

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE DESIGN COMMISSION  
OF THE CITY OF LA CANADA FLINTRIDGE  
HELD ON JULY 21, 2011**

- I. CALL TO ORDER:** Vice Chairman Hoopes called the meeting to order at 7:30 a.m.
- II. ROLL:** Present were Commissioners Hoopes, Moldafsky, Roberts and Tobias, Director of Community Development Stanley, Planners Gjolme and Clarke. Commissioner Vavoulis was absent.
- III. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** The Flag Salute was recited.
- IV. ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR:** This was postponed until all Commissioners were present: M/S/C Roberts/Tobias 3-1.
- V. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC:** None.
- VI. CONSENT CALENDAR:**
- A.** Minutes – June 16, 2011 Meeting.

Commissioner Hoopes reviewed the minutes and noted that he would like to postpone voting on them. He wanted to look at other minutes and to possibly shorten them which would be easier and less time-consuming for staff and the Commission.

Direct Stanley said that the Commission could approve the minutes and look at the issue later.

Commissioner Hoopes said that some things were unclear and that he would have difficulty approving them.

Commission Tobias said that the Chair could speak to staff privately.

M/S/C Tobias/Roberts to table until next meeting: 4-0.

**VII. PUBLIC HEARINGS:**

- A. Design Review 11-09; ARCO; 550 Foothill Blvd.; treatment of existing pole sign.**

Director Stanley gave a presentation from the staff report.

Commissioner Roberts asked if they could request improvements to the landscaping. He said that there was a nexus for the street tree in the planter.

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Director Stanley said that the application was only for the pole sign and not for landscaping.

Marc Fink, 1410 North Bailey, Anaheim said that he had visited the site and spoken to Director Stanley about landscaping. He advised ARCO about it but they did not do it yet.

Commissioner Roberts asked about the extent of the required landscaping.

Planner Gjolme gave an overview of landscaping, which was required to screen an equipment enclosure along Woodleigh Lane.

Mr. Fink said that he will see to it that it happens.

Commissioner Roberts said that the site desperately needs landscaping and that it would not cost a lot of money. It was a shame that the Commission can not use this opportunity since we are stuck with a pole sign. He wanted to match species on the site in the planter areas. He can select exact shrubs on a visit site.

Commissioner Tobias asked if ARCO was amenable to working on the planters.

Mr. Fink said that he can not speak for Arco but will tell them of the Commission's concern.

Commissioner Hoopes asked about the requirement to improve the planters.

Director Stanley noted that the area around the Healy tank on the side needed landscaping.

Commissioner Tobias noted that they could apply for matching City funds for the work.

Director Stanley agreed and suggested that Commissioner Roberts could form a subcommittee to review the issue.

Commissioner Roberts said that all three planters should be addressed at the same time.

M/S/C Tobias/Moldafsky to approve the request subject to landscaping as recommended by the subcommittee under the pole sign and as required adjacent to the equipment enclosure along Woodleigh Lane, and a suggestion that ARCO upgrade the center planter on Foothill Blvd. Unanimous 4-0.

**B. Design Review 11-11;** North Shore Burgers; 1929 Verdugo Blvd.; new wall sign.

Planner Gjolme gave an overview of the proposal.

Applicant, Mike Davitt, thanked staff for the presentation and work on the case. Challenge was the 120' distance from the street for the business. He noted that the designer was in attendance to answer questions. He said that the pillar blocks the view of the business and sign. He said that the graphic shown does not capture the distressed look of the proposed sign.

Commissioner Hoopes thought that it was tough to read the sign but if the letters were spaced out more it might be a bit more legible.

Commissioner Moldafsky asked if the spacing between the letters or words was the primary issue and acknowledged the need to stay within the size bonuses as allowed by code.

Applicant Corey Northcott said that the renderings are hard to properly assess since they are one-dimensional and utilize ink-jet colors. You can not see the depth of letters which sets them off the fascia. He suggested increasing the yellow color at the center of the background surfboard to provide additional contrast with the red letters.

