

# CITY OF LA CAÑADA FLINTRIDGE

## MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE LA CANADA FLINTRIDGE PLANNING COMMISSION HELD JUNE 23, 2015

- I. CALL TO ORDER:** 6:01 p.m.
- II. ROLL:** Vice Chair Jain, Commissioners Gunter, McConnell, Smith and Hazen were present
- III. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**
- IV. SELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR**  
Commissioner McConnell was nominated for Planning Commission Chair, all ayes.  
Commissioner McConnell is Planning Commission Chair.
- Commissioner Smith was nominated for Planning Commission Vice Chair, all ayes.  
Commissioner Smith is Planning Commission Vice Chair.
- V. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC:** no comments were offered
- VI. REORDERING OF THE AGENDA:** The agenda was not reordered
- VII. CONSENT CALENDAR:** Commissioners Hazen and Smith recused themselves from voting to adopt the March 24<sup>th</sup> minutes because they were not present at the meeting. Chair McConnell made a motion to approve the minutes. Commissioner Jain seconded the motion.
- A. **Minutes:** March 24, 2015 – Approved, 3-0-2.  
B. **Minutes:** April 14, 2015 – Approved, 5-0.
- VIII. CONTINUED PUBLIC HEARINGS**
- IX. PUBLIC HEARINGS**
- A. **Second Floor Review 15-06/Modification (Setback) 15-02/Categorical Exemption; Kim; 4508 Littleton Place:** Request to allow the construction of a 3,700-square foot two-story house. The project encroaches 3'-0" into the required 8'-0" first-floor north side setback. Staff is recommending approval of a Categorical Exemption for this project. (Assistant Planner Parinas)

Assistant Planner Parinas presented the project in accordance to the staff report. She pointed out that the applicant is proposing too much paving to the front of the lot and asked the Planning Commission to add a condition of approval requiring that at least 50% of the front yard is landscaping if the project is approved.

Commissioner Smith stated that there is a need for additional landscaping because of the proposed balcony and windows; the other directions have adequate existing landscape screening. He asked why staff did not require the applicant to relocate the garage.

Assistant Planner Parinas responded that staff felt that the proposed garage encroachment was reasonable since the garage encroachment is existing and relocating the garage further south would make vehicle access to the garage difficult due to the limited back up space because of the slope and Oak trees.

Commissioner Gunter pointed out that more than 30% of the roof is being removed and the existing wall on the west side is increasing in height. He questioned how the garage is going to remain in place since the wall is increasing in height.

Commissioner Hazen asked for clarification regarding the front yard landscaping requirement.

Chair McConnell stated that the plans include a lot of paving. He asked what triggers compliance with LID standards. Director Stanley responded that the lot would have to be considered a hillside lot and if they disturbing 5,000 s.f. or greater.

Chair McConnell opened the public hearing

Commissioner Gunter asked Juliet Kim, property owner, why she felt the Setback Modification was necessary and why the existing garage is proposed to remain in place when a large portion of the house will be demolished.

Mrs. Kim asked her architect to answer Commissioner Gunter's question.

Eric Kwan, architect, stated that he did not relocate the garage in order to keep the garage easily accessible by vehicles. He stated that he explored moving the garage to the east but it wasn't structurally and financially feasible. He stated that the garage wall would be built up by adding additional vertical studs; leave the top plate and build up.

Philip Chirino, 4502 Littleton Place, stated that he applied for a Setback Modification in the past and was denied. He added that the tree on the south side of the property is large and he is afraid that it will fall on his property.

Chair McConnell closed the public hearing.

Commissioner Hazen stated that he can support the findings for the Setback Modification for the auto access. He is concerned about the 50% paving restriction and would like to add a requirement for additional landscaping and the submittal of a landscape plan.

Commissioner Jain stated that he sees the logic in leaving the garage and the only reason he supports the Setback Modification is because of the slope limitation. He wants to add a condition to address the front yard landscaping and requiring additional screening in the north and east side. He can support the project.

Chair McConnell concurs with his fellow commissioners and can make the findings to support the project.

Commissioner Gunter stated that the second floor is supportable. He cannot the Setback Modification because the project would remove a significant portion of the existing house and so should be required to meet the current code standards. In addition, the eave wall is proposed to be raised and it will loom over the neighbor. Expense is not a reason to approve a Setback Modification request.

