

CITY OF LA CAÑADA FLINTRIDGE

**REGULAR MEETING
PLANNING COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
November 22, 2016 - 6:00 p.m.
City Hall Council Chambers
1327 Foothill Boulevard**

- I. CALL TO ORDER** – Chairman Gunter called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m.
- II. ROLL:** Also present were Vice Chairman Hazen and Commissioners Jain, McConnell, and Oh.
- 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** – The Agenda was not reordered.
- VI. CONSENT CALENDAR** - There were no consent order items.
- VII. CONTINUED PUBLIC HEARINGS** – There were none.
- VIII. PUBLIC HEARINGS**

- A. [Second-floor Review 16-18/Conditional Use Permit 523; Stoddard/Fermanian; 645 Hillcrest Avenue:](#) request to allow construction of a new 2-story residence comprising approximately 10,090 sq. ft. on a 41,818 sq. ft. lot. A Conditional Use Permit is also required since total floor and roofed area would exceed 10,000 sq. ft. Staff is recommending approval of a Categorical Exemption for the project. (Director of Community Development Stanley)

Director Stanley gave a presentation in accordance with the staff report and explained that the request exceeds 10,000 sq. feet. The property is located in an estate area that contains large lots and homes. Alta Vista Drive circles around the rear of the subject site. A site plan and elevations were shown. The project complies with all setbacks. Director Stanley explained that staff suggested to the applicant that the roof pitch be changed. It is less than it was originally. He went on to describe the deck area and proposed east

elevation wall. The neighbor to the east can be looked down upon from the deck. The architectural style is French Colonial.

An aerial photograph was viewed to see the location of the proposed house on the lot as well as neighboring properties, 633 Hillcrest and 655 Hillcrest, which is currently under construction. Staff has drafted Condition No. 16 to require additional landscape screening and a landscape plan to be submitted to the Director for review and approval.

Floor plans were reviewed and it was noted that the first floor has two garage locations and complies with setback requirements. The driveway motor court area exceeds 50% of maximum front yard hardscape requirements, though, it is not visible to the public, in staff's opinion. The Fire Department has requested the additional hardscape. Staff does not feel the motor court area is impactful.

Director Stanley said that staff can make the findings, given the Conditions of Approval that have been added. This concludes staff's presentation.

Chairman Gunter asked staff if the 50% landscaping requirement is discretionary.

Director Stanley said, "yes, if it is not visible or impactful."

The public hearing was opened.

Project architect, Craig Stoddard made himself available for questions.

Staff and Commissioners discussed support letters from both adjacent neighbors to the subject project.

Commissioner Hazen asked if the power pole on the west side will be underground.

Mr. Stoddard said, "Yes."

Commissioner McConnell asked about the motor court and proposed landscaping.

Mr. Stoddard indicated that the new landscaping plans are in the works and that landscape architect, John Pride, will submit them to staff for review.

Commissioner McConnell asked about the retaining wall height in the front setback.

Mr. Stoddard indicated that it will be no higher than three feet tall.

Planning staff will review the retaining wall.

Commissioner McConnell asked where the water will percolate.

Mr. Stoddard said that a drainage plan needs to be prepared and approved. Gutters and drainage will be indicated on the drainage plan that will be submitted.

Vice Chairman Hazen asked about screening.

Mr. Stoddard indicated that there would be screening on both sides.

Commissioner Gunter said that he was concerned about the amount of hardscape and landscape in the motor court area.

Mr. Stoddard said that more landscaping could potentially be installed. He indicated that the driveway is proposed to be 20 feet wide which would not allow for added landscaping to be installed.

Commissioner Gunter said that Fire notations for the driveway will need to be spelled out on the plans.

Commissioner Gunter stated that a condition requiring 50% landscaping in the front yard area should be required.

Mr. Stoddard said that will be fine.

The public hearing was closed.

Commissioner Oh said that he visited the site and was concerned about the privacy of the neighbor to the east. He noticed that there is not a lot of landscaping proposed. He was concerned about the massing and privacy. He said that he felt that the property at 633 Hillcrest Avenue is fine with no objections. He believed that he could support the project.

Vice Chairman Hazen said that he visited the site and felt the proposed project will be nice. He is concerned, however, about the neighbor to the east of the project as well as about landscaping requirements being met.

Commissioner Jain requested that there be an additional screening condition added. With that, he said that he could make all the findings to support the project.

