

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION
OF THE CITY OF LA CANADA FLINTRIDGE
HELD ON MARCH 12, 2013**

- I. **CALL TO ORDER:** The meeting was called to order at 6:02 p.m.
- II. **ROLL:** Chairman Der Sarkissian, Vice Chairman Jain, Commissioners Curtis, Gunter and Walker. Director Stanley, Deputy City Attorney Guerra, Planners Gjolme and Clarke, Assistant Planner Harris.
- III. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** The Pledge of Allegiance was led by outgoing Commissioner Curtis.
- IV. **COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC:** There were no comments from the public.
- V. **REORDERING OF THE AGENDA:** The agenda was not reordered.
- VI. **CONSENT CALENDAR:** There we no items on the consent calendar.
- VII. **CONTINUED PUBLIC HEARINGS**
 - A. **Hillside Development Permit 12-54 & Directors Miscellaneous 12-42(SB); Gropper/Caire; 5240 Pizzo Ranch Road:** Request to allow a retaining wall up to 10' tall for a proposed swimming pool and patio to be located in the rear of an existing residence on a hillside lot with the pool equipment to be located within the side setback. Staff is recommending that a Categorical Exemption be approved for this project. (Planner Clarke)

Planner Clarke gave a presentation in accordance with the staff report. He described the revised project.

Commissioner Curtis asked staff to explain Condition #18 regarding the diversion and diffusion of water from the site.

Planner Clarke responded that the pipe in the rear of the property that was shown in one of the photographs needed to be removed and water should be diverted to the street.

Commissioner Gunter clarified that the pool should drain to the street and the other drains should drain to rip rap at the rear of the site.

Commissioner Curtis asked if Condition #19 could be fulfilled by pumping the water to the street.

Planner Clarke replied yes.

Chair Der Sarkissian asked if the provided materials would be what they are proposing as the facing materials of the wall.

Planner Clarke replied yes.

John Caire of 2028 Lombardy Drive explained that the materials would be earth toned stucco or the materials displayed. The pool equipment has to be above the top of the pool. The neighbor to the south requested that the pool equipment be placed into the setback away from their house.

Commissioner Curtis asked about the amount of grading to be done. He understood that on the original plan there would be export but the current plan shows an import of 30 cubic yards.

Mr. Caire stated that they included the import because they were unsure of how much rock they will encounter in which case they would need to add fill dirt since rocks cannot be compacted.

Chair Der Sarkissian asked for clarification if there was dirt being exported as indicated on the plan.

Mr. Caire explained that there is 40 C.Y. for the piers, 20 C.Y. of grading and 85 C.Y. of dirt that will be back-filled. The amount of dirt that will actually be exported will be 60 C.Y. The engineer is trying to make an allowance for the rocks that they might encounter.

Commissioner Curtis clarified that Sheet 1 shows the dirt that will be removed for the piers, etc. and then what will be back-filled.

Chair Der Sarkissian asked if the section shown on the PowerPoint presentation is actually what is proposed.

Mr. Caire explained that the pool deck would be cantilevered out above the slope. The civil drawing is drawn correctly. They added the cantilever at the suggestion of the Planning Commission because it created a shadow line.

Commissioner Curtis asked if it would be a hardship to enclose the pool equipment.

Mr. Caire stated that they were willing to do whatever the Commission wanted them to do. They were in discussions with the neighbors about where to place the pool equipment. He felt the noise of the equipment in the canyon could be mitigated by landscaping and that an enclosure wasn't necessary.

Commissioner Curtis felt it was appropriately designed and the impacts are mitigated. As a suggestion he would like to add condition that the pool equipment for the pump be enclosed.

Commissioner Jain stated that the applicant has done as directed and the impacts are softened by the cantilevered deck. He felt that the muted tones were good. He also felt that an equipment enclosure is a must and if it is included it should match the color of the walls.

Commissioner Gunter supported the project. He liked the additional grading and drainage information which adds clarity. He thought that the project was a nice addition to the neighborhood. He added that the noise of pool equipment is a concern and should be

mitigated. He felt that there is an area that the equipment could be placed where it would meet setbacks.

Commissioner Walker appreciated the changes that were done. The project blends with the hillside. She liked the materials that were presented. She wanted to add a condition that specifies that it be stucco with a natural color or the stone as it will help the project to blend with the hillside.

Chair Der Sarkissian stated he liked the color of the rock since it is variegated. If the option is to use stucco it should be darker rather than lighter.

Planner Clarke stated that he will compare the final material when chosen to the materials presented to the Planning Commission. He asked for Commission direction regarding downslope landscaping as required by Condition #20.

Commissioner Gunter stated that he doesn't like the idea of the downslope landscaping. He didn't feel that the condition was necessary.

Chair Der Sarkissian felt that there should be some low planting at the base of the wall but not as a requirement especially since walls always end up being higher than shown.

Director Stanley asked for clarification if the Commission wanted to keep the landscape condition in or remove it.

Commissioner Gunter suggested that they should change the condition to require the submission of landscape plans for the downslope portion and omit the word "screening"

Director Stanley asked for clarification if the Commission wanted to require the use of the stone as presented or that the materials condition should state that the stucco should be as dark and varied as the samples if he chooses to stucco.

Chair Der Sarkissian clarified that he didn't have a material preference but that it should not be a light beige color on the hillside.

M/S/C Curtis/Jain motion to add condition #21 regarding the wall color that it be consistent with the range of the samples provided and to amend #20 to omit the word screening. 5-0 Unanimous.

