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MINUTES

REGULAR PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING

OCTOBER 16, 2006

1. **CALL MEETING TO ORDER**

A regular meeting of the Planning Commission of the City of Rolling Hills Estates was called to order at 7:30 p.m. in the City Hall Council Chambers, 4045 Palos Verdes Drive North, by CHAIRMAN REIN.

2. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

CHAIRMAN REIN led the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

3. **ROLL CALL**

Commissioners Present: Southwell, Conway, O'Day, Vanden Bos, Bayer, Killen
Chairman Rein

Commissioners Absent: None

Staff Present: Planning Director Wahba, Assistant Planner Masters

4. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

COMMISSIONER VANDEN BOS moved, seconded by COMMISSIONER BAYER,

TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE REGULAR PLANNING COMMISSION
MEETING OF OCTOBER 2, 2006.

There being no objection, CHAIRMAN REIN so ordered.

5. **AUDIENCE ITEMS**

None.

6. **CONSENT CALENDAR**

A. WAIVE READING IN FULL OF ALL RESOLUTIONS THAT ARE PRESENTED FOR PLANNING COMMISSION CONSIDERATION ON TONIGHT'S AGENDA AND ALL SUCH RESOLUTIONS SHALL BE READ BY TITLE ONLY.

B. A RESOLUTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION APPROVING A NEIGHBORHOOD COMPATIBILITY FOR ADDITIONS TO A SINGLE STORY HOME, RESULTING IN THE APPEARANCE OF A SPLIT-LEVEL HOME FROM THE REAR YARD, INCLUDING THE REORIENTATION OF THE DRIVEWAY AND CONSTRUCTION OF A REAR YARD DECK; A MINOR DEVIATION TO DECREASE THE FRONT YARD BY LESS THAN 10%; AND A VARIANCE TO REDUCE THE REQUIRED SIDE YARD SETBACK. PLANNING APPLICATION NO. 24-06; APPLICANT: MR. & MRS. JAVIER LEON; LOCATION: 52 BUCKSKIN LANE.

C. PLANNING APPLICATION NO. 34-05; APPLICANT: MR. BRUCE SOROUDI; LOCATION: 627 DEEP VALLEY DRIVE; A REQUEST FOR AN EXTENSION OF TIME FOR A PREVIOUSLY-APPROVED 58-UNIT MIXED-USE RESIDENTIAL/COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE COMMERCIAL GENERAL (MIXED-USE OVERLAY) ZONES.

COMMISSIONER VANDEN BOS moved, seconded by COMMISSIONER CONWAY,
TO APPROVE THE CONSENT CALENDAR.

AYES: Southwell, Conway, O'Day, Vanden Bos, Bayer, Killen, Chairman Rein
NOES: None
ABSTAIN: None
ABSENT: None

Planning Director Wahba advised of the 20-day appeal period for PA-24-06 and PA-34-05.

7. BUSINESS ITEMS

- A. PLANNING APPLICATION NO. 25-06; APPLICANT: MR. & MRS. ROBERT COLLINS; LOCATION: 4 RANCHVIEW ROAD; A NEIGHBORHOOD COMPATIBILITY FOR A FIRST AND SECOND STORY ADDITION TO AN EXISTING SINGLE STORY RESIDENCE. MINOR DEVIATIONS ARE REQUIRED TO DECREASE THE FRONT YARD BY LESS THAN 10% AND TO EXCEED ALLOWABLE LOT COVERAGE BY LESS THAN 10%.

Assistant Planner Masters gave a brief Staff Report, as per written material and reported that Staff has reached compromises with the applicant, other than the driveway. Regarding new correspondence received by Staff prior to the meeting, the Neighborhood Compatibility ordinance does not specifically cover such issues, and the plan, as proposed, does not contain windows on the westerly side of the second story addition. Staff agrees that the two properties are the narrowest of the eight on lower Ranchview, and the other 2-story residences do maintain greater setbacks between homes; however, the residents abutting the west side of the property maintain a legal nonconforming setback of approximately 7 feet. Regarding the correspondence concerning allowing the proposed driveway on a narrow width of lower Ranchview Road, Staff feels that allowing a substandard driveway would not be in the best interest of the City and, therefore, recommends a 20-foot deep driveway.

