

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE DESIGN COMMISSION
OF THE CITY OF LA CANADA FLINTRIDGE
HELD ON MAY 20, 2010**

- I. CALL TO ORDER:** Chairman Vavoulis called the meeting to order at 7:30 a.m.
- II. ROLL:** Present were Commissioners Hoopes, Roberts, Tobias, Director of Community Development Stanley and Planners Clarke and Gjolme. Commissioner Friedmann arrived at 7:33 am.
- III. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** The Flag Salute was recited.
- IV. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC:** There were no comments.
- V. CONSENT CALENDAR:**
- A.** Minutes – May 6, 2010 DC Meeting. M/S/C Hoopes/Roberts to approve the minutes submitted. 4-0.
- VI. PUBLIC HEARINGS:**
- A. Design Review 10-10;** 1929 Verdugo Blvd.; AT&T; replace existing wall sign.

Planner Clarke outlined the request which essentially replaced one channel letter sign with another, noting that two unauthorized wall signs would be removed in conjunction with approval.

Commissioner Tobias noted that there were too many signs in the window. He questioned how many temporary signs in the windows would remain.

Commissioner Hoopes commented that the sign seemed out of balance. He felt it needed to be shifted slightly to the right, or relocate the “Authorized Retailer” copy under the “ATT” copy to possibly solve the problem.

Commissioner Friedmann agreed and noted that the apex of the arch below causes the visual imbalance.

Applicant Simi Shokati explained that the “ATT” copy would be centered above the existing arch. ATT approved the layout as submitted.

Commissioner Friedmann noted that ‘this’ particular sign was approved given the available fascia, but noted other configuration options were likely available.

Commissioner Tobias explained that if the signband area was narrower, the "Authorized Retailer" copy would be relocated to account for the reduced space available.

Commissioner Hoopes used the whiteboard to demonstrate possible alternatives.

Commissioner Friedmann commented that while not preferable, he could accept the sign as submitted.

Commissioner Hoopes stated the configuration was an issue that needed to be resolved before he could endorse the proposal.

Director Stanley noted that this was the preferred option but a condition requiring reconfiguration of the sign as needed could be imposed.

Commissioner Roberts stated he was acceptable to the "Authorized Retailer" copy below and skewed to the right.

Chairman Vavoulis thought a continuance may be in order to explore alternative designs.

Applicant Shokati stated that the "Authorized Retailer" copy spread evenly at the bottom would not likely garner corporate approval.

Commissioner Tobias responded that approval from the Commission would likely not be forthcoming without refinements to the sign.

M/S/C Hoopes/Friedmann to continue the item with direction to explore design alternatives with the "Authorized Retailer" copy relocated below the ATT copy.

VII. OTHER BUSINESS:

A. Discussion of Annual Design Excellence Award program.

Commissioner Friedmann explained the he and Commissioner Tobias meet with Councilmember Steve Del Guercio to discuss the program. Mr. Del Guercio believed the process should be discussed with the Mayor and that the award process should be developed by a joint body that includes the Design Commission, rather than just the Commission itself. Perhaps the Chamber of Commerce and City could work together to develop and implement the process.

Commissioner Tobias stated that there could be the misconception of a 'bias' if the Design Commission was the only body involved. Perhaps the Design Commission could nominate projects but not actually grant the awards to avoid the appearance of playing favorites.

Commissioner Roberts noted that the Chamber already awards a "Community Beautification Award".

Chairman Vavoulis noted that the misconception could still result if Commission members were part of the nominating subcommittee.

Director Stanley stated that a Council Consideration item was prepared for this year's budget. He questioned if a business is not a member of the Chamber, would they still qualify to receive the award?

Commissioner Tobias believed that cash awards were inappropriate.

Commissioner Friedman inquired about possibly naming the award the "Village" award to better focus the scope of the award.

Commissioner Tobias noted that he did not want to overlook the west end of the City which plays a vital part in the overall commercial structure of Foothill Blvd.

Acknowledging the conflict issue, Director Stanley stated that he could possibly pull the Council Consideration item at this point to allow for further study.

Commissioner Tobias felt that the conflict of interest issue could be addressed through establishment of specific criteria that neutralize any perceived bias.

Director Stanley agreed and noted that the point of the program was to show the community good projects.

Commissioner Roberts further pointed out that the purpose was to give credit to projects that go above and beyond the minimum requirements.

Commissioner Hoopes was not in favor of abandoning the process all together. He strongly felt it was a good idea for the community.

Commissioner Tobias did not believe the conflict issue was 'that' significant since the Commission could play an advisory/nominating role only; with the Chamber making the actual decision.

Chairman Vavoulis thought the role of the Design Commission would be marginalized. He wasn't sure why the Commission would even be involved without the decision making ability.

Director Stanley and Commissioner Roberts agreed that the conflict of interest issue could be resolved.

Commissioner Tobias reemphasized that a monetary prize should not be involved.

Director Stanley clarified that the money would be used to fabricate some type of award, and would not be given as a cash prize.

Commissioner Roberts stressed it could be a very simple award, such as a letter of recognition, which doesn't have to be given just for the sake of the process. It would be awarded for exceptional merit when deserved.

Commissioner Hoopes stated that the award could address a single project component, landscaping, signage, materials, etc., rather than all facets possible for recognition.

Director Stanley commented that the award could simply be a proclamation from the Design Commission.

Commissioner Friedmann inquired about the possibility of recognizing past projects through a 'legacy' award.

The Commissions' consensus was to leave the Council Consideration request in the budget and re-agendize the item for further discussion.

Commissioner Tobias felt a Commission member should be directly involved and volunteered to inventory exemplary projects as they come through the process. He further suggested a study session to visit Foothill Blvd. and identify projects that warrant acknowledgement.

Commissioner Roberts noted the simplicity and effectiveness of San Marino's Design Guidelines.

Director Stanley remarked that the Streetscape Manual, when complete, will offer similar direction and guidance for commercial projects in LCF.

Commissioner Tobias felt that the Design Commission may need to operate more like the City Council, with Commissioner appointments to various committees and attendance at conferences as needed.

VIII. COMMENTS FROM THE COMMISSIONERS:

Commissioner Roberts referred to a Bank of America in Pasadena with silver signage, and again stressed that atypical non-corporate business signage is possible and highly desirable.

Commissioner Tobias remarked that he had recently visited Montecito and saw several great signs.

IX. COMMENTS FROM STAFF:

Director Stanley showed the landscape books desired by the Commission and noted that he would be attending a landscape seminar at Cal Poly Pomona the following week.

A brief discussion ensued with Commission consensus to hold the June 17th meeting at 4:30 p.m. in Memorial Park in order to recognize Commissioner Friedmann's service and departure from the Commission.

X. ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting was adjourned at 8:20 a.m.