

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE DESIGN COMMISSION
OF THE CITY OF LA CANADA FLINTRIDGE
HELD ON JANUARY 5, 2012**

- I. CALL TO ORDER:** Chairman Moldafsky called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m.
- II. ROLL:** Present were Commissioners Hoopes, Roberts, Tobias, Vavoulis, Director of Community Development Stanley, Consulting architect Cantrell, Planners Gjolme and Clarke and Assistant Planner Parinas.
- III. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** The Flag Salute was recited.
- IV. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC:** There were no comments.
- V. CONSENT CALENDAR:**
- A. Minutes - 11/17/2011 Meeting.** Continued to the 1/19/2012 meeting. Unanimous.
- VI. CONTINUED PUBLIC HEARINGS:**
- A. Design Review 11-29;** Unocal 76; 1001 Foothill Blvd.; new signs and landscaping for service station.

Consulting Architect Cantrell gave an overview of the request, which involved landscaping and signage for Unocal, which received final approval for the store and canopy in June of 2011.

Commissioner Tobias asked about the size of the pilasters – they may be too small and may need to be increased to 24”.

Commissioner Hoopes said that they may not be square but need to be bigger.

Commissioner Tobias had not seen rectangular pilasters before.

Commissioner Roberts asked more about the fountain and need for more details.

Consulting Architect Cantrell said that the applicant is trying to stay within size limits but he understands the point about proportions.

Commissioner Tobias said that he did not like LED lights on Foothill as they would be loud.

Commissioner Hoopes said that prices for gas are changing constantly.

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A& S Engineering representative, Sorin Enache, said that there is some room to make pilasters bigger but the fountain is a constraint. It's not a matter of cost but of space. He wanted separation between the fountain and sign.

Commissioner Hoopes suggested moving the sign.

Sorin Enache said they will be dedicating some land to the City. He will try to move the sign and can provide a sample of how it will look. It could be a challenge for visibility.

Commissioner Tobias asked what the pilaster really added and if a stone cap would work instead. It could lower the width of whole sign to 9'. It's quite busy as proposed.

Sorin Enache agreed with options as proposed.

Commissioner Tobias asked how they can get away from LED lights.

Commissioner Tobias asked about conventional lettering on the other side. He asked about other LED lights from five years ago that were removed.

Director Stanley was not sure if LED was even allowed by code.

Commissioner Hoopes suggested that non-exposed LED lighting could help.

Director Stanley said that the code does not allow reader boards or moving signs so it might not apply to the static LED lights.

Luis Herrera, (Project Contractor), said that they are proposing a fountain with the owners. They submitted a site plan before with a rendering attached - not printed. Stone will match building and the sign. It will have bubbling water going 3' into the air.

Commissioner Hoopes asked about the need to turn off the fountains in high winds.

Mr. Herrera said that it has automatic turnoffs in winds and when it is dry.

Chairman Moldafsky asked what the thought process was to have a fountain.

Mr. Herrera said that he has been building gas stations for his clients for 12 years with this detail. Upgraded materials are used to enhance the experience. There are 6 vertical jets. Photograph provided is larger than what is proposed.

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Commissioner Tobias spoke about Mayor's Discovery Park and 3" depth for water and how it was a safety concern.

Mr. Herrera said that the depth can be what the Commission wants.

Commissioner Tobias noted that if a child fell in it could be a safety issue at 18". He spoke about concave style that has no water in it. The standing water is a safety issue.

Director Stanley said that depth below 18" is not a Building Code issue. Owner has to accept the liability issues.

Chairman Moldafsky asked if other elements could be used that do not include water.

Director Stanley said that the Town Center is putting in water features.

Brian Whelan (Platinum) said that other cities such as Agoura Hills looked at it as softening street corners. The depth could be changed.

Commissioner Hoopes said that you can line the containment area with stainless steel mesh and eliminate standing water and stop splashing. Even without wind there can be splashing. It also cuts down on maintenance.

Commissioner Tobias spoke about how non-working fountains are not attractive and how can we be guaranteed that it would be maintained.

Consulting Architect Cantrell spoke about City enforcement.

Director Stanley said that the park fountain was shut off due to water issues.

Chairman Moldafsky said that it was a nice effort.

Mr. Whelan said that they will maintain the fountain.

Commissioner Tobias spoke about fencing around swimming pools at homes. There could be an outcry from the community due to safety issues. They need detailed drawings showing how it will look.

