

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION
OF THE CITY OF LA CANADA FLINTRIDGE
HELD ON JANUARY 23, 2018**

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Gunter called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m.

II. ROLL

Also present were Vice Chairman Hazen and Commissioners McConnell and Oh. Commissioner Jain was absent.

III. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Flag Salute was recited.

Mr. Gunter explained the process for conducting the meeting and public hearings. He explained the process for speakers and said that he does not limit the length of time one can speak. The Commission's job is to make the findings and administer the Zoning Ordinance. The Commission will deliberate and ask the staff questions. There will be 1 of 3 possible outcomes that will result: Approval, Denial, or Continuance to a later date. Denials very rarely occur. The location of property is not within the Commission's pervue.

IV. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

The Public Hearing was opened and one speaker expressed concern over the traffic signal at Foothill Blvd. and Angeles Crest Hwy. as it can be too faint and difficult to see.

The Public Hearing was closed.

V. REORDERING OF THE AGENDA

The Commission took item VIII.C., first, followed by VIII.D., VIII.B., and VIII.A.

VI. CONSENT CALENDAR

There were no items.

VII. CONTINUED PUBLIC HEARINGS

There were none.

VIII. PUBLIC HEARINGS

A. Zone Change 18-01; an Amendment of Chapter 11.33 of Title 11 of the City of La Cañada Flintridge Municipal Code; City of La Cañada Flintridge:

Deputy Director Koleda gave a presentation in accordance with the staff report. She requested that the Planning Commission recommend approval of the ordinance to the City Council. She confirmed for the Commission that tandem and uncovered parking spaces are permitted for these types of dwelling units.

The Public Hearing was opened.

Speaker and resident, David Haxton, 4543 Belita Lane, recommended that the Commission eliminate the 70-foot lot width requirement as well as the 20-foot requirement for a flag lot. Deputy Director Koleda indicated that staff feel that the 70 feet requirement could be eliminated but not the 20 feet requirement for a flag lot for public safety purposes.

The Public Hearing was closed.

M/S/C – Gunter/McConnell to recommend that the City Council approve the ordinance and eliminate the current 70-foot frontage width requirement. Approved 4-0.

B. Conditional Use Permit 511 / Variance 15-01 / Tree Removal Permit 17-33; Oakmont Senior Living; 600 Foothill Blvd.:

Deputy Director Koleda gave a presentation in accordance with the staff report. She showed a PowerPoint.

Commissioner Oh asked staff about who would own the project site. The Deputy Director confirmed that the first Church of Christ Scientist currently owned the site but the land use entitlement being requested would run with the land and not the property owner.

Mr. Oh asked why story poles are not required. The Deputy Director stated that they are only required for single family developments. She explained that recent, similar projects, such as Flintridge Preparatory School, only installed story pole at the request of the Planning Commission between the first and second hearings.

Vice Chairman Hazen asked if the ADA spaces within proposed underground parking were include in the total count of spaces. The Deputy Director confirmed they were. A total of 43 parking spaces will be provided. The church will have the ability to utilize both the surface and underground parking.

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Mr. Hazen asked how many employees will be on site. The Deputy Director stated that the largest shift would consist of 22 employees and that 36 total employees are anticipated with the senior living facility.

Commissioner McConnell asked staff about the definition for the structure in a rear setback. The Deputy Director said that it was determined that the shade pavilion and the trash enclosure both were defined as a “structure” and therefore subject to the Variance request. She explained that there have been design changes compared to what was submitted for the project 3 years ago. For example, the porte-cochère had be removed to meet Fire Department access requirements. Also, the applicant pulled back the 3rd story on the southern portions of the building and raised the ceiling height of the third-floor dining room as recommended by the Design Commission.

Mr. McConnell asked if the proposed parking is sufficient for the zone. The Deputy Director stated that parking had been assessed for each use, both the senior living facility and the church, but that shared parking was appropriate given that the uses had different peak periods. It was acknowledged that there may be times during the holidays when all spaces are utilized. She said that she believed the requested parking is reasonable for the site. The project applicant had offered to provide valet service during the holidays.

