

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION
OF THE CITY OF LA CANADA FLINTRIDGE
HELD ON OCTOBER 8, 2013**

- I. **CALL TO ORDER:** The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m.
- II. **ROLL:** Chairman Gunter, Commissioners Der Sarkissian, McConnell and Walker were present. Vice Chair Jain was absent. Senior Planner Buss, Deputy City Attorney Guerra, Planners Gjolme and Clarke, Assistant Planners Harris and Parinas.
- III. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** Commissioner Walker led the Pledge of Allegiance.
- IV. **COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC:**
- V. **REORDERING OF THE AGENDA:** The items in the agenda was rearranged in the following order: VII A, VII D, VIII A, VIII C, VII B, VII C, VIII B
- VI. **CONSENT CALENDAR**
- VII. **CONTINUED PUBLIC HEARINGS**

- A. **Hillside Development Permit 13-16/Setback Modification 13-04 /Second-Floor Review 13-06/Negative Declaration; Avedian; 1936 Hilldale Drive:** Request to allow construction of a new approximately 3,200 sq. ft. house upon a hillside lot. Additionally, a Setback Modification is requested for a substandard front yard setback and for reduced second-floor side yard setbacks at the rear corners of the house. Second-floor review is also required since the new home would achieve a 2-story profile along the downslope to the rear. Staff is recommending approval of a Negative Declaration for this project. This item has been re-advertised for the October 22, 2013 meeting. (Senior Planner Buss)

Chairman Gunter made a motion to continue this item to October 22, 2013. The motion is seconded by Commissioner Walker. The motion carried, 4-0 vote.

- B. **Hillside Development Permit 13-14/Second Floor Review 13-04/Categorical Exemption; Johnson/Boynerian; 458 Noren Street:** Request to allow construction of a new 4,770 sq. ft. residence and related site work, including reconfiguration of an existing rear yard swimming pool and new deck. Staff is recommending approval of a Categorical Exemption for this project. (Planner Gjolme)

Planner Gjolme presented the project in accordance to the staff report.

Commissioner Walker asked if the story poles reflected the changes to the home's height.

Planner Gjolme stated that the story poles were revised in accordance with the current plan.

Commissioner McConnell asked what the reason was for removing the pine trees.

Planner Gjolme stated that he would let the applicant address the question.

Chairman Gunter asked if the way the basement is exempted from floor area is consistent with the way basements were exempted in other projects.

Planner Gjolme verified that the basement is exempt because it is completely below grade. Chairman Gunter opened the public hearing.

Talar Tegerian, property owner, described the project and showed the Planning Commission photographs and a rendering of the project. She went over the changes that were made based on the Planning Commissioners' comments at the July 9, 2013 meeting.

Commissioner McConnell asked if the two pine trees on the slope would be replaced.

Mrs. Tegerian explained that the trees are a fire hazard. The trees that are going to be removed on the front of the property will get replaced.

Jay Johnson, architect, stated that the revised plans reduced the size of the house by 10%, improved view corridors by 3-4 feet, increased setbacks, improved the architecture of the house (the new design is in character of the neighborhood, modern ranch), and improved landscaping (the landscape architect can address the changes to the landscaping).

Jon Pride, landscape architect, stated that the landscape plan includes scattered trees along the front, landscaping screening under the deck, and screening along the side of the house. He stated that the pines at the back slope are a Fire Department issue; the Fire Department typically asks for pines to be removed.

Chairman Gunter asked if the lawn area in the back is synthetic.

Mr. Pride verified that lawn area is synthetic; no maintenance and no water required.

Commissioner Der Sarkissian asked if the trees on the backside are going to be removed. He also asked about the height of the house

Mr. Pride explained that the largest tree at the back is on the neighboring property and cannot be removed.

Christina Shakarian, 5231 Redwillow Lane, stated that she is in support of the project. The project will add to the charm of the community.

Kent Frewing, 455 Noren Street, stated that he is grateful to the applicant and property owner on the revision of the design. The average size house in the area is 2,200 s.f. He stated that he felt that the revisions do not solve the mansionization problem. He asked if the Planning Commission could make Second Floor Review finding #2.