COMMISSIONER VANDEN BOS advised Staff that, since there are not many residences in this neighborhood, a listing of each residence with their size would have been helpful. COMMISSIONER VANDEN BOS also pointed out a typographical error on page 3 of the Staff Report regarding a proposed living space of 4,289 square feet, which should be 3,092 square feet. Assistant Planner Masters confirmed the error. COMMISSIONER VANDEN BOS further asked Staff to explain the front yard coverage issue. Assistant Planner Masters explained that the applicant is going to be enclosing a covered porch, the eastern side of property will become a side yard, the hardscape is smaller, and the driveway is being reoriented.

COMMISSIONER O'DAY asked whether Staff was concerned about the proposed driveway and backing out onto the street. Planning Director Wahba agreed that they would lose the visibility due to the road starting to dip down.

COMMISSIONER BAYER asked whether Staff looked at just the lower Ranchview area or the entire neighborhood for Neighborhood Compatibility. Planning Director Wahba and Assistant Planner Masters responded that the entire neighborhood was looked at, but Staff also wanted to achieve compatibility and consistency on the street.

CHAIRMAN REIN asked whether the lower Ranchview road is wide enough to meet Code. Planning Director Wahba advised that it is a private driveway and doesn't meet the City's road standard requirements. It's a nonconforming private road and doesn't comply with current-day Fire Department requirements.

COMMISSIONER VANDEN BOS asked for further clarification of the front yard coverage and what area is counted as their front yard coverage calculations. Planning Director Wahba responded that typically with private common driveways, the applicant is not penalized for the portion that serves other properties, from a coverage standpoint; however, it does count from a setback standpoint. COMMISSIONER VANDEN BOS pointed out that everything on the other side of the driveway going up the hill to Ranchview is counted as part of the front yard. Planning Director Wahba explained that is done due to the Code defining that as the front yard because legal access is up on Ranchview Road, not the legal driveway, and also the City doesn't want structures built

within that area. COMMISSIONER VANDEN BOS stated that it seems as though the applicant is having their cake and eating it too because the square footage is given for front yard and total lot coverage but not counting the hardscape against it. Planning Director Wahba stated that the Code is silent as to how to address that. If there was a way to move the private road back to achieve a 20-foot setback, it would help the other properties out too, but there is steep topography on the other side of the street. COMMISSIONER VANDEN BOS pointed out that the project is going over the 30%, yet the project is already benefiting from the open space on the other side of the private road and the private road that doesn't count against it.

COMMISSIONER KILLEN asked whether there was a survey of the property, Assistant Planner Masters provided a boundary survey, but it had no topography. COMMISSIONER KILLEN pointed out that the driveway is at a 15% slope right now (if accurate), assuming there are no transitions at the top and bottom, so it seems like it would be a tough driveway to try to maneuver.

COMMISSIONER O'DAY asked about the chimney clad in siding and whether it was typical. Planning Director Wahba stated that he had seen it before, especially on the prefab zero clearance units. However, it would not be seen in the neighborhood until beyond lower Ranchview, and brick, stone or stucco sidings are more typical.

COMMISSIONER VANDEN BOS asked about an attic window and whether that is typical. Planning Director Wahba responded that it is not completely unusual as a decorative feature; however, here it is too large and doesn't lend itself to the architectural style, and dormer windows would be more typical.

At CHAIRMAN REIN's invitation, the applicant, Elizabeth Collins (4 Ranchview), came forward and provided each Commissioner with a binder of pictures, which she reviewed and explained with the Commission. Mrs. Collins discussed the private access road and the proposed driveway. Mrs. Collins stated that the houses all have short driveways, and there haven't been any problems backing out of them. In fact, the driveway now is much more difficult to back out of. Mrs. Collins then addressed the close proximity with her neighbors and stated that the reason there's not much room between this property and 6 Ranchview is because 6 Ranchview is too close to the property line.

COMMISSIONER VANDEN BOS asked for the purpose of the attic window, and Mrs. Collins responded that it would be nice to bring some light into the storage area. COMMISSIONER VANDEN BOS asked about the existing shared concrete driveway and how important it is to maintain the part along the side of the property as an existing concrete parking area. Mrs. Collins responded that the current plan is that there would be a fence off the end of the house across that part of the yard, and the portion to drive into the parking area will not be taken away.

COMMISSIONER BAYER pointed out that the drawing shows that there will be landscaping to the back of the parking area. Mrs. Collins clarified that the plan is to landscape from the corner of the house forward (heading north). She added that lower Ranchview is narrow and difficult to navigate, as she had difficulty turning around.

COMMISSIONER O'DAY asked Mrs. Collins for confirmation that the site plan is wrong, and the plan is not to remove the driveway at the side of the house; the concrete would stay, but the asphalt would come out. Mrs. Collins confirmed.