Mr. Gunter clarified that what is before the Commission is the requested Variances for height and setbacks, the uses (senior living facility and church) were permitted in the zone with the CUP. He also explained that the 25-foot setback from Foothill Blvd. and the addition of a chimney on Woodleigh Lane were added at the request of the Design Commission a few years ago. Mr. Gunter confirmed with the Deputy Director that the CUP review will require the same level of scrutiny as schools and institutional uses. He also clarified with the Deputy Director that Variance requests are usually made because of the topography.

Mr. Oh questioned whether the definition of “subdivision” or any division for the purpose of sale or finance, such as a lease, falls under the Subdivision Map Act.

The Public Hearing was opened.

Applicant, Ken Kidd, with Oakmont Senior Living spoke and thanked the Deputy Director for her presentation. He explained that Oakmont Senior Living facilities are family owned and operated. They currently operate 23 facilities and their product are high end. They seek out properties where the zoning allows them. He referenced the City’s General Plan as it relates to senior living facilities. He said that the Oakmont will be purchasing the property and entering into a 99-year land lease with the church. He believed that the parking proposed is adequate. Mr. Kidd explained that the building articulation and siding break up the mass of the building.

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Speaker, Margie Viece, with Oakmont Senior Living spoke further about their facilities. She explained that the seniors that reside there are not sick. They are typically very social and community-oriented. Their families generally live nearby and the staff that are employed at the facilities tend to live locally. She said that there are facilities that operate in communities that are similar to La Cañada Flintridge such as Escondido and Pacific Beach.

Speaker, Graham Bothwell, with First Church of Christ, Scientist indicated that there is good collaboration between the church and Oakmont. The new church will be smaller than what currently exists. He said that he believed that the senior living facility is needed in the City and that the proposed project is one of better designs, aesthetically, in the City.

The following speakers were in opposition to the proposed project:

- Patti Smith, Woodleigh Lane resident (She requested that story poles be placed)
- Scott Van Owen, Woodleigh Lane resident (Is opposed to the project size; proposed parking is deficient, but supports the project use)
- Kevin Earhart, 4277 Woodleigh Lane (opposed the Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) in favor of an EIR; has density concerns, but likes the aesthetics of the design)
- Bob Antonoplis, 4251 Woodleigh Lane (concerned about congestion on Woodleigh Lane as a result of the project and parking concerns)
- Michael Gross, 4431 Woodleigh Lane (believed project is in conflict with the Downtown Village Specific Plan)
- Elsa Gross, 4431 Woodleigh Lane (concerned about the height of the project; traffic on Woodleigh Lane and left turns; has issues with the aesthetics of the design)
- Resident, 4429 Woodleigh Lane (Concerned about traffic and walkability to neighboring businesses)
- Resident, 1112 Roanoke Place (Concerned about the project scale and traffic)
- Dorothy Melendy (Concerned about bulb outs and trees that will be near the construction site; parking on site; safety of the residents in an emergency)

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- Steve Del Guercio, 4301 Commonwealth (believed the project is not in conformance with the General Plan or floor area ratio requirements)
- Lisa Walker, 3394 Woodleigh Lane (concerned about parking impacts to the community)
- Lauren Oaks, 4708 Gould Avenue
- Don VanderVort, 4716 Palm Drive (believed project scope is too large)
- Julia Gaskill, 1136 Flintridge Avenue (story poles should be required; traffic signal should be required.)
- Dr. Jan Yuo, 500 Georgian Road

The following speakers were in favor of the proposed project:

- Lisa Brownfield, 169 Starlight Crest (believed a facility of this type is needed in the community; supports the project height; any resultant traffic will be mitigated; the project will serve the public good; the bulb outs and crosswalks will be compliant; requested that the Commission require that new trees to be installed are mature)
- Zach Jennings, 226 Kirst Street (senior living options are needed in the City)
- Resident, 5131 Gould Avenue (senior living options are needed in the City)
- Pat Anderson, CEO Chamber of Commerce (project will provide jobs and local businesses will benefit)
- Realtor Carrie Grochow, 4820 Gould Avenue (also asked that the Commission consider all public comments)

Chairman Gunter called for a brief break at 10:17 p.m.

