

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION  
OF THE CITY OF LA CANADA FLINTRIDGE  
HELD ON SEPTEMBER 12, 2017**

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Gunter called the meeting to order at 6:04 p.m.

**II. ROLL**

Also present were Vice Chairman Hazen and Commissioners McConnell, and Oh. Commissioner Jain was absent.

**III. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

The Flag Salute was recited.

**IV. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC**

La Canada Flintridge Chamber of Commerce CEO, Pat Anderson, spoke to Provide a reminder that the Chamber will be hosting a business expo and community shredding event at USC Verdugo Hospital on September 13, 2017 from 5:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

**V. REORDERING OF THE AGENDA**

The agenda was not reordered.

**VI. CONSENT CALENDAR**

A. Minutes – 3/14/2017, 4/25/2017 & 5/9/2017 meetings – M/S/C – McConnell/Hazen to approve the minutes. Approved 4-0.

**VII. CONTINUED PUBLIC HEARINGS**

There were none.

**VIII. PUBLIC HEARINGS**

**A. Hillside Development Permit 10-44 (Amendment) / Second floor Review 10-31 (Amendment) / Setback Modification 10-28 (Amendment); Gross; 5545 Rock Castle Drive**

Planner Yesayan explained that a 12-month project approval extension is being requested. There have been no complaints, the ordinance has not changed, and the project has not changed.

No one wished to speak.

The Public Hearing was not opened.

M/S/C – Gunter/McConnell to approve the amendment. Approved 4-0.

**A. Hillside Development Permit 17-23; Klemmer; 3860 Madison Road**

Planner Gjolme gave a presentation in accordance with the staff report. Staff recommends approval.

Commissioner McConnell asked Mr. Gjolme about requirements for submission of grading plans. Mr. Gjolme indicated that staff believed that it would be appropriate for detailed grading plans to be submitted during Building Plan Check. Chairman Gunter said that for consistency for all projects, that grading plans should be required to be submitted so that the Commission can review the plans.

Commission Gunter opened the Public Hearing.

Speaker, Dave De Angelis said that an original survey was submitted and is on file. He indicated that the proposed grading and hardscape are consistent with current site conditions for the most part.

Speaker, Mr. Schubert, 3829 Chevy Chase Dr. said that 15 Oak trees were removed in the past and that the subject property has been vacant. He is happy with the proposed project, though he has 2 concerns related to screening and run off. There have been problems with rain water run-off in the past.

Chairman Gunter suggested adding landscaping close to the neighbor and recommended the property be graded so that drainage will not go on to the neighbor's property.

Mr. Dave De Angelis said he is concerned about a condition being placed that requires that there is no water flow on to another property. He said that the new Building Code requires that drainage remains on a project site.

Commissioner McConnell said that the design is very thoughtful. He said he can make the findings.

Vice Chairman Hazen said he likes the landscaping and the design and can make all the findings.

Commissioner Oh said that the street is narrow and there is no place to park. There are a lot of trees which hide the subject house. He said he can make the findings.

Chairman Gunter said he agreed with his fellow Commissioners.

M/S/C – Gunter/Oh to approve the project. Approved 4-0.

**B. General Plan Amendment 12-01/Zone Change 12-01; Flintridge Sacred Heart Academy (FSHA); 440 Saint Katherine Drive**

Chairman Gunter asked the audience for their patience while the Commission goes through the required procedures in reviewing this request. He explained that the applicant will be brought up to speak and then public comments will be called for. He said that the purpose of the meeting is for the Commission to make findings for the proposed project. A time constraint will not be imposed on the speakers.

Deputy Director Koleda gave a presentation in accordance with the staff report.

Commissioner Oh asked staff if the proposed 60-foot elevator tower could accommodate a pedestrian bridge and possibly the tower could be lowered. The Deputy Director noted the project architect was in attendance and may be able to speak to the lowered overall height. She explained that staff deemed the tower height appropriate as the majority of the height was not visible due to the subterranean parking levels and the elevator was necessary to provide accessibility.

Commissioner Oh asked if an increase in faculty, students, and events is proposed due to the increase in square footage on the school site. The Deputy Director that the Specific Plan clear calls for no increase in the student enrollment cap and memorializes existing school events within Appendix D. She said that no additional parking is required based on the number of classrooms, students and the fixed number of seats within the auditorium. The applicant is choosing to provide more spaces than what is required by code. FSHA is requesting a reduced parking stall size.

Commissioner Oh asked for clarification on the number of protected trees to be removed. The Deputy Director said that of 244 trees on the site, 77 would be affected by development. A Tree Removal Permit will be required for any protected tree prior to the issuance of any building permit. Director Stanley stated there are 39 protected trees.