CHAIRMAN REIN pointed out that would be a significant deviation from the calculations. The drawings may not be in final form, but the Commission has to go with what it sees.

COMMISSIONER O'DAY asked whether the applicant has done any calculations for the driveway slope into the garage, and Mrs. Collins responded that she had not; however, the engineer has done some preliminary measurements.

Janet Barton, Designer for Lenders Construction (1814 W. 245th Street, Torrance 90501), came forward and explained that the lot coverage numbers listed on the plan take into account what is drawn on the plan, so the concrete driveway is included in the lot coverage numbers. The driveway is shorter than recommend, although longer than the other houses and makes this house more compatible with the neighborhood. The existing concrete area extending out to Ranchview Road is going to stay. The auxiliary parking is a benefit because the Planning Commission was concerned that the driveway may not be long enough to park in.

CHAIRMAN REIN stated that on the site plan drawing it appears that the landscape should be concrete parking area and doesn't appear to reflect what the owner intends.

Dave Packwood (6 Ranchview) came forward to discuss his issues of the kitchen window blockage and the blocking of trees, sky and sunlight. Mr. Packwood also addressed the setback issue raised by Mrs. Collins, stating that he has lived in his home for several years, and setbacks have never been an issue.

COMMISSIONER CONWAY asked what his recommendation would be, and Mr. Packwood didn't have a recommendation, other than to move the structure clear to the back.

Alba Stangl (8 Ranchview) came forward and asked which way the garage is going to open. Planning Director Wahba responded that it would open the same as hers. Ms. Stangl then expressed concern about how a car would get out of the garage and up onto Ranchview without much room and limited line of sight. Ms. Stangl would like a safe, secure entrance and exit onto lower Ranchview.

Mrs. Collins re-approached the Commission, stating that there are engineering issues, and an engineer has been hired, who will work out those issues, in addition to drainage because of the dip there. As far as backing out from the driveway, there's not a lot of traffic on that road, and there won't be an issue, as there wouldn't be any less visibility than anyone else. COMMISSIONER O'DAY asked if the applicant had looked at raising the floor of the garage, and Mrs. Collins responded that it is being discussed. COMMISSIONER VANDEN BOS agreed that would be a simple solution.

Ms. Barton re-approached and stated that when the neighbors at 6 Ranchview look out the kitchen window, they see a wooden fence, some sky and a few treetops. The applicant has complied with all the setbacks, the applicant's house is farther away from the property line than the minimum that is required, and 6 Ranchview is closer to the property line and does not meet Code. 6 Ranchview will lose a few treetops but can still see the sky, their view won't be blocked more than the trees are blocking it now, and there would still be tree views on either side. Realistically, their view is not being affected very much.

Mrs. Packwood (6 Ranchview) came forward, stating that she has lived in her home for 37 years and briefly recapped the history of the street, including one home that fell apart. Mrs. Packwood does not want her kitchen darkened due to the sun not coming through anymore. Mrs. Packwood feels that she is entitled to her sunlight.

Mrs. Collins re-approached, stating that she is also concerned about the sunlight and has offered to put a skylight in the neighbor's kitchen and would work with the neighbors at 6 Ranchview to landscape the area for a better view. Mrs. Collins is trying to work with the neighbors and are not oblivious to their wishes.

Ms. Stangl re-approached and asked whether the property would require pilings in the foundation to support the second floor. CHAIRMAN REIN responded that would be addressed by Building & Safety after the project is approved.

COMMISSIONER O'DAY asked whether a gable off the master bedroom would help alleviate the view concerns.

COMMISSIONER CONWAY stated that the owners are 13 feet off the property line, and their second story is beyond what is required. Thus, the applicant has already mitigated any impact on the neighbors.

COMMISSIONER BAYER reminded the Commission that Staff indicated that they've worked with the applicant and have already reached compromises. COMMISSIONER BAYER added that it was kind of the applicant to offer to put a skylight in for the neighbor.

COMMISSIONER KILLEN suggested obtaining a full topographic survey with cross-sections drawn through the driveway in order to determine what the slope is. Raising the garage slab would be a way to address the issue. It could be raised a foot and brought down to a 10% grade.

COMMISSIONER VANDEN BOS stated that Staff should address the window in the attic. COMMISSIONER VANDEN BOS added that compared to most projects, this has

an incredible amount of lot coverage. This property, in the abstract, is way overbuilt. Although the conditions are understood, the more mitigation to downplay the hardscape, the better.

