

# CITY OF LA CAÑADA FLINTRIDGE

## PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES September 27, 2016 - 6:00 p.m. City Hall Council Chambers 1327 Foothill Boulevard

- I. **CALL TO ORDER** – Commissioner Jain called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.
- II. **ROLL:** Also present were Commissioners Gunter, Hazen and Oh. Chairman McConnell was absent.
- III. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE** The Flag Salute was recited.
- IV. **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.
- V. **REORDERING OF THE AGENDA** –Item VIII. C was taken first.
- VI. **CONSENT CALENDAR**
  - A. **Minutes** – [June 14, 2016 meeting](#) – The minutes were continued to the meeting of October 11, 2016 so that all members that were present for that meeting can vote.

### VII. CONTINUED PUBLIC HEARINGS

- A. [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. The previous Variance is no longer required since the proposed floor area complies with the limit for the lot. Staff is recommending approval of a Categorical Exemption for this project. (Assistant Planner Harris).

Assistant Planner Harris presented the project in accordance with the staff report. She explained the proposed addition and the fact that the Variance is no longer needed. The flag strip is only part of the ingress easement. There are also revised plans that clarify the setbacks. The floor plan was also discussed. The existing front setback is deficient and requires a setback modification. The second floor setback is generous.

Ms. Harris presented a rendering for the Commission to view. The applicant provided an additional rendering showing trees, the driveway, the rear elevation and a birds-eye view. There is existing screening at the rear of the property and additional fill-in landscaping will be required for screening. The rear east/west running property lines could be enhanced. Photos were viewed of the flag strip driveway. Photographs of the story poles were viewed. The patio will be deleted. A photo of story poles in red were viewed from Briartree Drive and Bramblewood Road vantage points. The grade change was also depicted. Staff is making a positive recommendation for all applications subject to conditions.

The public hearing was opened.

Applicant, Vahik Krikorian, spoke about how he does not feel that clerestory windows should be required. He stated that he removed the back patio from the proposal to better comply with floor area ratio (FAR) requirements. He also stated that he does not believe that the Setback Modification request will impact any of the neighbors.

Speaker, Peter Palermo, 5687 Bramblewood, sent in pictures for the Commission to review at the last Planning Commission meeting. He believed that the proposed project could result in privacy issues and that the proposed overall size is not compatible with the neighborhood. He agreed with the modular and plain design. He said that he agreed with Commissioner Jain's opinion he believed was expressed during a past Commission meeting on this item that the project is too large for the lot. He disputed the floor areas of the surrounding neighbors and believed that there is not enough vegetation proposed to screen the project from his property. He suggested that the Community Development Director recommend other trees be installed and that the Director meet with neighbors about landscaping.

Speaker, Norm Barakat, 5693 Bramblewood Road, said that he felt that planting of trees should be part of the requirements.

Mr. Krikorian reiterated that he did not want to install clerestory windows and that currently, even without the proposed second-floor addition, he can view other neighbors' back yards. He said that the story poles show the roofline, not the window line. He also maintained that the building square footage has been reduced and is less than the maximum allowed for the lot with just the flag strip removed.

Speaker, Katherine Palermo, 5687 Bramblewood Road, provided the Commission with photographs.

Commissioner Jain asked Ms. Palermo if the installation of screening vegetation would resolve her concerns.

Ms. Palermo indicated, "yes."

The public hearing was closed.

Director Stanley spoke about Commissioner Gunter's comments regarding the driveway. He explained that he was not at the initial Planning Commission meeting when this item was first heard. He said that a deduction for a ten-foot wide flag strip has to be factored in or the square footage should be reduced accordingly. He said that the item might have to be brought back for a Variance.

Commissioner Gunter stated it would help to see the adjoining property lines.

The Commission carried out a discussion about the flag strip and the paved area and how to measure the ten-foot wide flag strip to determine the driveway width.

Commissioner Jain suggested continuing the item until all of the information is provided.

Commissioner Gunter said that he values the neighbors input. He clarified that the Commission does not need to have the neighbors' approval. Story poles are a good way to communicate to the neighborhood what could be built. It helps all to get a sense of how big a property is going to be. He has concerns about the proposed size of the project. He does not feel that clerestory windows should be required. He is concerned about the scale of the home. He believed that the applicant did not reduce the bulk of the home, only the patio. He felt that the massing of the house is inappropriate. It needs to be well-modulated on all four sides. Articulation will help to reduce the visual mass. He recommended continuing the project.

Commissioner Oh said that he visited the site. He does not believe that requiring clerestory windows is fair. In terms of massing, he felt that it did not seem out of place. He felt that the applicant should be able to build what the code allows. However, until the applicant submits all required items, he believed that the item should be continued.

