

**MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF
THE TORRANCE PLANNING COMMISSION**

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Torrance Planning Commission convened in a regular session at 7:02 p.m. on Wednesday, June 6, 2007, in City Council Chambers at Torrance City Hall.

2. SALUTE TO THE FLAG

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Commissioner Busch.

3. ROLL CALL

Present: Commissioners Browning, Busch, Gibson, Horwich, Uchima, Weideman and Chairperson Faulk.

Absent: None.

Also Present: Planning Manager Lodan, Planning Assistant Yumul, Fire Marshal Kazandjian, Associate Civil Engineer Symons, Plans Examiner Noh and Deputy City Attorney Whitham.

4. POSTING OF THE AGENDA

Planning Manager Lodan reported on the posting of the agenda.

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – None.

6. REQUESTS FOR POSTPONEMENT

Planning Manager Lodan relayed requests to continue Agenda Items 9A (PRE07-00004: Wendy Lee), 11C (CUP07-00010, DIV07-00009: Frederick Koch) and 11D (CUP07-00005, TTM68480: Dean Thomas) to June 20, 2007; and to continue Agenda Item 11A (PRE07-00005, WAV07-00005: Rick Sellers) to July 18, 2007.

MOTION: Commissioner Horwich moved to continue Agenda Item 9A to June 20, 2007. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Browning and passed by unanimous roll call vote, with Commissioner Busch abstaining.

MOTION: Commissioner Weideman moved to continue Agenda Item 11A to July 18, 2007. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Uchima and passed by unanimous roll call vote.

MOTION: Commissioner Busch moved to continue Agenda Item 11C to June 20, 2007. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Gibson and passed by unanimous roll call vote.

MOTION: Commissioner Weideman moved to continue Agenda Item 11D to June 20, 2007. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Uchima and passed by unanimous roll call vote.

Planning Manager Lodan advised that the hearing on Agenda Item 11C would be re-advertised because there was a problem with the original notification and that the hearings on Agenda Items 9A, 11A and 11D would not be re-advertised because they were continued to a date certain.

7. **ORAL COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC #1** – None.

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Chairperson Faulk reviewed the policies and procedures of the Planning Commission, including the right to appeal decisions to the City Council.

8. **TIME EXTENSIONS** – None.

9. **CONTINUED HEARINGS**

9A. **PRE07-00004: WENDY LEE**

Planning Commission consideration for approval of a Precise Plan of development to allow first and second-story additions to an existing one-story, single-family residence on property located in the Hillside Overlay District in the R-1 Zone at 2434 Loftyview Drive.

Continued to June 20, 2007.

10. **WAIVERS** – None.

11. **FORMAL HEARINGS**

11A. **PRE07-00005, WAV07-00005: RICK SELLERS (KEN BERRYMAN)**

Planning Commission consideration for approval of a Precise Plan of Development to allow second-story additions in conjunction with a setback Waiver for an existing two-story, single-family residence on property located in the Hillside Overlay District in the R-1 Zone at 413 Via La Soledad.

Continued to July 18, 2007.

11B. **CUP07-00007, DIV07-00007: TERENCE KWOK (SHOOK HING TAM)**

Planning Commission consideration for approval of a Conditional Use Permit to allow the construction of a new front two-story condominium unit and conversion of the existing rear unit in conjunction with a Division of Lot for condominium purposes on property located in the R-2 Zone at 1811 Arlington Avenue.

Recommendation

Approval.

Planning Assistant Yumul introduced the request.

Terence Kwok, applicant, voiced his agreement with the recommended conditions of approval.

Commissioner Busch noted that a condition was included requiring the Floor Area Ratio to be reduced from .68 to .65 and asked how this reduction would be achieved.

Mr. Kwok reported that square footage would be eliminated from the second floor to comply with this requirement.

Gene Higginbotham, 2114 Arlington Avenue, voiced objections to the proposed project. He related his understanding that the R-2 zoning in this area was put in place to allow a property owner to add a second unit for a rental and was never intended to allow lots to be divided up to facilitate the building of condominiums. He expressed concerns that condominium developments were detracting from the charm of old Torrance and encouraging people who do not live in Torrance to buy properties for the sole purpose of making a profit. He commented on efforts to preserve historic structures in the area and suggested that the front unit could be renovated and a second story added, thereby allowing the home to be enlarged without losing its history.

A brief discussion ensued regarding the feasibility of adding on to the existing structure built in 1913. Plans Examiner Noh advised that while it could be done, it would likely be very expensive.

