

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE DESIGN COMMISSION  
OF THE CITY OF LA CANADA FLINTRIDGE  
HELD ON OCTOBER 6, 2011**

- 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 no comments.
- V. CONSENT CALENDAR:**
- A.** Minutes - September 15, 2011 meeting. Not distributed and tabled until the next meeting.
- VI. PUBLIC HEARINGS:**

**A. Design Review 11-20;** Cal Star Realty; 1033 Foothill Blvd.; new awning on front façade.

Planner Gjolme gave an overview of the proposal which involves an awning addition to a building that received prior approval from the Design Commission for exterior façade changes.

Rick Samkian - business owner - stated that the awning fabricator is from Glendale.

Commissioner Tobias liked the awning but thought the valance copy was excessive and favored separating the words and removing "WWW" from the web address.

Commissioner Hoopes thought the business name could be centered and flanked by the phone number and web address to the left and right, respectively. He also thought the top of the awning should be lowered a few inches to provide additional separation from the bottom of the newly installed wall sign.

Commissioner Tobias felt that cream-colored letters would be appropriate given the building's color.

M/S/C Tobias/Roberts to approve the awning subject to the following: awning valance copy shall be left, center and right justified as follows: "818-952-2815", "Real Estate Sales & Financing", "calstarinc.com". Valance copy color shall be cream to match the building façade. Awning height shall be reduced to approximately 3'-3" to provide separation from the bottom of the existing wall sign. Unanimous 4-0.

**B. Design Review 11-21; Big Lots; 2243 Foothill Blvd.; new monument sign.**

Planner Clarke reviewed the request to add a new monument sign at the Big Lots property in accord with the staff report.

Commissioner Roberts confirmed that the sign request was from the new owner of the property.

Commissioner Tobias inquired about staff's recommendation to include 5 tenant spaces on the sign instead of 6 as requested.

Planner Clarke responded that staff was concerned about spacing and the lack of legibility between marquees if 6 tenants were included on the sign.

Commissioner Hoopes had no questions for staff.

Applicant Mickey Woo - representing the property owner - stated that he tried to follow City codes and guidelines when designing the sign. Letter size is adequate for offsite visibility. He noted that the Fire Department requested 6" letters or greater in size.

Commissioner Hoopes inquired how future tenant changes would be accommodated.

Mr. Woo responded that the PVC letters are interchangeable and can be removed from the marquee.

Commissioner Roberts confirmed that patching and painting would be possible to adjust for variation in the size and length of future signs.

Commissioner Hoopes asked how far the edge of the sign base was from the planter wall.

Mr. Woo responded approximately 4 feet.

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Commissioner Roberts inquired and confirmed that the trim of the sign would be composed of wood.

Commissioner Tobias felt an 8'x5' pine face would be difficult to fabricate.

Mr. Woo explained that the sign face would be segmented with tongue and joint.

Commissioner Roberts noted that he was typically in favor of white letters on dark backgrounds, but was concerned about the lack of a relationship with the existing monument sign, which utilized dark letters against a white field.

Commissioner Hoopes felt that maximizing letter size and the number of tenants was compromising the look and legibility of the sign. He felt decreasing the letter size was necessary.

Commissioner Hoopes also preferred the sign's base to be extended to match the width of sign.

Commissioner Hoopes inquired about the plants proposed in front of the sign.

Commissioner Roberts noted his review of the prior landscape plan and appropriateness of the proposed plantings.

Commissioner Tobias agreed with Commissioner Hoopes' comments.

Chairman Moldafsky summarized the Commission's consensus to broaden the stone base to match the width of sign and to reduce letter height by 1 inch.

Commissioner Tobias favored a condition requiring the removal of temporary signs at the property. He also preferred an alternate/darker material for the sign's border.

Director of Community Development Stanley responded that the temporary sign issue was already being handled by code enforcement but that Commissioner Tobias' condition could be included.

Commissioner Tobias commented that the two signs would still appear too different given the contrasting field/copy color. He preferred the new sign to match the style of the other monument sign and to remain within code limits, with extension and sloping of the rock base and removal of unauthorized temporary signs as previously noted.

