

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE DESIGN COMMISSION
OF THE CITY OF LA CANADA FLINTRIDGE
HELD ON NOVEMBER 5, 2015**

- I. **CALL TO ORDER:** Chairman Moldafsky called the meeting to order at 7:30 a.m.
- II. **ROLL:** also present were Commissioners Balcazar, Hoopes, King and Roberts.
- III. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** the Flag Salute was recited.
- IV. **COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC:** there were none.
- V. **CONSENT CALENDAR:** Minutes: 10-15-2015 DC Meeting Approved 5-0.
- VI. **CONTINUED PUBLIC HEARINGS:** there were none.
- VII. **PUBLIC HEARINGS:**

A. Design Review 15-20; T-Mobile; 5500 Godbey Drive; telecommunication equipment enclosure and ground mounted antennae.

Consulting Planner Cantrell gave an overview of the request to install new telecommunication antennae, a walled equipment enclosure and new landscaping atop the hillside adjacent to the LCF Country Club parking lot.

He noted the project's history and prominence of the site/issues during prior reviews, which included a Design Commission subcommittee to work with the applicant that was never followed through with. Appropriate landscaping and color samples were submitted as part of the project and color samples were available for review. Project approval was recommended.

Commissioner Balcazar confirmed that the samples before the Commission were the actual colors being proposed.

Commissioner Balcazar and Mr. Cantrell felt the green was a bit too saturated.

Chairman Moldafsky commented on a height issue related to parking lot grade and associated equipment visibility with the prior project.

Mr. Cantrell noted that the current proposal is in a less prominent location and several feet below parking lot grade.

Commissioner Hoopes consulted with Commissioner Roberts about the proposed shrubs that intervene between the antennae and the parking lot.

Commissioner Roberts noted that the landscaping would achieve a reasonable height after time.

Mr. Cantrell added that the intent of the landscaping was not to create a complete vertical screen.

Commissioner Roberts commented that he was on a subcommittee associated with the previous project. At that time, it was a difficult location to mask given the project's disruption to the prevailing greenbelt. He confirmed far less visibility with current location. The proposed plant material is native and would look normal on the hillside.

Commissioner Balcazar asked about stealthing 'socks' for the antennae.

Mr. Cantrell responded that the Planning Commission did not regard the 'socks' as necessary.

Commissioner Roberts noted that color is the best mitigation in this instance.

Tim Byus - applicant for T Mobile - stated the color was chosen based on experience with other sites. He was, however, open to alternate colors.

Commissioner Hoopes liked and appreciated the project's new location.

M/S/C Hoopes/Balcazar to approve the project as submitted subject to use of DE 5650 (Green Bayou) as the color for the antennae and equipment enclosure. Unanimous 5-0.

B. Design Review 15-19; La Canada United Methodist Church; 104 Berkshire Place; new monument sign.

Planner Gjolme displayed slides of the corner location of the proposed sign at Berkshire Place and Oak Grove Avenue and noted the sign's design similarity to the Doctors of USC monument sign, which utilized angled sign faces. In this case, staff felt that the sign's sides would be viewed obliquely if typically configured, so it made sense to open and orient them directly with the respective streets, provided the resultant angle was not too great and did not result in excess sign length. Staff felt the sign's 90 degree angle achieved the proper orientation and visibility and could still be qualified as a compliant 2-sided sign. He noted the sign's other various specifications and provided a color rendering to better

illustrate the proposal. Mr. Gjolme noted that the Sign Ordinance does allow for flexibility in certain instances and given the size, location and zoning of the site, the sign's design was appropriate and within code tolerances. Approval was recommended.

Commissioner Roberts inquired about landscaping along the base of the sign.

Planner Gjolme responded that landscaping was not specified, but could be addressed through an approval condition, as was anticipated.

Commissioner Balcazar confirmed that illumination would be provided by a small down-lighter atop the sign.

Chairman Moldafsky confirmed the sign's 20-foot front setback.

Commissioner Hoopes asked about the potential precedent approval of the subject sign might establish, noting Jo-Anne's Fabrics corner location.

Planner Gjolme responded that all discretionary cases are reviewed on their individual merit and must satisfy required findings. Approval for one project does not establish or imply approval for another similar project. He again referenced the uniqueness of the property and the code's allowance for flexibility where/when justified.

Chairman Moldafsky restated staff's determination that the proposal constituted a single sign and confirmed that if considered to be two different signs, 50 feet of separation would be required. Deviation from this would require a Variance granted by the Planning Commission.

Robert Rinker, sign representative for church and retired architect, noted that the sign's design was based on a two-street view. There was some consideration of putting 2 signs far apart, but this is more integrated. He detailed the sign's composition in response to Commission inquiry and displayed material samples and spec sheets.

