

**MINUTES OF A SPECIAL MEETING OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION
OF THE CITY OF LA CAÑADA FLINTRIDGE
HELD ON OCTOBER 16, 2017**

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Gunter called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

II. ROLL

Also present were Vice Chairman Hazen and Commissioner Oh. Commissioners McConnell and Jain recused themselves and were not present at the meeting.

III. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Flag Salute was recited.

IV. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

There were none.

V. REORDERING OF THE AGENDA

The agenda was not reordered.

VI. CONSENT CALENDAR

- A. Minutes – 6/27/2017 minutes – M/S/C - Gunter/Hazen to approve the minutes with non-substantive corrections from the Director. Approved 3-0.

VII. CONTINUED PUBLIC HEARINGS

A. Conditional Use Permit 210 Amendment #3 / Variance 16-05 / Tree Removal Permit 17-17; Flintridge Preparatory School; 4543 Crown Avenue:

Deputy Director Koleda gave a presentation in accordance with the staff report. Staff recommends approval of the CUP and Variance requests, as revised by the applicant and presented in the October 16 staff report.

Commissioner Oh asked how the proposed mid-block cross walk would be triggered and what color the lights would be. Ms. Koleda said that the applicant's traffic engineer can explain it further and that she believed the color of the flashing lights will be yellow.

Commissioner Oh asked how tall the existing temporary sports field lights are and if any complaints have been received about the lights. Ms. Koleda said there are twelve, 25-foot tall lights on the field and that no complaints about these lights have been received.

Commissioner Oh asked if there is any restricted use of the lights. Ms. Koleda confirmed that there were, as approved under Temporary Use Permit 17-03, that permitted the lights during winter for football games up until 9:30 pm and during spring for soccer until 9 pm.

Vice Chairman Hazen asked about the trees that will be removed. Ms. Koleda clarified that 2 Oaks and 1 Modesto Ash would be removed and that the tree located on 4609 Crown Avenue, but hanging over the project site, would be saved but trimmed in accordance with City ordinance.

Vice Chairman Hazen said that he had questions for the applicant's lighting consultant.

Commissioner Oh asked if a peer review has been done for the proposals, especially the height and lighting. Ms. Koleda said the City Traffic Engineer has reviewed and is in agreement with what is proposed as it pertains to any traffic impacts. City staff had reviewed the lighting studies and believes all facts and figures are accurate.

The public hearing was opened and Chairman Gunter explained to those in attendance, the rules that take place during the public hearing portion of the agenda.

Speaker, Applicant Peter Bachman, explained his wishes to provide a 21st Century education and problem-solving learning for students. He said that the school held 3 community outreach meetings in August with invitations sent to 200 neighbors. The school wished to show the neighbors the height of the athletic field lighting that was proposed via story poles. They also let the neighbors know about tonight's hearing as well. He summarized the school's requests and how he believed they would meet the required findings the Commission must make. He said that the traffic mitigation plan has the support of the City's Traffic Engineer.

Speaker, John Dale from HED, the project architect, thanked the Planning Department for their report and working with him in reviewing the proposed changes to the project that were raised at the last Planning Commission meeting.

Mr. Dale showed renderings and a photo montage of the proposed changes to the project that have been made since the last Planning Commission meeting. He explained that the goal is to reduce the density of the project and the height of some components. A rendering of the original Collaborative Leadership Building design was also shown to demonstrate the changes.

Mr. Dale showed the profile of the Collaborative Leadership Building by reducing the height building and the photovoltaic elements and removing the rooftop educational area. He said there would not be public access to the roof. The access walkway along the northeastern corner of the building is gated and is not a public area. He explained that the windows are smaller and have translucent glass. The building was pushed back an additional 8 feet, for a total setback of 23 feet from the eastern property line. He studied lowering the building further but was limited by an existing underground culvert.

Landscape images were shown. The intent is to restore the trees on the north and east sides of the property and increase the density of the hedge to enhance the privacy of the neighbors.

Speaker, Francis Krahe of Francis Krahe & Associates, the lighting consultant, showed a table pertaining to the illuminance and light trespass calculations. He said that the lights are more focused and contained on the field. The new lighting will be LED. The poles are proposed at 70 feet high. He said that other school fields in La Canada are at 90 feet high for the same or smaller field dimensions. He showed an elevation view of the 4 poles looking east- west and north-south. He explained that the field lights are very concentrated. There could be more impact viewing from beyond the property line by adjusting the angle of the lights. He said that lowering the height of the poles lower than 70 feet high could increase glare. Mr. Cray showed a recommended light fixture example. It showed less spillage of light from the beam and would result in less glare.

Chairman Gunter asked how many heads on each pole. Mr. Cray stated each light pole would have six heads.

Vice Chairman Hazen asked about the foot candle illuminance difference between lights placed 60 feet high and those placed 70 feet high.

Mr. Cray clarified that there is little difference with regard to light trespass between 60 and 70-foot-tall lights, but that each degree the lights are tilted (with lower poles) can have a critical impact on the amount of glare that is observed.