Linda Pierce, 461 Noren Street, stated that the mass and scale of the project is out of line with the neighborhood. When the house on 464 Noren Street was built, the view of the sunset was taken away. The mountain view will be obstructed by the project. The Hillside Ordinance addresses preserving views of the neighbors; the project is visible from Paulette Place and Knight Way. The project will have a negative impact on property values on other properties where the views are being obstructed. The project is not compatible with other homes in the neighborhood and does not satisfy findings in the Hillside Ordinance.

Tom Williams, 405 Noren Street, stated that the project would have a negative precedent setting nature. The environmental impact of the project on a small windy street will be great. The Design Guidelines discuss massing, scale, and compatibility: the average size house is much smaller than the proposed. The trend in the neighborhood is improvement, but in a smaller scale. He suggested redesigning the house,

to have a master bedroom only on the second floor with the rest of mass on the first floor. He stated that the scope of the project will cause a challenge on the street.

Mr. Johnson explained that the second floor is 1,600 sq. ft., the first floor has 9 ft. ceiling, the second floor has 8 ft. ceiling, and the roof is low pitched. The family is driving the addition: the four bedrooms are needed upstairs. Eliminating the bedrooms on the second floor will cause distress on the family.

Commissioner McConnell asked about dropping the pad more.

Planner Gjolme stated that dropping the pad could cause an issue with trees on the adjacent lot to the south.

Mrs. Tegerian showed pictures of the story poles from Paulette Place. The house is not visible; only the deck. She asked if 1.7 times larger than the average considered mansionization. The project is going to be less dense than the house on 405 Noren Street. 405 Noren Street was the first second floor that was built on the street.

Chairman Gunter closed the public hearing

Commissioner Der Sarkissian stated that 465 Noren Street does not have any views; the only house that has a view is 461 Noren Street. The trees at the rear are taller than the house.

Commissioner McConnell stated that the trees at the rear are the pine trees that are going to be removed.

Planner Gjolme clarified that the trees at the rear are a blending of the pine trees, the Oak tree on the lot, and the neighbor's Oak tree.

Commissioner Der Sarkissian stated that the code allows for basements; he supports basements that have living spaces and require light wells where the potential mass of the living area of the house is reduced and transferred to the basement. The forum to discuss basements is the City Council. He can make the findings for approval.

Commissioner McConnell stated that the applicant has revised the project in a way that improves the look and opened up the view sheds. The landscape plan is significantly better. His main concern is the view from below. He is concerned with the deck. The pine trees should be left if allowed by the Fire Department and replaced if the Fire Department requires its removal. He can make findings for Second Floor Review and could support the project as submitted.

Commissioner Walker stated that the property owners and architect were responsive to the Commission's suggestions. The size of the lot is important and the house fits with the lot size. The basement is allowing the scale and mass of the house to be reduced. She can make the findings and the support project.

Chairman Gunter explained that the Commission enforces the current zoning ordinance. If the citizens feel that the ordinance should be changed, they should meet with City Council. He is comfortable with making the ruling that the basement is consistent with the zoning ordinance. The zoning code does not distinguish between living space and non-living space. The house is being reviewed based on the current code. He explained that review of homes on an individual basis doesn't set a precedent and two-story homes are allowed in La Canada. The scale and massing are a function of the design changes that the applicant made. The City took mansionization seriously and addressed mansionization by setbacks and floor area ratio. The applicant did exactly what the Planning Commission asked. The landscape plan shows significant improvement. He can make all the findings for the Second Floor Review and Hillside Development Permit. He would like to add conditions of approval to retain mature pine trees unless the Fire Department requires the removal, replacement landscaping shall be installed.

Chairman Gunter summarized that the Planning Commission is approving the project with the added condition to lower the deck to a maximum of 6 feet, and retain the pine trees.

Commissioner Der Sarkissian made the motion to approve the project with the added conditions of approval, Commissioner Gunter seconded the motion; vote 4-0.

The Commission took a ten minute break.

