

# CITY OF LA CAÑADA FLINTRIDGE

## MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE LA CANADA FLINTRIDGE PLANNING COMMISSION HELD FEBRUARY 24, 2015

- I. **CALL TO ORDER:** 6:01 pm
- II. **ROLL:** Chair Walker, Vice Chairman Jain, Commissioners Gunter, McConnell and Smith
- III. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**
- IV. **COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC:** None
- V. **REORDERING OF THE AGENDA**

Chair Walker reorders Item VII.B, Zone Change 12-02, to follow all other public hearings.

Chair Walker announces that Item VIII.B (Second Floor Review 14-05/Hillside Development Permit 14-07/Large Garage Review 14-01; Havel Residence; 1946 Foothill Boulevard) was requested to be continued by the owner for redesign. Ms. Walker inquires of project architect Jay Johnson a workable continuance date. Mr. Johnson states that the meeting of April 14, 2015 would provide adequate time. M/S/C Gunter/Smith to continue the project to the date certain of April 14, 2015. 5-0

### VI. **CONSENT CALENDAR**

- A. **Minutes:** January 13, 2015
- B. **Minutes:** January 27, 2015

M/S/C Smith/Jain to approve minutes of January 13. 3-0 (McConnell and Gunter abstain)

M/S/C McConnell/Gunter to approve minutes of January 27. 4-0 (Jain abstains)

### VII. **CONTINUED PUBLIC HEARINGS**

- A. **Hillside Development Permit 10-55 / Second Floor Review 10-39 /  
Director's Miscellaneous 14-21  
5471 La Forest Drive  
Johnson/Garrard**

*[Continued from January 13, 2015] Request to construct a new 7,087 sq. ft. 2-story residence, cabana, basement, and related site work, and a Director's Miscellaneous (Flat Roof) review for mansard roofs (considered flat roofs per code).*

Consulting Architect/Planner Cantrell notes that the project was continued without having been discussed on January 13, 2015, due to inaccuracies with the story poles.

Mr. Cantrell gives an overview of the project and its setting. He notes that the basement is exempt from area calculations and that the house, while sizable, is sited in a manner that would prevent its full extent from being viewed offsite. He refers to the story poles being viewed from a limited number of vantage points, and with less than the full extent of the house exposed. Mr. Cantrell notes that the project is under review for a flat roof due to the mansard configuration, and that a roof configuration without the

flat center would involve a lower pitch that would leave primarily eaves visible from the lower vantage points.

Mr. Cantrell notes the revisions to the plans which earlier included an expanded pad ringed by retaining walls. He states that the grevillea shrubs once intended to screen the retaining walls were retained, creating an overly formal effect that is addressed in a draft landscaping condition for more variety and transition. He highlights the proposed widening of the driveway, improvement of its street transition, and replacement of its retaining walls as an important functional component of the plan that would benefit the other two property owners using the driveway. He notes that he had received that day a letter from the two upper neighbors who share the driveway, supporting the project but raising concerns about construction staging. Mr. Cantrell recommends positive findings and approval.

Commissioner McConnell asks if the story poles were moved from the previous hearing, and if staff regards them as accurate. Consulting Architect/Planner Cantrell states that the story poles were corrected in location and orientation, as confirmed by the project engineer, Mr. Cantrell, and Director Stanley.

Commissioner McConnell states that the turret was not shown in the story poles, and asks if it is the highest point of the project. Mr. Cantrell states that it is, but that it is on the north side of the house, where it is obscured by the other portions of the roof.

Commissioner Smith inquires about whether the concerns in the recently submitted letter from the two neighbors sharing the driveway are addressed in conditions. Director Stanley states that the construction management of the driveway access is not addressed in conditions.

Commissioner Gunter confirms with Mr. Cantrell that the outward-facing driveway retaining walls are limited to 42 inches of exposed height.

Chair Walker states the need to specify the pool fence and asks about the height of the turret. Mr. Cantrell responds that the Hillside Development Ordinance allows extra height for architectural extensions.

