

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE DESIGN COMMISSION  
OF THE CITY OF LA CANADA FLINTRIDGE  
HELD ON APRIL 21, 2011**

- I. **CALL TO ORDER:** Chair Vavoulis called the meeting to order at 7:30
- II. **ROLL:** Present were Commissioners Hoopes, Moldafsky, Roberts, Tobias and Chair Vavoulis, Director of Community Development Stanley, Planner Clarke and Assistant Planner Lang.
- III. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** The Flag Salute was recited.
- IV. **COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC:** None.
- V. **CONSENT CALENDAR:** None.
- VI. **CONTINUED PUBLIC HEARINGS:**
  - A. **Design Review 11-02;** Calstar Realty & Mortgage; 1033 Foothill Blvd. – new wall sign and façade changes.

Director Stanley gave a presentation in accordance with the staff report. At the last hearing the Commission felt that the building and the sign were too plain. He showed the alternative design that staff prepared. He added that he felt that it met with the direction that was given by the Commission at its last meeting. He showed actual material samples. He added that the Planning Commission added a condition that the roof top equipment should be screened. He showed the applicants version and staff's version

Rick Samuelian (Applicant) stated that the garage door was going to be converted to a stucco wall with a 6' 4' tinted window in the middle of the wall. He added that he is proposing a planter box between the garage and the alley.

Commissioner Hoopes asked the applicant if he was having drainage problems to which the applicant said no.

Chair Vavoulis said the Commission should see plans for the planter box before they could make a decision.

Mr. Samuelian said that the planter box in front will have red brick to match the neighboring brick.

Commissioner Hoopes said that the appearance is great but that he is interested in the planter box and the windows going down to the ground. He likes the proposed sign as it's a substantial improvement to what was first proposed and its much more readable.

The Commission liked the applicant's version as it's more stylish.

Commissioner Roberts liked staff's version but neither proposal is detrimental. He did not like the burgundy line at top. There is a need to address the color of the building. He thought that the color of the building should be modified because it matched the rock planter

Commissioner Tobias asked about the stucco finish and the applicant indicated that it would be a sand finish

Chair Vavoulis asked Commissioner Roberts for clarification of the color strip

Commissioner Roberts felt it was a mistake to introduce the sign color on the building and Commissioner Hoopes agreed.

Commissioner Roberts suggested colors for the stucco and for the molding.

The applicant added that he could paint the entire building rather than using integrated color for the stucco.

Commissioner Roberts reviewed the colors and will list them during the motion. (colors: DE 6129, with cornice color of finest silk DE 6127)

Director Stanley showed a photo of the roof equipment. The Planning Commission had a condition requiring screening for it. He suggested that it could be screened or a parapet could be added, but that would make the building look taller.

Commissioner Tobias felt that the equipment was not highly visible.

The Commission asked how Director Stanley would address the parapet.

Director Stanley said that he would probably recommend adding to the parapet

Commissioner Hoopes asked how the parapet would be added.

Commissioner Tobias said that he never sees the equipment when he is going to Penelope's restaurant next door.

Chair Vavoulis and Commissioner Hoopes didn't find it necessary to add screening.

Commissioner Tobias suggested an inexpensive wood lattice around the equipment. He did not think a parapet all the way around is a good idea and that it may make the building look taller.

Director Stanley offered to take the issue back to the Planning Commission to let them know that the Design Commission didn't feel that it was an issue.

Commission Hoopes made a motion that there be no screening for the roof equipment, which was seconded by Commissioner Tobias. Approve: motion 4-0

Chair Vavoulis next addressed the planter box in the rear of the property.

Commissioner Tobias asked if the applicant chose the planter box.

Mr. Samuelian stated that he chose to add it because it was a cavity that needed to be filled and that it had no use as a parking space.

Commissioner Hoopes said that the area was sunken and that maybe it could be filled in.

Mr. Samuelian said that it had a berm.

Director Stanley suggested a retainer wall.

Commissioner Tobias asked how the applicant would drain the planter box.

Mr. Samuelian said that it would drain to the alley

There was some discussion by the Commission about how it should drain. Overall, the applicant needed to make sure that the water drains to the alley.

Chair Vavoulis asked if the rear planter should return for review of plant types.

The Commission gave the applicant the option to choose which sign he wanted. The applicant choose his proposed sign design. Commissioner Roberts changed the color selection to bison beige (DEC 750) for the cornice which will read like the bronze of the windows and rustic taupe for the building. The Commission liked the sign color.

Mr. Samuelian asked about the height of the planter box.

The Commission agreed that it should be the height of the curb.

Commissioner Moldafsky made the motion as Director Stanley stated.

The approved sign is the sign proposed by the applicant.

M/S/C Moldafsky/Hoopes to approve. Unanimous 5-0.

## **VII. PUBLIC HEARINGS:**

**A. Design Review 08-12;** 1975 Verdugo Blvd.; Howard. Final review and approval of monument sign and restaurant sign per original conditions of approval.

Planner Clarke gave a brief history of the last meeting and showed the new monument signs that the applicant had proposed. Staff recommended approval of monument signs as presented.

John from Westco Signs (applicant) introduced himself and gave descriptions of the signs.

Commissioner Roberts asked what type of materials were proposed.

The applicant stated that the sign material used in the breezeway that was already approved.

Commissioner Roberts asked about the white line that is shown under each tenant panel.

The applicant stated that it is aluminum.

Chair Vavoulis asked about what was proposed for the uplighting.

The applicant stated that he would use fluorescent garden lighting.

Commissioner Hoopes asked the applicant if he considered LEDs as they are more efficient and don't burn out so fast.

