

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION
OF THE CITY OF LA CANADA FLINTRIDGE
HELD ON AUGUST 28, 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

A. Minutes - March 27, 2018 meeting –
The minutes will be brought back next meeting as there was no quorum to vote.

VII. CONTINUED PUBLIC HEARINGS

There were none. Chairman Gunter explained the process to those in attendance.

VIII. PUBLIC HEARINGS

A. **Conditional Use Permit (CUP) 529/Variance (VAR) 17-03/Tree Removal Permit (TR) 17-30/Lot Line Adjustment (LLA) 18-02; YMCA of the Foothills (CUP 529, VAR 17-03, TR 17-30, LLA 18-02)/Wai Ka Tsang (LLA 18-02); 1930 Foothill Boulevard (CUP 529, VAR 17-03, TR 17-30, LLA 18-02) and 2023 Rancho Cañada Place (LLA 18-02):**

Director Koleda gave a presentation in accordance with the staff report. She confirmed for Chairman Gunter that there are separate Resolutions for Variance, Lot Line Adjustment, Conditional Use Permit, and Tree Removal requests. She explained that the conditions of approval were tailored to the type of entitlement.

Director Koleda explained to Chairman Gunter that seven letters were received by email from the public and are on the dais for the Commissioners to review.

City Engineer Han clarified for Commissioner McConnell that the nearby City project, the Link Project, will go through a separate environmental review. Because federal funding will be provided to the City for the project through Caltrans, the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) must be complied with in addition to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Chairman Gunter further clarified the difference between CEQA and NEPA.

Commissioner McConnell indicated that he was confused by the accessibility requirements. Director Koleda explained that the City is required to integrate the required ADA improvements for the YMCA with those and update as part of the Link project.

City Engineer Han clarified that it was anticipated that the City Link project would be completed after the YMCA's project. He said that it would be safer to fully build out the Palm street intersection, but that it will eventually tie in to the Link project.

Commissioner McConnell asked about the number of members that the YMCA has. Director Koleda said that the applicant will clarify the enrollment numbers.

Commissioner McConnell asked if any complaints regarding parking had been received. Director Koleda confirmed that none had been received.

Director Koleda confirmed for Commissioner McConnell that construction staging, and delivery areas would be in place on the site as well as parking for the contractor and staff, YMCA patrons, and YMCA employees.

Director Koleda confirmed for Commissioner McConnell that the design and location of the light standards would be reviewed at a future date by the Design Commission. She confirmed that the light fixture height was not included in the overall height of the structure.

Commissioner McConnell and Director Koleda discussed the parking and traffic demands and that they will be addressed in the construction management plan. She also clarified for Commissioner McConnell that a Traffic Management Plan would also be completed.

Director Koleda clarified for Commissioner McConnell that there would likely be temporary closures of one lane on Foothill Boulevard during construction of driveway improvements. Residents will be notified prior to such closures.

Director Koleda explained to Commissioner McConnell that the traffic engineer would clarify any potential impact of net daily trips traveled during the project construction as a result of the improvements.

Director Koleda clarified for Vice Chairman Hazen that any change or approval for parking configuration would need to be approved by the Parking Commission. She indicated that queuing would be addressed by the traffic engineer and traffic study. She also explained how the City's Link project would be coordinated with the YMCA project, as well as how traffic would circulate through the subject site.

The Commission and Director Koleda discussed access and ownership by the residents who live on Rancho La Canada. She has been told by the residents that they have access via a prescriptive easement. She recommended that a clear and legally defined access easement to the boulevard be provided.

Commissioner Oh asked if clean-up of the access to the boulevard would be required to be documented. Director Koleda said that the City cannot force this, however it had been requested that the YMCA record access easements across the west driveway in favor of

the residents. She also informed Commissioner Oh that the traffic engineer could speak to the sharing of the driveway during construction.

City Engineer Han explained that the City is not the underlying fee owner of the unused portion of Michigan Avenue. A vacation process would have to be undergone. Director Koleda explained that portion of Foothill Boulevard (Michigan Avenue) would be vacated. The easement was dedicated a long time ago. It might require going to court to determine who the underlying property owner is (quiet title action).

The Public Hearing was opened.

Speaker, Tyler Wright, YMCA President and CEO, explained how the YMCA came to be at the current location. There has been a growing need over the last six years to increase services to the community. Approving the project would allow the YMCA to continue to serve the community today and into the future. Access is an issue. Proposed improvements would include improving access to and within the facility itself. Services for adults and children will be improved. Mr. Wright explained that he met with neighbors on four occasions about the proposed project.

