

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE DESIGN COMMISSION  
OF THE CITY OF LA CANADA FLINTRIDGE  
HELD ON NOVEMBER 17, 2011**

**I. CALL TO ORDER:** Chairman Moldafsky called the meeting to order at 7:30 a.m.

**II. ROLL:** Chair Moldafsky, Commissioners Hoopes, Roberts, Tobias and Vavoulis, Community Development Director Stanley, Consultant Architect Cantrell and Planner Clarke.

**III. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** The flag salute was recited.

**IV. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC:** None.

**V. CONSENT CALENDAR:**

**A.** Minutes - November 3, 2011 DC meeting.

M/S/C Roberts/Hoopes to approve. 4-0 (Tobias abstained)

**VI. CONTINUED PUBLIC HEARINGS:**

**A. Design Review 11-14;** Los Gringos Locos; 631 Foothill Blvd.; final awning & canopy colors and new signage.

Director Stanley gave an overview of the proposal.

Commissioner Hoopes asked about open-faced channel letters and the use of neon.

Bent Hanson (Applicant) said that he met with Commissioner Roberts since the last meeting. He discussed the proposed colors for the awnings and the sign. He wanted to table the sign at this time and asked the Commission for direction. It was impossible to make the sign as currently proposed.

Commissioner Vavoulis asked if the applicant just wanted a decision on colors and awnings at this meeting.

Applicant Hanson asked about a possible Variance for sign height with letters taller than permitted.

Chair Moldafsky asked about the height of the west-facing wall.

## DC Minutes - 11/17/2011 Meeting

Applicant Hanson said that it was about 12' tall. He also noted that some of the individual letters in the sign would be up to 36" tall.

Commissioner Tobias said that the letters may be too small but it is up to the Planning Commission to decide on the Variance. He agreed that the sign needs to be visible.

Applicant Hanson discussed how the signs would work.

Commissioner Vavoulis asked about the type of fabrication proposed for the sign.

Director Stanley said that appendages are exempt and that it could work in terms of height. He also noted that buildings setback from the street are permitted larger signs.

Commissioner Tobias said that he was in agreement with that interpretation of the definition of appendages.

Commissioner Hoopes suggested using gooseneck lighting.

Commissioner Roberts said that he loved reverse channel letters but that there can be a problem with variations in color when neon is used. He suggested that the applicant try galvanized lamps over the proposed sign. Discussion of lighting for restaurant ensued.

Director Stanley noted that there was a cobra lamp there now.

Commissioner Roberts asked about using a stripe of open neon.

Applicant Hanson said that they will come back to the Commission with signage at a later date. He showed the Commission the model of the building with the awning color options.

Commissioner Tobias said that he could approve as stated in the staff report and defer signage to another meeting. The larger letters are to be considered with appendages up to 24" in size. Any words on the awnings are to be approved by subcommittee with plans to come back later to the Commission for review.

Commissioner Roberts suggested two species -succulents are easier to keep.

Applicant Hanson spoke about the size of signs. He suggested having neon inside facing east possibly up to 36" in size.

DC Minutes - 11/17/2011 Meeting

M/S/C Tobias/Vavoulis to approve the awning and canopy colors as submitted and to review signs at a later date. Approved 5-0.

Commissioner Tobias asked about having three signs with a Variance.

Director Stanley asked about the planter.

Applicant Hanson said that he hoped to get approval for the planter.

**B. Design Review 11-25; Plaza de La Canada; 633-661 Foothill Blvd.; tenant sign program.**

Planner Clarke gave a brief overview of the project.

Commissioner Vavoulis asked about multiple space tenants.

Aimee Brazeau (Applicant) said that they would have continuous beams for multi-space tenants.

Commissioner Vavoulis noted that beams would have columns in between them.

Ms. Brazeau said that they would have beam behind which would make it look like it was continuous.

Commissioner Tobias said that the columns would show.

Ms. Brazeau said that the beams would look continuous even if separated.

Commissioner Vavoulis asked about tenants who rent two store bays.