Planner Gjolme said that the Commission had the same issue with the recently approved sign for Anytime Fitness.

Commissioner Tobias said that the sign seemed small considering the available sign-band area. He suggested that the sign should be bigger considering the available space. He asked if the Commission could increase the size of the sign.

Commissioner Hoopes inquired about the size of the adjacent café sign.

Planner Gjolme said that a variance would be required to increase the size of the sign.

Commissioner Roberts suggested an open faced channel letter with exposed neon. This would jazz up the sign and make it look special at night.

Commissioner Tobias pointed to Jersey Mike's as an example of exposed neon that was approved by the Commission.

Mr. Northcott said that the client wanted to keep the distressed look of the letters. Open neon would not allow for that effect.

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Commissioner Roberts asked if a neon component could be added to the background surfboard.

Commissioner Tobias said that a nice cool blue neon band around the surfboard would draw the eye to the sign at night.

Commissioner Roberts was concerned about the aged look on the plastic as it may look broken and that he preferred reverse channel letters.

Commissioner Tobias asked if the palm tree at the front of the property could be trimmed to improve visibility of the sign.

Commissioner Moldafsky suggested that the applicant meet with the property owner about the tree issue.

Commissioner Hoopes asked about changing the color of the surf board.

Mr. Davitt said that he was sensitive to suggestions made and about having to work with the confines of the sign-band area. There are local La Canada Flintridge people involved in the business. He intended to keep the gooseneck lighting already on the building.

Commissioner Roberts asked if uplighting could be used to illuminate the sign from below. This would give the sign an added dimension.

Commissioner Hoopes said that gooseneck lights were not appropriate for this project as they are built to shine on the patio and if upturned would overexpose the wall.

Mr. Davitt thanked the Commission for the suggestions and said that he will investigate them.

Commissioner Roberts preferred a metal sign that utilized uplighting and retention of the surfboard element, around which a neon band could still be added.

Mr. Davitt said that they can easily change lighting. He noted that there are lights from neighboring businesses also. Because of timing issues, he preferred approval of the sign as submitted with the intention to fully explore the Commission's suggestions at a later date.

Commission Hoopes said that they needed a motion so that members can vote to approve the request.

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Commissioner Tobias made a motion to approve what was submitted and recommend that the applicant consider the Commission's alternatives.

Commissioner Roberts said that he can not support a red channel letter sign even with the distressed look. He asked if Commissioner Tobias could form a subcommittee to explore alternative designs.

Director Stanley said that the Commission can give general direction to Commissioner Tobias or appoint two people as subcommittee.

Commissioner Roberts said that the use of channel letters was the wrong direction.

Commissioner Moldafsky said that they made the wrong statement.

Mr. Northcott disagreed and said that internal illumination is best since view of the sign is easily lost given the distance to Verdugo Blvd.

**Commission Roberts noted that** Jersey Mike's had a bad location and is thriving. Given the adjacent theater complex, he felt the business would have ample exposure.

Commissioner Tobias said that it was hard to see the sign from street as people only get a second to see it. The target audience will be movie-goers and community members who know the business is there.

M/S/C Tobias/Moldafsky to approve the application as submitted with the understanding that the applicant will consider using a neon band around the surf board, and a strong recommendation not to use channel letters but rather pinned-off non-plastic letters with uplighting. Approved 3-1. No - Commissioner Roberts.

**C. Design Review 11-12;** Printsmith/Sossi Jewelry Collection; 837-839 Foothill Blvd.; new awning and relocation of existing signs.

Planner Clarke outlined the request which involved installation of new awnings, repainting the building and relocating existing signs.

Commissioner Roberts asked about moving existing signs up and if there was adequate space to accommodate the signs.

The applicant, Paulette Geragos, believed that there was adequate space for the signs. She said that the wall along the driveway was not to be painted Kale. She also said that the brick was unattractive and needed the splash of color - Kale.

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Commissioner Hoopes confirmed submittal of the Kale color sample.