Commissioner McConnell said that he is familiar with the site and that his biggest concern relates to the amount of landscaping that will be maintained in the front setback. He is pleased to see that a condition addressing landscaping is proposed to be added. He said that he could make all of the findings and that the project fits in with rest of the neighborhood.

Chairman Gunter said that he is familiar with the site and can make all findings.

M/S/C – Jain/Hazen to approve the project with the addition of Condition No. 25 requiring that 50% landscaping be provided in the front yard, in keeping with the ordinance. Approved 5-0.

IX. REPORT OF DIRECTOR'S REVIEWS – There were none.

X. OTHER BUSINESS

- A. [Los Angeles Regional Interoperable Communications System; Los Angeles County; Cerro Negro Observation Tower – south of the terminus of Sugar Loaf Drive in the City of Glendale \(APN: 5658-038-900\)](#): opportunity for public input regarding a land mobile radio communications system proposed at the above address which could include a 600 sq. ft. equipment shelter and up to a 100-foot tall lattice tower with up to a 15-foot tall lightning rod as well as proposed whip and microwave antennas. (Director of Community Development Stanley)

Commissioner McConnell recused himself and left the meeting for the duration.

Director Stanley gave a presentation in accordance with the staff report. He explained that the proposal is located primarily in the neighboring City of Glendale. He showed a site plan to provide an overview of the tower location as well as the shelter for the equipment. The project does not need local approval from the City of La Cañada Flintridge. The presentation by City and Los Angeles County consulting staff representing LA RICS, is given as a courtesy.

Director Stanley indicated that he visited the Cities of Glendale and Pasadena in order to photograph from various vantage points and to gauge where the proposed tower would be located by line of sight. His summation was that the lookout tower would be barely visible from the Cerro Negro Trail. He showed the regional coverage map area of the tower and explained that the higher the tower, the farther and larger the coverage area is. An 80-foot-tall tower is proposed. The communications system is not visible from most nearby homes.

He described the antennae that would be on the tower. He indicated that a back-up generator would be housed in the equipment building located on the site. There will be a 2,000-gallon fuel tank as well as security fencing.

Director Stanley indicated that the benefits to public safety because of the new communication tower, override, in his estimation, any aesthetic opposition to the proposal. He highlighted that Los Angeles County has agreed to work with the City on the decision of total tower height. He believed that there will not be a significant aesthetic effect from the tower.

Chairman Gunter reiterated that the project is statutorily outside of our City's jurisdiction and that the Commission is being approached to offer feedback in order to be given any further consideration that might be necessary. He understood that a maximum 180-foot tall tower could be proposed and built, but that Los Angeles County is only proposing a 100-foot tall tower.

The Commission and staff discussed additional coverage areas that a taller tower could service.

The project representative/LA RICS, Chris Odenthal, explained that the equipment is for public safety first responders. The current technology that is being utilized by first responders is 30 years old. A simulated view was shown which indicated a noticeable difference between an 80-foot-tall tower and a 180-foot-tall tower. He explained that there are 63 sites in the total coverage area. The beams of transmission from the tower go out and up rather than down. Los Angeles County owns the subject project site. Five homes could be impacted which are located outside of the City.

Vice Chairman Hazen asked when the start date for the tower installation would be.

The Consultant said 12 months.

The Public Hearing was opened.

Speaker, Christina Faist, 1515 Sugar Loaf Road, said that she believed that she would be able to see the tower from her driveway which concerned her. She was also concerned with noise mitigation when the generator runs.

The consultant explained that a CMU block wall will be constructed to house the generator. It will help to abate the generator noise and by the time the sound exits up and out from the block wall, it would meet acceptable noise decibels. It would run for only minutes during the day.

Commission Oh asked why a vault would not be constructed to house the generator.

The consultant explained that the block wall would be L- shaped and would contain soundproofing material inside. The roof will be open. The noise will dissipate the farther away you are located from the generator. The block wall enclosure would direct the noise up and out.

Chairman Gunter said that this topic was covered nicely and recommended staff's recommendation of an 80 feet tall tower.

Director Stanley said that he will send the Planning Commission recommendation to the County.

XI. COMMENTS FROM THE COMMISSIONERS – There were none.

XII. COMMENTS FROM THE DIRECTOR – There were none.

XIII. ADJOURNMENT- 7:17 p.m. – M/S/C – Jain/Hazen to adjourn the meeting at 7:17 p.m. Approved 4-0.