- C. **Second Floor Review 13-07/Negative Declaration; Chun; 425 Woodfield Road:**
Request to allow construction of a 7,800 sq. ft. 2-story residence on a 31,183 sq. ft. lot. The project complies with all floor area, setback and height limits for the subject lot. Staff is recommending approval of a Negative Declaration for this project. (Planner Gjolme)

Planner Gjolme gave a presentation in accordance with the staff report. He reminded the Commission about the previous hearing and provided an update on the changes since the last hearing. The gross square footage of the lot is almost an acre. Once all the easements are removed, lot size would be reduced to 31,180 sq. ft. Staff recommended an increased setback on the south side which would allow room for screening on that side. The maximum height of the structure would be 26'-6" (lowered by 18") and steps down to 24' and 21'. He showed a view of the story poles from the neighboring property. He also showed the revised right elevation. He described which protected trees would be removed and which ones would be retained. The garage roof had been altered and other rooflines have been added to reduce any roof massing. He described the last-minute design change that was suggested by Chairman Gunter and showed plans that were developed by the project architect based on the suggested changes. He explained that Woodfield Road is a unique street with diverse home styles. Staff also considered Chula Senda Lane as part of the neighborhood. He concluded by saying that the driveway was reconfigured to satisfy the 50% front landscaping requirement.

Commissioner McConnell asked staff if he looked at the historic potential of house.

Planner Gjolme replied that an environmental review was done to look at historic value of the house. An expert was hired to determine if the house was historically significant. His conclusion was that the house was not a candidate for historic listing. A Negative Declaration was prepared for the project.

Commissioner McConnell asked if staff considered reorienting the house on the lot with the long side facing the larger house on the northwest side and protecting the smaller house on the south side and shifting the house back to protect the Sycamore in the front.

Planner Gjolme indicated that he looked at that but reviewed the proposal as submitted.

Chair Gunter asked if the front-yard fence would be lowered.

Planner Gjolme was unsure of the applicant's intentions with regards to the front-yard fence and deferred to the applicant for the answer to that question.

Commissioner Der Sarkissian corrected the FAR number. He asked if the trunk diameters of the multi-trunk tree are added together. He was confused by the discrepancy in the arborist report. He also asked why the assessor's floor area numbers for the neighboring home were smaller.

Planner Gjolme explained that we use the Assessor's numbers which don't count non-habitable space.

Assistant Planner Harris explained that it is common practice for arborist to calculate the surface area of a tree rather than simply adding up the trunk diameters and this usually yields a smaller number.

Commissioner Walker asked if the new garage lines up with the south neighbor's garage.

Chair Gunter clarified that the new garage lines up with the existing neighboring home to the south.

Craig Stoddard, the project architect, explained that the existing story poles are still at 29' high. He added that the owners are not against trees and that the arborist stated that the oak tree is in poor health and potentially a hazard. They are willing to plant replacement trees. He explained that they did look at flipping the house but that the owners didn't want a garage that faced the street which could require the removal of an additional sycamore.

Commissioner Der Sarkissian asked Mr. Stoddard if they considered saving the house.

Mr. Stoddard replied that they did not consider saving the house.

Chair Gunter asked if they considered moving the driveway to increase the landscape area in the front.

Mr. Stoddard explained that they would like to keep existing access and gate but would consider moving it if the Planning Commission required it.

Chair Gunter asked if they would consider placing additional planting to enhance the streetscape and mitigate the removal of the existing canopy.

Mr. Stoddard replied that they would be willing to do that.

Chair Gunter asked if they intend to keep the existing fence as is since it is over-height.

Commissioner Der Sarkissian reminded his fellow commissioners that it is located well onto the property.

Mr. Stoddard indicated that they planned to keep it as it is and that the call-out on the plan for the fence is incorrect.

Gita Singh, of 437 Woodfield Road, indicated that they are good friends with the applicants. They also used Craig Stoddard as their architect when they built their single-story home 10 years ago. They met with the architect and owner in July/August to go over the proposal and Mr. Stoddard explained that all of the City's development standards were satisfied by the project. The meeting was before the story poles were erected and at that time she didn't have any immediate concerns about the project. She indicated that she would prefer a single-story home and realized this after the story poles went up. At that time she didn't realize what a two-story home would do to the unique character of Woodfield Road. Currently, they have a significant amount of privacy. She felt that you cannot include Chula Senda Lane as part of the neighborhood. All homes on Woodfield Road are single-story homes. She expressed concern about the lack of maintenance and landscaping on site. The lot is currently an eyesore. She felt that the property should be maintained during this process. She concluded by saying there were issues with on-going construction at 4270 Chula Senda Lane which has been a nuisance for four years. She had concerns with traffic and access during the construction process and that removing the shade-providing oak tree would alter the look of the street.

