

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE DESIGN COMMISSION
OF THE CITY OF LA CANADA FLINTRIDGE
HELD ON JULY 16, 2015**

- I. **CALL TO ORDER:** Chairman Moldafsky calls the meeting to order at 7:34 a.m.
- II. **ROLL:** Also present were Vice-Chair Hoopes and Commissioners Balcazar and King. Commissioner Roberts was absent.
- III. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**
- IV. **COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC:** None
- V. **REORDERING OF THE AGENDA:** Chair Moldafsky mentions that the sign reviews are anticipated to be brief, and recommends that they be conducted before the more lengthy continued public hearing on The Link right-of-way. M/S/C Balcazar/Hoopes to reorder the agenda: 4-0
- VI. **CONSENT CALENDAR:** M/S/C Hoopes/King to approve the July 2, 2015 Design Commission meeting minutes: 4-0

Commissioner Roberts arrives.

VII. CONTINUED PUBLIC HEARINGS:

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

Public Works Director Edward Hitti gives an overview, noting that it is expensive to keep returning to design review. He announces that the City Council subcommittee has approved Section E, with the project otherwise the same as before. Mr. Hitti notes that the most cost effective process is bring the latest revisions to the City Council. He states that Section E features separation between the Class 1 bicycle path and the sidewalk.

Director Hitti reviews the background, starting with the Foothill Boulevard Master Plan in 1991, with it linear park approved in concept by the City Council. The implementation plan was preliminarily approved by the City Council January 22, 2013. Subsequently, staff had two meetings with the YMCA in February 2015. That was followed by a Design Commission public hearing in April, and Design Commission study sessions. Staff then met with the City Council subcommittee

on June 17, discussing many revisions and adjustments pertaining to the linear park and bicycle lanes. Mr. Hitti notes that the Foothill Boulevard Master Plan concept for The Link included no parking on the Boulevard. He states that the current proposal is the closest the City can get to address everything while including both parking and a greenbelt. He notes that the parking stalls were modified to an 18-foot length, with no T markings, yielding 66 spaces. There would be no parking on the north side. He notes a bulb out at the bus shelter, and three ADA-compliant spaces at the YMCA and church. The YMCA driveway is aligned with Palm Drive. Director Hitti also mentions the possibility of a street vacation near the future YMCA parking structure.

With regard to the bicycle facilities, Director Hitti states that the City Council subcommittee separated the Class 1 bicycle lane from the sidewalk with a raised median, allowing 9 feet of width for the bicycle lane and 5 feet for the sidewalk. He reviews the reduction of median width and resulting increases in parkway width, stating that the Section E as approved by the City Council has yet to be shown on plan.

Mr. Hitti further notes the reduction in the #2 lane west of Palm Drive from 11 feet to 10 feet, and the inclusion of a left turn pocket at Lone Pine Lane. He notes that the parkway landscaping will be revised, and that up to 25 feet in landscape width will be provided on the south side, with some reduction of bulbout widths.

Director Hitti recalls the June 17th City Council recommendation to make another effort to send out letters to residents, including specific mention of left turn effects. That letter was sent out June 25, resulting in calls from 4 residents out of the 25 notified. He notes another City Council directive to reduce median length if possible to the east of Palm Drive. Mr. Hitti states that on the plan, median length east of Wasatch Drive at 1830 Foothill is to be reduced, and clarifies to Vice-Chair Hoopes that the landscape would preserve safe views, being no more than 30 inches in height. He states that the City Council also inquired about introducing a raised median at Hillard and Foothill.

Chair Moldafsky asks what the City needs from the Design Commission at this stage.

Community Development Director Robert Stanley replies that all non-residential projects are subject to Design Commission review, and that the Commission will be making recommendations to the City Council. He states that Director Hitti has been working toward the Commission's earlier comments, within constraints and City Council subcommittee directives. Mr. Stanley states that, other than those constraints, the Commission will be making a recommendation, and that to date

the Commission has made significant improvements to the project. He notes that the Commission can make a formal motion.

Vice-Chair Hoopes asks about the composition of the City Council subcommittee. Director Hitti replies that it is composed of Councilmembers Davitt and Walker.

Vice-Chair Hoopes asks if the Class 1 bikeway will serve all cyclists. Mr. Hitti replies affirmatively, noting that it would have its own right-of-way, separate from motor traffic on the south side. He adds that on the north side of the Boulevard, a Class 2 bike lane would continue. Mr. Hoopes confirms that, in general, Class 2 is used mostly by bike enthusiasts or commuters, while riders are slower on Class 1. He questions safety issues with pedestrians. Mr. Hitti states that cyclists and pedestrians would be separated. Chair Moldafsky questions the interface between cyclists and pedestrians at the ingress and egress to the separated lanes. Director Hitti acknowledges that those points would require caution, noting that cyclists do not have to worry about car doors or pedestrians. Mr. Moldafsky confirms that bicyclists will have to watch for pedestrians at the transition crossings.

