

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION
OF THE CITY OF LA CANADA FLINTRIDGE
HELD ON JULY 26, 2016**

- I. **CALL TO ORDER** – Chairman McConnell called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.
- II. **ROLL:** Also present were Commissioners Gunter, Jain and Hazen.
- III. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE** The Flag Salute was recited.
- IV. **SELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIRMAN** – This was tabled until a full Commission is available.
- V. **COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC:** At this time, members of the audience may address the Commission regarding matters that are not on the agenda or matters that are on the Consent Calendar. There were none.
- VI. **REORDERING OF THE AGENDA** The agenda was not reordered.
- VII. **CONSENT CALENDAR** There were no consent items.
- VIII. **CONTINUED PUBLIC HEARINGS** There were no continued public hearings.
- IX. **PUBLIC HEARINGS**
 - A. **Second-Floor Review 15-32/Setback Modification 16-05; Larsen, 1103 Atlee Drive:** request to allow construction of a new 680 square foot second-story addition to an existing 1,312 square foot single-family residence. A Setback Modification is requested to allow for the existing 8” interior side yard and 8’-1” rear yard setback of the detached garage and the 8’-0” corner side yard setback of the first floor of the residence. Staff is recommending approval of a Categorical Exemption for this project. (Deputy Director Koleda).

Deputy Director Koleda gave a presentation in accordance with the staff report. She explained that staff can make positive findings and recommend approval of the project.

The Public Hearing was opened and there were no speakers.

Commissioner Hazen said that he visited the site and can make the findings.

Commissioner Jain said that he visited the site. He believed there are issues with the alley and the fact that it is not easy to access. He believed that it is not a street or a through lot, but an alley. He felt that there are few options to consider for the project. He said that he can support approval of the project and can make the findings.

Commissioner Gunter said that he visited the site and that he can make all of the findings. He felt that the design was thoughtful and does not look like an addition.

Chairman McConnell said that he visited the site and felt it was well designed and would fit in well in the neighborhood. He said that he can make all of the findings.

M/S/C – Gunter/Jain. Approved. 4-0.

- B. Second-Floor Review 15-02/Variance 16-01/Setback Modification 15-01; Krikorian; 5708 Alder Ridge Drive:** request to allow the construction of a new second floor. A Setback Modification is required to preserve the existing 10'-0" setback which constitutes a 15'-0" encroachment into the 25'-0" required front setback for flag lots. A Variance is required because the total floor area would exceed the allowable floor area limitation based on net lot size. Staff is recommending approval of a Categorical Exemption for this project. (Assistant Planner Harris).

Assistant Planner Harris gave a presentation in accordance with the staff report. She explained that a continuance is being requested for the project by the neighbor.

Commissioner Gunter asked if there was a survey on the property and if the applicant provided any existing site or floor plans.

Ms. Harris indicated that a survey has been completed, though it was included as part of the submittal, but not in their packets and that the applicant did not provide any existing floor plans.

Commissioner Gunter commented that many of the plans are not dimensioned.

Chairman McConnell asked for clarification about the driving path.

Ms. Harris clarified that staff calculated it to be 775 square feet.

Chairman McConnell asked staff that if less area is paved in the front for ingress and egress, would the calculation be different?

Commissioner Jain felt that sufficient information has not been provided.

Deputy Director Koleda indicated that the title report clarified properties that utilized the shared access and a metes and bounds description was included.

The public hearing was opened.

Applicant, Vahik Krikorian, thanked Ms. Harris for her hard work. He explained that the house is an investment for his family. He felt that his property provides him with a disadvantage as opposed to his neighbors. He explained that the long flag strip access driveway that runs through his property also benefits his neighbors as they use it to access their properties. Mr. Krikorian said that he has a growing family and he needs more room to accommodate them. He provided the Commissioners with an aerial photograph of the site and flag strip.

Mr. Krikorian said that he did not feel that he would be reducing the surrounding neighbor's privacy. He is concerned that should the Commission request that the new windows be changed that it would hinder his view of the mountains.

Commissioner Gunter asked if Mr. Krikorian's designer was present.

Mr. Krikorian indicated, "No."

Commissioner Gunter asked the applicant if his designer told him that there were no other design options for the site.

Mr. Krikorian said that his designer had not given him other design options.

Commissioner Gunter explained that flag lots are all viewed in the same way and therefore, generally do not present a hardship to homeowners. He attempted to explain how flag lot requirements apply to all property owners utilizing the flag lot and that floor area ratio requirements are applied accordingly in order to be fair to all.

Speaker, property owner Norm Barakat, 5693 Bramblewood, said that he strongly opposes the project and believed that some neighboring owners' privacy could be lost due to how the proposed windows would be situated.

Speaker Wade Winter, 5679 Bramblewood, stated that he felt that the proposed square footage is excessive. He has concerns about privacy being lost. He would like to see additional green space be added.

Chairman McConnell asked Mr. Winter if size and privacy components would be an issue for Mr. Winter.

Mr. Winter answered, "Yes."

Mr. Krikorian spoke again and said that he does not know why neighbors have issues. He felt that redesigning the window location would not be beneficial to his family.

The public hearing was closed.