Ms. Brazeau said that they would come back to the Commission if they had more than one bay. She wanted architectural consistency between the tenant spaces.

Commissioner Hoopes said that coming back would defeat the purpose of a sign program.

Ms. Brazeau said that she was not opposed but preferred not to have to return. The aesthetic placement was important.

Commissioner Hoopes spoke about the beams and how they needed consistency and rhythm.

Chair Moldafsky asked about using continuous beams.

DC Minutes - 11/17/2011 Meeting

Commissioner Roberts asked for construction drawings with details. He wants to be able to read correctly. The idea is fine but wants to make sure the fabrication works.

Ms. Brazeau said that they would not do construction drawings until direction by the Design Commission. It would have a wood veneer around an aluminum box.

Chair Moldafsky asked if a cabinet would exist before signs were installed.

Commissioner Roberts spoke about the tenant spaces and doors and whether they should have a sign.

Commissioner Hoopes said that the wall is a secondary surface and always in shadow.

Chair Moldafsky asked about using continuous beams in the tenant bays.

Commissioner Tobias said that the middle example is more in keeping with center. He agreed with Commissioner Roberts.

Ms. Brazeau said that they were trying to get architectural consistency in the center.

Commissioner Roberts wanted to see architectural drawings.

Commissioner Hoopes voiced concerns about sign duplicates.

Commissioner Hoopes asked if only one bay had the maximum signage permitted if this would count as signage for the second/third bays.

Ms. Brazeau spoke about previous tenants in the center.

Commissioner Vavoulis said that applicants could come back to the Commission if they had more than one sign.

Commissioner Tobias asked about a middle alternative - he was not in love with a continuous beam as it was not visible. Unlit hanging secondary signs would work.

Commissioner Roberts said that will look like piece of architecture.

Commissioner Tobias was concerned with internally illuminated secondary signs.

Commissioner Vavoulis distinguished between continuous and separate beams. He wanted to see construction drawings.

Ms. Brazeau asked which one.

Commissioner Vavoulis said he needed to see drawings for the continuous beam but was okay if it was a separate beam.

Commissioner Roberts spoke about the breezeway area. It has to look like a pergola if it is one.

Commissioner Tobias wanted to see construction details.

Director Stanley spoke about giving conceptual approval and requiring construction drawings and more detailed information.

M/S/C Roberts/Hoopers to continue in order to get construction drawings and a written plan. 5-0.

**VII. PUBLIC HEARINGS:**

**A. Design Review 11-28; 7-Eleven Liquor; 1535 Foothill Blvd.; new wall sign and pole sign copy.**

Consultant Cantrell gave an overview of the proposal and the history of signs on the property. In the staff report were options which he outlined to the DC.

Commissioner Tobias asked questions about illumination for signs.

Commissioner Roberts asked about nonconforming signage requirements in the Old Town area and about altering the structure of the sign.

Consultant Cantrell said that the proposed changes to the sign were not enough to affect its grandfathered status.

Commissioner Roberts asked who the applicant was.

Commissioner Tobias confirmed that the wall sign would include the words “liquor” and “7-Eleven”, per the direction of the City Council.

Director Stanley said that the city attorney can review this issue.

DC Minutes - 11/17/2011 Meeting

Commissioner Tobias asked about the State law regarding nonconforming signs and also about adding cap or wood surround to the sign.

Director Stanley said that the pole need not be removed and that it can be remodeled.

Consultant Cantrell indicated that it would expedite a change to the approval and would thus trigger a removal.

Commissioner Tobias asked if the trapezoid shape can be changed.

Director Stanley said that the City would pay to remove the sign and help with grant money for a monument sign.

Director Stanley said that 7/Seven would be willing to put up a "liquor" wall sign and replace the deli sign. He said that neon signs have been used in downtown areas.

Commissioner Tobias asked if they would consider a monument sign.

Monica Krueger (representative of Southland Corporation - 7-Eleven) said that it would be acceptable.

Commissioner Roberts spoke about City requirements.

Applicant Krueger indicated that a monument sign installation would be acceptable after the store opens.