Commissioner Jain asks if the pool is considered as sited in the front yard. Mr. Cantrell responded that it is not, because it is farther from the front property line than the closest point of the house. Director Stanley states that it is not in the front of the house, and staff regards it as being on the side. If it is determined to be in the front, the Commission could require a Conditional Use Permit. Commissioner Gunter notes that the pool is shown in different locations on the submitted plans and the architectural site plan still shows the cabana.

Commissioner Jain asks if the pool and cabana be separated from this approval. Director Stanley replies affirmatively.

Chair Walker opens the public hearing.

Jay Johnson, project architect, reports that the owner purchased the property five years ago and prefers English Tudor style. There is a flat portion of the roof but from a distance it looks like a ridgeline. It is a large home. The siting is unique in that the front of the home is on the north side, facing away from the street.

Chair Walker asks who relocated the pool. Mr. Johnson replies that the landscape architect relocated the pool and removed the cabana.

Chair Walker confirms the retention of large trees.

Commissioner Gunter asks about the height of the structure the Commission is being asked to approve, given that it has no margin of error from the code limit. Mr. Johnson responds that a condition limiting the height to 27'-10" to be verified by surveyor would be acceptable.

Commissioner McConnell asks if the basement feasibility has been confirmed in geotechnical analysis; Mr. Johnson responds that it has.

Roy Leisure, project landscape architect, invites Commission questions.

Chair Walker asks about materials for the fence. Mr. Leisure responds that it would be wrought iron in a dark color. Ms. Walker inquires about retention of the conifers. Mr. Leisure states that they are pines that are planned to be retained.

Commissioner McConnell asks about the fence location; Mr. Leisure responds that it would be below the top of slope so as to not to obscure views from the house.

Commissioner McConnell states that he would be comfortable with a condition that the pines are retained, since they offer nice screening for the neighbor. Mr. Leisure agrees, but states that the Fire Department may have another opinion, since pines are not good choices for fire safety.

Commissioner Smith asks if the tall tree in the story pole picture is a tallow. Mr. Leisure responds that it is not on the subject property. He notes that he met with the neighbor to the south who asked if more trees could be added, and is willing to add trees as needed.

Marc Turcot, 5463 La Forest Drive, is one of the two neighbors above who share the driveway with the subject property. He states concern about construction traffic and access to the shared driveway and the timing of the project. He asks if the neighbors can be notified. Mr. Turcot also mentions trash management issues and resulting bee infestation with the last project on the neighboring parcel. He is also concerned about existing water lines in the driveway area.

Commissioner McConnell states that he would be comfortable with a condition to provide a construction schedule, and no contractor parking on the driveway and blocking of access. A condition could also address potential loss of water services.

Commissioner Gunter notes the easement among the three property owners, and agrees with concerns and requests conceptually.

Chair Walker asks the Director if the onsite construction parking condition includes the driveway. Director Stanley states that a driveway parking prohibition would need to be added to the condition. He suggests that the construction schedule should be submitted to Planning.

Mr. Turcot asks that the driveway be completed first, as requested in their letter, to improve access. Director Stanley notes that a driveway is usually finished last so as to not get ruined during construction. Mr. Turcot notes that in commercial construction it is common for a partial uncapped driveway to be used during construction and finished afterwards.

Commissioner McConnell asks Mr. Turcot if he had reviewed the grading plan; Mr. Turcot responds that he had not.

Commissioner Smith notes that Condition #12 does not address onsite parking including trucks queuing. Director Stanley states that the condition should be reworded.

Craig Anderson, project contractor, notes that he lives on a similar lot. He would revise the access during the construction as suggested by Mr. Turcot. He notes the large size of the pad in stating that he does not anticipate trucks stopping in the driveway. He states no problem with adding conditions, and notes the potential conflict between Planning and Fire Department interests with regard to landscaping. Director Stanley comments that the Fire Department forestry division will likely require removal of the existing pines.

Commissioner Jain comments that it would be appropriate to add a condition to replace the pines along the east property line in the event that the Fire Department requires their removal.