Commission Oh asked if the proposed buildings will be sprinklered. The Deputy Director confirmed new construction would include fire sprinklers, as required by code.

Vice Chairman Hazen complimented staff on a thorough job reviewing the proposed project.

Commissioner McConnell asked if an overlay zone could be created rather than a specific plan. Director Stanley said that it is the applicant's option to submit the specific plan.

Commissioner McConnell asked the Assistant City Attorney why the Planning Commission does not certify the Environmental Impact Report (EIR). Mr. Guerra said because the General Plan Amendment and the adoption of the Specific Plan are both legislative acts that have a recommendation from the Planning Commission and final action is taken by the City Council.

Commissioner McConnell asked staff for further clarification on the parking structure requirements. The Deputy Director explained that should the Commission not support the reduced stall size, then the parking structure would be reduced in size and the total number of spaces provided. Director Stanley indicated that because the school is an institutional use under the City's code and that reduced parking has been permitted by the Commission in the past based on the use.

The Commission expressed concern over temporary and permanent trailers on the site and suggested that the timeline for the structures be clearly spelled out. In the case of temporary trailers, a date for final removal must be required.

Commissioner McConnell asked how much time between construction phases there would be. Chairman Gunter suggested that perhaps a permit for construction should not be issued within 10 days in between the project phases.

Commissioner McConnell said he was concerned about the parking calculation in the City's Zoning Code. The Deputy Director agreed that the existing Zoning Code parking requirements may be outdated and explained that the issue will be addressed in the Zoning Code update. Commissioner McConnell said that Title 24 requirements would also need to be addressed as well.

The Commission talked about "sporting activity" definitions and the impacts and possible restrictions on interscholastic competitions. Chairman Gunter

indicated that athletics can change over time and that the definitions should be very clear in the Specific Plan.

The Commission talked about goals and objectives of Specific Plans and that they should be written to provide flexibility for the school to carry out their long-range plans without the City having too much control in the way they carry out their plans.

Commissioner McConnell expressed concern about light spill associated with lighting on the top level of the parking structure and how it would look at night from a distance.

The Commission talked about the native trees on the site and the existing Sycamores. The Deputy Director noted that a three-to-one replacement is required as a mitigation measures and this would apply to Sycamores that are removed.

Commissioner McConnell asked about the maximum site coverage and percentage of open space and whether there is relation between them. Ms. Koleda said the Specific Plan would be reviewed again in its entirety to ensure consistency throughout the document.

The Commission questioned whether the Design Commission would review the retaining walls as they could be extremely visible from far away. The Deputy Director stated that the Design Commission would review the walls in conjunction with the associated building and landscape plans.

Commissioner McConnell suggested that the Commission recommend the City Council certify the EIR and adopt the Statement of Overriding Considerations.

Chairman Gunter said that the City of Pasadena is on board with the proposal and recommended that it be clear which parcels that are currently located in Pasadena and will be potentially annexed into the City of La Cañada Flintridge. He also suggested thoroughly describing the uses rather than the name of the buildings as the names and the uses could change over time. It was suggested that if the annexation falls through, then, all portions of the project can proceed separately but consistent with what is described in the Specific Plan.

Chairman Gunter expressed that a definition of "enrollment cap" is not included and would be helpful.

Chairman Gunter opened the Public Hearing.

Speaker, Applicant, Sister Carolyn, 440 St. Katherine Drive said she is appreciative of the opportunity to speak on behalf of the project. She thanked the neighbors and the community for their support. She said the Specific Plan would allow the school to modernize the campus while being sensitive to the community. Sister Carolyn said the architect and the CFO are available for any questions the Commission has. She respectfully asked that the Commission approve the project.

Speaker, Carmella Grahn, CFO, FSHA, explained the reason for the increase in the number of classrooms on the site is to provide classrooms in place of the existing portable classrooms. She asked staff if the Specific Plan would identify the temporary classrooms that are to be removed. The Deputy Director confirmed it would.

Speaker, Anne Wong, project architect, spoke about the elevator tower height on the parking structure. She said the height was necessary to align the pathway to/from the elevator tower with the upper level of the classroom cottages. It would not be connected to any part of the high school, but to a walking path. She said that regarding the height of the parking structure light fixtures, she would work with the lighting consultant to reduce the overall height.

The following speakers support the proposal:

Barbara Marshall - 5309 La Forest Dr.  
Mary Pinola - 330 St. Katherine Dr.  
Robert Malchione - 489 Berkshire Ave.  
Charlie Kenny - 330 St Katherine Dr.  
Darla Longo - 535 Meadow Grove St.  
Mrs. Semler - 277 St. Katherine Dr.  
Rosana Borgen - 5702 Evening Canyon Dr.

