

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE DESIGN COMMISSION
OF THE CITY OF LA CANADA FLINTRIDGE
HELD ON MAY 19, 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, Director of Community Development Stanley, Planner Gjolme and Assistant Planner Parinas.
- III. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** The Flag Salute was recited.
- IV. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC:** There were none.
- V. CONSENT CALENDAR:**
- A.** Minutes - April 7, 2011 and April 21, 2011 meetings. The minutes were approved unanimously.
- VI. CONTINUED PUBLIC HEARINGS:**
- A. Design Review 10-06;** Conoco 76; 1001 Foothill Blvd.; refurbish/remodel existing service station building in conjunction with convenience store expansion and installation of new pump island canopies. M/S/C Vavoulis/Moldafsky to continue the item to the June 2, 2011 meeting. Unanimous.
- VII. PUBLIC HEARINGS:**
- A. Design Review 11-05-;** Jo-Ann Fabrics and Crafts; 2160 Foothill Blvd.; new wall signs.

Assistant Planner Parinas gave an overview of the request, which involved installation of new non-illuminated wall signs along the front and sides of the building.

Commissioner Moldafsky confirmed that the visibility of the south sign was only possible to the rear and when traveling northbound on Rockland Place. He inquired about staff's reasons for recommending elimination of this sign.

Assistant Planner Parinas noted that code allows only two wall signs and that elimination of the south sign was needed to achieve compliance.

Commissioner Moldafsky inquired how the applicant felt about eliminating one of the signs.

Miss Parinas stated that the corporation's preference was to have 3 signs as proposed.

Chairman Vavoulis confirmed that the applicant was in attendance.

Jason Engbert - applicant - preferred retention of the front and east sign since the sign to the rear (south) was the least visible.

Commissioner Moldafsky confirmed that only one wall sign currently adorned the subject building.

Mr. Engbert was hopeful that the east sign could be approved at 14.9 sq. ft., as opposed to 10 sq. ft. as recommended by staff.

Planner Gjolme explained the "flexibility" provision in the code which could allow a slight size increase to the size of the east sign provided the Commission was amenable to it. The provision, however, could not be used to allow an additional sign.

Commissioner Hoopes visited the site and commented that on the mammoth size of the east wall. He felt the east sign should be bigger and could support increasing the size from 10 sq. ft. to 14.9 sq. ft.

The Commission concurred.

M/S/C Hoopes/Moldafsky to approve the request for the front (north) sign as submitted; the east side sign increased to 14.9 sq. ft. in size and the south sign eliminated. Unanimous.

B. Design Review 11-06; Anytime Fitness; 890-B Town Center Drive; new wall sign.

Planner Gjolme gave an overview of the request, which involved installation of a new wall sign composed of channel letters.

Commissioner Roberts disagreed with staff on the use of channel letters. He was hopeful that the center and the subject business would employ more unique signs. He thought the sign was poorly located, awkward and difficult to read, and felt there were other more creative options.

Commissioner Moldafsky supported Commissioner Roberts' comments. He thought the black slash through the letters might lend to visibility issues.

Commissioner Hoopes disagreed about the sign's location and felt the sign was at the best location for the building and the site as a whole. He explained the orientation of the building and how the sign related to the parking lot and other tenants.

Commissioner Roberts apologized for his misunderstanding of the sign's location and agreed that the sign was located properly.

Commissioner Hoopes was concerned about the sign's proposed colors, and felt that white letters on a yellowish wall lacked needed contrast. He also preferred the use of reverse channel letters.

Commissioner Moldafsky thought the sign lacked corporate identity and was difficult to read.

Karl Eng - applicant - confirmed that corporate colors, font and logo were proposed.

Commissioner Roberts asked about other business locations and if other corporate design options for the sign were available.

Chairman Vavoulis was hopeful for a solution and asked if the applicant was amenable to the use of reverse channel letters.

Commissioner Roberts asked if other options were available for the white letters.

Mr. Eng stated that the corporation would not allow deviation from the palette.

Commissioner Hoopes noted that the sign could be approved as the Commission sees fit and then returned to the corporation for hopeful endorsement.

Commissioner Hoopes felt that standard letters with a metallic finish might be effective and appropriate.

Planner Gjolme called the Commission's attention to the required findings and felt that remedying the sign's visibility issue was the key concern based on the Commission's comments. Staff had no objections to the color and design of the sign, and noted other channel letter signs nearby.

Chairman Vavoulis questioned whether an approval with conditions was possible.

Mr. Eng stated that the corporation won't allow deviation from the design and color of the sign.

Commissioner Moldafsky asked the applicant what happens if issues between the corporation and City are ultimately unresolved.

Mr. Eng stated he had never encountered this outcome.

Commissioner Roberts stated he was very sympathetic to the applicant and sensitive to the issue. He stressed that he had no problem with the corporate colors and font style as proposed. He specifically opposed the use of generic channel letters. He felt there were better design options with this palette and letter style.

Mr. Eng stated that all the businesses he was aware of used this type of sign.

Commissioner Hoopes was frustrated with corporate mandates seemingly restricting the City's options to some degree.

Commissioner Roberts' asked for Charlie Kamar to comment on the corporate issue.

Charlie Kamar - owner of Unocal 76 at 1540 Foothill Blvd. - acknowledged the issue of balancing corporate and City concerns and was sympathetic to the applicant.

Chairman Vavoulis inquired if positive findings with revisions as needed were possible at this point.

Commissioner Hoopes thought that a continuation with direction to explore design alternatives with corporate input was the best solution.

Chairman Vavoulis acknowledged this but noted that the applicant needs specific direction at this point.

Commissioner Roberts commented that a perforated metal field might provide the needed contrast between the sign and fascia. He also thought perforated letters that create a day/night effect, similar to the sign employed by Chipotle, might be the solution.

Chairman Vavoulis summarized that a continuance with the aforementioned direction - with an exhibit prepared by Commissioner Roberts - was in order.

M/S/C Roberts/Moldafsky to continue the request to explore alternate designs with the same font style, color and logo perhaps with a perforated metallic field to provide needed contrast between the sign and wall or individually perforated letters to provide a day/night effect similar to Chipotle, and to receive corporate input on said alternatives. Unanimous.

VIII. OTHER BUSINESS:

There was no other business.

IX. COMMENTS FROM THE COMMISSIONERS:

There were no comments.

X. COMMENTS FROM STAFF:

Planner Gjolme noted that the Design Commission Ordinance change would be expanded to include outdoor furniture and copy changes to non-conforming pole signs.

Director Stanley informed the Commission that the color change to the Alta Dena Dairy at Foothill and Ocean View was not permitted since a prior color palette was approved by the City in 1995.

XI. ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at 8:27 a.m.