

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE DESIGN COMMISSION
OF THE CITY OF LA CANADA FLINTRIDGE
HELD ON OCTOBER 20, 2011**

- I. CALL TO ORDER:** Chairman Moldafsky called the meeting to order at 7:30 a.m.
- II. ROLL:** Present were Commissioner Vavoulis, Hoopes and Roberts, Director Stanley and Planners Gjolme and Clarke. Commissioner Tobias was absent.
- III. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** The flag salute was recited.
- IV. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC:** None.
- V. CONSENT CALENDAR:**
A. Minutes - September 15, 2011 meeting. M/S/C Hoopes/Roberts to approve as submitted. Approved 4-0.

VI. PUBLIC HEARINGS:

- A. Design Review 11-23;** March Village Pharmacy; 2143 Foothill Blvd.; copy change to existing pole sign.

Planner Gjolme gave a presentation of the staff report.

Commissioner Vavoulis asked about what the non-conforming section precisely allows for with regard to the change of copy to a pole sign. He noted that the "Palace Cleaners" text is unchanged.

Planner Gjolme said that the code allows for copy to be changed as long as the sign 'structure' is preserved. The panel has not been changed, only new letters have been applied.

Commissioner Hoopes asked if this was the same sign that was broken and then fixed.

Planner Gjolme responded that was another sign which was smaller and has since been removed.

M/S/C Vavoulis/Hoopes to approve the request as submitted. Approved 4-0.

VII. OTHER BUSINESS:

- A. Sprouts Farmers Market** - discussion on building signage

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Planner Gjolme gave an overview of the Planning Commission hearing for the sign Variance application for the market.

Commissioner Roberts asked about the opaque letters mentioned by Planner Gjolme and he also described how reverse channel letter signs are designed and manufactured.

Director Stanley said that the Planning Commission did not like the signs for aesthetic reasons and also that other markets along the Blvd. didn't have secondary signs. The Planning Commissioners said that there were no reasons why Sprouts should get all the proposed signage as requested. Residents know that the business is coming and are looking forward to its opening. He referenced an email from Commissioner Cahill about the size of signs at other Sprout stores. Staff is asking for input from the Design Commission prior the City Council appeal by Sprouts.

Planner Gjolme said that the Planning Commission may have considered the Variance request to be somewhat open-ended since the Design Commission's eventual role in the review process was not stressed.

Commissioner Vavoulis asked about the facades shown on the plans and noted that they were the original drawings approved by the Commission. A plan showing revisions and the most recent current east elevation was needed.

Director Stanley said that staff was expecting revised plans for the Commission subcommittee to review.

Commissioner Vavoulis noted that they would have to vote on a plan and that he wanted up to date plans.

Commissioner Roberts noted that the City Council needed updated drawings.

Commissioner Vavoulis asked if there were approved plans for Henrys to review.

Planner Gjolme said that Henry's had no sign approvals but only placeholders. The proposed sign locations were similar to Sprouts.

Commissioner Vavoulis recommended that the Planning Commission and City Council see original sign drawings from Henrys.

Planner Gjolme asked for comments on sizes and lighting.

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Commissioner Hoopes said that clearly all the signs are too large and that there is a need for reduction.

The Commission had a discussion about the signs proposed for Henry's as compared to Sprouts. While similar in size and location, the Henry's signs were smaller and complemented by a multi-colored graphic.

Commissioner Hoopes walked the site and looked at how people would see signs from different locations. He also looked at signs from Vons and was startled at how big they were from a distance. He also went to Big Lots and Home Goods. Sports Chalet has big sign but it was not directly related to visibility. Reducing the size of the sign on the east elevation was needed and what the Planning Commission proposed was correct. On the north side the proposed sign is out of proportion to the façade under the gable and reduction is necessary. He would propose even less than 4'. The smaller signs are fine but may be a little pinched and maybe make them 12" and should not be lit and they should be pin mounted. Northern façade signs were not visible eastbound along the Boulevard. People from outside the community will be going to the store. However, it would be difficult to see the Sprouts signs while driving from Angeles Crest. A blade sign would be a good addition.

Commissioner Roberts spoke about the move years ago to get rid of channel letter sign. He referenced signs for the theatres and how that worked well. Over time, the City has weakened its position. He would never approve channel letters for Sprouts. The proposed signs are too big and this does not make them more visible. People are not looking over parking lots to the signs. The secondary text proposed is not needed. He agreed with Commissioner Hoopes about a blade sign and signs of a smaller human scale. There was need for extreme reduction and to develop signage of a human scale, possibly under the eaves. The plans should not have gone to the Planning Commission as they were inaccurate.

Commissioner Hoopes liked the pedestrian scale of signs proposed by Commissioner Roberts. He noted the small wooden signs in the Vons center and that it would add a good detail at the pedestrian level.

Commissioner Vavoulis agreed with Commissioner Roberts and summarized that is the direction from the Commission. He was not opposed to a blade sign.

Commissioner Moldafsky said that a reverse channel sign could work.

Commissioner Roberts asked for non-illuminated secondary signs.

Director Stanley asked about location of any blade sign as trees may block views.

Commissioner Hoopes said that brown and tan wooden signs would add needed human scale.

Commissioner Roberts said that this design would tie in with the proposed shutters for the façade of the building. He was reluctant to give numeric size as the design is more important.

Commissioner Vavoulis was concerned about the blade sign and would need to see any proposals. He was in agreement with smaller and less signs and open to blade signs. He was concerned that that the City Council would approve something which the Design Commission did not like.

Planner Gjolme said that the allowance would possibly be for up to four signs total with the secondary signs ultimately subject to review and approval by the Commission.

VIII. COMMENTS FROM THE COMMISSIONERS:

Commissioner Roberts asked Director Stanley how the Planning Commission had the authority to add signage.

Director Stanley discussed the issue while Planner Gjolme noted that the Design Commission had approved locations of signs for the Town Center but not the actual signs as there were no tenants at that time.

Commissioner Hoopes noted the Trader Joes project over 15 years ago and the design issues at that time. The Commission used to give preliminary review and give recommendations to the Planning Commission. It seemed as if the order is changing.

Director Stanley spoke about technical issues for Variances and sequencing of discretionary reviews, noting that sign proposals typically don't require preliminary review by the Design Commission prior to Planning Commission review.

Commissioner Vavoulis said that the Design Commission should have the first review and not the Planning Commission.

Commissioner Hoopes said that now there are two points of view.

Commissioner Roberts noted that the Design Commission works more with sign companies as compared to the City Council.

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Director Stanley said that the Commissions were in general agreement. The Commissioners could attend the City Council meeting and voice their issues. He was not sure when the appeal would be heard by the City Council.

Commissioner Vavoulis asked what the ramifications were for ignoring the City's codes. The Commission can make design changes which result in better projects -

Said changes are difficult to implement if the sign is already installed. There is a need for an economic consequence for doing work without permission/permits.

Director Stanley spoke about code enforcement process. He will put the issue on a future agenda to further discuss penalties, etc.

Commissioner Hoopes spoke about penalties possibly being added to the application fee.

IX. COMMENTS FROM STAFF:

There were no comments.

X. ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at 8:45 a.m.