

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE DESIGN COMMISSION
OF THE CITY OF LA CANADA FLINTRIDGE
HELD ON JULY 18, 2013**

- I. **CALL TO ORDER:** Chairman Moldafsky called the meeting to order at 7:30 a.m.
- II. **ROLL:** Present were Commissioners Hoopes, Roberts, Tobias, Director of Community Development Stanley, Planners Gjolme and Clarke. Commissioner Vavoulis was absent.
- III. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** The Flag Salute was recited.
- IV. **COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC:** There were none.
- V. **CONSENT CALENDAR:**
 - A. Minutes – July 3, 2013 meeting. Approved as submitted. Unanimous 4-0.
- VI. **CONTINUED PUBLIC HEARINGS:** There were none.
- VII. **PUBLIC HEARINGS:**
 - A. **Design Review 13-08; Rita’s Ice Custard Happiness; 468 Foothill Blvd.;** new wall sign.

Planner Clarke gave an overview of the request for a new wall sign. He noted a size issue that would need to be remedied and lack of definition for the ice custard letter-box component, but positive findings could be made and approval was recommended.

Commissioner Tobias confirmed that individual channel letters would be used for the “Rita’s” copy and light boxes would be used for the two logos.

Jeff Reich – applicant for the sign – offered to answer any questions. He was amenable to reducing the size of the sign where necessary.

Commissioner Tobias felt the letter box to the right was a tad overpowering and thought pinned letters might work better.

Commissioner Roberts was concerned with the extent of illumination, in particular the white field of the letter box.

Chris Rogers - franchise owner - stated that the sign is a nationally registered trademark and he was simply adhering to corporate sign standards and details.

Commissioner Hoopes noted the extent of ambient light at the site and did not regard the extent of proposed illumination as critical.

Commissioner Roberts appreciated the cup logo and thought it could be larger.

The Commission's consensus was to reduce the size of the letter box and increase the size of the cup logo and use a neon border for all three sign components as opposed to standard internal illumination.

M/S/C Tobias/Roberts to approve the new sign subject to: the size of the smoothie logo shall be increased up to the maximum square footage unallocated for the sign and letter box. The logo shall have a light blue neon border and returns if proposed; "Rita's" copy shall be composed of open-faced green channel letters with exposed neon and green returns; the size of the text box component of the sign shall be reduced by 30%. It shall have no internal illumination and shall have a light blue neon border matching the color provided by the applicant. Returns if proposed shall also be light blue. Unanimous 4-0.

B. Design Review 13-05; La Canada Smiles Dentistry; 2220-A Foothill Blvd.; new wall sign.

Planner Gjolme gave an overview of the request for a new wall sign, and noted use of variable font size, style and means of illumination. Though straightforward and composed of internally illuminated letters, the sign was appropriate for the use and consistent with other signs in the center. Approval was accordingly recommended.

Commissioner Hoopes felt the sign worked well with the building and center.

Commissioner Tobias felt the "LC" should be larger to match the other over-size letters proposed, but it was not a major issue for him.

The Commission agreed that lower-case letters should be used for the monument sign panel per staff's recommendation, and noted that "Smiles Dentistry" was a better choice for the panel as opposed to simply "Dentistry".

M/S/C Hoopes/Moldafsky to approve the sign as submitted with use of lower-case letters for the monument sign panel. Unanimous 4-0.

C. Zone Change 13-01; amendment to City's Sign Ordinance to allow LED reader boards in excess of 4 sq. ft. on certain Public/Semi-public and Institutional properties.

Planner Gjolme outlined the potential changes to the City's Sign Ordinance that would allow electronic reader-boards on certain schools within the City. He explained that the focus of the amendment would be expanding the sign standards matrix to include a section specific to reader-boards. Discussion of the matrix and direction was sought by staff in advance of Planning Commission and City Council review of the changes.

Commissioner Tobias thought that a 20 sq. ft. reader-board was too large, and confirmed that the number was a starting point for discussion.

Commissioner Tobias found it odd that churches were no longer considered potential candidates. He thought reader-boards would be more valuable to churches rather than schools. He noted that the Commission routinely rejects illuminated box signs and felt all reader-boards are just another type of box sign. He was very concerned with the lack of control for the means of displaying the message and felt this was the wrong direction for the City.

Commissioner Roberts commented that reader-boards outside of main retail areas are not necessarily offensive. He thought the location for LCHS's reader-board was acceptable considering its relative isolation and lack of impacts.

Commissioner Tobias commented that this issue started with Saint Francis High School wanting a sign. One request does not warrant a code change to this extent.

Chairman Moldafsky felt the idea was just wrong and embodied political favoritism.

Commissioner Roberts asked why Variances couldn't be applied for on a case-by-case basis.

Director Stanley noted that the findings for a Variance are very arduous and would not likely be supportable.

Commissioner Hoopes recognized the problem but noted that if the Commission doesn't tailor some sort of design criteria recommendation, they could be turning things over to the Planning Commission and City Council.

Commissioner Roberts was sensitive to staff's position but felt more discussion and outreach to the Council could help resolve things.

Chairman Moldafsky felt that the Commission should formulate a message to the Council and reaffirm their opposition to any code change that would allow reader-boards.

Commissioner Tobias suggested the Commissioners contact the Council members individually.

Chairman Moldafsky felt a continuance to the next meeting would afford time to formalize the Commission's opinions and opposition.

Commissioner Tobias thought the idea of a joint meeting with the Planning Commission would be beneficial. The two Commissions seem to be in agreement on the issue and need to voice their message to the Council.

Commissioner Tobias detailed specific issues with reader-boards - driving distractions from reading text, difficult to enforce as signs can change, regulating brightness, and lack of set design standards for the actual message.

Commissioner Hoopes was worried that the Commission would lose control over a major portion of the sign; the color, style and size of the message would be almost impossible to regulate.

Chairman Moldafsky restated that the issue was unfair and simply wrong for the community.

Commissioner Tobias understood staff's attempt to develop siting and design parameters, but felt the preliminary standards were totally arbitrary and unfair.

Chairman Moldafsky encouraged the Commission to come up with specific points of opposition and relay it to staff.

Planner Gjolme commented that the points raised could be incorporated into a formal resolution in opposition to the reader-board code change.

Staff and the Commission agreed to a date of July 24, 2013 to hold a special meeting to discuss the issue further.

VIII. OTHER BUSINESS: There was no other business.

IX. COMMENTS FROM THE COMMISSIONERS: None.

- X. **COMMENTS FROM STAFF:** None.
- XI. **ADJOURNMENT:** The meeting was adjourned at 9:05 a.m.