Commissioner Hazen said that he agreed with the neighbors and that more screening vegetation is necessary at the rear of the property. There should

be modulation as the proposed design is not in keeping with the character of the neighborhood.

Commissioner Jain said that the design needs to be looked at again.

The applicant was invited back up to speak with the Commission.

Director Stanley stated that there could be a good chance at a Variance due to the shape of the lot and the access to it.

Commissioner Gunter stressed the need for the survey showing all lot lines.

Deputy City Attorney Guerra said that it is important to determine the proposed square footage of the lot after factoring in the flag strip and the paved area used by the easterly neighbor.

Director Stanley said that staff will work with the applicant to demonstrate what the Commission is asking for.

The public hearing was closed.

Commissioner Oh asked if the Variance should still be considered.

Deputy City Attorney Guerra said, "no."

Commissioner Jain suggested continuing the item so that staff could work with the applicant to determine other changes to the project and a possible Variance request.

M/S/C - Jain/Hazen to continue the project to a date certain of October 25, 2016 in order to obtain correct information and the correct entitlement requests. Approved 4-0.

Staff will guide the applicant as to what is missing and if there are any discrepancies to determine if it were grounds for a Variance.

## **VIII. PUBLIC HEARINGS**

- A. [Second-floor Review 15-35 / Setback Modification 16-06 / Director's Misc. Review 16-21 \(flat roof and equipment\); ZAA Studio/Park; 5030 Castle Road:](#) request to allow the construction of a new, single-story house with an entry that qualifies as second floor. A Setback Modification would allow the construction of a new wall with a guardrail along the south property line with a cumulative height of 9'-11" as measured from the low side. A Director's Miscellaneous Review is required because the

applicant is proposing a flat roof for the new structure and is also proposing to mount new A/C condensers on the roof. 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 talked about the floor area ratio and explained that the applicant is requesting to build a new home. The Commission viewed a floor plan. There is a master suite wing and unroofed open patio proposed. Ms. Harris recommended adding a condition of approval that would limit the rear eaves to four feet or they would count as floor area. They should be reduced when they come in to Building and Safety for plan check.

Ms. Harris stated that the applicant is requesting a floor area review and that roof HVAC equipment is proposed. She explained that the main entitlement requested is the Second Floor Review for the eave height that exceeds code requirements. Also, the Setback Modification is requested for the existing retaining wall. The applicant wishes to install a fence for safety purposes.

Ms. Harris explained that there are Oak Trees located on the site and showed a photo of them. She also showed a photo of the retaining wall with a fence on top and proposed stairs. A portion would be taller on the south side.

Commissioner Hazen asked for clarification of the fence height and whether a retaining wall will be added to the existing wall.

Ms. Harris clarified that an item would be brought back for review if necessary and would need to be vetted through the Building & Safety Department.

Applicant, Zaven Ayvazin explained the architecture and concerns about affecting neighbor privacy. He explained that he is proposing that a basement be built to keep the residence, single-story.

Speaker, Richard Von Lassburg, said that he lives east of the subject property at 2118 Los Amigos Street. He talked about the triangular opening of the lot and asked about the barrier around the air conditioning unit. He expressed concern about a pool being installed in the future.

Ms. Harris indicated that the fence would be retained.

Speaker, Charlotte Bin, 5026 Castle Road, asked about the height of the fence. There are several fences in the area. She indicated that at one time, she was not allowed to construct a fence because it did not comply with code. She also stated that she does not like the height of the fence that is currently proposed.

Mr. Ayvazin said that he is available to address any concerns. He spoke about the fence at the rear and maintaining privacy. He explained that he

believed that the height of the fence meets code. The elevated a/c unit would contain a three-foot parapet that would help to reduce noise significantly.

2118 Los Amigos, Karen Von Lassburg, asked how many bedrooms and bathrooms are proposed.

Commissioner Oh said that he drove the site and viewed the roof. He mentioned that many houses are not visible from the street. There is a mix of architecture in the neighborhood. Regarding the roofs in the area, he is not concerned with the proposed modern design or flat roof. He said that he can make the findings for the project.

Commissioner Gunter said that he agrees with all of the findings.

Commissioner Hazen said that he can make all findings.

Commissioner Jain believed the project is a unique case. He said that he can make the findings. Staff should make sure that the air conditioning unit is not visible and that steps should be taken to minimize noise.

Commissioner Gunter said that there are rules for approving fences on retaining walls and property lines.

MS/C - Hazen/Gunter to approve the project. Approved 4-0.

- B. **[Second Floor Review 16-09 / Setback Modification 16-10; Campos /R53 Design LLC; 5310 Angeles Crest Hwy.:](#)** request to construct a new two-story house comprising approximately 4,869 sq. ft. A Setback Modification is also requested to maintain the existing 23'-4" front setback and 4'-4" side setback of the garage. Staff is recommending approval of a Categorical Exemption for this project. (Deputy Director Koleda).