M/S/C Tobias/Hoopes to approve the sign with the following conditions: match the design and composition of the existing monument sign, extend the sign base to match the width of the sign, angle the base similar to the existing monument sign, reduce letter height by 1" and remove existing unauthorized temporary signs. Unanimous 4-0.

**C. Design Review 11-18 & 11-22;** Gilmore Bank; 964 Foothill Blvd.; new wall signs, awnings and exterior alterations.

Planner Gjolme gave an overview of the project.

Commissioner Roberts noted that the neighbor to east has non-illuminated acrylic letters.

Commissioner Tobias asked if the designer tried other colors for the columns.

Applicant Dan Stein (Gilmore Bank) spoke about how to unify the building including using painted elements on the face of the building. The owners wanted to clean up the facade of the building as it was too patchy. Security is big concern for financial institutions and the main entry to the business is from the rear parking lot with the street facing entrance used for exit purposes only. He said that the proposed sign is appropriate and compatible with the block. The handicapped accessible rear entry meets for ADA requirements.

Commissioner Roberts asked about how they would communicate that the main entry to the building is to the rear.

Applicant Stein said that there was a small sign indicating entry to the rear.

Commissioner Hoopes asked about the bar relief and the quoins. They would need to be filled by skin coating.

Applicant Stein said that they may make them flush with the façade surface.

Commissioner Hoopes said that they could create visible shadow lines. Need to skin coat the joints.

Applicant Stein said that the brick would be skin coated.

Commissioner Hoopes said that the awning seems to be in middle of the brick element and that it does not have a relationship with the architecture of the building.

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Applicant Stein said that the awning will cover the brick. They may have to remove the brick in order to make it flush.

Commissioner Tobias asked if the gooseneck lights would stay.

Applicant Stein said that they will be removed from the front but kept on the rear elevation.

Commissioner Hoopes asked why they did not use the business logo on the front of the building and why were different awnings proposed for the front and back elevations of the building.

Applicant Stein noted that the awnings were the same color and similar in design.

Commissioner Hoopes asked if it was safe to have an ATM in the back of the building.

Applicant Stein said that there was no parking along the front of the building on Foothill Boulevard. People would have to walk around the building to the ATM machine in front. The rear would be illuminated with a new pole light in the parking lot.

Commissioner Hoopes asked about whether there were any measures to prevent the light spilling from the light pole to the neighboring properties.

Applicant Stein said that the light from the pole stopped at the property line.

Planner Gjolme said that the ambient light would have to be captured at the property line. He had not seen the pole light before.

Applicant Stein said that the lights were small in size and that no light shined upwards.

Commissioner Tobias asked if neighbors would get notified about the pole light. His preference would be to meet with the neighbors. He suggested providing some screening such as trees.

Applicant Stein said that the trees are pretty dense now but that he was happy to give notice to the neighbors.

Planner Gjolme said that they can notify them as a courtesy and require mitigation if necessary.

Commissioner Hoopes asked if the new fixtures match anything else.

Applicant Stein said that there were no other fixtures in the parking lot.

Commissioner Tobias asked if Commissioner Hoopes could look at the proposed fixtures.

Commissioner Roberts said that it was a historic building. He looked at the Calstar building slides. He was concerned about the color of the cornice. If the awnings were open-ended with metal supports, it would make it look more vintage; similar to when the building was constructed. He wanted to give character to the building and not just create another stucco box. A subtle grey accent for the cornice would be good.

Commissioner Tobias said that it can help a business if it is located in a historical building since residents like that.

Commissioner Roberts said that the railings at the rear of the building could be painted black or charcoal grey.

Commissioner Tobias said that metallic color for the railings could work.

Commissioner Hoopes agreed with the historic issues and importance of retaining some of the building's character.

Applicant Stein said that he had no problem changing the color. He could work with the designer and show the Commission different colors.

Chair Moldafsky said that it was a clean and easy sign to read.

M/S/C to continue the project with the applicant to resubmit plans with the window/cornice colors of a grayish tone. The awning design should be open-ended with metal supports.

Commissioner Hoopes asked if they should have a subcommittee to look at revised plans before it comes back to the Commission.

Applicant Stein asked if the Commission could approve the sign so that it could be fabricated.