Molly Brockmeyer, of 445 Woodfield Road, stated that she didn't want a two-story home built on this lot. The proposed project does not preserve the existing scale and character of the neighborhood. Chula Senda Lane is not a part of neighborhood. She expressed concern with the tree removal permit request. The neighbors were willing to hire another arborist to get a second opinion on the health of the trees slated for removal but the owner won't allow access to another arborist. The tree looks very healthy and

she requested that the Tree Removal request be denied for the oak tree. She gave a brief history of the Flintridge area and specifically the Woodfield Road neighborhood with all the old oak trees.

Mr. Stoddard indicated that the proposed square footage includes the garage and a large patio in the rear. In his report, Bill McKinley (the project arborist) stated that the tree was in poor health and a potential hazard. The neighbor's house that he did is 21'-6" high and this house is 26'-6" high. He designed this house to look like a tall one-story building and not a large traditional two-story home.

Commissioner Walker stated that the Planning Commission has to rely on the expert reports that are submitted. She quoted directly from the arborist report. She agreed that it was beautiful tree and that the neighborhood is very unique. She also felt that Chula Senda Lane is related to this neighborhood. The proposed house is setback a good distance and steps back to soften the look of the house and would not change the character of the neighborhood. She felt that these are estate parcels and concurred with staff. She was ready to approve the house as proposed.

Commissioner Der Sarkissian thought the existing house is unique and is saddened that it is being demolished. The original house was designed to save the trees. He indicated that he knew the historic reviewer. He was OK with the size of the proposed house. He thought that it was well-designed and doesn't look like a two-story house. The windows are well-sheltered within the roof. The longest façade should have been put on the other side. He could not make the findings for the Tree Removal request. He felt that the house could be designed around the tree. He proposed a revised design that flips the house that is built around the tree.

Commissioner McConnell also expressed concern that the existing house is not being utilized. He could, however, make the findings for the Second-Floor Review. The architectural style is not compatible with the rest of the street. He would limit the neighborhood to just Woodfield Road. He agreed that the house should be flipped and pushed back. He would support a second opinion by an arborist regarding the trees removal.

Chair Gunter indicated that he did view the project from Mr. Scott's (417 Woodfield Road) backyard. He was sensitive to construction issues. He briefly discussed the tree removal findings that state a personal can ask to remove a protected tree if they have a reasonable cause and the tree removal can be reasonably mitigated. He agreed with the historic assessment and that its removal is not contrary to what the City is trying to do with respect to historic preservation. He agreed that the Arborist report was prepared by a professional and that we should rely on that report. He agreed that it was a nice tree but he did notice the signs of decline. He could support the findings of tree removal request. He did like the wooded character of neighborhood, specifically the sycamores along the road. He felt that flipping the design to save the oak tree in the back would impact the sycamores along the street. He added that removing the second story would not change the height of the building and that the project is in compliance with the Design Guidelines. He indicated that he could make the Second-Floor Review and Tree Removal findings and was comfortable with the location of the house. He concluded by saying that this project will change the neighborhood but will not adversely impact the character of the neighborhood. He asked if the rest of the Planning Commission was comfortable approving the proposed changes that include the addition of the carriage house without submittal of new plans.

Commissioner Der Sarkissian stated he was not comfortable approving the changes because the tree is a big issue that needs to be fully addressed.

Commissioner Walker comfortable with the design and can also ask for more screening

Chair Gunter clarified that he was only asking about the changes to the house, irrespective of the tree issue.

Commissioner Walker indicated that she was comfortable approving the changes. The screening could be conditioned.

Chair Gunter asked Deputy City Attorney what would happen if their vote was in favor of the Second-Floor Review but not in favor of the tree removal permit.

Deputy City Attorney indicated that it was not clear if that was the case.

Commissioner McConnell clarified that he was in favor of the Second-Floor Review but not for the house as currently situated on the property.

The current vote was a 2-2 split vote.

Commissioner Der Sarkissian recommended a continuance for a full vote.

Chair Gunter clarified for the applicant that a split decision would be a denial.

Chair Gunter summarized that Commissioners Walker and Gunter were comfortable with approval for the Second-Floor Review with the recommended revisions. Commissioner McConnell is in favor of second floor for the house with revisions to its siting on the lot.

Commissioner McConnell suggested flipping the house, adding additional details to break up long façade and shifting the house further back on the lot.