Commissioner King notes that the City has narrowed the driving lanes on the south side for more landscaping and bike path, and asks if the subcommittee considered that bike commuters may tend to share the right-of-way with cars. She states that if the City wants to maximize use, accommodation of Class 2 cyclists would seem to make sense. Director Stanley notes that the Commission can decide whether to make that recommendation.

Chair Moldafsky notes that the Design Commission was not a party to the subcommittee discussions, and that no minutes of those discussions were provided. Director Hitti states that the subcommittee was authorized to make decisions on design. Mr. Moldafsky asks why the Commission should spend time on debating Section E if the City Council subcommittee has already chosen it.

Chair Moldafsky continues, noting that in public comments to the Design Commission, it was "painfully clear" that most cyclists won't use Class 1 facilities. He notes that between Plan B and Plan D there are very acceptable alternatives. He states that he is at a loss as to why the subcommittee would choose a dysfunctional option, but that it appears that they have already made their decision. He states that there is a clear option that would solve the functional problems. Vice-Chair Hoopes concurs, stating that he would love to make a rational plan, but that it appears to be tilting at windmills. Commissioner Roberts notes that it is unusual that a subcommittee can make a decision without public comment. Director Stanley states that it appears that the full City Council approved the plan in concept. Director Hitti refers to the City Council approval of the Foothill Boulevard Master Plan concept. Commissioner Roberts states that the

Foothill Boulevard Master Plan had 35 feet of greenbelt width, and that 4 feet of green space has no relation to it. Mr. Hitti states that the City Council had all the information. Chair Moldafsky asks if the City Council discussed the rationale for Plan E over Plan D. Director Hitti states that Class 1 is safer than Class 2. Mr. Roberts notes that it was not a problem on the north side. Mr. Moldafsky states that the information that the Commission received from the public, namely cyclists, indicated that they would not use the Class 1 facility. Mr. Hitti states that the City Council subcommittee is aware of that.

Chair Moldafsky opens the public hearing.

Bill Osborne, 4625 Palm Drive, states that the process is dysfunctional, with the City not listening to public testimony. He states that cyclists have spoken, and that the City is on notice. Mr. Osborne states that the City Council is not listening to the Design Commission or public.

Mr. Osborne confirms with Director Hitti that the YMCA would have two driveways, with one aligning with Palm Drive, and that Palm Drive would have a 4-way signal including a left arrow on eastbound Foothill Boulevard, timed according to need. Mr. Osborne further confirms that separate cycles will be provided for left turns from Palm Drive and from the YMCA.

Chair Moldafsky closes the public hearing.

Commissioner Balcazar notes the difficult process. She states that from noncyclist's perspective, the separation of cyclists is good. She notes the compromise of landscape between cyclists and pedestrians, and issues of ingress and egress, but that there is no one way to please everybody. Ms. Balcazar is "trying to look at the bright side", and not opposed to Class 1.

Commissioner Roberts states that Plan E has no relationship to the Foothill Boulevard Master Plan, with its 4 feet of landscape vs. 35 feet originally. He states that 25 feet seemed conceivable as a compromise, but that 4 feet of width is not a linear park, particularly when people walk back and forth on the limited area, reducing its turf to dirt. He states that the plan is "hideous looking" and a disgrace to the Foothill Boulevard Master Plan.

Vice-Chair Hoopes raises safety issues, noting that serious cyclists will ignore the Class 1 route. He expresses hope that they will choose it but has no faith in that occurrence. Mr. Hoopes notes that on Canada Boulevard, there is a bike lane stamp in the middle of the right hand lane. He states that this is how the project will end up being used, with bikers competing with cars. Mr. Hoopes states his agreement that Class 2 is probably not as safe as Class 1 near the hillside, but that cyclists are

not accustomed to Class 1. He states that it could be designed much more rationally, more like Section E, using bulbouts for exercise places, with meandering sidewalks. He states that it "looks almost like a lost cause", and that he can't vote for the proposal.

Commissioner King agrees with Vice-Chair Hoopes' comments, noting a missed opportunity to do something nice for the city and have more people use it. She states that it is shocking that two City Council members make a decision for whole Council while precluding public and Commission comments, and that it appears that the Commission's hands are tied.

