

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION
OF THE CITY OF LA CAÑADA FLINTRIDGE
HELD ON JULY 24, 2018**

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Gunter called the meeting to order at 6:04 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.

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. Hillside Development Permit 17-25/Second Floor Review 17-17/Setback Modification 17-05; Vincent Tsoi-SLSD/Vision Real Estate Development Inc.; vacant lot located on north side of La Forest Drive (AIN 5864-002-019):

Planner Gjolme gave a presentation in accordance with the staff report.

Commissioner McConnell asked if the retaining walls are compliant. Planner Gjolme confirmed they were compliant. He explained that the findings address the tiered retaining walls in the resolution.

Commissioner McConnell asked for clarification of the area left of the stairs. Planner Gjolme confirmed there would be a retaining wall in conjunction with limited grading.

Vice Chairman Hazen asked for clarification of the east yard setbacks. Planner Gjolme said that the retaining wall would exceed 6 feet in height in that area which is also reflected in the findings.

The Public Hearing was opened.

Speaker Thomas Lim said he was available for questions.

Chairman McConnell asked for clarification of the height of the retaining wall near the stairs.

Mr. Lim said it will be 42 inches high.

The Public Hearing was closed.

Commissioner Oh was pleased with the redesign and said he could make the findings.

Vice Chairman Hazen said the architect and owner did a good job of redesigning the project and he could make all the findings.

Commissioner McConnell agreed that the redesign is better, and he could make all the findings.

Chairman Gunter agreed with the Commissioners and said that he was happy that all is in compliance. He could make all the findings.

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

B. Hillside Development Permit 18-03/Second-Floor Review 18-03/Setback Modification 18-01; Nazaryan Design Associates/Chatoyan; 370 Berkshire Avenue:

Assistant Planner Yesayan gave a presentation in accordance with the staff report.

Commissioner Oh asked if there was the potential for a future sewer system. Director Koleda said it would need to go before the neighborhood for a vote. There is no plan to go out for a vote anytime soon.

Assistant Planner Yesayan said that an arborist had been consulted about the tree and its preservation.

The Public Hearing was opened.

Speaker, applicant, Harut Nazaryan, said he was working to get around constraints on the site such as the tree and septic issues. He talked about the hillside, regrading, and potential drainage issues. He explained that another potential option could be to push the garage so that it would encroach into the berm area. He said that the second floor weight could be transferred down. He said he had an arborist report. The tree could be harmed if steps are not taken to protect it. He showed a powerpoint presentation and indicated that most windows are clerestory, particularly the restrooms and closets. He said he was careful not to invade the privacy of the neighbors. He showed the encroachment plane.

The Public Hearing was closed.

Chairman Gunter visited the site and spoke with homeowners. He said that the applicant had documented the difficulties of the site. He felt the neighbors were agreeable to the proposal. He believed the entrance did not appear as two stories. He said he was appreciative of the thoughtful response to the redesign.

Vice Chairman Hazen said he met with the architect and applicant. He agreed with Chairman Gunter's comments. He appreciated the lot and the difficulties it presented. He said he could make all of the findings.

Commissioner McConnell said he could make all the findings for all requests but the second story setback modification request. He felt it did not present as a two-story entry. Perhaps this type of entitlement could be studied further in the future.

Commissioner Oh said he visited the site and met with the architect and agreed that there are difficulties with the site and therefore, there are reasonable grounds for the entitlements requested. He said he could make all the findings.

M/S/C – Gunter/Hazen to approve the project, excluding the over height entry. Approved 3-1; McConnell voted no. McConnell/Gunter to approve the over height entry. Approved 3-1; Oh voted no.

VIII. PUBLIC HEARINGS

A. Conditional Use Permit 538/Second-Floor Review 17-34/Setback Modification 17-15/ Variance 18-03/Director's Miscellaneous Review 17-54 (Height); Johnson/Kim/Rhee; 632 Berkshire Avenue:

Assistant Planner Yesayan gave a presentation in accordance with the staff report. He spoke about the potential historic nature of the project. He explained that staff is currently in the process of drafting an historic ordinance. He said that the property is not listed on any local registry though he did believe it could be historically significant. The City Council would need to adopt a resolution to find it historically significant. Director Koleda said she would recommend to the City Council that it be designated as historic.