Speaker, Steve Finney with Charles Walton Architects wished to address the safety of the members, staff and access as well as traffic issues. He planned to address parking issues on Foothill Boulevard and crossing of Foothill Blvd. The idea is to provide better access. The site is unusual. It drops fifteen feet, which is significant. He believed that providing elevator access from the lower parking level to the facility level will help to ease congestion. He is also attempting to look at future needs of the facility.

He explained that the second phase of the project would include a basement, which will be utilized for storage and maintenance for the site. The slope of the site has presented some design challenges. He tried to design the parking structure centrally on the site and in a way that would prevent lights from cars shining across the street to the residents. He also described the project scope for the Commission which would include more storage area, an elevator, stairs, restrooms and a new wellness center.

Commissioner Oh asked how the western driveway was being handled. Speaker, Warren Lukesh, Chair of the YMCA building committee explained that he believed that Foothill Boulevard, once called Michigan Avenue, was dedicated to the City as an easement for right of way. Mr. Lukesh said that there is no plan to change the location of the driveway. Commissioner Oh asked why an easement was not granted to the residents for legal access to Foothill Boulevard. Mr. Lukesh said that he could not assure that all owners would agree to that. Commissioner Oh said that Prescriptive Easement could be involved.

Speaker, Jon Pride, project landscape architect, recommended softening the impact of the building by installing a type of green screening such as Evergreen vines. This could minimize the vertical aspects of the parking structure. Clinging vines would help to eliminate light spill from the structure and from the cars driving through it. Mr. Pride explained that 48 mature trees are planned to be removed, most of them pines. They will be replaced with 53 trees.

Mr. Finney showed photos of the proposed trees that would help to layer and soften the buildings. Commissioner McConnell asked about the height of the landscape screening. Mr. Finney said that it would be staggered. He also explained for Commissioner McConnell that the grading and filling would eliminate hauling of earth during construction. He said he is trying to be considerate of the City's upcoming adjacent Link project.

Commissioner McConnell asked if a mock up design was completed that would include compliant setbacks. Mr. Finney clarified that he reviewed many schemes for placement of the parking structure farther back on the site. He explained that all potential designs resulted in roadblocks that would impact the inner drive aisle in the parking structure.

Mr. Wright explained to Commissioner McConnell that the YMCA is considering relocating the Christmas Tree sales to an off-site location. Mr. Wright said that the YMCA has a very large membership which also serve the communities of La Crescenta and Sun Valley. He clarified for Commissioner McConnell that capital improvements are planned for the nearby Crescenta Valley and Tujunga locations. He said that all of the facilities are impacted. He is expecting over a 70% growth in membership in La Canada Flintridge over the next 5 years especially given new programs that are coming.

Speaker, Project Traffic Engineer, Claire Look-Jaeger with LLG, explained that she studied the on-street parking spaces that would be available after the Link project is completed. She said that the level of trip generation that could result from the proposed YMCA project was not great enough to warrant a full trip generation study. She believed that an additional 30 vehicle trips would be generated. Ms. Look-Jaeger said that the City required a detailed site circulation review where driveway counts were shown. She explained that west and eastbound left-hand turns would also be protected. She said that volumes should be lower at the west driveway, in her professional judgement. During construction of the YMCA project when 20 – 25 contractor employees could be present at any one time on the project site, YMCA staff may want to consider temporarily moving some programs to the La Crescenta or Tujunga locations.

Ms. Look-Jaeger said that east and west driveways would be accessible during the YMCA construction. She explained that there will be split traffic signal phasing. The final signal plan design still needs to be finalized. She clarified for Commissioner McConnell that it was anticipated that no more than two vehicles would be in the queue at the exits. Further study of the queuing is needed.

Director of Public Works, Patrick DeChellis clarified for Commissioner McConnell that if the traffic signal improvement at Palm Drive is not completed because Proposition C Transportation funding is not secured, then a traffic study will be conducted bearing that issue in mind.

Commissioner McConnell asked Ms. Look-Jaeger if the west driveway would be kept clear from residents of the nearby properties. She explained that there could be a "Stop" sign or a "Keep Clear" sign installed.

Ms. Look-Jaeger explained to Commissioner McConnell that her review included the assumption of a typical day and did not included allowances for special events.

The following speakers had concerns with the proposed project:

Speaker, Vin Song, a resident of over 25 years of Rancho Canada Road said he understood the need for more parking. He was concerned about an increase in traffic in the area over the last few years, has seen more traffic collisions, and believed the proposed parking structure would impact congestion. He was concerned about cars leaving the adjacent streets in the event of an emergency such as during a fire.