Mr. Anderson states they use a large excavator from down below, so they don't anticipate blocking access to the driveway. He notes that his contact information is on his sign on the fence. He stated concurrence with a condition to constantly retain driveway access, noting that staging will take place on the pad.

Director Stanley states that a condition will be required that driveway access is maintained and that the driveway be installed prior to building permits.

Sandeep Gulati, owner at 5467 La Forest Drive, states that it is a nice project but that the driveway is a unique issue and challenge. He emphasizes the importance of the proposed driveway widening, and states his appreciation that the driveway work will be first. He suggests that a temporary driveway could be built on the opposite side of the property.

Director Stanley read the code section describing a front yard pool as requiring a Conditional Use Permit, and notes that architectural extensions can be as tall as 40 feet.

Chair Walker closes the public hearing.

Commissioner McConnell states that, after looking at the project from different angles, it is too upright to meet the intent of the hillside ordinance. He states that he understands the views are hidden by existing foliage, but that other homes would have a direct line of site if trees are gone.

Commissioner Jain states that access is the primary issue. He notes the huge size of the pad as capable of supporting the proposed house size. He states that visibility is not a concern. Mr. Jain notes that access should be secured far before construction. He states no problem with the house height, and notes that visibility from street is insignificant and screened. He suggests an approval condition for three or four evergreen trees, 36-inch-box planting size, to replace the pines as needed.

Commissioner Smith agrees that access should be handled first, noting that mitigations will be in place. He also notes no long range views, and describes the design as thoughtful. He can make all the findings.

Commissioner Gunter describes the landscape design as thoughtful and project as well-sited. He agrees that access and driveway management are very important. He advises of having struggled with the overall height of the building, being concerned with 28-foot-height as viewed from all sides. He believes that the design should be more modulated. He states that the pool siting is acceptable, but that the code issue of location is of concern. He notes concern that the architectural plan is inconsistent with civil and landscape plans.

Chair Walker recalls looking for views and concluding that the project is very secluded. She states no problem with height, and agreement with the project architect's suggestion for 27'-10" height and certification. She suggests an approval separating out the pool and cabana to allow for main house construction. Ms. Walker considers it likely that the Fire Department will require pine tree removal, and

recommends replacement trees of substantial size. She cites a list of potential approval conditions discussed:

- Replacing the pine trees with species, number, and size subject to Director approval;
- Construction schedule;
- Uninterrupted driveway access;
- Neighbor notifications;
- Driveway improvement prior to building permit issuance (widening, retaining wall, base paving);
- Height limited to 27'-10" certified by surveyor upon framing inspection;
- Separate pool and cabana approval;
- Onsite parking limited to the pad; and
- Utilities to be restored quickly if interrupted.

Ms. Walker adds a recommended approval condition for the pool fence to be dark wrought iron as suggested by the project landscape architect, to return for review with the pool.

M/S/C Jain/Smith to approve the project excluding the pool and cabana. 4-1 Second-Floor Review (No: Gunter); 3-2 Hillside Development Permit (No: Gunter and McConnell)

**B. Zone Change 12-02  
Downtown Village Specific Plan and CPD Zone Citywide  
City of La Canada Flintridge**

*[Continued from January 27, 2015] Consideration of amendments to the City's Downtown Village Specific Plan (DVSP - Ordinance No. 312) and the Community Planned Development (CPD) Zone (Chapter 11.14 of the Zoning Ordinance) pertaining to the allowance and development standards for drive-through facilities.*

(Discussion was reordered to follow the public hearings.)

Senior Planner Buss notes that the ordinance would go beyond the Downtown Village, affecting the CPD Zone as well. Following direction from the last review, staff has incorporated recommendations as the document is organized into three basic topics: character, code standards, and findings.

With regard to character, the pedestrian orientation downtown is to be retained, and uses are to be kept limited. Drive-throughs will be kept out of Mixed Use 1, and allowed conditionally only in Mixed Use 2 and CPD as accessory use to limited uses.

Standards would limit drive-throughs to appropriate uses like restaurants, financial institutions, and pharmacies. Queuing lengths would be per the 2012 draft, which can't be met by existing drive-throughs. The standards could conform to ITE standards, or allow variations to standards through traffic impact analysis or other variations. Mr. Buss announces that the City Traffic Engineer is present.