Commissioner Der Sarkissian suggested that the tree should not be removed and the house redesigned to accommodate the tree. He also suggested a second opinion for the arborist review.

Deputy City Attorney interpreted the new tree ordinance that says a second opinion could be required by the decision-making body.

Commissioner Walker felt that applicant did their due diligence by obtaining the arborist report in the first place. If the arborist determined that the tree was viable, the applicant would have designed the home around the tree. She felt that asking for another arborist report because the outcome was not desirable was an undue hardship.

Chair Gunter asked his fellow Commissioners if they felt they were qualified to determine if the report was faulty.

Chair Gunter suggested continuing the project and not requiring an extra arborist report although the applicant might consider getting a second opinion to defend the original report. He asked the applicant when he could return with a redesign of the project so that it could be scheduled for a date certain.

Mr. Stoddard replied he could return in one month, November 12, 2013.

Commissioner Walker asked if they could require a landscape plan to be submitted that provides for screening on the south side.

Chair Gunter thought that was a good idea and it should show mitigation measures for the trees being removed.

M/S/C Gunter/Der Sarkissian to continue the project to 11/12/13 with the direction given by the Planning Commission. 4-0 Unanimous.

- D. **Zone Change 13-01/Negative Declaration; City-wide:** Request to consider adoption of an amendment to the City's Zoning Ordinance pertaining to Section 11.37.040; Sign Regulations Standards and Guidelines. More specifically, the amendment would allow electronic reader-boards in excess of 4 sq. ft. on certain properties zoned Public/Semi-public and Institutional with private school uses. This is an amendment to the City's Zoning Ordinance, which requires a future City Council public hearing and City Council approval (to be noticed later). The Planning Commission will make a recommendation to the City Council at this hearing. Staff is recommending that the Planning Commission recommend approval of a Negative Declaration. (Planner Gjolme)

A motion was made by Chairman Gunter to continue this item to a date certain of October 22, 2013, seconded by Commissioner Walker. Motion carries unanimously.

VIII. PUBLIC HEARINGS:

- A. **Variance 13-04/Second Floor Review 13-02 (Dir)/Director's Miscellaneous Review 13-05 (SB)/Categorical Exemption; Bender/Coane and Associates; 533 Georgian Road:** Request to allow a 949 sq. ft. first-floor addition including a 425 sq. ft. solid-roofed patio and a 131 sq. ft. second-floor addition on a 16,540 sq. ft. lot. A Variance would allow the existing 17'-0" wide garage to be maintained as is. A Director's Miscellaneous Review would allow the first-floor addition to encroach 3'-5" into the 8'-11" side-yard setback requirement but no closer than the existing house. 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.

Chairman Gunter opened the public hearing.

James Coane, architect, stated that the project would improve the look of the house and maintain existing setbacks. He added that other garages in the area are also small.

Chairman Gunter closed the public hearing.

Commissioner McConnell stated that he can make the findings.

Commissioner Walker stated that she can make the findings for the garage. She has concerns regarding the Director's Review for the decreased setback. She pointed out that the neighbor jogged in when they added and the addition is new construction. She cannot make the findings for the Director's Miscellaneous Review for the setback.

Commissioner Der Sarkissian stated that he can make the findings. He has no problem with the side-yard setback and he is comfortable with project as presented.

Chairman Gunter stated that he can make findings for the garage and can make the findings for the Director's Review for the decreased setback. The house and property lines are not parallel and house is gradually moving away from the property line.

A motion was made by Commissioner McConnell to approve the project; Commissioner Der Sarkissian seconded the motion, vote 4-0.

Commissioner Walker wanted it noted for the record that she had concerns about the encroachments.

- B. **Second Floor Review 13-12/Tree Removal 13-12/Categorical Exemption; Commonwealth/Anderson; 4834 Commonwealth Avenue:** Request to construct a new two-story house on a vacant 10,122 sq. ft. property. The project complies with all floor area, setback and height requirements. The project also includes the removal of four oak trees. Staff is recommending that the Planning Commission approve a Categorical Exemption for this project. (Planner Clarke)

Planner Clarke gave a presentation in accordance with the staff report. He indicated that the applicant relocated the story poles 5' back from what is indicated on the plan. This was done to ascertain any impacts on the protected trees that would be removed as part of the project. It was determined that moving the house back 5' would not change the impacts to the trees.

Commissioner McConnell asked if staff knew when the lot was originally split.

