

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE DESIGN COMMISSION
OF THE CITY OF LA CANADA FLINTRIDGE
HELD ON JUNE 2, 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, Planners Gjolme and Clarke and Consulting Architect Cantrell. Commissioner Tobias absent.
- III. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** The Flag Salute was recited.
- IV. **COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC:** None.
- V. **CONSENT CALENDAR:**
 - A. Minutes – May 5, 2011 and May 19, 2011 meetings. Continued.
- 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.

Consultant Cantrell gave a presentation of the project which has returned to the Commission for final approval. The proposed Conditions of Approval were reviewed.

Commissioner Roberts asked about the colored renderings referred to in the plan packet.

The applicant (Ahmad Ghaderi) said that it will be a 7/11 store but that it was not shown on the plans as there will be a separate sign application submitted in July. Landscaping – he will comply with what the Commission and staff want. Lights – the Commission has cut sheets and he can have color copies available. The changes proposed to the building are as discussed before with staff and the Commission, and he is willing to make changes as required.

Commissioner Roberts noted that the color rendering shows a white line which is not a cap. It just shows change.

Commissioner Hoopes asked about the size (18”) of the wall-mounted light fixtures. He requested that the size of fixtures that are illustrated on the elevation be approved.

Mr. Ghaderi said that he will use larger fixtures and coordinate with staff.

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Commissioner Roberts suggested to the Commission that the multiple paint colors trying to create detail may not be working as they are computer generated. There is a need to review the paint colors in the field.

Director Stanley asked if the entire Commission or a subcommittee would review the colors. Commissioners could go to site individually or in groups of two but not three at any one time.

Commissioner Roberts said that they can visit the site individually and discuss at the following Commission meeting.

Commissioner Hoopes noted the significant differences in the colors presented due to printing discrepancies. For example, tower tan is indicated on one plan but not on another.

Mr. Ghaderi said that he will check on the location of the different colors.

Commissioner Roberts said that some paint colors can be eliminated.

Commissioner Hoopes asked about creating a subcommittee to work with the applicant.

Commissioner Roberts said that he would volunteer to assist in this effort.

Chairman Vavoulis said that a subcommittee comprised of Commissioners Hoopes and Roberts would be formed. The applicant will work with the subcommittee and come back to the Commission. He asked to go over the Condition of Approval list.

Commissioner Roberts said that he supported all the Conditions and commended staff for its work. He asked the applicant about the location new monument sign and any other signs that will be proposed.

Director Stanley mentioned the corner street dedication and that the monument sign may not be in the same place as currently.

Mr. Ghaderi said that they spoke to Public Works and that they will get an encroachment permit until the dedication is given.

Commissioner Roberts asked about approving the landscaping portion without approving the corner where the monument sign would be located.

Commissioner Hoopes asked if the Commission could approve the rest of the project except for the corner.

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Mr. Ghaderi said that he wanted to finalize the construction bid but that he could leave out the corner for now.

Commissioner Roberts recommended 36' box red leaf shrubs and two crepe myrtles similar to the one by the book shop and they can be kept to 10'. If there is a visibility issue story poles can be set up to review.

Chairman Vavoulis asked about safety issue and if the City traffic engineer could look at the proposal.

Senior Planner Buss said that this issue has been reviewed and that he can get more information from the traffic engineer about setbacks.

Commissioner Hoopes said that they would carve out an area for the monument sign that will be reviewed and approved later.

Senior Planner Buss suggested approving two locations with the ability to move the sign.

Chairman Vavoulis said that they could carve it out and move it to the next meeting.

Mr. Ghaderi asked to carve out the area also and return to the Commission at a later date.

Commissioner Roberts asked about street improvements.

Commissioner Hoopes said that they need to be shown on the drawings.

Senior Planner Buss said that they can be bundled together and brought back to the Commission.

Commissioner Roberts asked if there would be a new tree near the existing crepe myrtle.

Senior Planner Buss mentioned creating more landscaping behind the bench.

Chairman Vavoulis noted that all the landscaping is being continued along with the sign. The address issue will come back to the Commission with the sign.

