

## DESIGN COMMISSION MINUTES

June 4, 2015 meeting

- I. **CALL TO ORDER:** Chairman Moldafsky called the meeting to order at 7:33 am.
- II. **ROLL:** also present were Commissioners Balcazar, Hoopes, King and Roberts.
- III. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** the Flag Salute was recited.
- IV. **COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC:** there were no comments.
- V. **CONSENT CALENDAR:** Minutes: 05-21-2015 DC Meeting. M/S/C Hoopes/King to approve the minutes as submitted. Unanimous 5-0.
- VI. **CONTINUED PUBLIC HEARINGS:**

Chairman Moldafsky inquired about which agenda items members of the public were in attendance for. Based on a show of hands, items A and B were re-ordered accordingly.

- A. **Design Review 14-27;** FirstElement Fuel; 550 Foothill Blvd.; new hydrogen fueling station.

Planner Cantrell commented on the project revisions since the prior two reviews. The associated Conditional Use Permit (CUP) has been approved so formal design review is now at hand. The prior submittal had metal murals on the wall, which were well regarded. The new proposal deviates and has a river rock base, undulated metal wave and lattice above. He discussed the current landscape scheme, and noted issues with revisions to the plan - disjointed clusters, removal of a Jacaranda tree, planting to the south that appear to preclude equipment access. With this said, staff is aware of the rigorous schedule for the project and has drafted conditions to address these issues in order to possibly facilitate approval at this time.

Commissioner Balcazar felt that what was now presented was not the direction the Commission had previously given. Her alternative was presented and simplifies things and is a concept/example only.

Dr. Shane Stevens - project applicant - had interpreted previous feedback a bit differently. He thought the murals were a bit too focal the design

moved away from them. The current idea is to make the wall recede rather than visually project. He stated that planting along the south side of the enclosure is not an issue since an access would need to be removed only a couple times a year to access the equipment. The project's landscape architect looked at the repertoire of planting local to the area and developed the current plan accordingly.

Chairman Moldafsky felt that the current design is much closer to what he envisioned from the last meeting. He liked the current submittal.

Commissioner Hoopes stated that the curvilinear metal wave was a little over the top. It needs to be smoothed out a bit. He liked the river rock and freeform idea and thought that dark textured block above would work well. He stated that the plaster wall to the left needs a grid to accommodate vines in order to "green it out". Overall, planting needs to be beefed up but the general concept is good.

Commissioner Balcazar asked why the west face of the enclosure was composed by two different walls.

Mr. Stevens responded that the lower portion of the wall to the north is recessed.

Commissioner King stated she was a bit confused about the street facing side and how the landscaping would accommodate access.

Mr. Stevens clarified that there is a gap between the wall and planter for worker access with mulch in between.

Joel Ewanic - CEO of FirstElement - added that the panels would be removed once a year for inspection. Actual doors were not needed so they were removed to make it look less like a trash dispenser. They wanted the structure to visually recede and disappear and have discussed all of the aesthetic particulars regarding the walls, lighting and landscaping.

Commissioner King asked about the south and east elevations.

Commissioner Hoopes asked about gates on the south side of the enclosure.

Mr. Stevens responded that a grade difference between the site and the adjacent property to the east would mitigate most impacts and that dual

metals gates that swing open for main facility access would be to the south.

Commissioner King confirmed that the metal gates would be corrugated.

Commissioner Hoopes noted that the doors appeared very industrial, but was not particularly concerned given the use.

Commissioner Roberts stated that, overall, the project is close. He liked the hedges along the east side. A Strawberry tree called out as a 36"-box specimen will actually be a small 5' tree when planted. The tree would be slow growing and is good for the long term but it will look like a shrub at first. He just wanted everyone to be aware of this. He preferred to replace the crape myrtle to the south with a new street tree in an expanded planter and noted that applicants have worked with the City on past projects to achieve this. The rock wave goes nowhere and reads as more of a rock mural. He liked the metal wave but felt it needed to be more graceful and planted behind. Pinning it far enough off the wall to install a privet hedge is a simple yet effective solution. In summary, he endorsed an extended metal wave that would reach the ends of the wall and return to the access panel and gates with a privet hedge installed behind the pinned metal wave. There was no need for river rock since it was an alien material that did not exist anywhere on site.

The Commission and the applicants supported Commissioner Roberts suggestions and were excited about the design direction the project was taking.

M/S/C Roberts/Balcazar to approve the project subject to the following revisions: river rock shall be removed from the walled equipment enclosure; a privet hedge shall be installed along the base of the walled equipment enclosure; the decorative metal wave shall incorporate a reduced/softened curvature and shall be pinned approximately 18" from wall to accommodate planting of said privet hedge. The metal wave shall be extended to the ends of the wall and shall include approximate 3-foot returns along the north and south sides - up to the removable access panel on the north face of the enclosure and access gates to the south; a Subcommittee consisting of Commissioners Roberts and Balcazar shall work with the applicant in revising the landscape plan, with focus on the north side of the equipment enclosure as seen from Foothill Blvd. Unanimous 5-0.

