

INDEX

REGULAR PLANNING MINUTES

MARCH 31, 2008

<u>PAGE</u>	<u>SUBJECT</u>
1	<u>CALL MEETING TO ORDER</u> <u>PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE</u> <u>ROLL CALL</u> <u>APPROVAL OF MINUTES (March 17, 2008)</u> <u>AUDIENCE ITEMS</u> <u>CONSENT CALENDAR</u> 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.
	<u>BUSINESS ITEMS</u>
1-3	A. A RESOLUTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION RECOMMENDING TO THE CITY COUNCIL APPROVAL FOR A CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT TO ALLOW A 75-UNIT CONDOMINIUM PROJECT IN THE COMMERCIAL GENERAL (C-G)/MIXED USE OVERLAY ZONE; A PRECISE PLAN OF DESIGN FOR SITE AND BUILDING IMPROVEMENTS INCLUDING DEMOLITION OF EXISTING ON-SITE IMPROVEMENTS AND CONSTRUCTION OF CONDOMINIUMS AND 2,000 SQUARE FEET OF FLEX SPACE; TENTATIVE TRACT MAP NO. 67528 FOR A ONE-LOT SUBDIVISION FOR THE SALE OF CONDOMINIUMS; A GRADING PLAN AND A MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION UNDER THE CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT (CEQA), FINDING THAT THE PROJECT, WITH MITIGATION MEASURES, WILL NOT HAVE A SIGNIFICANT IMPACT ON THE ENVIRONMENT. PLANNING APPLICATION NO. 16-07; APPLICANT: TED WYNNE; LOCATION: 927 DEEP VALLEY DRIVE.
	<u>PUBLIC HEARINGS</u>
3-4	A. REQUEST FOR A ONE-YEAR EXTENSION OF TIME ON THE TENTATIVE TRACT MAP FOR PLANNING APPLICATION NO. 34-05; APPLICANT: MR. BRUCE SOROUDI; LOCATION: 627 DEEP VALLEY DRIVE (FORMER LOCATION OF PV CARWASH).
4	<u>COMMISSION ITEMS</u> <u>DIRECTOR'S ITEMS</u> <u>MATTERS OF INFORMATION</u> A. PARK AND ACTIVITIES MINUTES (MARCH 18, 2008). B. CITY COUNCIL ACTIONS (MARCH 25, 2008).
	<u>ADJOURNMENT</u>

**MINUTES**

**REGULAR PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING**

**MARCH 31, 2008**

1. **CALL MEETING TO ORDER**

A regular meeting of the Planning Commission of the City of Rolling Hills Estates was called to order at 7:31 p.m. in the City Hall Council Chambers, 4045 Palos Verdes Drive North, by CHAIRMAN VANDEN BOS.

2. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

CHAIRMAN VANDEN BOS led the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

3. **ROLL CALL**

Commissioners Present: O'Day, Conway, Bayer, Rein, Golida, Chairman Vanden Bos  
Commissioners Absent: Southwell  
Staff Present: Planning Director Wahba, Senior Planner Cutler  
City Experts Present: Traffic Engineer Erik Zandvliet

4. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

COMMISSIONER CONWAY moved, seconded by COMMISSIONER BAYER,

TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE REGULAR PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING OF MARCH 17, 2008.

There being no objection, CHAIRMAN VANDEN BOS 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.

COMMISSIONER CONWAY moved, seconded by COMMISSIONER BAYER,

TO APPROVE THE CONSENT CALENDAR.

There being no objection, CHAIRMAN VAN DEN BOS so ordered.