Chair Moldafsky observes that there may have been miscommunication, and that perhaps the subcommittee felt that all input had been made. He believes that their intent must have been to do right thing. He notes things missing in thought process, questioning the real purpose of the Class 1 bike path. Mr. Moldafsky states that through compromise, the process has ended up with cross purposes that are unfortunate for the community. He expresses hope for a modified master plan consistent with Plan B, with more bulbouts. Chair Moldafsky suggests more time with the subcommittee, with Vice-Chair Hoopes' design assistance. Mr. Moldafsky reiterates his respect for the two Councilmembers comprising the subcommittee.

Director Stanley notes a clear Commission direction, and states that if the Commission desires, it can request that the City Council subcommittee come to a Design Commission meeting, or the Commission could form its own subcommittee to go to the City Council.

Commissioner Roberts states that it is unfortunate, that the Commission thought that it gave direction at the previous meeting, including a meandering path faithful to the Foothill Boulevard Master Plan.

Director Hitti states that the City cannot make changes from every Commission meeting. Vice-Chair Hoopes states that he can, and would be happy to do it. Mr. Hitti states that the meandering walk will be in the final plan. Mr. Hoopes states that he doesn't have that much trust at this point.

Chair Moldafsky states that he would support Plan B or D, putting in a Class 2 bike lane, which would make functional sense. The other Commissioners agree.

Director Stanley recommends that a Commissioner work with the consultant on the meandering configuration. Director Hitti states that they will work from a Commission sketch if provided.

Chair Moldafsky recommends that a motion be made to support typical sections that the Commission thinks will work, and states that they have explained why Section E is dysfunctional.

Director Stanley reminds the Commissioners that they can talk to Councilmembers any time they want. He suggests making a motion for recommendation, and offering Gordon's design and drawing, with landscaping to return to the Commission with a meandering course. Mr. Hoopes' drawing would go to Director Hitti first, followed by Commission discussion with the City Council subcommittee.

Chair Moldafsky reiterates that it was a big surprise to learn of the action taken without final Commission input.

M/S/C King/Balcazar recommending City Council approval of modified Master Plan B and D, based upon multiple input from public, as a compromise to the Foothill Boulevard Master Plan, and nominating Vice-Chair Hoopes to meet with the City Council subcommittee to assist in any way possible: 5-0.

VIII. PUBLIC HEARINGS:

A. **Design Review 15-11** **700 Foothill Boulevard** **Panda Express:**

New wall signs

Consulting Architect Cantrell gives an overview of the building design and sign approval history. He displays the new proposal involving a routed disc with punch-thru copy, to be installed on Foothill and on the east elevation. Mr. Cantrell notes that the sign would be of more conventional construction than the sophisticated existing sign in the interest of durability, but would continue the tradition of refinement of sophistication. It would work well with the building and conform to code limits. The sign's red field would not be illuminated. During the day, the red would balance against the canopies, but at night could have been too dominant. The white portions of the panda would be illuminated, and staff's only concern is the potential lighting level of those white areas. A condition is included in the event that the applicant does not provide a balanced lighting level.

Vice-Chair Hoopes asks if there would be a raceway behind the word "Panda". Mr. Cantrell replies that there would not.

Commissioner Roberts asks about alterations to the building. Mr. Cantrell states that any nonconformities from previous approvals can be addressed as part of the inspection clearance process.

Chair Moldafsky opens the public hearing; with no public testimony forthcoming, he closes the public hearing.

Commissioner Balcazar notes favorably the addition of the logo to the east side of the building.

Commissioner King concurs, noting that it adds more character to the building.

Vice-Chair Hoopes states that it is a good proposal overall.

M/S/C Hoopes/King to approve the project as submitted: 5-0

Commissioner Roberts confirms with staff that enforcement on any items not conforming to prior approvals will be made.

**B. Design Review 15-12
1434 Foothill Boulevard
Loris Moradian Insurance Agency, Inc.:**

New wall sign

Planner Gjolme notes the simple, straightforward proposal for the remodeled Zentmyer building. He describes the wall sign's externally illuminated pinned letters as of elegant and refined design, well reflective of the business. Mr. Gjolme notes the copy height of 5" to 8", with a total height of 2 feet and a span of 12 feet. He states that the sign is within code and without issues. He recalls a discussion in the memorandum about uncertainty as to whether the logo would have more than one color, noting that it is just a question without need for a condition. He shows the image on the company's website, showing two colors. Mr. Gjolme concludes that it is the type of sign the City endorses for the Old Town District.

Commissioner Balcazar asks Mr. Gjolme's view on whether the logo could be bigger. He responds that it could.