Director Stanley said that they would have to remove the pole sign.

Applicant Krueger said Southland Corporation bought the pole sign as part of the assets but that they do not own the land.

Commissioner Roberts asked when they would make changes.

Applicant Krueger said that they would make them within 120 days. Commissioner Roberts said that the press needed to know that the signage is only for 120 days and that they would come back with a monument sign.

Director Stanley said that a Variance would be needed for a monument sign but that he was in favor of it with the removal of the pole sign.

DC Minutes – 11/17/2011 Meeting

Commissioner Hoopes said that they may want a cheaper sign now if they plan to remove it in 120 days.

Director Stanley said that the City will pay for removal of the pole sign through the façade improvement program.

Commissioner Tobias preferred a temporary looking sign. He was concerned about the time needed to obtain a Variance.

Consultant Cantrell spoke about temporary opening signs and timing.

Commissioner Roberts shared a photograph of a 7 Eleven store in Boston, MA noting that it did not incorporate the typical 7 Eleven trade dress and logo but instead featured classic wood signs in dark green with metallic gold lettering.

Ms. Krueger acknowledged that that signage was part of the company's design and that she was willing to work with La Cañada Flintridge to achieve the appropriate identity.

Commissioner Roberts said that he had gotten 5 phone calls from people who were concerned about 7/11 moving into the city.

Applicant Krueger said that this would be a very nice store and not like other stores. She also spoke about signage in other cities. They can do good work but they can be limited by buildings and city regulations.

Commissioner Roberts said that temporary sign should reflect the direction that they are taking. He noted that the staff report was very good and offered options.

Applicant Krueger discussed possible changes to signs. She said that she had been told that no changes were allowed to the exterior.

Director Stanley said that changes would require Commission approval.

Commissioner Tobias encouraged changes to the building.

Director Stanley asked about agreement on future signs. They should come and speak to the City about exterior changes.

Applicant Krueger said that they had ideas to improve the façade. They need to open now but could come back in January.

DC Minutes - 11/17/2011 Meeting

Director Stanley said that the additional liquor sign would have to comply with city regulations. He asked about hours of operation.

Applicant Krueger said that she did not know hours of operation but that there would be no telephones outside. The store will sell gourmet coffees and fresh food

M/S/C Tobias/Hoopes to approve a temporary sign only with an application for a monument sign to be submitted later to remove existing pole sign and replace it with a new monument sign. Fig 3 in the staff memorandum to be used for temporary sign design. Wall sign to be reviewed by staff to comply with size and design to be similar to wood design for fascia.

Director Stanley said that the City Attorney will write up the contract for the sign approval dependent on pole sign abatement.

Commissioner Tobias said that he appreciated the work done.

Commissioner Roberts said he appreciated that the owner's representative is there and that they could make decisions.

Commissioner Vavoulis asked about the likelihood for approval. What happens if they cannot get monument sign approved. There was no time reference in the motion.

Director Stanley summarized the motion: temporary pole sign; agreement before permit issues; time period for staff and the City Attorney to decide.

Commissioner Vavoulis was concerned that they would be left with a pole sign if a monument sign did not get approved.

Director Stanley said it could be condition that if they cannot get monument sign approval that they come back to the Commission for permanent pole sign approval.

Commissioner Tobias asked that the sign application be fast tracked.

Approved 5-0.

Applicant Krueger asked if they could put up a temporary plastic sheet sign. She wanted to be part of the community like schools and libraries.

Commissioner Roberts said that image is important so it should be sophisticated.

DC Minutes - 11/17/2011 Meeting

Commissioner Hoopes said that Monica should talk to Pat Anderson of the Chamber of Commerce.

Consultant Cantrell asked for matte finish on the temporary sign.

**VIII. OTHER BUSINESS:**

Commissioner Tobias asked about the canopy for Union 76 gas station.

Consultant Cantrell discussed the design issues for the project.

**IX. COMMENTS FROM THE COMMISSIONERS:** None.

**X. COMMENTS FROM STAFF:** None.

**XI. ADJOURNMENT:** 9:20 a.m.