Commissioner Gunter clarified that the Commission does not look at whether a property will be occupied by the owner or rented. He also said that second floors are allowed by right in the City and this results in hillside homes looking down on others. He expressed further that the drawings are deficient and that a legal survey must be included with the application for the Commissioners to view. The access to the property and the easements are deficient as they are not clear to the Commission. He explained further that he believes the design is excessive.

Commissioner Gunter explained that two key findings, compliance with the code and hardship must be met. He said that he has a difficult time agreeing that the applicant is experiencing a hardship. He went on to say that the site plan is not descriptive as he cannot tell what he is approving. It is very important that the Planning Commission understand what is before them as it is a clear record of what is approved. The approval goes with the land.

As to the design, Commissioner Gunter said that he is certain that the City's Code is not complied with in regards to second floor design guidelines as it is very modular and plain. He recommended continuing the item to allow for the applicant to redesign the project.

Commissioner Jain said that he believed that the applicant is asking to build too much on a small lot. He does not feel that he can make the findings. He said that he agrees that windows that look out onto mountain views are important, but the Commission must be prudent to be sure that the impact is minimized. He recommended that the item be continued.

Commissioner Hazen said that he agrees with his fellow Commissioners and that the buildable size of the lot is in question. He said that he felt that a proper survey is needed. As to window design, he suggested transom windows.

Chairman McConnell said that he is confident that with adequate landscaping and some refinements, that the look of the building could

change. He said that he believed that a Variance would be very difficult to justify.

The public hearing was reopened.

Mr. Krikorian spoke and agreed to the continuance. The Commission reminded him that new story poles would need to be placed.

M/S/C – McConnell/Hazen to continue to a date certain of September 27, 2016. Approved 4-0.

- C. **Second Floor Review 16-05/Director's Misc. Review 16-08 (flat roof)/Tree Removal Permit 16-04; Kang/Yi; 4402 Wasatch Drive:** request to construct a new two-story house and attached garage comprising approximately 5,500 sq. ft. on a 20,580 sq. ft. lot. Director's Misc. Review (flat roof) would allow more than 25% of the roof to have a slope of less than 2:12, in concert with its modern design while a Tree Removal Permit is requested to allow removal of a 21" oak tree. Staff is recommending approval of a Categorical Exemption for this project. (Planner Gjolme).

Planner Gjolme gave a presentation in accordance with the staff report. Mr. Gjolme said that staff had issues with the location of the deck and the interface with the neighbor to the west. Staff recommended recessing the deck to benefit the neighbor as they have a large second floor deck along the easternmost portion of their lot. The applicant responded to this concern as reflected in the current plans. As to the project design, staff believes the designer was sensitive to the design of surrounding homes in the neighborhood.

Mr. Gjolme recommended that a condition pertaining to enhancement of the landscaping plan be added. Condition No. 15 would include language requiring that a 24-inch box Oak replace the tree that was removed. Staff regard the removal of the protected tree favorably.

Overall, staff is in favor of the project.

Chairman McConnell asked if the fence needs to be added to the plan.

Mr. Gjolme indicated that it is a separate item to be reviewed at a later date.

The public hearing was opened.

Speaker, Barbara Baffa, 1896 Foothill Boulevard, stated that she has the adjoining deck. She is appreciative that her property was shown and discussed as it relates to the proposed development. She expressed concern with drainage, the flat roof and the modern architectural design.

Speaker, Gary Baffa, 1896 Foothill Boulevard, said that he feels that the proposed project will be oppressive to him and that the proposed project is very different from what is existing. He said that planting a hedge and mature trees for screening would make him feel better about the project.

Speaker, Drake Silliman, 4411 Wasatch, expressed concern about the short and small street getting beat up with the construction traffic.

The applicant, Heagi Kang, said that he would like the neighbors to be happy and that he will provide a green buffer and try to mimic nature and the surroundings.

Chairman McConnell asked if the landscape plan had been shared with the neighbors.

The applicant responded that it will be when complete.

The Commission discussed the location for the air conditioning equipment. They were also concerned about the large amount of wear and tear that will take place on the street during construction.

The public hearing was closed.

Commissioner Jain said that he visited the site and that the project was well designed. The screening can be addressed by staff and he can make all of the findings.

Commissioner Hazen said that he visited the site and indicated that the project design was well thought out. He can make all of the findings for all applications.

Commissioner Gunter said that he visited the site. He felt the design is good and the package is complete. The building is well-sited and modulated. He said that he can make all of the findings and that this is a good location for a modern design. He can make all of the findings.

Chairman McConnell said that he visited the site and he agreed that the design is good. He can make all of the findings.

M/S/C – Jain/Gunter to approve the project with the added Condition requiring a 24-inch box Oak tree. Approved 4-0.

X. REPORT OF DIRECTOR'S REVIEWS This was reported.

- A. **Director's Misc. Review 16-26 (flat roof); Lim; 1156 Descanso Drive:** allowed a flat roof as part of a new 2-story residence. Approved as part of Second-floor Review 15-25 on June 28, 2016.

XI. **OTHER BUSINESS** There was no other business.

XII. **COMMENTS FROM THE COMMISSIONERS**

The Commission clarified that the next meeting is scheduled for September 13, 2016.

XIII. **COMMENTS FROM THE DIRECTOR** There were no comments from the Director.

XIV. **ADJOURNMENT** – The meeting was adjourned at 8:03 p.m.