The meeting resumed at 10:26 p.m.

Applicant Ken Kidd said that he wants to be a good neighbor and work with the community.

Speaker Margie Viece, said that not all staff would be full-time. She used the facility in Santa Clarita as an example where there are 4 facility residents that are active drivers out of the facility resident occupancy of 90 people. She also indicated that Oakmont would like to offer La Cañada Flintridge residents such options as pet parks and raised garden beds. The facility is required to have a disaster plan. She

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explained that after the recent fire in Santa Clarita, all residents were evacuated safely.

The Public Hearing was closed.

Mr. Gunter said that the City's objective is to retain the small town feel of the community. As a result, large-scale projects like these are not proposed very often. Mr. Gunter suggested that this project should be continued for further review.

Mr. Hazen raised issues concerning installation of a traffic light. He said he would like to review the environmental document. Parking should be studied as well as deliveries and van parking. He indicated that he would like to see a more detailed employee count. The project's building height should be reviewed. He felt that the height design was thoughtful. He agreed that the project should be continued.

Mr. Oh said that there is a need for a facility like this in the City. He questioned whether a violation of the Subdivision Map Act is present with the proposed lease to the church. He said he could not approve the project if that was the case. He believed that story poles should be required. He believed that the Oak tree on the west side of the project should be saved. He suggested that the public study the traffic and parking and that the project should be continued so that the public has time to obtain their findings.

Mr. McConnell had the following questions/suggestions for the project:

- Regarding the CEQA process and how State Law requires a project to be taken in and reviewed; he also has some traffic study questions.
- Clarification on landscape plan and number of trees to be removed, relocated as well as the size of the of the trees.
- A 24-hour construction management point-person should be available by phone for questions.
- Proposed bulb out – he requested an explanation regarding the draft condition from Public Works/Traffic Engineer regarding the necessity and location of the bulb-out.
- The DVSP is out of date. The limitations that the plans impose do not recognize the reality of the current physical environment. Changes need to be made to the DVSP to allow the Planning Commission greater flexibility on project proposals and to understand project sites and the community to de-emphasize the need for so many Variances. He said he is concerned about the front setback and saving the Oak tree.
- The proposed height should be studied. He recommended that the height and the rear of the design needed to be reduced.
- How will the comments submitted regarding the MND be addressed?
- He believed that the parking is sufficient and accurate.

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- He would like the City to study the density of the project and whether it complies with the General Plan.
- He recommended continuing the item to a date uncertain.

M/S/C – Gunter/Oh to continue to a date uncertain. Approved 4-0.

C. Second-Floor Review 15-07 (Amendment); Anderson/Gans; 4321 Bel Air Drive:

Assistant Planner Harris gave a presentation in accordance with the staff report. She showed a PowerPoint.

Mr. Hazen asked where the furnace was in the past. Mr. McConnell said that it was in the basement.

The Public Hearing was opened.

Speaker, Matt Anderson, representing the owner of the property said he did not obtain permits prior to construction of the change to the project.

Mr. McConnell asked if he had built in the City before. Mr. Anderson said he had and that he has learned from his mistake not to construct without permits.

The Public Hearing was closed.

Mr. McConnell asked Ms. Harris if the next-door neighbor was notified of the hearing. Ms. Harris said, "yes."

Mr. McConnell said he had concerns about the project making one feel confined. He did not feel the project would result in any privacy impacts, however. He said he could make the findings.

Mr. Hazen said he was disappointed that the project was built without permits. He could make the findings on what he felt was an improvement for the property.

Mr. Oh said he believed it looked better in terms of symmetry and did not pose a privacy issue. He said he could make the findings.