Planner Clarke stated that it was unknown when the lot was split.

Commissioner McConnell asked if the story poles were inaccurate. He asked if the neighbors were looking at something that is inaccurate.

Planner Clarke replied that the story poles were relocated by the applicant and are not an accurate depiction of the proposed location of the house.

Commissioner Der Sarkissian was confused by the story poles. He tried to locate trees based on the story poles on site.

Commissioner Walker asked what the procedure for their review is since the story poles did not accurately depict what is proposed.

Planner Clarke indicated that the item could be continued so that the story poles could be corrected.

Commissioner Der Sarkissian asked for clarification if the story poles were 5' further away from the street.

Planner Clarke replied yes.

Chairman Gunter stated that we don't allow flag lots anymore so this lot must have been subdivided some time ago.

Craig Anderson, the property owner and developer, explained that he moved the house back 5' to preserve the Oak tree. If he had moved the house back to eliminate the need to remove the trees he would have been left with very little back yard. He moved the story poles to save the trees. One of the trees he initially wanted to preserve would have impacted the second floor of the proposed house. One of the trees impacted garage access. The house was already pushed to the south because of other Oak trees along the north side of the property. He is OK with moving the house back if that's what the Commission wants.

Commissioner Walker asked if he moved the story poles back because that is where he wanted to put the house.

Mr. Anderson stated that he would prefer the house be 5' forward of where the story poles are. He moved them back to save the tree in the front.

Chairman Gunter asked if the site plan matched the story pole location.

Mr. Anderson replied no.

Chairman Gunter asked for clarification who the architect on the project is.

Mr. Anderson indicated that Jay Johnson is the designer and Keith Ward is the draftsman that prepared the drawings.

Chairman Gunter suggested that who the architect is be made clearer in the future.

Jay Johnson, the project architect spoke regarding the difficulty that the Oak trees presented when he began working on the project. He felt that he presented a reasonable design given the slightly sloping site and the many Oak trees. He explained that by terracing the house grading would be minimized so as to not impact the protected trees further. The Oak trees in the front will act as a buffer too.

Commissioner McConnell asked about the discrepancy in the south setbacks noted on the various plans and the staff report. He asked for clarification if the required setback apply to fireplaces.

Mr. Johnson explained that the required first-floor setback is 8'-6"

Mr. Gunter explained that the setbacks indicated on the drawings would supersede the number presented in the staff report.

Commissioner Der Sarkissian asked why the Tree #1 needs to be removed for a walkway. He speculated that perhaps the survey showed the tree in the wrong location. He felt that the survey needed to be corrected.

Mr. Anderson explained that Tree #1 is in front of the garage and not in the location for the future walkway as Commissioner Der Sarkissian stated.

Mr. Johnson understood the confusion over site plan in relation to trees. Perhaps pushing the house back the 5' as proposed by Mr. Anderson and as depicted in the story poles would be a good idea. He suggested confirming the location of the trees and whether or not the house would be moved 5' further back than originally proposed. He asked the Commission if they liked the design of the house.

Commissioner McConnell felt that the design of the house was OK but there are site plan issues.

Kai Ryssdal of 4832 Commonwealth, stated that he is the neighbor on the south side. He is happy that the sites are being developed but he is concerned with south side setback and the height of the proposed house. His house is 21' high. This house is proposed to be 31' high and he understands that the height satisfies the code requirement but it is too high.

Chairman Gunter asked Mr. Ryssdal how far his house is from the shared property line.

Mr. Ryssdal stated that his house is 5' from the common property line.

Yanyan Zhang of 4848 Commonwealth Avenue, she welcomes a new neighbor but expressed concern about her privacy as it relates to the new two-story house and the pool in her back yard. She also expressed concern about the proposed balcony.

Planner Clarke clarified that the houses on the back lots, including the one immediately adjacent to her lot, are single story.

Mr. Anderson apologized for the confusion on the site plan. The previous speaker may be confusing his project with the other single-story project currently under construction on the lot adjacent to her. He indicated that the plans and the field conditions should be

Chairman Gunter stated that he can't approve the project tonight since there are so many inconsistencies on the site plan and with the story poles.

Commissioner McConnell stated that he was unaware of the height difference between the project and the height of the structure on the neighboring property. He stated he will make a point to look at that specific issue when the project comes back for review. He was Ok with a two-story home. He thought that the design was sensitive to neighboring properties.