Commissioner Roberts requested display of a photo of the intersection and inquired about parking lot access on each street and noted that the sign would be under the outer canopy of a large oak tree. He asked if a preschool sign further to the west along Berkshire Place constituted a 2nd monument sign.

Planner Gjolme responded that the preschool sign's status was somewhat nebulous since it could be considered a directional sign.

Chairman Moldafsky commented on staff's interpretation of this sign, noting it was a bit of a stretch, but reasonable given the uniqueness of the site. He did not feel that the project would set a problematic precedent.

Commissioner Roberts questioned the sign's legibility, noting that the sign's optimal angle should be pinned down through installation of a mockup.

Mr. Rinker responded that he was involved with establishing sign standards for LA County and that the proposed sign utilizes letters larger than those used for freeway signs. Given the stops at the intersection, he felt that the orientation as proposed made sense.

Commissioner Roberts added that a more acute sign angle might increase visibility further to the west along Berkshire Place and south along Oak Grove Drive. He restated his desire to see a mockup.

Commissioner Hoopes noted that cars stopped at the lights in the morning could impair the sign's visibility. He agreed that a tighter sign angle might improve the sign's overall visibility and felt a mockup would be beneficial to everyone.

Commissioner Roberts had no issue with the sign's material or design, but did comment on his preference to see a master sign plan for the church.

Mr. Rinker responded that this project was limited in scope and that there was no consideration for a master plan at this point.

Commissioner Hoopes confirmed the 6-foot height limitation for the sign and stressed that the church logo portion needs to be taller than the rest of the sign.

Pat Anderson, representing the Chamber of Commerce, asked about the zoning of the property. She confirmed its Public/Semi-public designation, which is different from the commercial zoning of most properties seeking signage, and felt this justified the request and precluded the issue of precedent.

A discussion ensued about use of a dimensional sculpture for the logo at the front of the sign.

Planner Gjolme stated that a separate, non-integral sculpture at the front of the sign may be allowed to exceed the 6-foot height limitation.

Mr. Rinker regarded the sculpture concept favorably but was not in the position to endorse or approve it. He was hopeful for approval with further review of the sign's angle to confirm optimal visibility.

Commissioner Hoopes and staff regarded a simple mockup composed of hinged plywood to be more than adequate to demonstrate various sign angles.

The Commission favored creation of a subcommittee to review the mockup and delegation of related findings and recommendations to staff for confirmation at a later date.

Commissioner Hoopes noted his preference for river rock at the base of the sign, consistent with the both the site and immediate area.

Planner Gjolme summarized the changes to this point, including the change in the sign's base material, installation of a mockup, creation of a subcommittee to determine the sign's optimal location and angle, and the allowance for a dimensional sculpture of the church's logo at the front of the sign.

Commissioner Roberts added a condition to incorporate minor landscaping at the edges of the sign's base.

Commissioners' Hoopes and Balcazar were appointed to the subcommittee.

M/S/C Hoopes/King to approve the sign subject to: the base of the monument sign shall be composed of whitewater river-rock, in accord with the catalog sample provided at the 11-5-2015 Design Commission meeting; the church logo may be comprised by a dimensional sculpture in excess of 6 feet in height adjacent to the front apex of the monument sign; a mock-up of the sign shall be installed to assess visibility from the street. In conjunction, a subcommittee consisting of Commissioners Balcazar and Hoopes shall be formed to explore alternative siting/positioning of the monument sign. Deviation from the current 90° angle of the sign faces to a more acute angle shall be allowed in order to achieve optimal visibility from Berkshire Place and Oak Grove Drive; lantana, or an alternate species as determined by the subcommittee, shall be installed along the ends of the sign's base. Unanimous 5-0.

VIII. OTHER BUSINESS: there was no other business.

IX. COMMENTS FROM THE COMMISSIONERS:

Commissioner Roberts stated that he would not be available for a Unocal subcommittee meeting later in the afternoon. A discussion about an alternate Commissioner possibly attending the meeting ensued. It was determined that said alternate would constitute a Brown Act violation. As such, the meeting would either be rescheduled or held without the subcommittee's presence.

Commissioner Roberts stated that several street trees fronting Ralphs have died and this time of year is appropriate for their replacement.

Commissioner Balcazar stated that the wall and sign colors for KellerWilliams Realty were different than those approved.

Planner Gjolme responded that he would look into both issues.

X. COMMENTS FROM STAFF:

Planner Gjolme informed the Commission that the revised Partner's Trust sign had been approved by the Commission last December. Fabrication was under way and installation was expected shortly.

XI. ADJOURNMENT:

M/S/C Roberts/King to adjourn the meeting at 9:14 a.m. Unanimous 5-0.