The draft standard of a 100' buffer from residential zones combined with the draft queueing standard would leave only 4 parcels in the City that could comply. The buffer radius of 100 feet dates from the 2012 draft and is not a magic number. With regard to noise, a question is whether to buffer or to limit hours. Commissioner McConnell confirms with Mr. Buss that a 50-foot separation from the property line would not be required. The recommended noise level for a drive-through speaker would be 50 dBA at a distance of 4 feet. The guideline for noise at the property line is 65 dBA daytime and 55 dBA at night.

Senior Planner Buss recalls having looked at CUP findings, which were a good fit for drive-throughs. He states that supplemental findings could be added. Finding E could address whether a project detracts from pedestrian qualities.

Senior Planner Buss concludes that the infrastructure is there for an ordinance if the City Council wants to proceed. He states that it is improved since the last meeting.

Chair Walker states that the City Council wants particular design work from a potential applicant. Senior Planner Buss notes that the applicant had presented only a concept plan without returning to the City Council.

Chair Walker notes that on Page 10b, reference is made to request by a sector of business community. Since it is just one business, need is not demonstrated. She notes that the committee also concluded that there was no overwhelming desire. Mr. Buss recalls that the City Council vote to proceed was 3-2. Commissioner Smith confirms with Mr. Buss that the application would not meet the draft criteria without vacation of Craig Avenue. Mr. Buss states that he doesn't know the status of the street vacation at this time.

Commissioner Smith confirms with Mr. Buss that if an existing drive-through business were sold, it would continue as an entitlement without meeting new zoning standards.

Mr. Smith asks Deputy City Attorney Guerra about Finding C, that the property is good location. Mr. Guerra responds that the language needs revision, that the section doesn't apply, and that findings are not needed in an ordinance.

Commissioner Smith asks if menu boards can contain scrolling messages. Mr. Buss responds that the sign ordinance allows for them within a very restrictive size limit.

Commissioner Gunter asks about the dining classification. Mr. Buss responds that some businesses don't serve substantial food, only drinks, and an example being Starbuck's. He notes a difference in speed, noting that Goldstein's Bagel Bakery does not serve toasted bagels in the drive-through because they take too long to prepare. Commissioner Gunter asks about revisiting definitions, noting that "restaurant including drink sales" would work better. Senior Planner Buss agrees. Commissioner Gunter asks if "accessory use" is sufficiently defined, noting that there could be instances when it is not secondary. Mr. Buss recommends just allowing a use in conjunction.

Mr. Gunter states that the draft ordinance is a big improvement over the last version, being clear and concise.

Commissioner Smith refers to the uses listed in Section 1, asking if the following page is consistent. Commissioner Gunter notes that in the Downtown Village Specific Plan a car wash could not be a primary use. Senior Planner Buss recommends trimming the list. Commissioner Gunter notes that at this stage the ordinance is not just simple regulations (e.g. 50 feet).

Commissioner Jain refers to Page 5, Section 6, asking about hours of operation. Senior Planner Buss replies that it is in the discussion, not the ordinance, and that it is open for Commission choice.

Senior Planner Buss introduces Steve Libring, recently hired City Traffic Engineer who, Mr. Buss states, was not involved in the study.

Chair Walker asks about the reported 50 new trips during morning peak hour. Mr. Libring states that not all trips are new trips, but may be merely new to that area. Commissioner Gunter states that in the ordinance is the recommendation that applicants prepare the traffic impact analysis, and asks Mr. Libring if that is a good idea. Mr. Libring notes the need for an objective view of what the situation will be like, and an inherent bias for the applicant in that case, but that staff ensures that it is fair through industry standards and parameters set by the City. Commissioner McConnell asks if it would be preferable for the

applicant to pay for a consultant hired by the City. Director Stanley states that such an arrangement is customary in the City.