The applicant said that he has never used them as garden letters before but that he could research it.

Commissioner Roberts stated that he didn't like the practice of naming all shopping centers as it takes away from the tenant names, but that he liked the sign design. He suggested using the building address rather than the center name of La Vista. It may work for a big location like The Grove but not for a small center. He asked if there was an address that could be used.

Commissioner Hoopes mentioned giving the applicant the option of using the address or the name of the center.

Commissioner Tobias asked if there were there any restrictions about the size of the letters that could be used on the sign (up to maximum of 18" per code).

The representative for Howard Green said that they wanted to distinguish themselves from other centers. There are identity issues but he would suggest the use of the address rather than the name to the property owner.

Commissioner Hoopes asked if the river rock could be sloped similar to the other river rock accents on the building.

The applicant stated that the landscaping would cover the sloping rock.

Commissioner Tobias asked if the Commission would see signs again when tenants came in for approval. Would the applicant just use white block letters for the individual signs?

Commissioner Roberts was comfortable letting tenants use their own font in signs as long as they fit in the respective panels.

Director Stanley noted that in the Town Center general areas were permitted with tenants to apply for individual signs to the Commission.

Commissioner Tobias said that he could see a restaurant having an issue being tied to white lettering. An applicant may not want his hands tied requiring white lettering only.

The applicant agreed to change the color of the stripe under the sign.

The Commission wanted to review the restaurant sign in the future. They felt that they should offer the future tenant some flexibility. This would be a placeholder for now. It was very important to the applicant and future tenants.

Commissioner Hoopes asked about shapes which would not fit in the panels and if they had to come back if it didn't fit in the panel.

Commissioner Tobias made a motion to approve the signs leaving it up to the tenant regarding naming the plaza or using the address. The material under the names shall be the same 6061 River Rock color as on the building. The river rock is to be sloped similar to the pillars of the building. The colors were to match the samples provided with 752 DE to be used. Lighting shall be a light bar in garden area and the applicant was to consider LED lighting. The white strip was to be illuminated and the applicant could use own font as long as it fits in the panel.

M/S/C Tobias/Roberts to approve the project. Unanimous 5-0.

**VIII. OTHER BUSINESS:**

**A. Budget; Fiscal Year Budget 2011-2012**

Director Stanley discussed budget items which will be considered by the City Council. He asked if the Commissioners had any budget requests. He showed the Commissioners last year's budget and offered suggestions for potential budget items over and above regular budget items. Director Stanley suggested that they might want to review the tree ordinance revision. A request for out of state travel was rejected by the Council last year. He mentioned that the Town Center might be sold and a monument sign and courtyard changes may be coming to the Commission later. Specific plan implementation is ongoing with the Commission with some items to come back to the Commission. Obertz Park may see changes proposed by the potential buyer. The sign ordinance may be redone but it may require a consultant. Commercial trees are all protected due to Commission approvals. Commissioners looked at street trees before and came up with a mapping system which was adopted by Public Works.

Commissioner Roberts indicated that he felt they might want to look at the tree ordinance for commercial properties.

Director Stanley offered the Commissioners a guided tour of commercial properties similar to the single family tours given for the Commission and Council. The City could hire a bus and organize a tour.

Commissioner Roberts said that he would like the tour to tie into the street tree master plan. He has a 25' long plan/overview of Foothill Boulevard in his office.

Commissioner Hoopes said that he has been a proponent of removing the crepe myrtles along the street. They can hide building signs.

Commissioner Roberts said he would be ready to present his findings to the Commission in a few weeks. Different groups and departments need to endorse the plan.

Commissioner Hoopes asked if it included fixing the sidewalks and to make sure trees get enough water.

Commissioner Roberts mentioned that the trees were getting water from individual property owners. The recommended trees (tulip) will look huge in five years time.

Commissioners noted that the trucks providing water needed to water more frequently. Irrigation is a big issue.

Director Stanley agreed that irrigation was an important issue and that it was required at the Town Center. He noted that Commissioner Roberts did a lot of work on this item with Ralph's and Public Works. He wanted some feedback or ideas from the Commission.

Commissioner Tobias noted that contacting Councilmembers was key to getting items. He inquired about the park and ride lot across from Memorial Park.

Commissioner Hoopes spoke about facade improvement program's one-to-one offer up to \$2,000 on new planters, paint etc.

Director Stanley said that he had to go back to the City Council at mid-year budget for additional funding as the money had been used.

Commissioner Tobias wanted to have the park and ride lot resurfaced sooner than later and the fencing and other improvements could be addressed at a later date.

Director Stanley stated that was a Public Works item.

Commissioners Hoopes felt that a tour would be more appropriate once the new street tree program was ready to be rolled out. Once the coordination of the various issues has been done it would be a good time to have a tour

Director Stanley felt that a tour could be an opportunity to point out the good and the bad and what recommendations could be made. There is an issue with absentee owners in the city. How can you screen things that are unattractive.

Commissioner Roberts used a commercial center on the boulevard as an example of something that could be screened.

Commissioner Hoopes spoke about finding places on the boulevard and then using them as way to visualize the street.

Commissioner Roberts suggested getting more color samples boxes and awning samples.

Commissioner Tobias suggested using the shuttle for a tour.

Commissioner Roberts requested a color fan. Boxes are better. He will provide links to Director Stanley and include stucco colors and umbrella colors also.

**IX. COMMENTS FROM THE COMMISSIONERS:** None.

**X. COMMENTS FROM STAFF:**

Director Stanley said that the Design Review ordinance would be brought back to a future hearing.

**XI. ADJOURNMENT:** The meeting was adjourned at 8:54 a.m.