The Commission asked for catalogue cuts.

Chairman Moldafsky said that the proposal needs to go to the Public Safety Commission.

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Director Stanley said that the traffic engineer had reviewed it.

Commissioner Vavoulis asked for the City Attorney to look at it.

Director Stanley said that if the fountain is less than 18" deep, it's not an issue. The proposed sign may be more in the way than the fountain.

Commissioner Hoopes said that it would not be an issue if it was screened.

Commissioner Roberts said that he was not fond of the fountain design at all and felt that it was not in character of such an important corner in La Cañada Flintridge character. He stated that fountains in relationship to municipal building as retail developments are a positive thing, but that the visual impact of the proposed fountain would be underappreciated. He acknowledged that fountain design like the one proposed are more mainstream with corporate developments in desert communities often found in Arizona. He felt a more appropriate effort would be to install a large multi-trunk Crape Myrtle that would not block signage and would be indicative of a small town community.

Commissioner Tobias said it would take time. A tree would get a lot more goodwill from the community and cost less. La Cañada Flintridge is a Tree City".

Mr. Whelan said that they can provide a better visual of the proposal and that they could provide options.

Chairman Moldafsky said that Agoura is a new city and La Cañada Flintridge is more interested in trees.

Commissioner Tobias said that the applicant may want to regroup and come back to the Commission with new plans as this corner is the gateway to the city.

Mr. Whelan said that they want to improve the corner from what it has looked like for a while.

Commissioner Roberts looked for something special and noted that they need to think outside the box. Don't use Arizona as a guide but a rural motif instead. It looks too cookie-cutter - needs more unique design aspects. Original building proposal had no stone on it. The Commission had to ask for it.

Mr. Whelan spoke about the monument sign and providing landscaping in the base area.

Chairman Moldafsky asked to go through each item individually.

Item A. Canopy Wrap

Commissioner Hoopes asked about the yellow color.

Consulting Architect Cantrell said that the color was approved before by the Commission, and that it is a buff color as presented previously in samples.

Mr. Whelan said that it was not yellow but a muted color.

Commissioner Tobias asked about the materials used. He also asked about lighting for the sign. It looked like they were accentuating the lights. He did not see need for more lighting.

Commissioner Roberts spoke about other buildings with yellow but this building had lots of ambient lighting from street lights.

Commissioner Tobias did not see the need for so much lighting.

Consulting Architect Cantrell said that light strip would just be an accent that would provide balance.

Commissioner Roberts agreed with Commissioner Tobias.

Chairman Moldafsky said that lighting was a problem.

B. Logos

Commissioner Hoopes wanted the applicants to understand requirements and asked Consulting Architect Cantrell to clarify.

Consulting Architect Cantrell stated that per City code exposed plastic faces are prohibited, so that typically internally illuminated signs use perforated metal over the plastic.

C. Monument sign

Commission Tobias said that it needed to be continued.

Commissioner Roberts agreed and asked if red/orange coloration for the field behind the gas prices is used in all stations.

Bent Hanson said it was used in all stations including Santa Barbara.

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Commissioner Tobias spoke about the red ATM put in by the Bank of America which was changed to grey by the Commission.

Mr. Hanson said that he could assure the Commission that the red is used everywhere.

Commissioner Roberts said that the red takes away from the 76 logo.

Commissioner Roberts spoke about the 7/11 signs and that they don't need corporate colors.

Commissioner Hoopes said that he did not think that the change in color would be a deal killer.

Mr. Hanson said that the corporate office would not change the sign. He used the example of Montecito and how they got City Council approval for the corporate sign colors.

Commissioner Hoopes said that he can get any color at Home Depot.

Commissioner Tobias spoke about the Bank of America ATM and the public outcry.

Consulting Architect Cantrell spoke about the intent of the sign ordinance to maximize effectiveness of signage, and agreed that the red field detracts from the 76 logo.

Chairman Moldafsky asked what direction they can give to the applicant.

Commissioner Roberts said that they have to bring back the proposal.

Commissioner Tobias asked about the LED on the sign. The consensus of the Commission was opposition to it. They need color options similar to 7/11. They need a cohesive package of what the corner will look like.

Commissioner Roberts was not sure if the pilasters softened the corner.

Chairman Moldafsky was looking to provide direction to the applicant as it's such an important corner of the city. Less is better than more but contrast needed.