Deputy Director Susan Koleda gave a presentation in accordance with the staff report. She explained that the applicant is requesting that the garage be retained. She described the setbacks and indicated that staff worked with the applicant on the building height. The house is dual-level and changes have been made to the project so that the house is code-compliant. There is a grade difference between Angeles Crest Highway and the proposed project conforms with code height requirements.

Deputy Director Koleda showed the Commission renderings of the proposed design and described the proposed architecture as possessing elements of a French chateau. There are limited views of the proposed property from surrounding properties. She explained that the property is well-sited and described that the entry and main living area is pushed to the south which

would cause there to be a minimal view and impact to 5334 Angeles Crest Highway.

Deputy Director Koleda showed photos of the site from different vantage points. The nearby views of the site are very limited. Story poles have been placed on the site and can be viewed only very minimally.

Deputy Director Koleda indicated that staff can make positive findings for the project.

Commissioner Gunter asked whether the grade measurements were correct.

Deputy Director Koleda answered, "yes."

Commissioner Jain asked if there was a title report.

Deputy Director Koleda confirmed staff had reviewed the title report and legal access to the property was provided from the shared access easement located immediately east of the project site.

Commissioner Jain asked if the project was considered a through-lot.

Deputy Director Koleda stated that it was not.

The public hearing was opened for public comment.

The Applicant had nothing to add.

Speaker, Lawrence Park, 5334 Angeles Crest Highway, said that he is concerned that the proposed project will block the view to the west. He is also concerned that the two-story house will impact the view of his bathroom and dining room as the project would be in close proximity.

Applicant, Rosanna Campos indicated that she is concerned about the privacy of those that are located near the proposed project.

The public hearing was closed.

Commissioner Gunter said that he visited the site and believes the house is thoughtfully designed and is consistent with the neighborhood. He said that he did not believe the proposed project would negatively impact the surrounding neighbors' properties. He said that he could make all of the findings.

Commissioner Hazen said that the overlay that was shown was thoughtfully completed. He said that he can make the findings to support the project.

Commissioner Oh said that he visited the site. There is a lot of landscaping provided that he felt would provide adequate screening. He expressed that he had a concern about the balcony and how it would affect privacy. He believed that the building design is tasteful and unique.

Commissioner Jain said that he visited the site and found that it is difficult to see. He indicated that he could make the findings as submitted. He stated that the architect did a good job of designing the private area and swimming pool in the middle of the site.

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

- B. **Hillside Development Permit 15-37 / Second-floor Review 15-39; Chen/Johnson; 4200 Mesa Vista Drive:** request to construct a new 2-story residence and attached 3-car garage comprising 6,173 sq. ft. on a 25,112 sq. ft. hillside lot with an average slope of approximately 28%. Swimming pool, deck and other site improvements are proposed. Staff is recommending approval of a Categorical Exemption for this project. (Planner Gjolme). –

Director Stanley explained that a continuance was requested to a date certain.

Deputy City Attorney Guerra asked if there was anyone in attendance that wished to speak.

The public hearing was opened. No members of the public spoke.

The public hearing was closed.

Director Stanley suggested that the item be continued to a date certain of October 25, 2016.

M/S/C - Jain/Hazen to continue the item to a date certain of October 25, 2016. Approved 4-0.

## **IX. REPORT OF DIRECTOR'S REVIEWS – Was reported.**

- A. **Hillside Development Permit 16-32 (Dir.) / Director's Misc. Review 16-35 (Setback); Myers/Belt; 5539 Burning Tree Drive:** allowed two replacement patio covers at the rear of an existing residence on a hillside lot.

- B. **Hillside Development Permit 16-29 (Dir.); Bloch; 5303 Crown Avenue:** allowed a 283 sq. ft. 1<sup>st</sup>-floor addition to an existing residence on a hillside lot.
- C. **Director's Misc. Review 16-28 (SptCt); Price; 2053 Sunnybank Drive:** allowed a rear yard batting cage to be constructed partially within the south side setback.

**X. OTHER BUSINESS** – There was none.

**XI. COMMENTS FROM THE COMMISSIONERS** – There were none.

**XII. COMMENTS FROM THE DIRECTOR**

Director Stanley informed the Commission that he would like to schedule a special meeting to discuss the Zoning Code Update. The Commission indicated that November 7<sup>th</sup> or 14<sup>th</sup> might work. Director Stanley indicated that he would check with the consultant to verify her attendance.

Director Stanley also polled the Commission for their availability to attend the regularly scheduled meeting of December 27, 2016. The Commission agreed to check back in with each other as the meeting got closer to check for availability again.

**XIII. ADJOURNMENT** – M/S/C – Gunter/Jain to adjourn the meeting at 8:08 p.m. Approved 4-0.