With regard to the queuing lane requirements to make sure that the drive-throughs don't impact traffic on adjacent streets, Commissioner McConnell asks if each situation is unique. Mr. Libring responds that studies over the years have shown effects to allow for reasonably, but not absolutely, reliable generalizations.

Chair Walker opens the public comments.

Randi Strapazon, 444 Georgian Road, a 25-year resident, recalls sending email to the Commission and to the City Council. She recalls how the Shell building was flipped, backing up to the freeway exit. She notes General Plan objectives of reducing pollution and car trips, and maintaining a healthy lifestyle for the City. Ms. Strapazon urges the Commission to ask the City Council to reject the draft ordinance. She cites concerns about incremental effects and pollution, noting that there hasn't been a new drive-through for 20 years. She states that if this went out to the residents, they would wonder why it is being proposed.

Chair Walker closes the public comments.

Chair Walker states that Senior Planner Buss did an excellent job. She notes that, if the City has to have an ordinance, there are particulars to go through. She further notes that the Commission and staff are going through all of this effort for one business without being certain that they will qualify or are interested. A Commission subcommittee was formed, with no overwhelming desire for an ordinance. She questions the need for the ordinance.

Commissioner Jain notes that he was part of the subcommittee. He describes the effort as not doing service to business, but rather satisfying one person, which was not right. He recalls many concerns to discuss with staff, and notes that the standards are not absolute, but should be. He states that he is not comfortable with the draft ordinance.

Commissioner McConnell states that the draft ordinance is too limiting in its location, excessive in delineation of design of facilities, and insufficiently specific in resolving impacts. He notes that many new cars turn themselves off rather than idle. Mr. McConnell comments that, with this draft ordinance, the City is not moving toward a walkable community. He would like to see it apply to the entire Mixed Use zone, with a 50-foot queuing lane. He notes his preference that any traffic impact analysis be conducted or arranged by the City.

Commissioner Smith refers to the requested ordinance as a puzzling issue. He describes some of the constraints as not so onerous, but notes that it doesn't seem likely there will be opportunity for drive-throughs. He recommends that it be denied by the City Council.

Commissioner Gunter recalls that a similar process was followed for a draft reader board ordinance that was abandoned. He praises the draft drive-through ordinance's clarity and notes that the requirements are quite stringent. He recommends that, under section 7.4.15.3.1, "shorter distances may be approved by Public Works Director" be deleted, and that under section 7.4.15.3.2 "waive or modify" be deleted. He recommends a distinction between an ATM and a live teller, and the addition of lighting regulation. He favors the type of direct approach used for the noise limit. He is also concerned about the definition of "accessory". Chair Walker concurs, asking if coffee service would be an accessory use to a gas station. Commissioner Gunter asks if "accessory" would be by area, by revenue, by ownership, or other criteria.

Commissioner McConnell asks if curbside service would be allowed. Senior Planner Buss responded that it was not addressed.

Commissioner McConnell asks about a timeline. Senior Planner Buss responds that there is none, and that it can be continued to a date certain or uncertain. Director Stanley advises that the Commission can complete the ordinance and then vote against it if desired.

Chair Walker suggests continuance to a date uncertain.

Chair Walker reopens the public comments.

Ms. Strapazon recalls that 15 years ago Arco wanted beer and wine sales, and many mothers came out against it. Arco had proposed selling through a window.

Chair Walker closes the public comments.

M/S/C Gunter/McConnell to continue the project to a date uncertain. 5-0

## **VIII. PUBLIC HEARINGS**

### **A. Minor Conditional Use Permit 509 965 Foothill Boulevard Harcourts USA Realty**

*Request to permit a real estate office use within an existing tenant space in the Downtown Village Specific Plan (DVSP) zone).*

Consulting Architect/Planner Cantrell states that the project was denied on a 2-1 vote, and then granted reconsideration for full Commission review. The business owner had noted that the previous application had misstated the business hours.