- B. Hillside Development Permit 12-27/Second Floor Review 12-10/Setback Modification 13-02; Pereira/Hall; 3841 Keswick Road:** Request to allow 1st and 2nd-floor additions totaling approximately 2,100 sq. ft. to an existing 2-story residence on a hillside lot. A Setback Modification is also requested to retain existing garage and covered patio encroachments into the front and east side yard setbacks. Staff is recommending that a Categorical Exemption be approved for this project. (Planner Gjolme)

Planner Gjolme gave an abbreviated presentation in accordance with the staff report.

Commissioner Curtis expressed concern that the existing landscaping would be removed. He wanted to add a condition to retain the landscaping. He would like to add condition to maintain existing landscaping as mitigation of the building's massing. Or, alternatively a condition that requires a landscape plan that includes a maximum height for future trimming.

Director Stanley stated that it is better to have plan that indicates a hedge to be maintained.

Commissioner Gunter asked for clarification if the building complies with setbacks on the side. with the exception of the trellis.

Planner Gjolme replied yes.

Neville Pereira, the designer and engineer of the project, responded to the balcony issue by stating that the balcony was included to break up the stairs along the side.

Chair Der Sarkissian indicated that there is an inconsistency between the floor plans and elevations. His floor plans do not show the windows proposed as the elevations do.

Mr. Pereira indicated that the windows are below the cut plane used for the floor plan.

Commissioner Gunter indicated that he can make all the findings. He is OK with exceeding the slope factor guideline because the addition is infill of an "L" shaped portion of the building and there would be no additional grading. He stated that moving garage door to front is a nice idea. All additions are within the setbacks and that the proposed encroaching trellis will improve the situation. He was not in favor of adding the landscaping requirements. He was OK with the project as submitted with no additional conditions.

Commissioner Jain supported the project but he was concerned with the driveway slope and its impact on the drainage and garage. He was OK with retaining the patio roof. He felt that there was no need for landscape plan since it was a wooded site.

Planner Gjolme stated that the patio roof needed to be converted to a trellis so that it no longer qualified as floor area to allow the additional floor area for the addition.

Commissioner Walker stated that it was a nice project as submitted. She felt that a landscape plan should not be required and that the trellis was an improvement.

Commissioner Curtis stated that the project was nicely designed. He would like to see some level of landscape review. He wanted to know which trees are they keeping and at what height. He was willing to not require the landscape plan if his fellow commissioners felt strongly about not requiring a landscape plan, he will let it go.

Chair Der Sarkissian stated that he could make all the findings and supported the project. He is OK with the trellised area. He added that he wanted to ensure that the front gets landscaped.

Director Stanley reminded the Commission of the 50% or more front landscape requirement.

Commissioner Curtis pointed out that the plan called for new lawn and landscaping.

M/S/C Curtis/Walker to approve the project as presented. 5-0 Unanimous.

VIII. PUBLIC HEARINGS: There were no public hearings.

IX. OTHER BUSINESS: There was no other business.

X. REPORT OF DIRECTOR'S REVIEWS: There were no reports of Director's Reviews.

XI. COMMENTS FROM THE COMMISSIONERS:

Commissioner Curtis stated that it was pleasure serving on the Commission. He thanked his fellow Commissioners, the City Attorney and staff.

Chair Der Sarkissian thanked Commissioner Curtis for his service. He added that all documents that are submitted to staff should be available digitally but don't necessarily need to be included in the PowerPoint presentations.

Planner Gjolme responded that in the past floor plans tended not to be scrutinized by the Commission and staff rarely refers to them. He added that we can include the floor plans in the future.

Commissioner Gunter added that he would miss serving with Commissioner Curtis.

Commissioner Walker concurred the Commissioner Curtis will be missed.

Chair Der Sarkissian stated that he went to the League of California Cities Conference on the first day and expressed disappointment in the conference and we should pass on the conference for next year if the quality was the same.

Director Stanley also expressed disappointment in this year's conference.

XII. COMMENTS FROM THE DIRECTOR

Director Stanley also thanked Commissioner Curtis for his service and input while on the Planning Commission. He stated that the Parking Ordinance is the only item on the March 26, 2013 Planning Commission agenda. He reported that the RV Ordinance was approved at the last City Council meeting and will be effective in early April.

The Tree Ordinance will go back to City Council for the 2nd reading on March 18th. The Deodar Cedar was removed from the protected list. Only Sycamores and Oak trees and all trees on non-residential property will be protected.

He informed the Planning Commission that there would be a joint Planning Commission and City Council meeting in May regarding drive-thrus and electronic reader boards.

Commissioner Curtis clarified that the Planning Commission was OK with electronic reader boards but that the Design Commission didn't know how to review them.

Director Stanley clarified that Design Commission said that they didn't want electronic reader boards in the city, not that they didn't know how to review them. The Design Commission said they don't want it and Planning Commission followed suit.

Planner Gjolme added that it was brought before the Planning Commission as a discussion items and that they were OK with the possibility of electronic reader boards signs but the same week it was reviewed by the Design Commissions and they were adamantly against allowing electronic reader boards. After the Design Commission meeting it was returned to the Planning Commission who backed the Design Commission's decision.

Director Stanley that the joint meeting in May was to discuss it further and to present staff's additional recommendations.

Commissioner Curtis asked if there will be examples of electronic reader boards that staff might consider appropriate.

Director Stanley will have local samples but staff may or may not consider them appropriate. They will also have recommendations and development standards for consideration.

XIII. ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at 7:12 p.m.