Director Stanley said it was the gateway to the city and downtown area and very important.

Commissioner Tobias suggested Commissioner Roberts be on a subcommittee.

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Commissioner Roberts said that he and Commissioner Hoopes were on the site yesterday. He also wanted to change the plant materials proposed. He was willing to review with the applicants.

Mr. Hanson said they were spending time on the proposal to make it look nice.

Commissioner Tobias suggested that the applicants be shown what 7-Eleven proposed at other site.

Mr. Hanson said that move to LED was an efficiency and energy saver. He cited an example of the City of Long Beach.

Director Stanley stated that only up to 4 sf of LED was allowed by the code.

Commissioner Tobias said that the understood convenience but design was the main issue.

Commissioner Hoopes spoke about clocks that use lights that are not exposed or too bright. It can be softened behind the lens.

Commissioner Tobias suggested no pricing on the Angels Crest side as it's the first thing that people see when they arrive in the City.

M/S/C Vavoulis/Hoopes to form a subcommittee of Commissioners Tobias and Roberts be created to work with the applicants and to bring options back to the Commission.

Mr. Hanson asked if they could meet today at the site to review colors.

Commissioner Roberts spoke about colors. He and Commissioner Hoopes were at the site yesterday. He noted that in blaring sun all colors fade.

Director Stanley asked if color approval subject to subcommittee review would be possible.

Chairman Moldafsky said that the proposal needs to come back to Commission.

Commissioner Roberts asked if existing lighting will be removed or not.

Mr. Whelan said that they will be removed.

Consulting Architect Cantrell reminded the applicant that they could have temporary signs for the opening.

B. Design Review 11-15; Anthony's Fine Food & Wine; 714 Foothill Blvd.; new sign.

Assistant Planner Parinas gave an overview of the request in accord with the staff report, noting that an awning valance sign had obtained prior approval. The current sign involved a dual sided projecting sign composed of simulated cheese, wine bottle and pear, oriented to capture views from east and west bound traffic.

The Commission had no questions for staff.

Commissioner Roberts acknowledged that he met on site with Commissioner Hoopes on the previous day and both concurred that what appeared to be darker stucco colors appeared washed out and faded in strong sunlight. He recommended a darker color palette be used.

Commissioner Roberts asked if the existing light standards would be replaced. He asked that the new fixtures be dark bronze or LCF street lamp green in color with a simple, non-decorative design to not distract from an already busy corner.

Mr. Whelan agreed.

Commissioner Roberts inquired about the exact colors proposed. He asked if the sign would be fabricated and then painted.

Gary Swanson - Dimensional Graphics, applicant - noted that the model represents the actual colors. The cheese would be coated foam with a textured look to simulate an actual block of cheese.

Commissioner Roberts noted that the textured foam would look more like an actual cheese wheel as opposed to the sample provided, which looked like a "pac man".

Commissioner Hoopes was concerned with the two bottle ends, which when viewed obliquely looked like rabbit ears and not the top of a single bottle.

Commissioner Tobias felt a 3-D magnum-like bottle would look genuine when viewed directly or from the sides.

Mr. Swanson agreed but noted that the business owner wanted the cheese to be the sign's strongest element.

Commissioner Roberts strongly felt that painting each element after fabrication would result in the best colors.

Commissioner Hoopes agreed that the bottle should be a fully dimensional element, as should the cheese wheel so it would not be visually diminished.

M/S/C Hoopes/Tobias to approve the sign subject to all elements made from hard coat foamcoare, painted to mimic the actual item, bottle and cheese full dimensional elements, pear to be ½ dimensional element. Unanimous 5-0.

VII. PUBLIC HEARINGS:

A. Design Review 11-24; Sprouts; 920 Foothill Blvd.; final approval of wall signs for new market.

Planner Gjolme summarized the request and briefly gave an overview of the project's history. He noted that the 4 signs proposed reflected the direction of the Design Commission and recommended approval accordingly.

The Commission had no questions for staff or the applicant.

M/S/C Tobias/Hoopes to approve the project as submitted. Unanimous 5-0.

B. Design Review 11-34; MD Appliances; 1428 Foothill Blvd.; new wall sign.

Planner Gjolme outlined the request in accord with the project staff memo, noting that the project involved a fairly straightforward wall sign composed of aluminum and acrylic letters that would be externally illuminated.

