

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE DESIGN COMMISSION
OF THE CITY OF LA CANADA FLINTRIDGE
HELD ON MARCH 20, 2014**

- I. **CALL TO ORDER:** Chairman Moldafsky called the meeting to order at 7:30 a.m.
- II. **ROLL:** Present were Commissioners Hoopes, Roberts, Tobias, Vavoulis, Director Stanley, Planners Gjolme and Clarke. Commissioner Vavoulis was absent.
- III. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** The Flag Salute was recited.
- IV. **COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC:** There were no comments.
- V. **CONSENT CALENDAR:** Minutes - 3/6/2014 Design Commission meeting. M/S/C Tobias/Hoopes to approve as submitted. 4-0.
- VI. **CONTINUED PUBLIC HEARINGS:** None.
- VII. **PUBLIC HEARINGS:**
 - A. **Design Review 14-04;** State Farm; 1111 Foothill Blvd.; new wall sign.

Planner Clarke gave an overview of the request to install a new unlit wall sign. Staff had alternatives to the basic red letters proposed and recommended approval of one of the alternate designs.

Commissioner Tobias confirmed that the existing window sign was not included in the area of new sign and would be removed. Planner Clarke confirmed that a condition of approval to this effect could be added.

Ed Latell - applicant - showed a material sample to the Commission. He noted that the sign was a corporate logo.

Commissioner Roberts recognized this and respected the corporate identity, but stated that corporations always have more than one option. He preferred to see other options rather than having staff decide the issue and put forth an alternative.

Mr. Latell presented the corporate design options available per Commissioner Roberts' request.

Commissioner Tobias commented on the cottage-like character and charm of the building. The sign should reflect this more. He thought a routed hanging sign under the overhang would work well. The current proposal is too commercial.

Commissioner Roberts agreed and thought dropping it would make it easier to read.

Commissioner Hoopes added that gooseneck lights could be installed to shine down on a hanging sign and would add a nice touch to the project.

Richard Vossmyer - State Farm agent and business owner - noted that he was bound by State Farm corporate to a degree.

Commissioner Tobias clarified that the company logo could be used for the sign, but that it would be composed of a routed hanging panel, rather than individual acrylic letters as proposed.

Commissioner Hoopes did not care for staff's alternatives and felt they were too 'circus-like'.

The applicant and Commission agreed that a continuance to explore other design options was in order. M/S/C Tobias/Hoopes to continue the item. Unanimous 4-0.

B. Design Review 13-19 (amendment); DCG; 1043 Foothill Blvd.; request to remove 4 trees in conjunction with approved remodel of existing building.

Planner Clarke gave an overview of the request to amend a recently approved project to allow removal of 4 onsite trees that were interfering with/damaging the building and/or hardscape.

Commissioner Roberts asked staff if they had plans from the approved project to confirm that the planting area was still available.

Commissioner Hoopes noted the poor quality of the trees to be removed.

Abeer Sweis - project architect - confirmed the poor quality and appearance of the trees. The only replacement location available to the front was the new planter area. She thought a Japanese maple would be nice. She noted the impacts from the trees to be removed and was hopeful for approval.

Commissioner Roberts had no issues with the removal as proposed. He felt the applicant could work with neighboring property owner and submit a planting

list to staff for approval. He preferred avoiding annual grasses to the rear and thought a Japanese maple at the front of the building would get 'scorched' in the summer.

M/S/C Roberts/Tobias to allow removal of the trees as requested and submit a new planting proposal to staff to be informally reviewed by Commissioner Roberts prior to approval. Unanimous 4-0.

C. Design Review 07-10 (Amendment); Plaza de La Canada; 631-663 Foothill Blvd.; revised building color palette.

Planner Gjolme gave a brief overview and explained per the Commission's request at the last meeting, the new color palette for the Plaza de La Canada center was agenda'd for formal review.

Commissioner Roberts expressed the importance of the proposal. The center was built in the 70s and he didn't care for the recent remodel, which he felt was compromised by the recession. The new paint palette emphasizes the problem with the architecture and style of the buildings. The accent colors over-emphasize building features that do not work aesthetically. He felt the palette needed to recess/mute these features, rather than accentuate them.

Commissioner Hoopes agreed with Mr. Roberts comments. He felt a session at the site might be needed to properly review the colors in natural light.

Commissioner Tobias reflected on the amount of time the Commission spent reviewing the remodeling of the center. He again noted that the center could be repainted with existing colors without review.

Commissioner Roberts favored forming a subcommittee to review the new palette on site with the applicant(s). He felt the color P2 - Sonora Shade - was poorly used with the current proposal.

Commissioner Hoopes commented on the approved sign program for center. He questioned the location and use of attachment brackets for the signs and asked staff to investigate.

M/S/C Tobias/Hoopes - to form subcommittee consisting of Commissioners Roberts and Hoopes to work with the applicant to reduce/refine the color palette and advise staff prior to formal approval. Unanimous 4-0.

D. Zone Change 13-01; Electronic Message Centers; certain Public/Semi-public and Institutional properties; subcommittee update.

Commissioner Tobias gave the Commission and staff an update on the recent subcommittee meeting on electronic message centers.

Commissioner Jain, Councilmembers Curtis, Davitt and Commissioner Tobias felt that an Ordinance for electronic message centers on Foothill Blvd. high school properties east of freeway could work. Further qualification could include a minimum 400 student count and 3-acre lot size, which he noted would need to be confirmed by staff.

Commissioner Hoopes was still concerned with the 'creeping' of issue. The Design Commission is still against a potential code change. However, if the City Council pursues an Ordinance, properties east of the freeway only is the right call.

VIII. OTHER BUSINESS: There was no other business.

IX. COMMENTS FROM THE COMMISSIONERS:

Commissioner Tobias mentioned that possibly 3 Design Commissioners would be leaving in June.

Chairman Moldafsky stated that he did not have a lot of aesthetic experience and design expertise and felt that the Commission might be better served by someone else.

Commissioner Roberts strongly disagreed and noted that Chairman Moldafsky had been exposed to considerable discussion and input and was a valuable member given his years of experience.

Commissioner Roberts confirmed that new candidates are always interviewed prior to appointment.

Director Stanley added that current Commissioners typically remain in place until new members are appointed.

Commissioner Hoopes asked if the City would reach out to a prior candidate.

Director Stanley responded that the City does not reach out to candidates. The vacancies on the various Commissions are publicly posted.

X. COMMENTS FROM STAFF: There were no comments.

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- XI. ADJOURNMENT:** M/S/C Roberts/Hoopes to adjourn the meeting at 8:43 a.m.
Unanimous 4-0.