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**REGULAR PLANNING MINUTES**

**JULY 16, 2007**

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**MINUTES**

**REGULAR PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING**

**JULY 16, 2007**

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 O'DAY.

2. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

CHAIRMAN O'DAY led the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

3. **ROLL CALL**

Commissioners Present: Southwell, Conway, Vanden Bos, Golida, Chairman O'Day  
Commissioners Absent: Bayer, Rein  
Staff Present: Planning Director Wahba, Associate Planner Thom,  
Assistant Planner Masters

4. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

COMMISSIONER CONWAY moved, seconded by COMMISSIONER VANDEN BOS,

TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE REGULAR PLANNING COMMISSION  
MEETING OF JUNE 18, 2007.

There being no objection, CHAIRMAN O'DAY so ordered.

5. **AUDIENCE ITEMS**

None.

6. **CONSENT CALENDAR**

None.

7. **BUSINESS ITEMS**

- A. PLANNING APPLICATION NO. 18-07; APPLICANT: MR. & MRS. IVAN BENAVIDEZ; LOCATION: 5030 RANGE HORSE LANE; A NEIGHBORHOOD COMPATIBILITY TO DEMOLISH A ONE-STORY RESIDENCE AND BUILD A NEW TWO-STORY HOME WITH A THREE-CAR GARAGE. A MINOR DEVIATION IS REQUESTED FOR ENCROACHMENT INTO THE FRONT YARD WHICH DOES NOT PROJECT CLOSER TO THE PROPERTY LINE THAN THE FORWARDMOST BUILDING LINE.

Associate Planner Thom gave a brief Staff Report, as per written material, and noted that with the Minor Deviation, the front yard area is increasing, and front yard coverage is decreasing. Staff recommends approval with conditions.

COMMISSIONER VANDEN BOS asked whether Staff had evaluated the impact on the house that sits below. Associate Planner Thom responded that there didn't appear to be privacy issues.

COMMISSIONER CONWAY asked about the previous denied applications to increase the home size to the same square footage and what has changed that would persuade

the Commission to approve this project. Associate Planner Thom responded that with the previous applications, the home appeared to be three stories from the street, so it was more of a mass and scale impact. Staff is asking for a reduction in square footage as a condition of approval, and the current project incorporates a wedding cake, second-story modulation to help decrease the appearance of being massive.

At CHAIRMAN O'DAY's invitation, architect Lewis Skelton (2537D Pacific Coast Highway, #168, Torrance) came forward and addressed the Commission. Mr. Skelton summarized the previous application variations and the current changes in design. Mr. Skelton also pointed out inconsistencies in methods for calculating square footage.

COMMISSIONER VANDEN BOS asked about any privacy impact to the west of the property, and Mr. Skelton explained how there is no impact on privacy.

COMMISSIONER CONWAY expressed his appreciation for the concise, clear testimony and asked Mr. Skelton to respond to Staff's recommendations. Mr. Skelton requested that the applicant not be required to reduce the square footage further, as the impact has been minimized from the street. The downstairs bedroom could be reduced, but that would not achieve any additional reduction of scale or mass. There is only one view impact, and the redesign has enhanced that neighbor's ocean view.

CHAIRMAN O'DAY suggested that the reduction would be very easy with the generous bedrooms, large hallway and loggia. Mr. Skelton again responded that there would be no additional reduction of scale or mass as a result.

COMMISSIONER CONWAY commented that he was impressed and persuaded by the explanation of design and the extensive efforts with the neighbors and is reluctant to impose a square footage number and expect there to be such a positive design in the after effect. Losing a bedroom in the back doesn't benefit anyone in particular, other than abiding by a number. This is not the largest home in the neighborhood and is not incompatible with the neighborhood, and the architecture should not be approached just from a numbers standpoint. COMMISSIONER CONWAY is supportive of the application, even without the reduction.

COMMISSIONER VANDEN BOS agreed that numbers alone should not drive the design. There is no problem with massing. COMMISSIONER VANDEN BOS is supportive of the application without reducing the square footage. Most of the lot is usable, and the design is tasteful.

COMMISSIONER GOLIDA concurred with COMMISSIONER CONWAY's statements. There have clearly been many tasteful modifications, and there is a theme of accommodation to the neighbors. An extra 200 feet is not going to make a significant difference.

COMMISSIONER SOUTHWELL commented that in general he has a tendency to support smaller houses, but this design does seem like it's compatible with the neighborhood, and he would support it.

CHAIRMAN O'DAY thanked the applicant for going through the process of denial and appeal and coming back with a design that is much more compatible with the city and consistent with the city's goals. CHAIRMAN O'DAY agreed with the other Commissioners that making a decision solely based on numbers would be inappropriate, and there would not be a lot of value in pushing for a reduction in size.

COMMISSIONER VANDEN BOS moved, seconded by COMMISSIONER GOLIDA,

TO APPROVE PA 18-07 WITH CONDITIONS 2 AND 3, AS OUTLINED IN THE STAFF REPORT.

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

Planning Director Wahba explained the 20-day appeal period.

Mr. Skelton re-approached the Commission to express his gratitude for Staff and thank Associate Planner Thom for her time.