7. **BUSINESS ITEMS**

A RESOLUTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION RECOMMENDING TO THE CITY COUNCIL APPROVAL FOR A CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT TO ALLOW A 75-UNIT CONDOMINIUM PROJECT IN THE COMMERCIAL GENERAL (C-G)/MIXED USE OVERLAY ZONE; A PRECISE PLAN OF DESIGN FOR SITE AND BUILDING IMPROVEMENTS INCLUDING DEMOLITION OF EXISTING ON-SITE IMPROVEMENTS AND CONSTRUCTION OF CONDOMINIUMS AND 2,000 SQUARE FEET OF FLEX SPACE; TENTATIVE TRACT MAP NO. 67528 FOR A ONE-LOT SUBDIVISION FOR THE SALE OF CONDOMINIUMS; A GRADING PLAN AND A MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION UNDER THE CALIFORNIA

ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT (CEQA), FINDING THAT THE PROJECT, WITH MITIGATION MEASURES, WILL NOT HAVE A SIGNIFICANT IMPACT ON THE ENVIRONMENT. PLANNING APPLICATION NO. 16-07; APPLICANT: TED WYNNE; LOCATION: 927 DEEP VALLEY DRIVE.

Planning Director Wahba gave a brief Staff Report, per written material, and advised that there were a couple of changes made to the resolution, as recommended at the last meeting.

COMMISSIONER BAYER asked what Silver Spur Garden is, and Planning Director Wahba suggested that was perhaps a typing error. Also, COMMISSIONER BAYER pointed out a typing mistake on page 8. COMMISSIONER GOLIDA also suggested edits on pages 1 and 4.

COMMISSIONER CONWAY asked for a summary of the City's nexus program, which Planning Director Wahba explained. Planning Director Wahba further advised that this project is subject to the impact fees.

COMMISSIONER BAYER commended Traffic Engineer Zandvliet for his clear traffic impact report.

CHAIRMAN VANDEN BOS raised a procedural question about City Council remanding the project back to the Planning Commission for further analysis on design and architectural characteristic versus the final project design review and approval prior to zone clearance, as outlined in the resolution. Lengthy discussion ensued among the Planning Commission and Staff. CHAIRMAN VANDEN BOS expressed his concern with the resolution being approved before the Planning Commission has had a chance to look at the Precise Plan of Design, including grading and building design.

COMMISSIONER O'DAY agreed that an attempt should be made to approve the Mitigated Negative Declaration separate from the rest of the project. The Planning Commission would like to more carefully review the design of the building, grading and the amount of export coming from the site.

COMMISSIONER BAYER MOVED, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER GOLIDA,

TO ADOPT RESOLUTION PA 16-07 RECOMMENDING APPROVAL OF A CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT, PRECISE PLAN OF DESIGN, TENTATIVE TRACT MAP, AND GRADING PLAN AND FURTHER RECOMMENDING THAT A MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION BE ADOPTED.

Before voting, COMMISSIONER O'DAY commented that his concerns around this project are not with the project itself, in principle, as this is the direction the hill is heading. However, there are a number of projects already underway on the hill that are not yet completed. Also, this is a lot of medical space, and there is a good chance that this building will be taken down before the Silverdes project breaks ground, potentially displacing some doctors on the hill.

COMMISSIONER REIN added that the scope of the project is head and shoulders above those that are already underway, but the impact on the environment has not been addressed.

COMMISSIONER O'DAY commended the project for having no Variances and added the under the current process of determining impact, the project itself does not have a significant traffic impact. Also, the City of Torrance is going to be making improvements at the intersection at Hawthorne and Pacific Coast Highway. An EIR will not give the city more information than it has today. The only source of more traffic information is in allowing the projects to be completed, so the MND is sufficient. There are serious concerns about grading and the stability of the hillside, but there may have been sufficient geological review. As a Planning Commissioner, COMMISSIONER O'DAY can support the project, but if he were a City Council member, he may have a different view of the project.

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

COMMISSIONER VANDEN BOS agreed that if he were sitting on a different type of body and looked at the project from a different perspective, he would have opinions about the development, but it is not the Planning Commission's place to do so, and the goal here is to apply both the law and the rules and regulations the way they are written. City Council is responsible for those decisions and has given the Planning Commission the body to work within.

COMMISSIONER VANDEN BOS also thanked Traffic Engineer Zandvliet for being very responsive. COMMISSIONER CONWAY suggested to Traffic Engineer Zandvliet that a presentation using a Sims program to model traffic impact would have been helpful.