Commissioner Roberts asks about whether the vinyl finish is to be matte or glossy. Mr. Gjolme states that it is uncertain, and that the applicant would know, but that generally a matte finish is required.

Chair Moldafsky opens the public hearing; with no public testimony forthcoming, he closes the public hearing.

Chair Moldafsky states that the logo could look good enlarged. Commissioner Roberts disagrees, but endorses the use of a matte finish.

M/S/C Roberts/Hoopes to approve the sign as submitted: 5-0

**C. Design Review 15-13
4331 Oak Grove Drive
Hillside School & Learning Center:**

New wall sign

Planner Gjolme describes the sign as consisting of three rows of individual letters mounted on an existing low wall parallel to the street. He notes the offset logo and the straightforward composition straightforward, adding that it is unclear as to whether the letters would be pinned or flush-mounted, but that it is a moot point. He notes that the subcopy is called out as 2" high, but indicated as 4" on the bottom, adding that 2-inch copy would not be legible. Mr. Gjolme states that the "Hillside" copy is bold and strong relative to the low wall, but look in context to street setting it is appropriate. He recommends approval as submitted.

Vice-Chair Hoopes asks about the City policy on phone numbers. Planner Gjolme replies that it doesn't come up often, and that there is nothing in the code to preclude them. Consulting Architect/Planner Cantrell notes that the Sign Ordinance prevents a phone number from becoming too dominant by requiring that the business name be the dominant element. Director Stanley notes First Amendment prohibition of regulating content. Commissioner Roberts mentions that clutter would be an aesthetic issue; Mr. Gjolme concurs, but notes that it is not the case with the submittal.

Planner Gjolme notes the plantings shown. Commissioner Balcazar asks if the bench in front of the sign would be removed; Mr. Gjolme replies that he knows of no such plan.

Commissioner King confirms with Mr. Gjolme that the sign would rely solely on ambient lighting.

Chair Moldafsky opens the public hearing.

Robert Frank, Hillside Center Director, explains that the letters would be hard foam mounted with epoxy. Commissioner Roberts confirms with Mr. Frank that

students would sit on the bench, which Mr. Frank describes as two inches from the wall. Commissioner Roberts states his concern that the foam letters could be damaged or removed. He raises the possibility of moving the bench, which Mr. Frank agrees is an option.

Chair Moldafsky asks if other Commissioners are concerned about the letter size, adding that it is not an issue for him. Commissioner Balcazar states that larger subcopy might make sense, and Mr. Frank concurs. Mr. Gjolme displays the subcopy color as rendered. Vice-Chair Hoopes confirms with Mr. Frank that it would be per school colors.

Mr. Frank states that the landscaping would consist of lantana and possibly other drought tolerant species, cautioning that succulents might not be appropriate. Vice-Chair Hoopes endorses the choice of lantana.

Chair Moldafsky states his positive view of the sign.

Commissioner Roberts states that he is not fond of the phone number, and that it might make more sense to center the address with the phone number deleted. Mr. Frank states that the Police and Fire Departments want the address. Mr. Roberts adds that he likes the look of the bench, but is concerned about maintenance of the adjacent sign letters. Director Stanley states that maintenance is mandatory, addressed through code enforcement. Mr. Frank states that it is not expensive to replace letters as needed. Planner Gjolme notes that Mr. Cantrell recommends flexibility in the approval to allow for the use of metal if needed for durability.

M/S/C King/Balcazar to approve the sign with 4-inch top subcopy in blue to match the logo, with maintenance and change to metal as needed, with lantana added, and the option of removing the phone number and centering the address: 5-0.

IX. OTHER BUSINESS: None

X. COMMENTS FROM THE COMMISSIONERS:

Commissioner King states that banners are still present at The Proper. Planner Gjolme replies that code enforcement is already active on that, and that he can recheck its status.

XI. COMMENTS FROM STAFF:

Planner Gjolme provides signage updates on La Canada Imports, Hello Pizza, and John Hart Real Estate.

Director Stanley states that the pole sign will be removed at 7-Eleven, albeit within a year from the Council's action date. Commissioner Roberts states that he would like to be involved with that project, and that resolution has to be out there somewhere. He states that the corporation can compromise and be a nice neighbor, perhaps working with the Chamber and Pat Anderson.

Director Stanley states that he needs conference expense information from Vice-Chair Hoopes.

Chair Moldafsky reiterates his respect for the City Council, and his belief that miscommunication has led to the state of The Link review.

XII. ADJOURNMENT: M/S/C Roberts/Hoopes to adjourn at 9:38 a.m.: 5-0.