They expressed the following:

- The school has been a great neighbor for many years;
- The school is very helpful to the community;
- There is concern that the school is limited to a certain number of non-school related events per year when other schools in the City do not have the same type of restrictions;
- The school improvements are long overdue;
- The school has always graciously offered their facilities to the community;
- Non-school events, like weddings, should be allowed;
- The school needs to be modernized

- Requested that the EIR be approved.

Ms. Grahn said that the first improvements to take place will involve fire safety items. Infrastructure work would then be completed next and the Art Center/Auditorium expansion would follow. She asked staff for clarification as to the involvement of the Fire Department. Director Stanley said that the Fire Department would deal with the fire suppression pump system as it is a private system.

The Public Hearing was closed.

Chairman Gunter called for a break at 8:55 pm.

The meeting resumed at 9:00 pm.

Commissioner McConnell said he visited the site and viewed it up close as well as from far away to see how it would affect the greater community. He also viewed it during peak hours. He said he appreciates the dedication of the open space and that the plan does not aggressively build out which is very thoughtful. He believed the school respects the environment for which they are in and that proposed development is in keeping with the historic nature of the site. The Construction Relations Officer during construction is an important position to have in place as there will be a lot of truck traffic. The school has been very proactive with its traffic management plan and impacts to the surrounding neighborhood have been reduced. There is no new sports lighting proposed which at the Palmerstone location would have been most visible. Fire and life safety plans will be put in place which is positive. Appendix D allows enough flexibility for events that can be obtained with a Special Event Permit.

Commissioner McConnell said the height of the lighting in the parking structure should be carefully studied and recommended the lighting be no higher than 32 feet on the upper level of the parking structure.

Vice Chairman Hazen said the design was very thoughtful. He believed the school has done a good job with retaining historic elements mixed with the new proposed ones. He said he can make the findings.

Commissioner Oh said the design is thoughtful and considerate of the neighbors. The roads that lead to the school are narrow and winding and the school should be mindful of adding people and cars on such narrow streets. He would like to see that the new classrooms off-set the existing portable classrooms and this be documented. He said he can make the findings.

Chairman Gunter said he agrees with Commissioner McConnell and his fellow Commissioners. He complimented the school on their responsiveness to the community during the design of the plan. He supports the project and the school. He said that the project should be brought back for approval in three separate resolutions: 1) recommending City Council certification of the Environmental Impact Report; 2) recommending City Council approve the project for that area that is subject to potential annexation 3) recommending City Council approve the project for that area that is currently within the boundaries of the incorporated City.

Commissioner Oh reiterated that the smaller parking stall is acceptable.

Chairman Gunter opened the Public Hearing to discuss a timeline with the applicant.

Ms. Grahn said that she can get all items to the City by October 3<sup>rd</sup> in time for an October 24<sup>th</sup> hearing date.

The Public Hearing was closed. No new public notice will be sent out. Tonight's meeting serves as the notice.

M/S/C - Gunter/McConnell to continue the project to a date certain of October 24, 2017. Approved 4-0.

## **IX. REPORT OF DIRECTOR'S REVIEWS**

Were reported.

**A. Hillside Development Permit 17-26 (Dir.); Raines; 5385 Haskell Street:** allowed a 3-foot retaining wall along the north side property line and 42-inch freestanding wall in the front yard.

**B. Hillside Development Permit 17-28 (Dir.); Khatchaturian; 887 Saint Katherine Drive:** allowed enclosure of 159 sq. ft. of existing roofed area to the rear of an existing residence to expand kitchen and bathroom area.

**C. Director's Misc. Review 17-22 (Roof Equipment); Amin; 4826 Fairlawn Drive:** Allowed installation of new AC equipment on the roof of an existing single-story residence.

**D. Director's Misc. Review 17-27 (Pool Equipment); Markarian; 4804 Palm Drive:** allowed new pool/spa mechanical equipment to encroach 4 feet into the required south side-yard setback.

**E. Director's Misc. Review 17-29 (Pool Equipment); Lei; 1204 Homewood Lane:** allowed pool/spa mechanical equipment to encroach 4'-2" into the required east side setback and 9 feet into the required rear setback.

**X. OTHER BUSINESS**

There was none.

**XI. COMMENTS FROM THE COMMISSIONERS**

There were none.

**XII. COMMENTS FROM THE DIRECTOR**

There were none.

**XIII. ADJOURNMENT**

M/S/C – Gunter/McConnell to adjourn the meeting at 9:30 p.m. Approved 4-0.



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Secretary to the Planning Commission