COMMISSIONER BAYER moved, seconded by COMMISSIONER CONWAY,

TO CONTINUE PA 25-06 TO A DATE UNCERTAIN TO ALLOW THE APPLICANT TO WORK WITH STAFF TO ADDRESS THE DRIVEWAY CONCERNS AND THE 20-FOOT MINIMUM, CONFIRM THE LANDSCAPE AND HARDSCAPE AS IT RELATES TO LOWER RANCHVIEW, AND OBTAIN A TOPOGRAPHIC SURVEY.

AYES: Southwell, Conway, O'Day, Vanden Bos, Bayer, Killen, Chairman Rein
NOES: None
ABSTAIN: None
ABSENT: None

8. PUBLIC HEARINGS

A. PLANNING APPLICATION NO. 15-06; APPLICANT: MR. CRAIG KNICKERBOCKER; LOCATION: NORTHEASTERLY OF THE INTERSECTION OF TANGLEWOOD LANE AND ROLLING HILLS ROAD. A REQUEST FOR A TENTATIVE PARCEL MAP (TPM 061156), GRADING APPLICATION AND NEIGHBORHOOD COMPATIBILITY DETERMINATIONS FOR THE SUBDIVISION OF THREE LOTS AND CONSTRUCTION OF THREE SINGLE-FAMILY RESIDENCES IN THE RA-20 (HORSE OVERLAY) ZONE.

Planning Director Wahba gave a brief Staff Report (as per written material), stating that a continuance has been requested by the applicant, due to some issues in the title of the property that doesn't allow for it to be further subdivided from the present one lot that it is. The applicant is looking at several options of either amending the CC&Rs or moving forward with the construction of a single-family home on the lot.

CHAIRMAN REIN asked for public comment, but no members of the audience came forward.

COMMISSIONER CONWAY moved, seconded by COMMISSIONER BAYER,

TO CLOSE THE PUBLIC HEARING.

AYES: Southwell, Conway, O'Day, Vanden Bos, Bayer, Killen, Chairman Rein
NOES: None
ABSTAIN: None
ABSENT: None

COMMISSIONER BAYER commented that if the applicant resolves the title so that the parcel could still be subdivided into three lots, two homes would be far more compatible than three with the area, with the topography and with common sense.

Planning Director Wahba thanked COMMISSIONER BAYER for providing direction to the applicant in the event that they are looking at their options.

COMMISSIONERS VANDEN BOS, SOUTHWELL AND KILLEN agreed that two lots makes a lot more sense.

COMMISSIONER CONWAY moved, seconded by COMMISSIONER O'DAY,

TO CONTINUE PA 15-06 TO A DATE UNCERTAIN.

AYES: Southwell, Conway, O'Day, Vanden Bos, Bayer, Killen, Chairman Rein
NOES: None
ABSTAIN: None
ABSENT: None

9. COMMISSION ITEMS

COMMISSIONER VANDEN BOS asked about the silhouette at the top of Crenshaw and Crest Ridge. Planning Director Wahba responded that it is a proposed 55 and older townhome project in the City of Rancho Palos Verdes.

COMMISSIONER VANDEN BOS asked about the silhouette for Sunrise Assisted Living at Hawthorne Boulevard and Rolling Hills Road in the City of Torrance. Planning Director Wahba responded that the applicant is asking to build higher than what was approved based on the geology of the site.

COMMISSIONER BAYER asked about the house on Bluemound. Planning Director Wahba responded that the applicant has come back with revised plans.

COMMISSIONER VANDEN BOS mentioned that the Judy Chai property is now advertised for sale as entitled with a 5,570 square foot building.

10. DIRECTOR'S ITEMS

Planning Director Wahba updated the Commission on the status of the holiday party planning and asked that each Commissioner have a Hawaiian basket or gift to give out.

11. MATTERS OF INFORMATION

A. PARK AND ACTIVITIES MINUTES. (OCTOBER 3, 2006).

B. CITY COUNCIL ACTIONS. (OCTOBER 10, 2006)

COMMISSIONER CONWAY moved, and COMMISSIONER KILLEN seconded,

TO RECEIVE AND FILE ITEMS 11A THROUGH 11B.

There being no objection, CHAIRMAN REIN so ordered.

12. ADJOURNMENT

At 8:50 p.m. CHAIRMAN REIN adjourned the Planning Commission meeting to November 6, 2006, at 7:30 p.m.

Julie Cremeans
Minutes Secretary

Douglas R. Prichard
City Clerk