Commissioner Smith stated that the interior walls are being extensively changed and the whole roof is going to be removed. The proposed encroachment has a crowding effect on the north side neighbor. The north side neighbors were concerned about the second floor windows. He supports the Second Floor Review but does not support the Setback Modification.

Commissioner Jain motioned to approve Second Floor Review 15-06 and Modification (Setback) 15-02 as submitted with added conditions to reduce the paving on the front yard and additional landscape screening on the north side. Chair McConnell seconded the motion. Approved, 3-2. Commissioners Gunter and Smith voted to deny the Setback Modification.

- B. **Conditional Use Permit 494 (Amendment)/Categorical Exemption; Um/Lim; 1004 Foothill Boulevard:** Request to amend previous approval for outdoor dining patio comprising approximately 470 sq. ft. at the front of an existing restaurant. A 1,000 sq. ft. interior expansion of the restaurant was previously approved on January 15, 2015. Since outdoor dining requires a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) in the Mixed Use 2 zone, the request requires an amendment to the current CUP. Staff is recommending approval of a Categorical Exemption for this project. (Planner Gjolme)

Director Stanley presented the project in accordance to the staff report and stated that the amendment adds an outdoor patio.

Chair McConnell asked if there are any exits or entrances to the patio. He pointed out that there is a wall with tempered glass on top and that the layout calls for booths.

Commissioner Smith asked about the setback to the street.

Director Stanley responded that there are no setbacks to the street and no patio entrance/exit unless the Department of Alcohol Beverage Control requires it. The Design Commission will review the landscaping and other design issues.

Commissioner Gunter asked if the amendment is just for the outdoor dining patio. He verified that the Design Commission has not reviewed the project.

Chair McConnell clarified that all the conditions that were in the previous approval would be applied to the project.

Chair McConnell opened the public hearing.

No public comments were offered.

Chair McConnell closed the public hearing.

Commissioner Smith stated that he supported the original design. He is surprised about how close the patio gets to street.

Commissioner Gunter supports the addition and the patio. He is disappointed in the quality of the work because it is the bare minimum. He stated that the Design Commission needs extraordinary latitude to make it better. He supports the project.

Commissioner Hazen concurs with Commissioner Gunter.

Commissioner Jain stated that in trying to comply with the code, the ambience was lost. He stated that having some decorative features would be needed.

Chair McConnell agreed that there could be a better treatment. He stated that landscaping along the wall will help, but he is troubled with access because it is not directly accessible from the street and the path from the parking lot is not clear.

Chair McConnell made a motion to approve Conditional Use Permit 494 (Amendment) with added conditions of approval. Commissioner Smith seconded the motion. Approved; 5-0.

## **X. OTHER BUSINESS:**

### **A. Discussion: Setback averaging for front encroachments.**

Director Stanley explained that there was an issue about the front setback on an angled house on a project that was reviewed by the Planning Commission at the last meeting. He asked if the Planning Commission wants to move forward with a code change.

Commissioner Jain requested the Department to do this for 8 years; this would allow modulation and interest to buildings. The averaging tool is a good concept.

Chair McConnell asked if research was obtained from other cities.

Commissioner Gunter pointed out that the code is being rewritten. He stated that there is no reason to make a specialized change to the code to address the issue.

Commissioner Smith questioned the language in the report. He agreed that there are existing homes with setbacks less than 5 feet, but felt that the Commission would not approve setbacks less than 5 feet.

Director Stanley explains that this was an applicant proposal and a recommendation by staff.

Commissioner Gunter stated that the proposed averaging is not binding on the Planning Commission and staff explains to applicants the Planning Commission will make their own decision no matter what staff recommended.

Commissioners Jain and McConnell further discuss the issue, including justification within the existing findings. The change should be part of the upcoming code revision.

Director Stanley clarified that the issue will be resolved in the upcoming code revision.

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

**XII. COMMENTS FROM THE COMMISSIONERS**

Commissioner Jain volunteered to be Administrative Hearing Officer and Commissioner Smith volunteered to serve as backup. The Planning Commissioners all agreed.

Chair McConnell stated that second floor proposals result in the same house design. He would like to see creativity.

Commissioner Jain discussed limiting second floor using percentage of floor area.

Commissioner Gunter would like to address how additions are treated for existing homes. He specifically identified the 30% roof removal rule. He feels that staff is not taking a strict enough interpretation.

**XIII. COMMENTS FROM THE DIRECTOR** None

**XIV. ADJOURNMENT:** 7:27 p.m.