Chairman Gunter talked about removal of the entire roof and questioned whether the exterior would be looked upon as being historically significant. Director Koleda explained that historic reports have been requested for the property. She believed that the amendments to the house would be historically consistent and explained that she relies on the expertise of historians.

Assistant Planner Yesayan explained that per the Historic Evaluation Report, if the project is not visible from the street then the improvements would not compromise the historic significance.

The Public Hearing was opened.

Speaker, Joe Catelano explained that when a property is believed to be potentially historic, he feels it is typically treated as such.

Commissioner McConnell asked Mr. Catelano if the height of the addition could impact the historic significance of the property. Mr. Catelano believed that it could.

Chairman Gunter asked about changing the finish from the front façade. He did comment that the front façade cannot be seen from the street. Mr. Catelano said he was not aware of finish changes.

Director Koleda explained that conditions of approval numbers 13 and 14 have been written in order to ensure that the historic significance is retained.

Speaker, Jay Johnson, project architect, explained that the roof in the front of the home will not be rebuilt. Significant changes to the windows are proposed, however. The intent is to blend them in with the front of the house. He believed that doing so would enhance the historic attributes of the house. He said that the steep pitched gables would be historically consistent. The plan is for the home to appear seamless like an addition was never built.

Chairman Gunter and Mr. Johnson talked about maintaining the eyebrow when the addition is completed.

Mr. Johnson discussed the separation of nearby homes by 32 feet. He expressed that he believed that the new Director Koleda is interpreting the code in a manner that is inconsistent with the past director. He did not question that she is good at what she does. Mr. Johnson said he had never seen a one story setback modification request denied before.

Commissioner McConnell asked if the addition has to be as tall as it is currently proposed. Mr. Johnson explained that it does. He said that the ceiling and floor heights are the same so that they will tie in with the architectural portion of the garage.

Speaker Catelano explained that it is important to retain the character defining features on the front façade.

The Public Hearing was closed.

Commissioner Oh believed that the front of the house appeared to be historical significant. He said he could make the findings for all entitlements based on the present information he has. He could not make the finding for the setback modification request, however.

Vice Chairman Hazen said he visited the site. He felt that a good job of preserving the historic nature of the home is being done. He felt that more assessment of the cabana area should be done. He said he could make the findings for all entitlements.

Chairman Gunter said he did not feel that he had enough information to make a decision on the entitlements. He said that he could not understand why the addition needs to be higher than required. He felt that a second story addition would create a self-fulfilling obstacle. He also believed that a cabana request is not a guaranteed right. He said he could not make all the findings. A lot of dimensions are missing. He felt that there is not enough reason for why the requests should be approved at this point.

Commissioner McConnell said he could make all findings with regards to the height but could not for the cabana or setback modification. He felt that a big portion of the front façade and the lack of the eyebrow are integral to the original

intent of the architect. He believed the design would be against the historical consultant's recommendation. He could not find a reason to approve the setback modification or the second floor review requests. He felt that the historical significance of the front façade would be altered.

The Public Hearing was reopened.

Mr. Johnson said he preferred a denial as opposed to a continuance. He said he would appeal a denial.

Assistant City Attorney Guerra said that the Commission does not need to make a decision if they did not wish to. He recommended that based on incomplete information that the item be continued.

M/S/C Gunter/McConnell to continue the item to a date certain of September 11, 2018. Approved 4-0.

B. Hillside Development Permit 18-28; De Angelis Designs, Inc./Tobias; 458 Noren Street:

Planner Gjolme gave a presentation in accordance with the staff report.

Commissioner McConnell said he would like to review the code section that deals with the reduced 20-foot front setback for Hillside projects. Director Koleda read the section for him.