M/S/C Hoopes/Moldafsky to approve the architecture of the building with colors and landscaping to be approved later. Lantern size approved as shown on elevation drawings and not cut sheets. Include all staff Conditions of Approval. Unanimous 4-0.

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

Planner Gjolme went over staff report on this continued item and noted changes made.

The applicant (Carl Eng) proposed the various suggestions from the Commission to the corporate offices but they were not in support of them. Reverse channel letters would not work either so they came up with a darker aluminum back panel.

Commission Moldafsky said that he did not know where to go from here but he didn't think it looked right and that the sign would get lost.

Commission Hoopes noted the contrast between colors was solved and that he can make positive findings.

Commissioner Roberts said that he was disappointed and that he could not make the findings due to legibility. He was in support of staff's suggestion. He would prefer a reverse channel letter sign with a black field.

Commissioner Hoopes noted that looking at it straight is fine but obliquely it could change the readability.

The applicant said that a black background would be overwhelming

Planner Gjolme asked if the size of the black contour could be increased.

Chair Vavoulis asked Commissioner Moldafsky if he could make the findings.

Commissioner Moldafsky said that there was an aesthetic compromise to be made.

Commissioner Hoopes asked about the size and depth of the letters. The black would be too overwhelming when looked at obliquely.

Planner Gjolme said that the returns would be legible.

The applicant had Planner Gjolme show an example of an installed sign to the Commission.

Commissioner Roberts said that he would support reverse channel letters.

Commissioner Hoopes said that the letters look thinner than 5".

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Planner Gjolme asked the applicant about the use of reverse channel letters.

The applicant thought that the proposal addressed visibility and that the reverse channel letters would not aid in visibility at night. The day issue was getting clarity from the wall but not at night.

Commissioner Roberts thought that the sign would look awful at night and would prefer reverse channel letters.

The applicant noted that the proposed sign is similar to the AT&T sign in the center.

Commissioner Roberts noted that the AT&T sign had only three letters. He said that the Commission had to work with Chipolte 3-4 times before the sign was approved and installed.

Commissioner Moldafsky asked if the sign had reverse channel letters would Commissioner Roberts be able to approve it.

Commissioner Roberts said that he was disappointed in the sign but that he could support reverse channel letters.

The applicant thought that reserve channel letters would be too much.

M/S/C Moldafsky/Hoopas to approve the original design using reverse channel letters. Approved 3-1. No - Commissioner Roberts.

VII. PUBLIC HEARINGS:

A. Design Review 11-08; Kwon Orthodontics; 1528 Foothill Blvd.; new wall signs.

Planner Clarke outlined the request in accord with the staff memo, which involved installation of two new wall signs composed of an aluminum channel with foam letters.

Applicant Darren Tanabi clarified that the sign frame would be 3" solid tubing. He noted that the colors shown on the plan were not quite right. He distributed an actual color sample for the Commission to review.

Commissioner Roberts inquired if there was a color sample of the window mullion to review.

The Commission discussed the building's color, which had faded over time and become uneven.

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Commissioner Hoopes liked the idea of having the color of the existing panels run through the new sign.

Mr. Tanabi wanted to distinguish the sign color slightly from the panel color. He proceeded to distribute an alternate color sample that used a green panel with white letters.

The Commission regarded the alternate color scheme favorably and endorsed its use for the project.

M/S/C Roberts/Moldafsky to approve the request with use of the alternate color scheme, specifically "slippery lizard" as the background color and "sea shade" for letter color. Unanimous 4-0.

B. Design Review 11-07; Ankor Realty; 737 Foothill Blvd.; new wall and blade signs.

Planner Gjolme gave an overview of the project, which involved a new wall and blade sign added to a remodeled building previously approved by the Commission. A demonstration piece showing a lighted letter was displayed for the Commission. Staff appreciated the quality of the submittal and approval was recommended.

Chairman Vavoulis asked about the color of the dot.com portion of the sign.

Applicant Arun Jain stated it would be double-tone metallic and only 1.5" in height, and visible from directly in front of the business.