Speaker, Diana St. James, a resident near Rancho Canada Road asked that the hearing be continued as she did not receive information about this project. She also expressed concern about congestion primarily at the west entrance.

Speaker, Mark Hunter, resident of Rancho Canada Road said he did not receive notice from the YMCA of the proposed project. He is concerned about traffic impacts as well as the fact that he had not been given opportunities to provide feedback. He was concerned about intensified traffic issues as a result of the proposed project as well as emergency vehicle access. He believed this should have been addressed in the draft Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND). He suggested reconfiguring the east driveway. He requested that the Commission continue the item.

Speaker Dr. Salem had concerns about the lower parking lot. He believed that a condition of sale of his property by the past property owner guaranteed that there would be a height restriction of not more than 32 feet tall which the parking structure would be in conflict with. He asked that a continuance be granted.

Speaker, Marissa Solis, a resident of Rancho Canada Road expressed concern about safety. She felt that the YMCA had not properly reached out to the residents about the proposed project. She felt that the proposed parking structure should be moved to a different location on the site to where it would create less congestion. She said that the YMCA had not approached her about the easement. She requested that the matter be continued.

Speaker, John Havel, resident of 1946 Foothill Boulevard, said he was concerned about safety at the exit and entrance to the property.

Speaker, Anita Brenner, said that she felt that the proposed project will receive approval as staff supports it. She was concerned about shared access. She showed a video clip that was taken from her Ring camera during the 2016 Fire on nearby Park Street. She explained that there is a fire hydrant near the area. She suggested that an easement by necessity exists and not a fee title easement or else other properties would be landlocked. She requested a continuance so that the YMCA representatives could meet with the neighbors to discuss the project or for the Commission to deny the request that evening. She believed that removing the west entrance to the parking structure and installing a signal at Palm could remedy the problem. She felt that the title is silent on the easement.

Speaker, Ridich Jain, resident of 1950 Foothill Boulevard, said he was concerned about traffic safety and felt that the parking should be shifted to the center of the site.

Speaker, John Roberts, resident of 4510 Alcorn Drive, indicated that YMCA employees often park on his street at lunch time. He felt that the YMCA should be innovative about looking at the project. He expressed concern over the noise that would be generated

from the project as well as the trees that are proposed to be removed. He felt that removing so many trees would have a devastating effect on the appearance of the property.

Speaker, resident of 4511 Alcorn, felt that there are ways to minimize the light and noise effects from the proposed parking structure. He questioned what would be the effects of the Link project not being completed.

Speaker, Edward Solis, resident of Rancho Canada Road, was concerned about the safety of the people entering and exiting the facility.

Speaker, Barbara Baffa, resident of 1896 Foothill Boulevard, expressed concern over circulation. She felt that an EIR should be required to address possible project impacts. She did feel that the YMCA is an asset to the community.

Speaker, Mr. Baffa resident of Foothill Boulevard, expressed concern over increased traffic. He is a big supporter of the YMCA. He requested a continuance.

Speaker, Andy Chung resides on the eastern side of the proposed project. He is supportive of the YMCA. He felt said that a full impact study should be done. He felt that removing 48 trees would impact the community. He was concerned that the light standards to be installed could result in issues. He requested that a continuance or additional conditions be imposed.

Speaker, Rod Schneider, also resides to the east of the proposed project. He was concerned about the traffic impact on his driveway. He requested a continuance.

The following speakers spoke in favor of the project:

Speaker, Son Choi, Vice President of the YMCA's Youth and Government said the facility has strengthened his values.

Speaker, Levon S. said he supports the project. He believed the parking structure would help. He felt that with the YMCA's desire to grow that a parking structure is necessary.

Speaker, Tony Swartz, said he supports the project. He felt the YMCA is valuable to the community.

Speaker Brian Daniels, YMCA volunteer and board member, is in favor of the proposed project. He felt that time should be given to deal with the parking issue so that the whole community can benefit.

Speaker Glen Cunningham a project manager at JPL supports the project because he felt it would improve the safety of access to the YMCA which would be good for the whole community.

Speaker, Laura Olhasso supports the YMCA and the proposed project. She believed it is necessary for the safety of the community. She said there are not enough handicapped parking spaces. She requested that the project be approved.

Speaker, Kay Linden, supports the project.