Planner Gjolme clarified for Commissioner McConnell that the height of the deck at the back is approximately 6 feet tall.

Planner Gjolme clarified for Commissioner Oh that there is no restriction for hedge height from the neighbor's property.

The Public Hearing was opened.

Speaker. Dave DeAngelis said he believed the request was reasonable and compatible. The height was brought down and views maintained. The hip roof was designed to be compatible with the neighborhood.

Mr. DeAngelis confirmed for Commissioner McConnell that the flat roof would comprise approximately 18% of the overall roof.

Speaker, Keith Tobias, applicant, said he met with each neighbor in the cul de sac to talk about ways to soften the design.

Speaker, Mohammed Maboubi, supports the project.

Speaker, Linda Pierce, 461 Noren, said she was happy that a second story is not proposed. She is still concerned about the height of the proposal and feels it will block her view of the mountains. Mr. Tobias said he was surprised about the concerns but wants to be sensitive to them. He offered to reduce the roof pitch.

Mr. Tobias confirmed for Vice Chairman Hazen that it would be possible to reduce the pitch and height by one foot.

Vice Chairman Hazen complemented the applicant and said that the design is thoughtful and thus, he could make all the findings.

Commissioner Oh said that the design is tasteful and appreciated the applicant's willingness to work with the neighbors. He said he could make all of the findings.

Commissioner McConnell said he visited the site. He appreciated how the applicant reached out the neighborhood. He felt that a one-foot reduction in the roof pitch would help. He said he could not make the findings for the setback reduction as he believed that the reduced setback would make the residence appear larger.

Chairman Gunter said he visited the site. He said he could make all findings for the entitlement request.

M/S/C – Hazen/Oh to approve with added condition amending roof pitch. Approved 4-0, with McConnell voting no on the 20-foot front setback.

C. **Zone Change 18-02;** City of La Cañada Flintridge; Citywide: a request to Amend Chapter 11.11 and Chapter 11.40 of the La Cañada Flintridge Zoning Code to permit tree houses meeting specified development standards within the R-1 zone and expanding the definition of "damage" or "damaging" a protected tree.

Director Koleda gave a presentation in accordance with the staff report.

Chairman Gunter said he wanted to be sure that all changes are reflected in the appropriate sections.

Director Koleda confirmed for Vice Chairman Hazen height restrictions for the tree houses. She said that all will comply with the Building Code.

Commissioner McConnell asked if other cities have ordinances. Director Koleda said she was not aware of other cities that have them. She explained that if privacy were to be invaded by a tree house that Code Enforcement would get involved. She also clarified that a modification for height would be given for tree houses.

The Public Hearing was opened. There were no speakers.

The Public Hearing was closed.

M/S/C – Gunter/Oh to recommend approval to the City Council. Approved 4-0.

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

Was reviewed.

A. **Director's Miscellaneous Review 18-29 (Setback); Habashi; 1403 Verdugo Blvd.:**

Planner Gjolme explained that retention of existing encroachments to the east and the front would take place. He confirmed for Commissioner McConnell that it would be compliant.

B. Director's Miscellaneous Review 17-48 (Setback); Jung; 721 Craig Avenue:

Approval of a request to allow a 78-square foot single-story addition to an existing residence that would encroach into the required west side setback but would maintain the current setback provided by the existing residence and would not encroach further at any point.

X. OTHER BUSINESS

There was none.

XI. COMMENTS FROM THE COMMISSIONERS

There were none.

XII. COMMENTS FROM THE DIRECTOR

Director Koleda that the City Council took action on the rezoning of 1327 Foothill Boulevard. She also explained that the Economic Development/Traffic and parking study was approved under the new budget by the City Council as well as an historic resources study.

Director Koleda reminded the Commission that August 14th would be dark, but that there will be an August 28th meeting at which the YMCA will be heard.

XIII. ADJOURNMENT M/S/C – Gunter/Hazen to adjourn the meeting at 9:12 p.m. Approved 4-0.