

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION  
OF THE CITY OF LA CAÑADA FLINTRIDGE  
HELD ON MARCH 27, 2018**

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Gunter called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m.

**II. ROLL**

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

**III. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

The Flag Salute was recited.

**IV. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC**

There were none.

**V. REORDERING OF THE AGENDA**

The agenda was not reordered.

**VI. CONSENT CALENDAR**

There were no items.

**VII. CONTINUED PUBLIC HEARINGS**

**A. Variance 17-08; EIS Studio/Nam; 4201 Mesa Vista Drive:**

Planner Gjolme gave a presentation in accordance with the staff report. He explained that a condition requiring review and approval by the Los Angeles County Fire Department was included. He recommended positive findings for the Variance.

Chairman Gunter asked if two of the existing fences are permitted. Planner Gjolme stated that he was not aware if the fences were permitted.

Chairman Gunter asked if the findings support the fact that the fence would not be located in an area that would causes problems and whether the topography, size, or location was unusual. Planner Gjolme said that the property is located in a very unique location and that the size and span of the auto court is also unusual.

Chairman Gunter asked if the front yard would meet the 50% landscape requirement. Planner Gjolme said he did not measure for that.

Planner Gjolme clarified the driveway gate location for the Commission.

Commissioner Jain asked if any proposals have been submitted for a fence or gate at the property to the west of the subject property. Planner Gjolme confirmed no application had been submitted.

Commissioner Jain asked staff if a potted plant would be prohibited in a front setback. Planner Gjolme confirmed it could, provided the pot was less than 42" in height. They discussed the fact that if a neighbor submits a request for a fence, that they would be instructed to develop it outside of any easements.

Vice Chairman Hazen and Planner Gjolme discussed the fact that the turnaround area is approximately 24 feet.

Chairman Gunter referenced a letter that had been received and was provided with the staff report at the previous public hearing. He requested, in the future, that such letters also be included in each successive staff report.

The public hearing was opened.

Speaker, applicant, Mr. Nam, said he was available for questions.

Chairman Gunter asked Mr. Nam why he could not make the gate code compliant. Mr. Nam explained that it would not be aesthetically pleasing and would impact usage of the play area. Chairman Gunter asked how long the property had been without a gate in this area. Mr. Nam said that he moved into the house three years ago and it was not there at that time. He explained that there can be problems when a car pulls into the driveway.

Commissioner Jain asked if the fence were pulled in five - ten feet back from the street would that present a problem? Mr. Nam confirmed it would.

Speaker, project architect, Eva Sobeski, explained that the area between the carport and the gate would open up and obstruct the existing yard area if it were pulled back, as Commissioner Jain suggested be done.

Planner Gjolme said that the fence could be aligned with the second pilaster behind the pedestrian walkway which would still require a Variance.

Commissioner Jain expressed that he believed the request is more for convenience than a real hardship. Ms. Sobeski felt that she could provide proof of why the request is justified.

The Public Hearing was closed.

Commissioner Jain suggested that if the gate was proposed to be at least ten feet from the pavement line, then that could work in the applicant's favor, as an adequate turning radius would be provided. Though it may not be most convenient, he did not believe that a reduced setback should be given, as a hardship has not been demonstrated.

Commissioner Hazen said that he visited the site. He believed that the site is unique and that the applicant's request is reasonable as a car could be difficult to maneuver around on the site. He felt that allowing it from a security perspective would be good. He said he could make the findings.

Chairman Gunter said that he appreciated that the pavement area on the site is narrow, but does not feel that the findings can be made to support the Variance. He asked Commissioner Jain if he felt the same way based on his previous comments. Commissioner Jain asked if the applicant was willing to move the gate back to 10 feet.

The Public Hearing was opened.

Chairman Gunter described what Commissioner Jain was proposing. The applicant and Ms. Sobeski discussed the matter further and acknowledged that the whole fence line would move under Commissioner Jain's suggested proposal.

Commissioner Gjolme said that he would like further clarification from Commissioner Jain about his suggestion and whether he was referring to the gate and the fence, both, moving back. Commissioner Jain said that he believed that the fence could be approved as proposed, but that the gate should be moved back to ten feet.

Chairman Gunter suggested that the item be continued and that it be discussed further at the next meeting. He said that no staff report would be required.

Director Stanley said staff would need to provide background from the current meeting in a report.

The applicant said they would like to continue their item to a date certain.

The Public Hearing was closed.

M/S/C - Gunter/Jain- to continue the item to a date certain of April 10, 2018.  
Approved 3-0.

## VIII. PUBLIC HEARINGS

### A. **Second-Floor Review 17-33; Hagobian & Associates/McLinn; 5187 Princess Anne Road:**

Assistant Planner Yesayan gave a presentation in accordance with the staff report. He explained that a 39-foot rear yard setback is required, contrary to the setback referenced in the staff report. He showed a PowerPoint. Staff recommend positive findings.

Vice Chairman Hazen asked if the asphalt area contained an easement and had been repaired. Assistant Planner Yesayan said it is a flat channel easement and that he is not sure if repairs have been made. He explained that there are no conditions requiring such repairs.

The Public Hearing was opened.

The applicant did not wish to speak.

Speaker, Eric Forssen, property owner to the west of the subject property, said he sent a letter to the project planner about the proposed project. He said he understood the applicant's request and has spoken with the applicant, project architect and his neighbors about the proposed project. He asked that there be a condition added for more landscape screening. He was concerned about construction dust. He asked that a block wall be required to be built to buffer the properties during construction. Chairman Gunter informed the speaker that it is not in the purview of the Planning Department or Planning Commission to require a buffer during construction.