**B. Preliminary Design of the Foothill Boulevard Link Bikeway and Pedestrian Greenbelt Project** from Leata lane to Glendale Freeway (SR-2) at Hilliard Avenue.

Public Works Director Edward Hitti gave an update on the Link project, briefly explaining the background of project and revisions to the plan based on prior Design Commission input. He noted that the last tentatively scheduled meeting was cancelled in order to re-advertise the project to ensure public participation and comments. Prior Commission comments have been incorporated into the revised plan, which is now before the Commission for final comments. He detailed a number of technical design and circulatory changes to the project, again in accord with prior Commission direction and was available for any questions.

Commissioner Hoopes asked Mr. Hitti to clarify his last remark.

Mr. Hitti responded that the plan calls for a left turn pocket from Foothill Blvd. to Leata Lane that continues to the east and also allows for left turns onto Lone Pine Lane, which is a private street.

Chairman Moldafsky noted that a letter had been received from the public - Mr. Glenn Winters who resides at 1855 Foothill Blvd. He verbally entered said letter into the public record and noted Mr. Winter's concerns.

Chairman Moldafsky opened the public hearing and invited comments.

Bill Osbourne - 4625 Palm Drive - stated that the project is working from and relying on a study from 1973. He felt the design represented 'scabbing in a piece of artwork' that is not reflective of Foothill Blvd.'s continuity. He preferred to simply continue the existing medians along Foothill Blvd and to make the south retaining wall look more like the newer crib wall to the north. He noted a prior meeting where 13 of 15 community members opposed the project.

Alfonse Milanese - 3154 Vista Del Mar in Glendale - vice chair and secretary of the YMCA in attendance to read a prepared statement by the board of directors. The YMCA is extremely concerned with the 60% reduction of street parking that would result from the project and its negative impact on the YMCA's ability to serve the community. The YMCA board is committed to providing affordable parking solutions for all members. The YMCA encourages and supports a median greenbelt that will continue the existing City greenbelt west of Hillard Avenue. This would not impact street parking and would be a more viable

improvement. The YMCA board is hopeful that the City planners will continue to work with the YMCA and residents to develop such an alternative.

Gary Zentmyer - 5106 Earl Drive - as a cyclist, he spoke about the bike lane. He felt it did not make any sense to have a bike lane on both sides of the street. He stated that Class 1 bike lanes make sense only at the beach, since conflict will invariably result with bikers in the street. He recommended Class 2 lanes on both sides of the street.

Reid Samuelson - 1700 Earlmont - stated he was a 45-year resident and a 30-year rider. He questioned the overall community benefit from the project in terms of its functionality, appearance and safety. This seems to be a bike lane that goes from 'nowhere' to 'nowhere'. He did not understand why a linear park design was being pursued without a clear benefit to the community.

Beth Miller - 4525 Alcorn Drive - noted that there was no shade on Foothill Blvd. to walk her dog. The proposed plan will slow down traffic, and the proposed parking will preempt new trees. The City needs to be beautified on the west side of town. She felt that the City giving up land in front of the YMCA was ridiculous. The YMCA has done nothing to resolve the parking issue, and noted that the YMCA has added 2,200 members but has not provided any additional parking. The YMCA needs to live in its 'own footprint'. One solution might be to move their offices offsite. In concluding, she stated that Foothill Blvd. should not be overflow parking for the YMCA.

Chairman Moldafsky closed the public hearing.

Commissioner Hoopes stated that he just doesn't understand the biking situation. He drives Foothill Blvd. every day and bikers pass him. He did not think that bikers and pedestrian could utilize adjacent paths. It just is not safe. He liked the green improvements, but felt the plan could do better with the driveways down near the freeway. The bike lane just will not work since eastbound bikers will be in the street with the traffic, which is slightly higher in this area. In its current form, it is an unsafe plan.

Commissioner Roberts asked if Commissioner Hoopes had any recommendations on how to resolve it.

Commissioner Hoopes responded that the bike lane needs to go next to the traffic lane. This is the only solution.

Commissioner Roberts questioned if funding would be in jeopardy if the bike lane was relocated.

Mr. Hitti responded that either option can be supported and funded.

Chairman Moldafsky confirmed with Mr. Hitti that the project can be funded with either a Class 1 or Class 2 bike lane.

Commissioner Roberts stated that the bike lanes on both sides of Foothill Blvd. should be the same. It is a design issue first and foremost, but function matters too in this case.

Chairman Moldafsky agreed with Mr. Zentmyer's comments.