Commissioner Browning noted that it would be impossible to determine when looking at a structure whether it is a rental or a condominium so he found it hard to understand the objection to condominiums. He explained that an applicant's motives are not part of his decision-making process because he focuses on whether or not a project would be an improvement to the area and in this case, he believed it would be due to the condition of the existing structure. He related his understanding that it would be extremely expensive to build a second story over the existing structure because it would have to be essentially free standing and made to look like it's attached.

Mr. Higginbotham conceded that it would be difficult to add a second story to the existing structure, but noted that there are three houses in the area where it has been done.

Mr. Kwok stated that he understands the interest in historic preservation, however, the existing structure does not look historic at all, while the new house has a bungalow-style design that better matches the neighborhood. He further stated that he did not want to build a second story over the existing structure because it is infested with termites and has sinking footings that were not designed to support a second floor.

MOTION: Commissioner Weideman moved to close the public hearing. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Busch and passed by unanimous roll call vote.

Commissioner Weideman stated that he would not support the project because he was opposed to the Division of Lot and believes the mass of the project will impair the integrity and character of the neighborhood.

Commissioner Busch questioned whether staff thought the existing 1913 structure could withstand a 6.0 or greater earthquake.

Plans Examiner Noh explained that he would be more concerned about seismic stability as opposed to vertical load stability, because most old homes are designed to be strong enough to support a second floor, but not seismic activity, which is lateral movement.

Commissioner Gibson questioned whether the existing structure has been deemed or designated historic. Planning Manager Lodan advised that there is no record of the property in any historic inventory or any other historic designation.

Commissioner Browning suggested that possibility of continuing the hearing so the applicant could meet with neighbors to come up with a design that would be more acceptable.

Commissioner Uchima voiced support for the project as submitted. He stated that he didn't see how this structure could be renovated short of completely gutting it, jacking up the foundation, and redoing everything, which would be a very difficult task. He further stated that while the original intention of the R-2 zoning may have been to provide rentals, he saw no liability in allowing condominiums, which offer the opportunity for homeownership, because there are many young families who would like to live in the area.

Chairperson Faulk reported that he had reservations about this project, including its compatibility and the configuration of the driveway, but conceded that his opinion might have been influenced by adjacent properties, which appear quite crowded and not very attractive.

Commissioner Busch thanked staff for the information provided and indicated that he concurred with Commissioner's Uchima's remarks and would support the project as proposed.

Commissioner Horwich agreed that it would be impossible to tell whether the two units are condominiums or rentals when looking at the project.. Voicing support for the project, he stated that it's bound to be an improvement because the existing structure is in shambles.

MOTION: Commissioner Busch moved for the approval of CUP07-00007 and DIV07-00007, as conditioned, including all findings of fact set forth by staff. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Gibson and passed by a 6-1 roll call vote, with Commissioner Weideman dissenting.

Planning Assistant Yumul read aloud the number and title of Planning Commission Resolution Nos. 07-071 and 07-072.

MOTION: Commissioner Busch moved for the adoption of Planning Commission Resolution Nos. 07-071 and 07-072. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Uchima and passed by a 6-1 roll call vote, with Commissioner Weideman dissenting.

Chairperson Faulk requested that staff monitor this development closely as it goes forward, especially in terms of perimeter walls and other added conditions, to ensure that it will be as attractive as possible.

11C. CUP07-00010, DIV07-00009: FREDERICK J. KOCH

Planning Commission consideration for approval of a Conditional Use Permit to allow the construction of a two-unit condominium project in conjunction with a Division of Lot for condominium purposes on property located in the R-2 Zone at 24431 Ward Street.

Continued to June 20, 2007.

11D. CUP07-00005, TTM68480: DEAN THOMAS (CHURCH OF CHRIST)

Planning Commission consideration for approval of a Conditional Use Permit to allow the construction of a 12-unit condominium project in conjunction with a Tentative Tract Map to divide one lot into two and for condominium purposes on property located in the R-3 Zone at 3525 Maricopa Avenue.

Continued to June 20, 2007.

12. RESOLUTIONS – None.

13. PUBLIC WORKSHOP ITEMS – None.

14. MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS – None.

15. REVIEW OF CITY COUNCIL ACTION ON PLANNING MATTERS – None.

16. LIST OF TENTATIVE PLANNING COMMISSION CASES

Sr. Planning Associate Lodan reviewed the agenda for the June 20, 2007 Planning Commission meeting.

17. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS #2

17A. Commissioner Horwich stated that he was saddened to learn that Pat McIntyre's illness was so grave she felt compelled to resign from the City Council and wished her the best.

17B. Commissioner Gibson and Commissioner Busch echoed well wishes to Ms. McIntyre.

18. ADJOURNMENT

At 7:45 p.m., the meeting was adjourned to June 20, 2007 at 7:00 p.m.

Approved as Submitted July 18, 2007 s/ Sue Herbers, City Clerk
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