be conducted to ascertain the demand for parking; and suggested that employees could park off-site if additional parking is needed. She stated that this attractive, well designed complex is the exception to the sterile complexes common in the City and urged the Agency not to take this drastic step.

Sandy Jacobs, El Segundo, former mayor of the City of El Segundo, related her experience that Continental Skypark Corporation is a premiere company that never sacrifices detail for profit and urged approval of the project.

Nancy Griffith, 3701 Skypark Drive, resident of Torrance and physician tenant of the subject complex, reported that Continental Skypark has done an exceptional job of maintaining and upgrading the complex and she has been very impressed with their attention to detail. She commented on the growing need for medical facilities and urged those who are opposed to visit the site.

In response to Mayor Scott's inquiry, Jim Border, arborist retained by Continental Skypark, explained that it was unlikely that any of the eucalyptus trees along the perimeter could be saved because it's impossible to avoid damaging the root structure and this will eventually cause decay.

In response to Member Witkowsky's inquiry, Mr. Rose confirmed that the exterior berm will not be removed entirely, and while it will not be as tall or as wide, the screening effect will remain the same due to the composition of the new landscaping. He noted that Continental Skypark is a family-owned company committed to improving its assets as it has for the past 40 years.

Member Brewer related his preference that maintaining the screening effect be made a condition of approval.

A brief discussion ensued regarding amending the conditions of approval, and the Agency entertained the idea of requiring the applicant to deposit funds in an escrow account for the maintenance of the 50 trees to be planted in other areas of the City.

Mr. Rose offered to deposit \$25,000 for this purpose.

Member Nowatka suggested that rather than creating an escrow account for maintenance, it might be easier to allocate the funds for the purchase of additional trees, and Mr. Rose indicated that he was agreeable to that suggestion.

Member Witkowsky expressed her preference that the additional trees be planted by the completion of the project.

Member McIntyre stated that the discussion this evening would have been very helpful had it preceded the Agency's action at the September 12 meeting, and commended Continental Skypark for their willingness to make concessions. She thanked the former mayor of El Segundo for sharing her experience with the company and related her belief that Ms. Poster's suggestions merited consideration in future projects.

Member Brewer commented that he found this to be a very difficult decision and the deciding factor was the great need for more medical facilities in the South Bay along with the site's location adjacent to Torrance Memorial Hospital.

MOTION: Member Brewer moved for the adoption of Resolution No. RA2006-04 with the following added conditions:

Add

No. 27 That the applicant shall donate to and install for the City of Torrance, 150 trees (24-inch or 36-inch box), the species to be determined, to the satisfaction of the Deputy Executive Director and Public Works Director.

No. 28 That the applicant shall install 72-inch box trees on the perimeter of the site, to the satisfaction of the Deputy Executive Director.

No. 29 That the screening effect of the proposed landscaping plan shall be maintained so as to obscure the view of the parking lot, to the satisfaction of the Deputy Executive Director.

The motion was seconded by Member Witkowsky and passed by a 5-1 roll call vote, with Member McIntyre dissenting (absent Member Drevno).

4B. INVESTMENT REPORT FOR AUGUST 2006

Recommendation

The Agency Treasurer and Redevelopment Agency Staff recommend that the Redevelopment Agency accept and file the monthly investment reports for the month of August 2006.

MOTION: Member Sutherland moved to concur with the staff recommendation. The motion was seconded by Member McIntyre and passed by unanimous roll call vote (absent Member Drevno).

5. HEARINGS

None.

6. REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR AND OTHER OFFICERS

None.

7. REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

None.

8. ADDENDUM MATTERS

None.

9. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

None.

10. REQUEST FOR EXECUTIVE SESSION

None.

11. ADJOURNMENT

At 11:17 p.m., the meeting was adjourned to Tuesday, October 10, 2006 at 5:30 p.m. for an executive session, with the regular meeting commencing at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers.