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REGULAR PLANNING MINUTES

MAY 4, 2009

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MINUTES

REGULAR PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING

MAY 4, 2009

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 CHAIRWOMAN BAYER.

2. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

COMMISSIONER CONWAY led the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

3. **ROLL CALL**

Commissioners Present: Conway, Southwell, Rein, Scott, Huff, Chairwoman Bayer
Commissioners Absent: O'Day
Staff Present: Planning Director Wahba, Assistant Planner Masters

4. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

COMMISSIONER SCOTT moved, seconded by COMMISSIONER CONWAY,

TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE REGULAR PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING OF APRIL 20, 2009.

There being no objection, CHAIRWOMAN BAYER so ordered.

5. **AUDIENCE ITEMS**

None.

6. **CONSENT CALENDAR**

A. PLANNING APPLICATION NO. 10-09; APPLICANT: MR. & MRS. MICHAEL MAY; LOCATION: 9 BROKEN BOW LANE; A NEIGHBORHOOD COMPATIBILITY DETERMINATION FOR A PROPOSED ONE-STORY ADDITION AND A SECOND STORY DECK TO AN EXISTING SINGLE STORY RESIDENCE. MINOR DEVIATIONS ARE REQUIRED 1) TO DECREASE THE FRONT YARD BY NO MORE THAN 10%; 2) FOR AN ENCROACHMENT INTO THE FRONT YARD WHICH DOES NOT PROJECT BEYOND THE FORWARDMOST BUILDING LINE; AND 3) TO CONTINUE A LEGAL NONCONFORMING SIDE YARD SETBACK.

COMMISSIONER SOUTHWELL moved, seconded by COMMISSIONER SCOTT,

TO APPROVE THE CONSENT CALENDAR.

AYES: Conway, Southwell, Rein, Scott, Huff, Chairwoman Bayer
NOES: None
ABSTAIN: None
ABSENT: O'Day

Planning Director Wahba explained the 20-day appeal period.

7. BUSINESS ITEMS

- A. PLANNING APPLICATION NO. 02-09; APPLICANT: DR. & MRS. LEONARD GALE; LOCATION: 26 MONTECILLO DRIVE; A NEIGHBORHOOD COMPATIBILITY DETERMINATION TO LEGALIZE AN EXISTING SOLAR-POWERED WATER HEATING ARRAY AND GAZEBO IN THE REAR YARD.

Assistant Planner Masters gave a brief Staff Report, as per written material, and recommended approval with standard conditions.

COMMISSIONERS CONWAY, BAYER and SCOTT thanked staff and applicant for the work they've done on this project.

COMMISSIONER SCOTT further expressed his gratitude to the applicant for immediately addressing the concerns of the community and Commission.

COMMISSIONER CONWAY moved, seconded by COMMISSIONER REIN,

TO APPROVE PA-02-09 WITH THE STANDARD CONDITIONS AS OUTLINED IN THE STAFF REPORT.

AYES: Conway, Southwell, Rein, Huff, Chairwoman Bayer
NOES: None
ABSTAIN: Scott
ABSENT: O'Day

Planning Director Wahba explained the 20-day appeal period.

- B. PLANNING APPLICATION NO. 12-09; APPLICANT: MR. & MRS. JAVIER LEON; LOCATION: 52 BUCKSKIN LANE; A NEIGHBORHOOD COMPATIBILITY DETERMINATION FOR CONSTRUCTION OF A GUEST HOUSE AND A POOL IN THE REAR YARD. A GRADING APPLICATION IS REQUIRED FOR RELATED GRADING ON THE REAR YARD HILLSIDE.

Assistant Planner Masters gave a brief Staff Report, as per written material, and recommended approval with the conditions outlined in the Staff Report and also with the condition that all vehicle activity related to this application go through the front yard via Buckskin Lane and that any vehicular access or use of the bridal trail would require prior approval by the Dapplegray Lane Property Owners Association.

COMMISSIONER SCOTT asked whether this would qualify as a residential unit, and Planning Director Wahba confirmed that it would be a second dwelling, per the State of California requirements. Planning Director Wahba further explained the City's housing element update approval status and its second dwelling ordinance status and confirmed that this unit would be recognized as a second dwelling unit.

COMMISSIONER REIN asked whether the horsekeeping requirements are being met, and Planning Director Wahba confirmed that they are.

COMMISSIONER CONWAY briefly discussed the pool square footage, and Planning Director Wahba pointed out that lot coverage is not at issue given the lot size being so large.

CHAIRWOMAN BAYER asked about any concerns with the stability of the hillside during excavation, and Planning Director Wahba responded that the applicant has done a soils and geology report and has worked with the County, and there are no concerns.

At CHAIRWOMAN BAYER'S invitation, Greg Schneider (architect at 1902 Speyer Lane Road, Redondo Beach) came forward representing the applicant.

COMMISSIONER SCOTT expressed his concern over the drainage plan. Mr. Schneider advised the Commission that he has done what the County has asked but can relay the concerns to the County. Planning Director Wahba also advised that he would talk with Lisa Eckert about the concerns.

CHAIRWOMAN BAYER asked whether the two large trees would be kept, and Mr. Schneider responded that they will be maintained.

COMMISSIONER CONWAY thanked Staff for their excellent work.

COMMISSIONER SOUTHWELL expressed his concern with the maintenance of the existing topography coming down the hillside with two new steps for the pool and guest house. The 5' retaining wall for the pool seems dramatic, and the overall slope of the backyard is an engineering challenge, tremendously altering the natural topography. Planning Director Wahba responded that Staff had similar concerns, but given the small usability of the lot, there is nothing that can be done here, other than mass grading and creating additional flat areas, so this is a compromise that nestles the pool and the guest house, and given the steepness of the lot it's the best they can do for typical backyard improvements.

COMMISSIONER SOUTHWELL further commented that there's always a challenge when looking at lot square footage without the slope taken into account, and there should be an adjustment for flat land versus slopes in usage of land. Planning Director Wahba agreed and added that in the past there have been discussions about establishing building pad coverage and a sliding scale as to coverage on the building pad, given its size.

COMMISSIONER REIN asked whether a second dwelling was prevalent in the Buckskin neighborhood, and Planning Director Wahba responded that it is rare because they were not allowed historically, but they are now, and the City has to work with the residents, given the State requirements. Staff is working with a couple of others, although this is the first that will be approved.

COMMISSIONER SCOTT thanked Staff and applicant for minimizing the impacts while building in very difficult circumstances. This is a worthwhile project, nicely integrated into the slope. However, the drainage should be addressed in a very carefully thought-out manner.

COMMISSIONER HUFF agreed that this seems like an amazing engineering feat, but the setting is far enough away from neighbors and views so as to not impact anyone else, and she is pleased to see that the trees will be saved.

COMMISSIONER BAYER commented on the construction eyesores seen from the back when walking along the trails. COMMISSIONER BAYER further expressed her appreciation that the cut and fill is staying on the property, as the rolling hills topography is important to the concept of the City.

COMMISSIONER CONWAY moved, seconded by COMMISSIONER SCOTT,

TO APPROVE PA-12-09 WITH THE CONDITIONS OUTLINED IN THE STAFF REPORT, ALONG WITH THE CONDITIONS THAT VEHICLE ACTIVITY GO THROUGH THE FRONT YARD VIA BUCKSKIN LANE, THAT ANY VEHICULAR ACCESS OR USE OF THE BRIDLE TRAIL WOULD REQUIRE PRIOR APPROVAL BY THE DAPPLEGRAY LANE PROPERTY OWNERS ASSOCIATION AND THAT A GRADING AND DRAINAGE ENGINEER REVIEW THE DRAINAGE PLAN.

AYES: Conway, Rein, Huff, Scott, Chairwoman Bayer
NOES: Southwell
ABSTAIN: None
ABSENT: O'Day

Planning Director Wahba explained the 20-day appeal period.

8. PUBLIC HEARINGS

None.

9. COMMISSION ITEMS

COMMISSIONER SCOTT asked about the Lomita tank, and Planning Director Wahba confirmed that it is under construction, and the de-annexation is complete.

COMMISSIONER SOUTHWELL suggested that some housekeeping be done at the corner of PVDN and PVDE, and Planning Director Wahba responded that he would talk to the Butchers again.

COMMISSIONER SCOTT raised an issue previously covered by the Traffic and Safety Committee years ago about a third of the traffic coming south on Crenshaw through PCH turning left onto Rolling Hills Road and the City of Torrance's plan to change the traffic flow to move more of that traffic onto PCH. There is still only one single left turn lane from Crenshaw onto PCH. Planning Director Wahba agreed to have it looked into.

10. DIRECTOR'S ITEMS

Planning Director Wahba discussed the Chandler Draft EIR and the 60-day review comment period.

COMMISSIONER SCOTT asked about the process for advising the community and suggested that the City give this plenty of publicity, so that it doesn't get missed. Planning Director Wahba said he would post some additional signs at the entrances to the surrounding neighborhoods.

11. MATTERS OF INFORMATION

- A. PARK AND ACTIVITIES MINUTES (APRIL 21, 2009).
- B. CITY COUNCIL ACTIONS (APRIL 28, 2009).

COMMISSIONER CONWAY moved, and COMMISSIONER SCOTT seconded,

TO RECEIVE AND FILE ITEMS 11A and B.

There being no objection, CHAIRWOMAN BAYER so ordered.

12. ADJOURNMENT

At 8:13 p.m. CHAIRWOMAN BAYER adjourned the Planning Commission meeting to May 18, 2009, at 7:30 p.m.

Julie Cremeans
Minutes Secretary

Douglas R. Prichard
City Clerk