Commissioner Der Sarkissian asked if there is a flag strip that belongs to the back parcel.

Mr. Anderson explained that there is no easement. It is a fee simple flag strip for access to the back lot.

Commissioner Der Sarkissian concurred with Commissioner McConnell. He felt that the proposed landscaping is critical to protect the privacy of the neighbors. Moving the house 5' feet will not reduce impacts. It seems that some of the trees don't need to be removed as proposed. He will also look at the neighboring house for potential issues.

Commissioner Walker stated that she has to rely on story poles. She could appreciate the concerns of the south side neighbor. She asked if it is possible to build a two story house under 21' high under the current codes. She also felt that building a one story house would increase the footprint of the house and would impact more trees. She felt that a two-story house was the way to go. She suggested that Mr. Johnson look into lowering the house in the next design.

Chairman Gunter stated that it really didn't matter if the house is moved but the plans and story poles need to be corrected. The cost of fixing the story poles shouldn't be the determining factor for the location of the house. He felt that the best trees on the lot were the lot's perimeter trees and the street trees. He was sensitive to the neighbor to the south and would be comfortable moving the house north at the expense of the trees on that side. He asked the applicant when they could return with revised drawings.

Planner Clarke recommended the case be continued to 11/12/13.

Mr. Anderson asked if it would be OK to take out more trees to increase south-side setback.

Chairman Gunter replied that in his opinion it would be OK to remove more trees to increase the setback.

Planner Clarke stated that he would need the plans by 11/1 to allow time for adequate review. He offered to meet with property owner and the neighbor on site.

M/S/C Gunter/Walker to continue to 11/12/13 with direction to applicant as discussed. 4-0 Unanimous.

- C. **Second Floor Review 13-15/Categorical Exemption; Aramouni/Boutros; 1344 Verdugo Boulevard:** Request to allow a 1,225-square foot second-floor addition, two balconies totaling 250-square feet, and a 1,746-square foot first floor addition to an existing two-story house. Staff is recommending that the Planning Commission approve a Categorical Exemption for this project. (Assistant Planner Parinas)

The Planning Commissions did not ask Assistant Planner Parinas for a presentation.

Edgar Aramouni, the project architect, indicated that he is available to answer any questions.

Commissioner Der Sarkissian stated that he is OK with the findings.

Commissioner Walker agreed with her fellow commissioners.

Commissioner McConnell felt that there was no impact to the surrounding area.

Chair Gunter could make all the findings in support of the project.

M/C/S Gunter/Walker to approve the project as submitted. 4-0 Unanimous.

IX. OTHER BUSINESS:

X. REPORT OF DIRECTOR'S REVIEWS

XI. COMMENTS FROM THE COMMISSIONERS

Commissioner Walker would like to tighten up the guidelines for basements – to clear up the gray areas.

Deputy City Attorney Guerra offered a future study session.

Chair Gunter added that it is not clear in the ordinance. They need clear direction from City Council, a written policy or an adjustment to the ordinance.

Commissioner Der Sarkissian emphasized that it is not an exiting issue. Internal stairs could be incorporated to exit habitable rooms in the basement. He added that he wrote to all the City Council members only Laura Olhasso responded.

Commissioner Walker asked if bedrooms in a basement are counted towards floor area.

Chair Gunter clarified that currently none of a basement counts towards floor area if it is below grade.

Deputy City Attorney Guerra stated that they would set it up a study session and possible future ordinance amendment.

Chair Gunter stated that he would be OK with direction from the City Council.

Chair Gunter stated that they need a handle on construction duration and enforcing the on-site parking requirements. He was sensitive to the concerns of the residents. He also thought that the grade ratings for trees shouldn't be a letter grade but instead should be "excellent, good, fair or poor".

Commissioner Der Sarkissian indicated that he sent Director Stanley an inquiry about a large satellite dish on Chevy Chase only a few feet away from the property line and totally visible from the street.

Deputy City Attorney Guerra indicated that we're looking at what authority we have regarding that issue and will report the findings to the Planning Commission.

XII. COMMENTS FROM THE DIRECTOR

Planner Gjolme asked the Commission to keep reader board information handy. He sent it to them digitally and did not intend to resend hard copies of the same information to them.

XIII. ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at 10:41 p.m.