Speaker, Steve Del Guercio, resident of 4301 Commonwealth Avenue, supports the project because it will make the facility safer and more accessible. He suggested that the parking structure be screened. He mentioned that the Saint Francis High School parking structure is aesthetically pleasing, and the proposed YMCA structure could be designed to be as well.

Mr. Finney said that he studied relocating the driveways. There are Fire codes and logistics issues with two levels. He also studied lighting as well. He felt that the west driveway access is over the subject property. He said that traffic controls should be put in place. He believed that signalization at the east side driveway would be properly addressed. He said that Fire equipment could be brought on either side of the structure in the event of a fire. There will be handicapped accessible parking stalls as well as over 20 electric charging stations.

Commissioner McConnell asked if the parking structure would lead up to the upper level deck that currently exists at the top of the hill. Mr. Finney confirmed that it would.

The Public Hearing was closed.

Chairman Gunter was clear that no one should be concerned about the YMCA and their objectives. The materials provided for review of the proposed project were very thorough. The environmental documents were very thorough. He said he could make all findings for the Lot Line Adjustment (LLA) request. He supported approval of 9 feet by 18 feet parking stalls and could approve the Variance request for the stalls as well as the Variance for height. He said he could support the findings for the Tree Removal permit. As to the 5-foot setback request and CUP request, he would like more time to review the documents on the project. He recommended approval of the Lot Line Adjustment and continuance of the other entitlement requests.

Vice Chairman Hazen thanked the community for their input. He said he wished to review possible impacts of the project that could possibly affect the residents on the eastern side of the proposed project. He said he would like to study circulation on the site. He would like to see the YMCA representatives meet with the residents on the western side of the project to discuss the project. He said he could make the findings for the Lot Line Adjustment, but not the rest of the requested entitlements at this time and felt the project should be continued.

Commissioner McConnell recommended reviewing the Palm Drive intersection upgrade pertaining to the proposed signal and access. Director Koleda said that staff is aware of how close this is to the easterly located neighbors to the project. She explained that the intersection and signal improvements are vital for the Link project. The final design of the Link project has not been completed.

Commissioner McConnell suggested that the following conditions be added:

- 1) Lighting as it relates to the upper deck.
- 2) Construction/access parking plan to be discussed with the neighbors. He would like for the YMCA to communicate thoroughly with the residents.
- 3) Discuss different design solutions to the west access.
- 4) Provide construction manager contact information to the nearby residents.

- 5) A quarterly meeting should be hosted by the YMCA with the neighboring residents.
- 6) The approved CUP should come back to the Commission for review at a certain period of time so that if necessary, adjustments can be made.

Commissioner Oh is familiar with the facility as he is a member there. He is aware of the parking problem. He felt that going forward with project would help to alleviate parking issues. He requested that the neighbors be worked with and that lighting should be addressed in the conditions. He is in favor of the project, particularly the LLA, but agrees that the remaining items should be continued.

M/S/C – Gunter/Hazen to approve the LLA and MND – approved 3-1. McConnell voted no.

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

IX. REPORT OF DIRECTOR'S REVIEWS –

Were reported.

A. Hillside Development Permit 18-37 (Dir.); Cosgrove; 5555 Stardust Road: Approval of a request to allow first-floor additions to an existing single-story residence on a hillside lot totaling 530 square feet.

B. Director's Misc. Review 18-21 (Setback); Khachatourians; 5755 Summit Crest Drive: Approval of a request to allow a 90-square foot-first floor addition to encroach 3'-7" into the required 9'-2" south side yard setback while maintaining the existing building line and current 5'-7" south side setback.

C. Hillside Development Permit 18-36 (Dir)/Director's Misc. Review 18-08 (Setback); Ibsen; 4105 Hampstead Road: Approval of a request to allow additions totaling 310 square feet to an existing residence on a hillside lot with encroachments into the required front and north side yard setbacks while maintaining the existing building line and current setbacks.

D. Hillside Development Permit 18-32 (Dir)/Director's Misc. Review 18-27 (Terracing); Abrari; 1096 Inverness Drive: Approval of a request to allow modification of an existing front-yard porch and construction of a new trellis along the east side of the property, and for proposed terraced planter-walls at the front of the existing residence.

X. OTHER BUSINESS

There was none.

XI. COMMENTS FROM THE COMMISSIONERS

There were none.

XII. COMMENTS FROM THE DIRECTOR

There were none.

XIII. ADJOURNMENT

M/S/C - Gunter/Hazen to adjourn the meeting at 10:20 p.m. Approved 4-0.

Secretary to the Planning Commission