Mr. Cantrell reviews the two basic areas of concern for real estate office CUPs. First, the effect of any office use on retail vibrancy, either existing or potential, can be of concern. He notes that realty uses are different, since they can offer interesting displays of properties for sale, which can have value for window shoppers in a retail district. He also notes the small floor area and Boulevard frontage of the proposed use. The other area of concern he notes is parking, particularly during staff meetings. However, in this case, there are no nearby residences to be impacted by staff meeting parking, and the shopping center creates a favorable parking setting. Mr. Cantrell concludes that staff continues to recommend positive findings and approval.

Commissioner Jain notes that the resolution needs to be corrected to change "applicant" to "owner".

Commissioner McConnell asks if pedestrian access to the street is a City requirement in the Mixed Use 1 Zone. Mr. Cantrell responds that it is encouraged but not required.

Realty owner Dawna Thibodeau introduces herself and invites Commission questions.

Commissioner Smith notes that operating hours were a bit of confusion last time, and asks for description of day-to-day operations. Ms. Thibodeau responds that 20 to 30 agents would be bringing clients there. She notes good customer service and states hours of 8am to 8pm, 7 days per week with some variability.

Aaron Hudson, CEO of Harcourts USA, states that the corporate team will be here in La Canada. He notes that the charitable Harcourt Foundation will be run from this office also.

Matt Traino, of property owner IDS Real Estate Group, states his support of the request, noting that realties are the only professional offices eligible for Conditional Use Permits in the zone. He describes the synergy among other nearby uses and the proposed realty.

Commissioner Smith recalls visiting the site, and states that he has changed his previous opinion. He cites clarification of the hours and Commissioner Jain's earlier comments about the realty supporting retail uses in the immediate area.

Commissioner Gunter recalls visiting the site and meeting with the tenant. He describes the Town Center as more vibrant than it was under the previous ownership, and that he is comfortable with the request.

Commissioner Jain also recalls his site visit, and welcomes the new business in town. He confirms that the tenant is committed for 6 years, and expresses concern beyond that. Director Stanley notes that the CUP runs with the land, and that it is voided if there is a cessation of use for nine months or more.

Commissioner McConnell states concern with the number of trainees, and suggests that the lease should require them to park on the Sport Chalet roof. He notes that the Town Center does not have a sidewalk presence, and suggests a requirement that the door fronting on Foothill be utilized and open during business hours.

Commissioner Smith asks if the project conditions can be specific to this tenant. Deputy City Attorney Guerra responds that it is not possible.

Chair Walker welcomes Harcourt into La Canada Flintridge, but not in this location. She refers to the Downtown Village Specific Plan's designation of the Village Center as the heart of the retail environment as the reason she can't make Finding #1. She notes that it would erode the intent of the Center.

M/S/C Gunter/Jain to approve the project with the added condition that the Foothill Boulevard door be operational during business hours. 4-1 (No: Walker)

**B. Second Floor Review 14-05 / Hillside Development Permit 14-07/  
Large Garage Review 14-01  
1946 Foothill Boulevard  
Johnson/Havel**

*Request to allow a new 8,674 sq. ft. 2-story residence and related site work, including two attached garages subject to Large Garage Review.*

Chair Walker notes that the project was continued to the date certain of April 14, 2015 earlier on the agenda. She opens the public hearing; with nobody present to comment, she closes the public hearing.

**C. Modification 14-22  
5131 Lasheart Drive  
Macho**

*Request to allow a 503-square foot garage. The proposed garage would encroach 4'-9" into the required 10'-6" south side setback.*

Assistant Planner Parinas confirms with the Commission that there is no need for a verbal staff report.

Chair Walker opens the public hearing.

John Macho, homeowner, introduces himself and invites Commission questions; there are none.

Chair Walker closes the public hearing.

Commissioner Gunter notes that is a modest encroachment of a single story addition near an easement area.

Commissioner Jain states that this is the only option for the addition.

Commissioner McConnell concurs with Commissioner Gunter and states his support.

Commissioner Smith concurs, noting the unique site.

Chair Walker agrees, noting the tricky nature of the site.