8. PUBLIC HEARINGS

- A. REQUEST FOR A ONE-YEAR EXTENSION OF TIME ON THE TENTATIVE TRACT MAP FOR PLANNING APPLICATION NO. 34-05; APPLICANT: MR. BRUCE SOROUDI; LOCATION: 627 DEEP VALLEY DRIVE (FORMER LOCATION OF PV CARWASH).

Planning Director Wahba gave a brief Staff Report, as per written material, and discussed the project's status. The entitlements are still active, but the tract map for the sale of condominiums needs to be extended one year. The Municipal Code is being amended to allow two-year subsequent extensions of time after the first one-year extension.

COMMISSIONER O'DAY asked whether entitlements will come up for review, and Planning Director Wahba responded that they will not. If the tract map is not extended, this project would become apartments rather than condominiums.

COMMISSIONER CONWAY moved, seconded by COMMISSIONER BAYER,

TO OPEN THE PUBLIC HEARING.

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

At CHAIRMAN VANDEN BOS' invitation, the applicant (Bruce Soroudi) came forward and referred the Commissioners to the status letter that he provided.

COMMISSIONER O'DAY asked about how the current market and difficulties in getting real estate funding affects this project. Mr. Soroudi responded that he does not have his construction loan in place but has submitted applications with vendors. However, he has a bridge loan as an interim loan that will cover all expenses incurred in the last year and a half (close to \$2 million) and to be incurred in the next 9 to 12 months in terms of working drawings, consultants, etc. (another \$1.5 million to \$2 million more).

COMMISSIONER VANDEN BOS pointed out that projects could get entitled and then look to somebody with more resources to push the project forward two years ago, but that may not be an option now. Mr. Soroudi agreed, and advised that a joint venture partner option is also being pursued, but a joint venture partner faces the same market conditions.

COMMISSIONER CONWAY asked what oversight agency monitored the removal of the USTs and waste oil tanks, and Mr. Soroudi responded that it was the fire and public works departments.

COMMISSIONER CONWAY moved, seconded by COMMISSIONER O'DAY,

TO CLOSE THE PUBLIC HEARING.

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

COMMISSIONER CONWAY moved, seconded by COMMISSIONER GOLIDA,

TO RECOMMEND TO THE CITY COUNCIL A ONE-YEAR EXTENSION OF TIME FOR PA-34-05 TENTATIVE TRACT MAP.

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

9. COMMISSION ITEMS

COMMISSIONER O'DAY raised an issue with the approved project on the corner of Gaucho and Saddle and the complaints about the red tile roof. Planning Director Wahba advised that Staff has been working with the applicant in the spirit of compromise, and the applicant has been pointing out other homes in the neighborhood that have less than a ranch-style design. COMMISSIONER O'DAY commented that if the house is going to be on Gaucho, it should look like the rest of the homes on Gaucho. However, Planning Director Wahba pointed out that one street cannot be singled out, but the whole neighborhood is considered for neighborhood compatibility.

COMMISSIONER CONWAY congratulated CHAIRMAN VANDEN BOS for his excellent leadership on the Planning Commission into a direction the Commissioners are all proud of, demonstrating the Commission's diligence, perseverance and commitment. All Commissioners echoed the sentiments.

CHAIRMAN VANDEN BOS commented that he has enjoyed the time and camaraderie on the Commission. This is a hardworking group, and the work is interesting and important for the community.

10. DIRECTOR'S ITEMS

At the next meeting (April 14) VICE CHAIRMAN CONWAY will be the new Chairman, and COMMISSIONER BAYER will be the Vice Chairwoman.

11. MATTERS OF INFORMATION

A. PARK AND ACTIVITIES MINUTES (MARCH 18, 2008).

B. CITY COUNCIL ACTIONS (MARCH 25, 2008).

COMMISSIONER CONWAY moved, and COMMISSIONER BAYER seconded,

TO RECEIVE AND FILE ITEMS 11A AND 11B.

There being no objection, CHAIRMAN VANDEN BOS so ordered.

12. ADJOURNMENT

At 8:35 p.m. CHAIRMAN VANDEN BOS adjourned the Planning Commission meeting to April 14, 2008, at 7:30 p.m.

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Julie Cremeans  
Minutes Secretary

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Douglas R. Prichard  
City Clerk