8. PUBLIC HEARINGS

- A. PLANNING APPLICATION NO. 19-07; APPLICANT: MR. & MRS. HOON DOKKO; LOCATION: 33 CLEAR VISTA DRIVE; A NEIGHBORHOOD COMPATIBILITY FOR A PROPOSED TWO-STORY ADDITION AT THE FRONT AND A PROPOSED ONE-STORY COVERED PATIO AT THE REAR OF AN EXISTING TWO-STORY HOME. A MINOR DEVIATION IS REQUESTED FOR ENCROACHMENT INTO THE REQUIRED FRONT YARD WHICH DOES NOT EXTEND BEYOND THE FORWARDMOST BUILDING LINE. TWO VARIANCES ARE REQUIRED TO EXCEED LOT COVERAGE BY GREATER THAN 10% AND TO EXCEED ALLOWABLE FRONT YARD COVERAGE.

Assistant Planner Masters gave a brief Staff Report, as per written material, and advised that Staff has not reached compromise and is not in support of the Neighborhood Compatibility determination or both Variance requests but is in support of the Minor Deviation request.

COMMISSIONER VANDEN BOS discussed with the calculation of increase in lot coverage with Staff. Staff and the Commission agreed that the numbers need to be recalculated and verified. COMMISSIONER CONWAY commented that a recalculation would change his whole approach to this project.

COMMISSIONER VANDEN BOS moved, seconded by COMMISSIONER CONWAY,  
TO OPEN THE PUBLIC HEARING.

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

At CHAIRMAN O'DAY's invitation, contractor John Hopper (22517 Biak Court, Torrance) came forward and discussed the project, which is a very minor addition with very minor changes to the back to make it more usable to the family.

COMMISSIONER CONWAY asked whether there is currently a contract, and Mr. Hopper responded that there is not.

COMMISSIONER CONWAY moved, seconded by COMMISSIONER GOLIDA,  
TO CLOSE THE PUBLIC HEARING.

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

COMMISSIONER VANDEN BOS stated that the Commission cannot make any findings for a Variance, and Staff's comment about columns is accurate. The back yard of the house can be viewed from several other houses, and the feasibility of what the applicant wants to do is not clear. COMMISSIONER VANDEN BOS and Planning Director Wahba then discussed the roof pitch.

CHAIRMAN O'DAY stated that the plans are very basic, which is fine for a preliminary, simple project, but for a Variance application, the plans need to be more sophisticated.

COMMISSIONER CONWAY discussed Neighborhood Compatibility and suggested focusing more on the architectural attributes of project. The applicant should consider the comments under neighborhood character and seek to work closely with Staff to achieve Staff's support.

CHAIRMAN O'DAY commented that there is no way to support the Variance findings, given the nature of the lot, and the Neighborhood Compatibility elements dealing with architectural character need to be more compatible with the elements of the neighborhood.

COMMISSIONER VANDEN BOS stated that he would like to see more detailed drawings when the application comes back.

COMMISSIONER O'DAY added that the applicant should do the engineering work and make sure to establish roof points.

COMMISSIONER CONWAY moved, seconded by COMMISSIONER VANDEN BOS,

TO CONTINUE PA 19-07 TO A DATE UNCERTAIN TO ALLOW APPLICANT AND STAFF TO WORK TOWARD ELIMINATING THE VARIANCES AND COMPLY MORE CLOSELY WITH NEIGHBORHOOD COMPATIBILITY.

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

9. COMMISSION ITEMS

COMMISSIONER VANDEN BOS asked about the status of the Linaris property. Planning Director Wahba responded that Staff was in court the previous week on this issue. The property owner did not comply with the order to complete his application and come before the city within 120 days. Therefore, the judge ordered him to, within 30 days, remove everything on the counts that he was charged and return to court on August 16, at which point he would be escorted to prison for six months if he does not fully comply.

COMMISSIONER VANDEN BOS asked about the driveway, and Planning Director Wahba responded that the walls need to come out on both sides, but the material is fine because the city removed the concrete within the horse trail and replaced it with gravel.

CHAIRMAN O'DAY asked for a report on the joint City Council/Planning Commission meeting. Planning Director Wahba responded that Mike Cope will work on the architecture of the homes to see what type of architectural style should comprise the neighborhood. The size of the homes was also discussed. This is a different approach and uncharacteristic of Rolling Hills Estates and the Palos Verdes Peninsula.

COMMISSIONER CONWAY asked whether Torrance is on board for the land swap, and Planning Director Wahba responded affirmatively.

10. DIRECTOR'S ITEMS

Planning Director Wahba advised that there will be two meetings in August and asked the Commissioners if they would be in attendance. COMMISSIONER VANDEN BOS responded that he may not be in attendance on August 6.

11. MATTERS OF INFORMATION

- A. PARK AND ACTIVITIES MINUTES (JUNE 19, 2007).
- B. CITY COUNCIL ACTIONS (JUNE 12, 2007).
- C. CITY COUNCIL ACTIONS (JUNE 26, 2007).

COMMISSIONER CONWAY moved, and COMMISSIONER VANDEN BOS seconded,

TO RECEIVE AND FILE ITEMS 11A THROUGH 11C.

There being no objection, CHAIRMAN O'DAY so ordered.

12. ADJOURNMENT

At 8:35 p.m. CHAIRMAN O'DAY adjourned the Planning Commission meeting to August 6, 2007, at 7:30 p.m.

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Julie Cremeans  
Minutes Secretary

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Douglas R. Prichard  
City Clerk