M/S/C Gunter/Smith to approve the project. 5-0

**D. Hillside Development Permit 12-27 (amend.) / Second Floor Review 12-10 (amend.) / Setback Modification 13-02 (amend.) / Director's Miscellaneous Review 15-08 (Flat Roof)  
3841 Keswick Road  
Hall**

*Request to amend an approved Hillside Development Permit, Second-floor Review and Setback Modification to allow the project's approval to be extended an additional 12 months. The amendment would also allow revisions to the approved roof design, wherein a lower roof of reduced pitch is proposed, inclusive of a flat component that requires Director's Misc. Review (flat roof).*

Planner Gjolme confirms with the Commission that a verbal staff report will not be necessary. Commissioner McConnell notes that he was not on the Commission at the time of the original approval. Commissioner Gunter confirms with Mr. Gjolme that not changes to the zoning code or project have occurred since the approval.

Chair Walker opens the public hearing.

Neville Pereira, project designer, invites Commission questions. Commissioner McConnell asks about the front porch. Mr. Pereira states that the porch will be more prominent with the decision to delete the higher roof ridge.

Planner Gjolme suggests aligning the porch ridge with the garage ridge to give more order to the elevation and to slightly reduce the prominence of the porch roof. Ms. Hall, property owner, states that the porch entry would need to be slightly higher than the garage roof according to the rules of feng shui.

Commissioner Gunter confirms with Mr. Pereira that lowering the entry eave or fascia would satisfy the feng shui concern. Planner Gjolme and Ms. Hall agree with that approach.

Chair Walker closes the public hearing.

Commissioner Smith recalls visiting the site, and describes the project as a nice improvement. He notes that the neighbor seemed in favor.

Commissioner Jain recalls the original hearing and notes that the changes are minor.

Commissioner Gunter notes that he was also at the original hearing, and that the project was improved.

Chair Walker also recalls the original hearing and invites a motion.

M/S/C Smith/Gunter to approve the project with the entry eaves lowered as discussed. 5-0

## **IX. OTHER BUSINESS:**

### **A. Story poles:** *Discussion regarding standards, performance and responsibility.*

Director Stanley refers to a memorandum distributed to the Commission reviewing the code basis for story pole requirements. He states that only the Hillside ordinance is fairly specific about graphic displays, possibly including story poles. Mr. Stanley states that the requirement is only through policy, and asks the Commission if a full ordinance requirement is desired, and whether that would require surveyor certification and/or heights plotted on the story poles.

Chair Walker states that certification is more important than procedure. She cites the need for some criteria including a licensed surveyor. She expresses concern about contractor certification as the fox guarding the henhouse.

Director Stanley recalls that originally story poles were used to give the community and Commission an impression, not precision that was provided in the drawings. Chair Walker responds that reliable story poles are especially important for neighbors' evaluation.

Director Stanley states that a surveyor requirement can be instituted, but at considerable expense for the applicant; he recalls hearing that fees start at \$2,000, sometimes more than the project cost. Commissioner Smith suggests that if the height is within one foot of the limit a surveyor certification could be required. He notes that on many projects it would not be needed. He and Commissioner Gunter stress the need for thresholds. Mr. Gunter suggests that if a project is more than 5 feet from a code limit there would be no need to certify. He further notes that neighbors have learned to rely on story poles.

Commissioner McConnell states that the story pole requirement is only a policy. Director Stanley states that it is one option for potential visualization requirements listed in the Hillside Development Ordinance, along with models. Commissioner Gunter states that it is the mistakes, and not the administration, that are problematic.

Director Stanley suggests having surveyor certification on all new homes, and other projects less than a certain distance from the required setback line. He also supports story poles for retaining walls. Mr. Stanley further suggests to the Commission that poles be marked at intervals to allow easy confirmation.

Chair Walker asks if the City should charge the surveyor fee to the owner and select the surveyor itself. Director Stanley states that the City is getting away from that level of involvement, relying instead on a recommended list. He reviews the possible thresholds for story poles: proximity to height or setback limits, new home, and retaining walls over a certain height.

Commissioner McConnell suggests that poles be required to indicate the highest point of the project, such as chimneys. Director Stanley replied that story poles were meant to indicate massing more generally.