Vice Chairman Hazen asked if from a neighbor's prospective, do lower poles have more impact?

Mr. Cray confirmed that lower pole height would result in an increase in both light trespass and glare and that taller poles are better.

Chairman Gunter again explained the rules that take place during the public hearing and opened up the meeting to members of the public who wished to speak. He said that he is not limiting the amount of time each speaker can speak, but asked that those in attendance be mindful of repetitive comments. He asked that all be respectful of one another.

Speaker, Bob Easter, 336 Nancy Way expressed concern about the field lights. He said he believes there is a benefit to 60-foot tall lights. He questioned the lighting analysis and talked about the aesthetics of a 70-foot pole. He felt several criteria are not met in the findings in the conditions. Mr. Easter passed out photos to the Commission. He said he did not believe the higher poles are justified. He asked the Commission to look at the findings for the field lights as he did not believe the hardship justification could be made. He felt there could be danger with the amount of voltage required and the impact it would have on a transformer. He said he realized there may not be a high probability of a problem with a transformer, but felt it should be further studied. He said that he did not feel screening of the poles would be helpful. He suggested possibly telescoping the light poles, though he understood that could be expensive. He said that he would like to see further studies on the height of the field light. He suggested that the school did not need the lights more than 300 hours a year and asked that the Planning Commission deny the schools request for the field lights as proposed. Mr. Easter said that he would like the decision on lighting to be deferred until the Zoning Code update is complete.

Chairman Gunter said that he cannot speak to the future Zoning Code. He clarified that the Planning Commission must take action on what is proposed by the school in a certain amount of time under state law.

Director Stanley said that the Commission can approve portions of the proposal or the project as a whole. They can also deny all or portions of the request.

Mr. Easter reiterated that he believed that more time needs to be taken to study effects of the varying pole heights and that the impact the height can have on the neighborhood should also be taken into account.

Speaker, Michelle Ametrano, 4609 Crown Avenue, said that the property in front of the Collaborative Leadership Building concerns her mom. She said her mom would have liked to attend the meeting, but she is ill as the stress of the project is making her sick. Ms. Ametrano expressed concerns over the landscaping. She said that the school has offered to relocate her mom during the construction, but that she does not believe that is an option at 84 years old. She said that with the proposed project, her mother's view would be gone. She said that her mother is also concerned about privacy and if the proposed building is approved, then her mother will have to move. She asked that the Commission reconsider the school's request. Ms. Ametrano provided photos and a photo simulation to the Commission. She said that the school provided a visualization picture of before and after the project was built, as well as tree screening. She believed the visualization showed foliage that is not very dense. She believed that a lot of the foliage will be removed which will take away a lot of her mom's privacy in her back yard.

Chairman Gunter asked if Ms. Ametrano's mother would have an issue with the building that would be expanded near her property. Ms. Ametrano said that anything that is higher than one-story would be an issue for her mother. She said that the tree located on her property is also an issue as she believes the trimming proposed by the school would be excessive.

Chairman Gunter stated that a neighbor can trim a protected tree without a permit.

Ms. Ametrano said that she would like the Commission to deny the project so that more time could be given for the school to work with and accommodate her mother.

Commissioner Oh asked with respect to the landscaping screening, has the school offered to work with the trees that would help to protect her mother's privacy?

Ms. Ametrano said that her mother does not want anything changed with respect to her property. She said that student noise will affect her mother. She said that she is speaking with the school on behalf of her mother.

Speaker, Sharlyn French, 331 Nancy Way expressed a concern about the proposed height of the lighting and that they would be permanently fixed. She is also concerned with the fact that the school's expansion could generate 30 more cars, two times a day. She was also concerned about construction vehicle traffic.

Speaker, Peggy Easter, 336 Nancy Way said that she feels for the Armatrano family. Ms. Easter said that she has enjoyed the school while living there for more than 40 years. She is not sure why 25-foot high lights are not good enough. She does not believe that tall lights will make any difference because the games that are played there are already dangerous. She said she likes the people at the school and she does not like to have to complain. She wished that telescoping lights could be installed.

Speaker, Michele Lyle, is a school parent. Her son plays football for the school. She said that regarding the proposed lights, that they would be no higher than other field lights in the city. She expressed that the current field lighting is drastically under-lit. She believed that 70-foot tall lighting is the best way to keep the glare down. She felt that the experts understand best how to address this type of issue. She believed 60-foot tall poles would cast more light and glare than 70 foot poles would. She reminded the Commission that the school has been there since 1933.

Speaker David Katika, 655 Bradford Street in Pasadena, said that he is on the School Board. He believed that the parking garage that was proposed was difficult to abandon and that doing so could potentially create more problems.

Speaker Lucia Avedissian, 317 Nancy Way, said she believes the high poles are a problem and that this is the time to address concerns with the height.

Chairman Gunter compared the request and concerns about views with that of a three-story residential building which could be allowed by right on a hillside.

After some disruption, Chairman Gunter asked that Mr. and Mrs. Easter leave the meeting.

