

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE DESIGN COMMISSION
OF THE CITY OF LA CANADA FLINTRIDGE
HELD ON FEBRUARY 17, 2011**

- I. **CALL TO ORDER:** Chairman Vavoulis called the meeting to order at 7:30 a.m.
- II. **ROLL:** Present were Commissioners Hoopes, Moldafsky, Roberts and Tobias, Director of Community Development Stanley, Senior Planner Buss, Planner Gjolme 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** - February 3, 2011 meeting. Approved unanimously
- VI. **PUBLIC HEARINGS:**
 - A. **Design Review 11-01;** T-Mobile; 5500 Godbey Drive; wireless telecommunication facility. Review of landscaping and colors.

Assistant Planner Parinas presented the request in accord with the staff memo, which involved a new wireless telecommunication facility. Input from the Design Commission regarding landscaping and color was required as a result of prior Planning Commission review and approval. Pending selection of plant species and endorsement of colors/materials, approval was recommended.

Commissioner Moldafsky inquired if the proposed antennae were located below the proposed equipment building and ridgeline.

Assistant Planner Parinas confirmed their location below the equipment enclosure.

Commissioner Tobias was concerned about the long range views of the project from homes along Gould Avenue to the south. He noted that a representation of this view was very important, but was not provided as part of the submittal. With regard to landscaping, he questioned if irrigation was proposed and stated he preferred artificial screening in some ways considering its durability and lack of required maintenance.

Senior Planner Buss noted that review of building material, color and landscaping is the issue before the Commission.

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Chairman Vavoulis confirmed that the Planning Commission has already approved the building's basic design and location.

Charles Dunn – applicant representing T-Mobile – confirmed that irrigation for the new landscaping was proposed and included as part of the construction drawings.

Commissioner Tobias inquired if a condition requiring irrigation was imposed as part of the Planning Commission's review of the project.

Senior Planner Buss responded that he did not recall such a condition.

Mr. Dunn preferred real landscaping to better blend with the change of seasons. His intent was to find a color and texture scheme that would effectively blend with the hillside.

Commissioner Tobias confirmed that all structures would be below the parking lot and ridgeline and profiled against the upslope. He noted that the stairway and railings appear to be the most visible element and was concerned with their above grade prominence. He preferred a manufactured stacked stone on the more visible portions of the staircase and felt that the stair risers needed to be pre-colored concrete or painted an appropriate color.

Mr. Dunn commented on the landscaping and noted that too much landscaping in front of the antennae would block the signal. He was open to the selection of species but preferred hardy drought-resistant plantings.

Commissioner Hoopes inquired about the height of the south-facing retaining wall and confirmed it would achieve a height of 7'-4". He explained that the painting of a flat surface will be obvious to some degree, regardless of the distance from which it is viewed. He noted that only shrubs, rather than trees, were identified along the south edge of the equipment facility on the plan.

Mr. Dunn responded that shrubs are identified on the plan and will eventually grow to obscure the wall.

Commissioner Hoopes explained that the main issue was the change to the hill's "texture" and the overall effect of the project as seen from greater distances to the south. There are no trees provided along the south elevation as currently submitted, but acknowledged that any tree planting should be of limited height. He also noted the importance of staggering the trees to achieve a natural look. Lastly, he was concerned with southerly views of the structure from the condominiums above to the north.

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Commissioner Roberts noted the importance of creating retaining planter pockets for the new landscaping. Shrub oaks, manzanita, and stipia giganta were all appropriate types of planting in this area; planting specifics could be clarified with separate subcommittee review at a later date. He was concerned with the south elevation and railings in particular and preferred to increase the respective wall heights and eliminate railings along the south side of the structure and walkway on the backside. He thought the green color palette was inappropriate and preferred a brown/tan palette.

Commissioner Tobias felt that the ascending railings that go up the stairs should be similarly eliminated.

Mr. Dunn responded that the railings were intended to minimize mass by being able to see through them. Raising the wall was possible but would result in wall height above the level of the parking lot. He was amenable to staggered planting and creating planter pockets. He noted that the trellis over the equipment would be painted and some sort of vine planting could be attached. The equipment would be largely below the horizon line and tucked into hillside. As such, it would not be prominently viewed from the condos above to the north.

Commissioner Hoopes disagreed and explained that he had walked down the hill and looked back up to the north and could see the condos. The structure's roof will be fully visible.

Chairman Vavoulis did not believe the structure's roof or trellis was an issue since the parking lot and associated cars are visible daily.

Commissioner Moldafsky had no comments.

Chairman Vavoulis confirmed that the type, size and location of landscaping would be deferred to Commissioner Roberts for further review and approval.

Commissioner Tobias remarked that the initial planting size should be as large as possible to afford immediate screening.

Commissioner Tobias was concerned with the impacts of similar projects on the hillside.

Senior Planner Buss responded that there was the potential for future co-location but that this was not a certainty.

Mr. Dunn responded that the facility's pad has room for additional equipment.

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Commissioner Tobias inquired if there was a need for the equipment building to be proximate to the antennae.

Mr. Dunn responded that the building needed to be within 190' of the antennae for proper signalization.

Commissioner Tobias inquired about the possibility of moving the building to the flat area adjacent to the parking lot and away from the hillside. He commented that a comparable residential project would typically not be allowed.

Director Stanley intervened and explained that the discussion was drifting away from the purpose of the meeting and the Commission's purview in this matter - review of the materials, colors and landscaping.

Senior Planner Buss added that the location as proposed was the preferred location since it was down-slope, hidden, secure and would not be an attractive nuisance.

M/S/C Hoopes/Moldafsky to approve the request subject to: 1) subcommittee consisting of Commissioner Roberts to review type, size and location of new landscaping, wall color and irrigation; 2) provision of flat planter areas for the trees and shrubs; 3) eliminate open railings along the stairway walls and south wall of the equipment pad and replace with wall of integral color; 4) use of naturally colored slumpstone or similarly textured material; 5) staggered, non-linear planting of new trees and shrubs. Approved 4-1. No - Tobias.

VII. OTHER BUSINESS:

There was no other business.

VIII. COMMENTS FROM THE COMMISSIONERS:

The Commissioners had no comments.

IX. COMMENTS FROM STAFF:

There were no comments from staff.

X. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:24 a.m.