Chair Walker suggests that projects over a certain floor area could be required to be certified. Director Stanley asks if that would apply to a small addition that results in an existing structure exceeding that threshold.

**B. Construction Parking:** *Discussion regarding current and potential requirements, and prosecution of the code.*

Director Stanley confirms that the Commission has the pertinent memoranda. Commissioner Gunter asks if the memorandum shows the suggested change. Mr. Stanley replies that it shows how it is currently written. He states that the provision for a waiver from onsite parking as determined by the Planning Commission should be revised to allow for Planning Director or Public Works Director determination, since by the time construction parking occurs it is too late for Commission involvement. Commissioner Gunter suggests that wording be changed because, in practice, contractors park on site if it's convenient; instead they should park onsite if its possible. He states that the Commission is not in a position to evaluate particular streets' situations, with how many construction projects are active. He recommends that the City get more serious about the parking requirement, recognizing that the parking will kill lawns and necessitate their replanting.

Chair Walker states that this approach is too onerous, using an example of a small construction project that nevertheless requires 3 or 4 worker's cars onsite, killing the lawn, while neighbors have several of their children's cars parked on the street.

Commissioner McConnell recommends deleting the "at time of approval" text and leave it up to the City rather than the Commission to determine appropriate cases for waivers. The Commission states agreement with that recommendation.

Director Stanley asks the Commission if there are any more concerns than that change. Commissioner Gunter expresses appreciation for the comments on a small remodel project. Director Stanley advises that the Deputy City Attorney recommends that the condition refer to the Director of Community Development, who is then the contact person who may refer cases to the Public Works Director as appropriate. Mr. Stanley confirms with the Commission that the issue has been resolved.

**X. REPORT OF DIRECTOR'S REVIEWS**

**A. Hillside Development Permit 14-23 (Dir.) / Director's Misc. 15-04 (SB)  
1415 Sugar Loaf Drive  
Smith**

*Approved a 42 sq. ft. addition to the front, 45 sq. ft. and 75 sq. ft. expansions to the side and rear of the main residence, new 3-foot tall retaining walls, construction of a deck and planters at the rear, new roofing material and stucco color of the main residence as well as the garage. The proposed deck is at grade-level and will not contribute additional floor-area to the project. The roof material and stucco colors are compliant with the Light Reflectance requirements per the Hillside Development guidelines. The addition to the main residence will involve roof removal but not to surpass 30%. Additions are outside of the required 30'-0" front, 11'-6" side, and 15'-0" rear-yard setbacks.*

**B. Hillside Development Permit 14-45 (Dir.)  
2264 Laughlin Street  
Darbidian**

*Approved a 594 sq. ft. addition to an existing single-story residence on a hillside lot. The project includes demolition of an existing deck and construction of a new 450 sq. ft., 12-foot tall deck, located at the rear of the residence. The deck is constructed 25-feet from the rear-yard property line and 13-feet from the west side-yard property line, remaining outside of the required 15-foot rear, and 8-foot side-yard setbacks. The project also includes a 144 sq. ft. bedroom addition at the east side of the property. The 594 sq. ft. addition increases the*

*total floor-area from 3,056 sq. ft. to 3,650 sq. ft. and remains within the maximum permitted floor area of 3,922 sq. ft. for this 11,400 sq. ft. lot. The addition conforms to all setback, and building requirements, and maintains the existing characteristics and design elements of the residence.*

**XI. COMMENTS FROM THE COMMISSIONERS**

Commissioner Gunter asks the Director and staff to push back on applicants to do a better job at drawing consistency.

Chair Walker reports driving by a Commission-approved house on Keswick Drive, designed by Dave DeAngelis, and finding it very attractive.

**XII. COMMENTS FROM THE DIRECTOR**

Director Stanley passes out economic interest forms.

Mr. Stanley notes that four have signed up for the Planning Commissioners' Academy at the Fremont Hotel in Newport Beach. He advises that Commissioners can use their cards to get rooms, followed by reimbursement by the City. He notes the Wednesday March 4<sup>th</sup> start date.

**XIII. ADJOURNMENT: M/S/C Gunter / Jain - 10:30pm**