Commissioner Roberts asked about the required width of the bike lane if adjacent to the street.

Mr. Hitti responded that a 6' lane and 3' buffer would likely be required and that this could reduce the size of the parkway. The precise size was not yet known.

Commissioner Roberts asked about the ADA requirement for a pathway on the south side of the street.

Mr. Hitti responded that a width of 4 feet would be required.

Commissioner Balcazar agreed that the bike lane needed to be next to the traffic lane while maintaining the greenbelt to the extent possible. She was not aware that funding would be available for a Class 2 lane only. Given this, the entire design may need to be reviewed again from square one.

Commissioner King felt it was the Commission's responsibility to go back and look at all options. The bike lane would receive far more use if it was a Class 2 lane. The YMCA needs to take care of its own parking issue. She agreed that the Commission needed to look at the project from scratch given this new development and emphasized maximizing the green belt.

Chairman Moldafsky wanted more information on the strip of City property fronting the YMCA. He suspected a prior relationship with Caltrans.

Mr. Hitti responded that the strip in question was part of the overall Foothill Blvd. right of way when it was relinquished to the City. He clarify that public land cannot be grandfathered no matter how long it is used for private purposes. The YMCA has shared a preliminary parking plan with City, which includes this portion, which may or may not be relinquished to the YMCA.

Mr. Hitti reminded Commissioner King that the 35-foot greenbelt detailed in the Foothill Blvd. Master Plan is identified as a maximum requirement.

Commissioner Roberts stated that he could be amenable to sacrificing a portion of the greenbelt on south side for parking and possibly a portion of City property as well for the benefit of the YMCA.

Commissioner Hoopes noted that a revised plan with the bike lane out by the traffic lane would allow as much planting as possible along the wall. He felt an informal workshop was needed where the preliminary plan could be reviewed in detail and marked up/revised where necessary.

Chairman Moldafsky felt it was important to ensure correct and concise direction to staff and the consultant going forward from this point.

He re-emphasized that separating the bike lane from the pedestrian walkway was the primary issue without question.

Mr. Hitti stated that all comments from today's meeting would be taken into account and presented to the City Council subcommittee. The environmental review needed to be moved along so he was hopeful for some consensus and wrap up at this point.

Commissioner Roberts encouraged the consultant to limit the width of the south side foot path as much as possible and have it meander to and from the curb to accommodate planting of large trees. A decomposed granite (DG) or paver path could be possible considering the limited use and would help water the trees.

Mr. Hitti responded that the sidewalk could be closer to the curb where there is adjacent parking and meander it away from areas where there is no parking.

Commissioner Hoopes was concerned with lengthy sections of sidewalk given number of parking spaces. He felt the sidewalk needed to be offset as much as possible.

Mr. Hitti stated that a 4-foot path with DG would likely not be possible since it posed a maintenance and trip hazard and there would be ADA and liability concerns.

Commissioner Roberts noted that DG is used at the Mayor's Discovery Park.

Mr. Hitti clarified that this was an internal park - not a formal public sidewalk. He concluded that a concrete sidewalk was preferred, but it could meander to the extent possible and colored concrete could be used.

Responding to an earlier comment from Commissioner Roberts, Mr. Hitti stated that runoff would reach either the turf of trees since the typical 2% slope would be shifted toward the planters, not the street.

Chairman Moldafsky invited final comments/direction from the Commission.

As an aside, Commissioner Roberts mentioned the Cal Trans lot and its lack of landscaping.

Mr. Hitti responded that there was zero landscaping before the improvements. Landscaping has been added in concert with the Chamber of Commerce and Farmers Market. The area is now ADA compliant and a marked improvement from what previously existed.

There was Commission consensus to continue the project for further review with the aforementioned direction in the preceding discussion.

M/S/C Hoopes/Balcazar to continue the project to the 7/16/2015 Design Commission meeting. Unanimous 5-0.

**VII. PUBLIC HEARINGS:** there were none.

**VIII. OTHER BUSINESS:** there was none.

**IX. COMMENTS FROM THE COMMISSIONERS:**

Chairman Moldafsky inquired about the status of the La Canada Imports pole sign.

Director Stanley gave an update and stated that an appeal by the property owner to retain the sign was heard by the City Council but continued to a future date for additional information.

Commissioner Roberts again stated that several tulip trees at Ralph's have died and need to be replaced.

Planner Gjolme responded that Ralph's landscaping personnel had been contacted about the matter. He stated that the matter would be referred to code enforcement if not resolved soon.

**X. COMMENTS FROM STAFF:**

Director Stanley commented that Commissioner Hoopes did a great job preparing information for a Council consideration item pertaining to the Long Beach streetscape/civic conference.

**XI. ADJOURNMENT:** M/S/C/ King/Roberts to adjourn the meeting at 9:44 a.m. Unanimous 5-0.