Commissioner Tobias confirmed that no signage was proposed on the awning at this time.

Commissioner Hoopes said that this was a good example of what he doesn't like about the street trees. Trees have been watered and canopies block views of the Printsmith sign.

Ms. Geragos said that the City has trimmed the tree.

Commissioner Hoopes said that he had visited site yesterday and noted that the tree blocks a sign. In addition, the 2<sup>nd</sup> tree next door also blocks the tenant to the east.

Commissioner Roberts said that he was working on the street tree plan. The tree is the wrong species and in the wrong location - "skeletal" trees in different locations are proposed.

Ms. Geragos said she plans to restore planters in front of Printsmith.

Commissioner Tobias asked if the brick column serves any actual function.

Ms. Geragos said not as far as she knows.

Commissioner Hoopes said that the building is at an angle in relation to the street and that the buildings steps back and the brick is likely integral.

Commissioner Roberts said that the brick wall was a 1950s architectural detail.

Commissioner Tobias asked if there was a color elevation.

Commissioner Hoopes said that he didn't like the Kale brick column or the stripe on the building.

Commissioner Roberts said that he liked jazzy signs but subdued buildings. This was too strong a look for a 3-tenant building. He noted that the downfall of the Town Center had to do with how it was painted.

Ms. Geragos said that the tenants are excited with the proposed colors.

Commissioner Hoopes asked if it would be possible to see a color version of the proposed building. He needs to see it before voting.

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Mike Geragos, who prepared the drawings, wanted to see it continued to a date certain.

Commissioner Roberts didn't have an issue with the brick being painted, but did with the color proposed. He was likely not in favor of the color palette as currently submitted. It lacks harmony at this stage.

Ms. Geragos said that it was meant to be fun and interesting.

Commissioner Roberts said that the findings require harmony.

Commissioner Hoopes said that they should explore other color options before coming back.

M/S/C Moldafsky/Tobias to continue to future meeting: 4-0 approved

**D. Design Review 11-13;** Crescenta Canada Family YMCA; 1930 Foothill Blvd.; copy change to existing pole sign.

Planner Gjolme gave a brief overview of the proposal.

Commissioner Roberts recused himself since he lived within 500 feet of the property.

Commissioner Tobias asked about the beige pole and confirmed that it was in good shape and did not need to be painted.

Commissioner Tobias felt this was the best solution for signage at this time and had no issues with the request as proposed.

The Commission had no issues with the proposal.

M/S/C Tobias/Moldafsky to approve the request as submitted. Approved 3-0.

**VIII. OTHER BUSINESS:**

There was no other business.

**IX. COMMENTS FROM THE COMMISSIONERS:**

Commissioner Tobias asked about reordering agendas in the future in order to expedite the simpler cases.

Commissioner Tobias asked about the park and ride lot painting update.

Director Stanley said that he was not sure if was budgeted.

Commissioner Roberts noted that one of the new street trees and two parking lot trees at Ralph's had died and needed to be replaced.

Planner Clarke said that he would look into it.

**X. COMMENTS FROM STAFF:**

Director Stanley spoke about the tree ordinance going through the review process and that Chinese elm and pepper trees were being removed from the protected list.

Commissioner Roberts asked if there could be tree zones and referenced Hampton Street in relation to Chinese elms. He wished that there was a way to make it work everywhere. He said that a tree czar/expert should be hired by the City.

Director Stanley said that he had discussed this in the past with the City Council and that it was not the direction they wanted to pursue.

Commissioner Tobias asked about a tree 'committee'. He also asked about relaxing the Code to allow for additional sign area.

Director Stanley said that the Sign Ordinance will be reviewed in the future and this can be addressed at that time.

Commissioner Roberts stressed the importance of having actual color and material samples to review, rather than photos of said materials.

Director Stanley mentioned the Alta Dena dairy and that enforcement of the authorized painted of the roof was underway.

**XI. ADJOURNMENT:** The meeting was adjourned at 9:10 a.m.