Mr. Gunter said he agreed with the Commissioners and could make the findings.

M/S/C – Hazen/McConnell to approve the project. Approved 4-0.

D. Lot Line Adjustment 17-01 / Variance 17-04; PDS Studio Inc. / Alta Canyon LLC; 1035 Fairview Drive (APN 5812-026-002) & APNs 5812-026-003, 5812-026-004 (vacant lots):

Mr. Oh recused himself as he knows the applicant very well. He left the meeting at 6:28 p.m.

Planner Gjolme gave a presentation in accordance with the staff report. He showed a PowerPoint presentation. He recommended positive findings.

Mr. Gunter asked if 42 feet is a correct lot line figure. Mr. Gjolme said that was correct. Mr. McConnell asked if any other options were considered. Mr. Gjolme indicated that there was an issue with a potential cul de sac since a minimum of 6 lots would be required and cannot be provided. Mr. McConnell asked if a Variance could be asked for in this instance. Deputy Director Koleda said that the street layout is part of the General Plan policy and therefore, a Variance cannot be applied for.

Mr. McConnell asked if the floor area would be based on the square footage minus the flag strip in the vacant lot. Mr. Gjolme said that was correct.

The Public Hearing was opened.

Speaker, applicant, Philip Chen said that he tried many different options over the span of a year with regards to the lots.

Speaker, City resident, said they own property nearby and asked about the height possible on the north lot. Mr. Gjolme said the proposed height could be up to 32 feet on the north lot.

Speaker, neighbor, Patricia Kim, said she had concerns about massing and privacy and asked for clarification why a matter like this would go before the Planning Commission before the houses were designed and sited.

Mr. Gunter explained that proposed 2-story residential projects go before the Planning Commission for review under the City's code and single stories are not subject to such review by the Commission.

Speaker, Joe Kim, said he was concerned about the Variance that is being requested.

Mr. Gunter clarified that the Variance request is for the width of the two parcels fronting the street. The existing lot is a flag lot. The City does not allow for the creation of new flag lots.

Speaker, Frank Aparicio, 4701 Las Colinas, agrees with Mr. and Mrs. Kim's concerns.

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Speaker, Holly Munguia, 4721 Las Colinas expressed concerns about the height of a potential structure and privacy.

Mr. Chen was called back up to speak. He explained that the subject request is to attempt to reconfigure 3 legal lots in the best way that will benefit all abutting lots.

The Public Hearing was closed.

Mr. Gunter asked staff if the Variance was required if the driveway were reshaped and if the lots were all the same.

Director Stanley said it is a legal non-conforming lot and would still require a Variance.

Mr. Hazen asked if the driveway was moved, would that create a workable scenario? Mr. Gunter said that would create a new flag lot which is not allowed.

Mr. McConnell asked about calculating side setbacks on Parcels 2 and 3. Mr. Gjolme said that an averaging technique is used.

Assistant City Attorney Guerra said it would be premature at this time to require specific setbacks for future projects.

Mr. McConnell said that the same Floor Area could be built regardless of whether the Lot Line Adjustment request is made or not. He said he could make the findings for the Variance.

Mr. Hazen said he could make all the findings and believed that what is proposed is cleaner.

Mr. Gunter agreed with the Commissioners and felt that the net-affect would be better. He said he could make the findings.

M/S/C – Gunter/Hazen to approve the item. Approved 3-0-1. Mr. Oh recused himself.

Mr. Oh rejoined the meeting at 7:15 p.m.

IX. REPORT OF DIRECTOR'S REVIEWS

There were none.

X. OTHER BUSINESS

There was none.

XI. COMMENTS FROM THE COMMISSIONERS

There were none.

XII. COMMENTS FROM THE DIRECTOR

Director Stanley reminded the Commissioners to make a reservation for the Planning Commissioners academy in April if they were interested in attending.

XIII. ADJOURNMENT

M/S/C – Gunter/McConnell to adjourn the meeting at 11:25 p.m. Approved 4-0.

Secretary to the Planning Commission