Commissioner Roberts was concerned that there was down-lighting on a sign that had upward lighting from the channel below.

Mr. Jain noted that the sign's letters were on a projecting ledge and that the gooseneck lighting would cast light onto the fascia behind the sign. He wanted to make the building more visible and translucent light gives more contrast and visibility. The space between the gooseneck lights and the terminus of the overhang is approximately 18 inches.

Commissioner Hoopes noted that the position of the goosenecks lights would allow for very limited lighting of the façade since the lights hung down near the top of the ledge.

Mr. Jain stated that the gooseneck lights can be raised accordingly.

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Commissioner Roberts felt the lighting scheme was quite "busy". He also felt the overhang's upper molding interfered with the top portion of the sign's individual letters.

Commissioner Hoopes agreed and said that the molding confuses the top edge of the letters.

Gary Swanson (designer) said that direct sunlight would intensify the shadows. The letters will create their own shadows and reduce the impact of the background molding.

Commissioners Hoopes stated that the edgy nature of the façade with contemporary feel of stone contrasted with the traditional gooseneck lights. He suggested a light bar along the upper molding in place of the goosenecks.

Mr. Jain agreed and said that it was a good suggestion that could be accommodated.

Commissioner Roberts noted that nothing was being done to light the blade sign to the side and that a light bar could be the solution. He did not like website names on signs as it seems busy. He preferred the sign without the website name.

Chairman Vavoulis agreed with Commissioner Roberts about the web address but it did not affect his ability to make positive findings for the sign.

Commissioner Hoopes liked the web address since it broke up an otherwise monotonous accent bar.

Commissioner Moldafsky stated that he did not understand the inconsistency of the two signs and felt they reflected two different businesses.

Mr. Jain confirmed that the signs are for two businesses. He choose blue since other signs in the area use that color and it would adequately distinguish the two businesses.

Commissioner Roberts noted that the actual color samples were different from the printed colors shown on the plans.

Commissioner Roberts noted the visibility issues with the blade sign, which would be partly obscured by the overhang as seen from the west. He did not object to the sign per say, but wanted something that read better and was more visible.

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Mr. Jain noted that Ankor Realty is the primary business while the other is secondary and the sign's exposure is not as important. The blade sign could be shifted to the east to improve visibility.

Commissioner Hoopes felt that a bronze plaque with simple raised letters on the front façade might be a more effective solution since the overall utility of the blade sign was somewhat questionable.

Mr. Jain was amendable to the idea.

Commissioner Moldafsky questioned the intent of the blade sign and asked what Mr. Jain was trying to communicate through its use.

Mr. Jain responded that identification of a secondary business was the purpose of the blade sign.

Chairman Vavoulis questioned the aesthetic value of the blade sign and felt it compromised the overall request.

Commissioner Hoopes wanted the 2nd sign to be classy and subtle as the building is edgy and use a plaque would achieve this.

Commissioner Roberts inquired if the electrical panel on the front elevation could be better disguised.

Mr. Jain responded that the color of the box will be painted to match the building.

Commissioner Roberts asked if the lighting fixtures were purchased yet and was hopeful they could be coordinated with the signs.

Mr. Jain stated that bronze or dark copper tones would be used for the light fixtures flanking the front entry.

Chairman Vavoulis suggested a subcommittee to review the light fixtures and alternatives for the blade sign. Commissioner Hoopes agreed to review the revisions.

M/S/C Hoopes/Moldafsky to approve the wall/ledge sign as submitted subject to; 1) gooseneck lighting shall be replaced with a light bar positioned under the top molding; 2) said light bar shall be painted to blend with the building color; 3) the blue blade sign shall be replaced with a plaque on the front elevation; 4) light fixtures on the front elevation shall be specified and coordinated with said plaque, subject to the review and approval from Commissioner Hoopes. Unanimous 4-0.

VIII. OTHER BUSINESS: None

IX. COMMENTS FROM THE COMMISSIONERS: There were no comments.

X. COMMENTS FROM STAFF: There were no comments.

XI. ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at 9:08 a.m.