Planner Gjolme asked if there were any issues with the proposed improvements to the rear of the building.

Commissioner Tobias said that the Commission likes logos and if the front sign could incorporate the logo.

Commissioner Roberts asked about the legibility of the color and the shading of letters on sign.

Applicant Stein said they he could have the sign designer attend a meeting, if needed, but the minimal 2" depth of the letters didn't call for shading.

Commissioner Roberts suggested black shadow to enhance the sign.

Ron Coley (designer) said that he has worked on signs for the bank for years.

Planner Gjolme asked if the improvements to the rear of the building could be approved.

M/S/C Roberts/Tobias to continue the improvements proposed for the front elevation and approve the rear improvements - sign, ATM and ramp. 4-0.

**VII. OTHER BUSINESS:**

**A. Discussion on temporary commercial banners**

Director Stanley spoke about the color of the roof of the Alta Dena dairy. He would do follow-up if there was a complaint. He said that the City does not do sign sweeps per the City Council's direction. Sweeps can be reinstated at a later date if the Council decides to do that.

Commissioner Tobias asked if the Chamber opposes sweeps.

Pat Anderson from the Chamber of Commerce spoke about being at the City Council meeting and the issue of illegal signs. Most business owners cooperate except for a couple of people. She had mixed feelings about sign sweeps. The boulevard can look sloppy if there is no enforcement. She wants to talk to the business owners first.

Commissioner Roberts said that long-term temporary banners look terrible.

**B. Sprouts Farmers Market - revision to front elevation.**

Director Stanley gave an overview of changes to the plans proposed by Sprouts.

Commissioner Tobias asked if any other Substantial Conformance changes were approved other than the front bump-out under consideration by the Design Commission.

Director Stanley noted that changes to the shelving in the store had been approved.

Commissioner Tobias asked if the back of freezers in the store could be seen through the windows.

Director Stanley answered no and then mentioned that Sprouts had requested new roof skylights but had since withdrawn that request rather than return to the Design Commission.

Rick Samkian (architect) said that the plan had changed due to differences in operations between Henry's and Sprouts. This was the narrowest building Sprouts had ever gone into. He said that the proposed façade changes were not that extensive. He understood that the changes were originally approved.

Commission Roberts asked if Sprouts considered a smaller bump-out.

Rick Samkian said that the store is narrow and that the aisle widths had been reduced and that it is hard to fit all the functions in the confined space.

Commissioner Tobias asked if Sprouts could move the offices elsewhere in the store. He said that the approved façade was attractive but that the proposed changes were not balanced.

Rick Samkian said that his aim was to minimize changes to the façade and that they were 99% compliant.

Commissioner Roberts said that the wall of the proposed bump-out was too big. He was concerned that it could turn into an area for posting flyers. The blank façade calls for something to be done to it.

Commissioner Hoopes made a motion with the following conditions of approval: exterior materials for the bump-out to be the same as the wood siding proposed on the upper gable of the facade; three faux windows are to be installed on the front face of the bump-out with shutters and appropriate real hardware; windows to look real and be able to be operated; the architect is to select windows; rock base and wood siding is to be wrapped around the bump-out on all sides.

Commissioner Tobias asked if the Commission would see revised plans.

Director Stanley said that Sprouts needed revised plans to remove the formerly proposed skylights and that the Commission can have a condition of approval that changes made to the plans during the building permit process be reviewed by a subcommittee. A subcommittee of Commissioner Hoopes and Tobias could review proposed hardware, window design and final elevation. The elevations provided to the Commission need to show people up to 6' tall for scale and reference.

Pat Anderson offered her assistance in the process. She asked if parts of the project could be approved today so that they can start work for a proposed January ribbon-cutting. She said that the economic impacts to the City are immense.

Commissioner Tobias noted that the Commission has not done anything to slow down the applicants.

Director Stanley said work on the project can start now.

M/S/C Hoopes/Roberts 4-0 approved.

**VIII. COMMENTS FROM THE COMMISSIONERS:**

Commissioner Tobias thanked Director Stanley for his work on the Sprouts project.

**IX. COMMENTS FROM STAFF:**

There were no comments.

**X. ADJOURNMENT:** The meeting was adjourned at 9:50 AM.