Commissioner Roberts confirmed that reverse channel letters are proposed for the "MD" copy.

Julie Ramirez - applicant - distributed sample letters that would be stud-mounted against the wall.

Commissioner Roberts asked why foam core was not being used for the "MD" copy.

Mrs. Ramirez responded that she prefers not to use foam core letters since they deteriorate and weather over time.

Mrs. Ramirez acknowledged staff's concern over the size of the "Appliances" copy but confirmed that the business owner preferred the 6" letter height as proposed.

Commissioner Roberts inquired about catalog cuts for the light fixtures.

Mrs. Ramirez confirmed that lighting identical to the neighboring tenants would be used, but installed at a later date.

Commissioner Hoopes was concerned with the polished look of the "Appliances" copy and did not believe that polished letters were appropriate for the subject building.

Mrs. Ramirez informed the Commission that the owner would be fine with a matte finish on the sign's letters.

Commissioner Roberts confirmed that the reverse channel letters would be pin mounted and that the smaller "Appliances" copy would be flush mounted to the fascia.

Commissioner Tobias had no issue with the 3 gooseneck lights as proposed.

Commissioner Hoopes felt that the spacing of the lights could be compressed slightly.

Planner Gjolme noted that the lights are spaced to match the width of the entry below.

Commissioner Roberts had no issue with the lights as proposed.

M/S/C Tobias/Hoopes to approve the request with a matte finish for both letter sets and for the proposed gooseneck lights to match the design and color of the gooseneck lights currently used by the adjacent tenant - Taix Workout Studio. Unanimous 5-0.

C. Design Review 11-32; Time & Space Gallery; 838 1/2 Foothill Blvd.; new wall sign.

Planner Clarke outlined the request in accord with the staff memo, which involved a new wall sign and re-painting of the fascia/awning.

Commissioner Roberts inquired if text was proposed on the awning valance at this time.

Christine Stilson - gallery owner - commented that valance copy was proposed and that the gallery would be displaying various types of space art.

Commissioner Roberts inquired how the signage would be applied to the awning.

Mrs. Stilson responded that it would be stenciled and painted.

Commissioners Roberts was concerned with the application since the awning is not a flat surface and painting could be difficult. He felt it was better to stencil the copy on a thin flat piece of metal and then apply it to the awning.

Mrs. Stilson acknowledged the issue and noted she plans to prep and refinish the awning prior to installation of signage.

Commissioner Tobias confirmed that the entire awning would be painted onyx.

Commissioner Tobias questioned if the mayflower blue is actually incorporated into the sign.

Mrs. Stilson responded that a hint of blue would accent the background sky in the image.

Commissioner Roberts suggested that the brickwork at the bottom of the front windows should also be painted to improve the overall look of the store.

Commissioner Tobias inquired about the availability of City funds to help with the upgrades.

Planner Clarke confirmed that up to 50% of the project's costs / \$2,000 maximum could potentially be reimbursed through the City's Façade Improvement Program.

M/S/C Roberts/Vavoulis to approve the sign as submitted. Unanimous 5-0.

VIII. OTHER BUSINESS: There was no other business.

IX. COMMENTS FROM THE COMMISSIONERS:

Commissioner Hoopes asked about signage for the Shell station on Angeles Crest.

Director Stanley said that they can be dealt with by Code Enforcement. The City works on complaint basis. It can be seen as more illegal signs are popping up.

Commissioner Tobias asked about complaint driven process. He cited water being turned off in park.

Director Stanley said that it was a Public Works issue but that there were safety issues. There were no sweeps and that it was not driven by the Chamber of Commerce. The Council supported the elimination of sign sweeps.

Commissioner Tobias asked if it was okay for him to speak to the Council.

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Pat Anderson said that they supported the Council decision so as not to put businesses through more during the recession. Some businesses are doing better and some new businesses may not be aware of the rule. She will work with Director Stanley and get the word out to businesses. She works across the street from the Shell station.

Charlie Kamar said that he would not do that at his business.

Ms. Anderson said that she worked with Director Stanley on 8 businesses. She also said that the Sprouts opening is scheduled for 3/21/2012.

X. COMMENTS FROM STAFF:

Director Stanley said that there was a need to work on streetscape program to bring back to the Council.

Commissioner Roberts said they he and Commissioner Hoopes needed to work on it.

XI. ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting was adjourned at 10:03 a.m.