A Speaker conveyed their concern about potential problems that could result from construction truck traffic and deliveries.

Chairman Gunter said that all construction parking must be on the project site.

Speaker, Jenny Wong, neighbor to the west of the subject property, said that she is concerned about reflection of light and deflection of sound off the proposed project. Chairman Gunter said that Public works will require mitigating measures to be put into place prior to construction in order to contend with these issues.

The Public Hearing was closed.

Vice Chairman Hazen said he visited the property and believed the design was thoughtful and the architecture was good. He said he could make all of the findings and appreciated the applicant following the rules.

Commissioner Jain said he appreciated the design being kept within the design guidelines. He said he could make all the findings.

Chairman Gunter said he appreciated the attractiveness of the design and to hear from the neighbors and talk to them. He believed the design was thorough and thoughtful.

M/S/C - Gunter/Hazen to approve the project as proposed. Approved 3-0.

**B. Variance 17-06; Mizuki/Lin; 375 Santa Inez Way:**

Assistant Planner Harris gave a presentation in accordance with the staff report as well as a PowerPoint presentation. She recommended that approval be given for the Variance for a reduced setback, but did not advocate for approval of the Variance for the deficient garage size.

Assistant Planner Harris explained that the garage was original to the house and that the proposed encroachment into the east side-yard setback was decided by staff to be processed as a Variance, rather than a setback modification.

Director Stanley said that the previous owner enclosed the garage.

Chairman Gunter asked if the garage is original to the house. Director Stanley confirmed it was.

The Commission and Director Stanley discussed the matter of retaining a door, wall and removing a closet or not, based on what the Building code requires. Director Stanley believed that both would need to be demolished. Commissioner Jain agreed. He said that the garage and fireplace are original and that the applicant is attempting to justify rebuilding of the garage which he does not support. The Commissioners talked about various ways the location could be reconfigured.

The Public Hearing was opened.

Speaker, Steven Mizuki, project architect, recommended possible portions of the home that could be removed.

Speaker and owner, Annelise Lin, said that her intention is to apply for a Variance for a hardship. She would like the construction to be at a minimum so that her family and children will not be exposed to dust during construction. She indicated that she would like to approach her request and construction with the least amount of impact possible. She went on to explain that when she purchased the home, she was not aware of any violations on the site. It turned out that the title was clouded.

Mr. Mizuki said that the applicant would be all right with changing the bedroom to an office, as the project as it stands is not in compliance.

The Public Hearing was closed.

Chairman Gunter said that he understood that the seller misled the applicant when the house was purchased. The Commission cannot make the findings, however, for a substandard garage. He did not believe that a request that is so far off from being code compliant could be approved by the Commission. He said that he did not believe that staff's recommendation for the project was unreasonable. He recommended continuing the item to a date certain for a setback modification for the addition. A condition of the setback modification would have to show that the bedroom was removed.

Director Stanley suggested that the applicant bring back a Setback Modification application request and that the Commission deny the Variance request, based on their comments. Chairman Gunter mentioned the need to readvertise.

Vice Chairman Hazen asked if the Variance would be denied for the garage request and a Setback Modification application be reviewed by the Commission to bring the garage and modified room into compliance with code. This was confirmed by staff.

Assistant City Attorney Guerra recommended that the matter be continued to a date uncertain. The applicant may opt to withdraw the Variance request and then apply for the Setback Modification.

Vice Chairman Hazen agreed with his fellow Commissioners and indicated that he could not make the findings for the Variance, but if the applicant returns with a Setback Modification application, it could then be considered.

Commissioner Jain agreed with staff that if the presentation was much clearer, the Commissioner could find it easier to review and potentially make the findings to approve the request for a Setback Modification.

Chairman Gunter reopened the Public Hearing. He informed Ms. Lin that the room should not be maintained as a bedroom. Routinely the Commission approve Setback Modifications, but do not usually grant Variances. He asked the applicant if they would agree to continuing the item to a date uncertain to review a Setback Modification request and that the Variance be withdrawn.

Ms. Lin asked if there would be an additional fee for the Setback Modification. Commissioner Jain indicated that he did not believe there would be a charge for it.

M/S/C – Gunter/Jain to continue to a date uncertain. Approved 3-0.

## **IX. REPORT OF DIRECTOR'S REVIEWS**

Were reported.

A. **Director's Misc. Review 18-07 (Telecommunications);** Pac Bell; 2320 Foothill Blvd.: allowed upgrades and replacement of rooftop antennae and related equipment.

**X. OTHER BUSINESS**

There was none.

**XI. COMMENTS FROM THE COMMISSIONERS**

Commissioner Jain informed the Commission that he would be attending the Planning Commissioners institute in a week.

Chairman Gunter asked if the Target project was appealed. Staff confirmed no appeal had been filed.

The results of the Normanton Drive appeal that recently went before the City Council was discussed with the Commission.

**XII. COMMENTS FROM THE DIRECTOR**

Director Stanley said that the Mayor requests that Chairman Gunter stay on as Planning Commission Chair for the YMCA project duration and then the Commission could go through their regular process of choosing a Chairman and Vice Chairman.

Director Stanley announced that he would be retiring on April 30<sup>th</sup>. April 24<sup>th</sup> will be his last Planning Commission meeting. Chairman Gunter thanked Director Stanley for his service.

Director Stanley said at the beginning of April, there will be an Open house at the new City Hall building celebrating the change of the Mayor and Mayor Pro-tem.

**XIII. ADJOURNMENT**

M/S/C – Gunter/Jain to adjourn the meeting at 7:42 p.m. Approved 3-0.

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Secretary to the Planning Commission