Mr. Dale spoke about construction access. He said that fire lanes onto the site will be used and staging will occur from below (west side). He also explained that one of the visualizations that was shown by a past speaker does not show the very large Oak tree that exists and will help with screening of the proposed adjacent building. He said that there will not be any door access to the second-floor walkway at the northeast corner of the Collaborative Leadership Building. The main entrance is located on the west side on the structure.

Mr. Bachman thanked all those that spoke. He felt that the improvements will be in the best interest of the students. He believed the field lighting improvements as proposed will result in less glare.

The Public Hearing was closed.

Chairman Gunter said he visited the site. He reiterated that the school was asked at the previous Commission meeting to open the lines of communication with the neighbors to hear what their concerns were and how to address them. He said that staff looked at a lot of technical items. He felt that the school worked hard to try to address concerns expressed by the neighbors. As a result, the school omitted some requests, including the parking structure. He said he felt he could make the findings as staff laid them out sufficiently. He believed the tree removal permit is reasonable and that sometimes it makes sense to remove trees. Regarding the building height requests, he understands that height requirements are really meant to deal with buildings in hillside areas. He is comfortable that the front of the building is within the height limits, the setbacks meet code, and that the back of the building is where the exceptions are being asked for. He did not believe the auditorium would result in major concerns. Regarding the crosswalk, he is not in favor of including a mid-block crossing and felt that adding another crosswalk is not helpful. As to enrollment, he felt the increase is fine and would not be detrimental to the community. As to the field lights, he said he relies on the experts to analyze and explain their effects. He believed having a properly lit field is important for young adults. As to the height of the poles, visually, the difference between 60 and 70 feet tall is irrelevant. Landscape screening is being provided. It is not up to the Commission to make all things unseen, but mitigate significant impacts.

Chairman Gunter asked the Deputy Director if he missed any points. She confirmed he had not. Chairman Gunter said he could make all of the findings.

Vice Chairman Hazen said that he wanted to congratulate the school for listening and for being thoughtful of the neighbors. He agreed with Chairman Gunter regarding all of the points he raised. He can make all the findings. He said that he still struggles with the height of the light poles. Possibly telescoping poles could be a thoughtful alternative unless they are cost prohibited.

Assistant City Attorney Guerra stated that the item before the Commission was 70-foot tall field lights and therefore he asked that the Commission take action on this.

Commissioner Oh said he agreed with his fellow commissioners and with Commissioner Gunter regarding the issues he raised regarding the midblock crosswalk. He said he could make all the findings. He does believe that

field lighting is a big issue. He felt that 70 feet high lighting is the better way to go as it would reduce the spillover effect. He said he could approve 60-foot high lighting as well, though.

Chairman Gunter asked what is in the findings as far as the height of the field lights.

Assistant Attorney Guerra said that the 70-foot height is noted within the findings and that such references would need to be changed to 60-foot if that is what the Commission decides.

Deputy Director Koleda confirmed that the environmental document analyzed the impact of 70-foot field lighting; therefore, if 60-foot tall lights were approved, the environmental document would not have to be revised as lower lights would not result in a significant new impact.

Chairman Gunter identified findings would need to be amended, including all references to 70-foot tall should be amended to 60-foot. Chairman Gunter said that he wondered if the crosswalk would still be required even if the parking structure is no longer proposed. He said that the Commission believes the crosswalk is a bad idea.

Assistant City Attorney Guerra identified that Condition 29, which addressed the new crosswalk and HAWK signal on Crown Avenue, should be amended to include "as required" by the Director of Public Works.

The Public Hearing was opened again.

Vice Chairman Hazen asked if telescoping poles were feasible.

Francis Krahe, the applicant's lighting engineer, confirmed there were telescoping poles but in this instance, they would be difficult to utilize due to seismic requirements and the required footprint outside of the setback. Telescoping poles would not be easily integrated into the project. They can be noisy when being raised and lowered. He said that in all of his years designing lighting for stadiums, he has never seen the telescoping lighting installed.

Chairman Gunter agreed with Commissioner Oh and Vice Chairman Hazen's concerns about the field lighting.

The Commission recommended that Condition No. 29 be amended to allow for the crosswalk only if the Director of Public Works and Traffic Engineer find it to be necessary. Also, that all references within the findings and

conditions of approval to 70-foot tall lights be changed to 60-foot. The Commission also said that Condition 19 should include language prohibiting use of the lights on weekends.

M/S/C - Gunter/Oh to approve the requests with the amendments noted above. Approved 3-0.

VIII. PUBLIC HEARINGS

There were none.

IX. REPORT OF DIRECTOR'S REVIEWS

There were none.

X. OTHER BUSINESS

There was none.

XI. COMMENTS FROM THE COMMISSIONERS

There were none.

XII. COMMENTS FROM THE DIRECTOR

Director Stanley asked the Commissioners if they would be available for the next meeting in order to ensure that there will be a quorum. The Commissioners said that they would be in attendance.

XIII. ADJOURNMENT

M/S/C – Gunter/Hazen to adjourn the meeting at 8:28 p.m. Approved 3-0.



Secretary to the Planning Commission