

**MINUTES**

**REGULAR PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING**

**DECEMBER 15, 2003**

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 SOMERS.

2. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

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

3. **ROLL CALL**

Commissioners Present: Conway, Killen, Bayer, Rein, O'Day, Chairman Somers

Commissioners Absent:

Staff Present: Planning Director Wahba, Assistant Planner Tran, City Attorney Steve Pfahler

4. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

COMMISSIONER CONWAY moved, seconded by COMMISSIONER BAYER

TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE REGULAR PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING OF NOVEMBER 17, 2003.

There being no objection, CHAIRMAN SOMERS so ordered.

5. **AUDIENCE ITEMS**

None.

6. **CONSENT CALENDAR**

None.

7. **BUSINESS ITEMS**

A. PLANNING APPLICATION NO. 35-03; APPLICANT: FARMERS & MERCHANT BANK; LOCATION: 1 HILLCREST MANOR; A NEIGHBORHOOD COMPATIBILITY FOR CONSTRUCTION OF A NEW SINGLE STORY HOME ON A VACANT LOT.

Assistant Planner Tran summarized the Staff Report (as per written material) with the listed conditions.

COMMISSIONER CONWAY moved, seconded by COMMISSIONER BAYER,

TO APPROVE PA-35-03 WITH THE SPECIFIED CONDITIONS AS OUTLINED IN THE STAFF REPORT.

AYES: Bayer, Rein, Killen, Conway, O'Day, Somers

NOES:

ABSTAIN:

ABSENT:

Planning Director Wahba explained the 20-day appeal period.

B. PLANNING APPLICATION NO. 36-03; APPLICANT: MR. & MRS ARDESHIRI;  
LOCATION: 2543 PALOS VERDES DRIVE NORTH A NEIGHBORHOOD  
COMPATIBILITY FOR FIRST AND SECOND STORY ADDITIONS TO AN EXISTING  
TWO-STORY HOME.

Assistant Planner Tran summarized the Staff Report (as per written material) with the listed conditions.

In response to a question from COMMISSIONER BAYER, Director Wahba discussed the entryway and stated that it is recessed at 6 ft.

COMMISSIONER KILLEN asked if a survey had been conducted. He stated that the points on the side appeared very close and are identified as 10 ft. and 12 ft. and that they appear too even to be exact. Planner Tran stated that a survey had been conducted many years ago and the applicant was present to discuss this further.

Director Wahba stated that the Planning Commission could add a request to conduct a survey as a condition of approval, if necessary.

COMMISSIONER O'DAY asked for clarification of the neighborhood compatibility findings that the building appears to be entirely of stucco. Director Wahba stated that there are other homes in the area that are stucco and it is not uncommon to see homes in the area entirely of stucco and further discussed the construction plans and stated that the applicant could discuss further.

COMMISSIONER CONWAY stated that he had an observation and was uncomfortable with some of the neighborhood compatibility findings and wanted to bring it to the Commission's attention. He stated that in finding #3 Scale, that the neighborhood is being defined within a 500 ft radius of the subject site and in Rolling Hills Estates, that neighborhood could result in being just the homes surrounding the property due to the large size of the lots. He further stated that the Commission, in the past, had difficulty defining what a neighborhood was. He further stated that he was uncomfortable with a concept of establishing a neighborhood through this finding and would like to have some Commission support in having those findings redefined so that they are not limiting themselves and perhaps creating a precedence in establishing a neighborhood of the homes adjoining the subject property.

He further commented that in finding #6 Views, stated that he saw no substance in the report finding #6 that the finding was "met because of the subject property is surrounded by other single and two-story homes" and would like to seek some consensus in having the findings modified to be less restrictive for any future needs.

CHAIRMAN SOMERS stated that he concurred with COMMISSIONER CONWAY.

COMMISSIONER CONWAY stated that he had a concern of a neighborhood being defined as a 500 ft radius and his direction to Staff is to come back with findings that are more reflective of the city and neighborhood character rather than just a 500 ft radius, something less restrictive. He added that he did not see single and two-story homes being a basis of a finding of no impact on the view.

COMMISSIONER O'DAY also concurred and stated that it would have to be a reflection of views, that adjacent properties have no blockage of their view.

CHAIRMAN SOMERS suggested they hear from the applicant.

Mr. David Breiholz, architect for the applicant, discussed the entry relief on the plan and indicated that it was flush with the south face of the house. He stated that they would preserve the wood that is present and on the second floor. He indicated that there would be no problem with the survey for the east property line to establish the dimensions for the setback.

COMMISSIONER O'DAY asked if they would consider incorporating more wood or other materials for the street facing side. He stated that he would like to see more natural materials rather than stucco.

CHAIRMAN SOMERS clarified the discussion and stated that the Commission could incorporate the design changes as a condition of approval.

Mr. Breiholz stated that they would accept the condition if necessary.

COMMISSIONER CONWAY moved, seconded by COMMISSIONER BAYER,

TO APPROVE PA-36-03, AS CONDITIONED IN THE STAFF REPORT AND REFLECT THE COMMENTS OF THE COMMISSION AND THE APPLICANT TO WORK WITH STAFF TO PROVIDE CHANGES ON A DESIGN THAT REFLECTS ADDITIONAL NATURAL ELEMENTS INCORPORATED INTO THE FACADE OF THE PROPERTY.

Director Wahba stated that there are "pockets" in the City that do not relate to a specific neighborhood. He stated that they would delete the 500 ft radius and state how they define the parameters for compatibility, and the Planning Commission can approve or disapprove.

AYES: Bayer, Rein, Killen, Conway, O'Day, Chairman Somers

NOES:

ABSTAIN:

ABSENT:

Planning Director Wahba explained the 20-day appeal period.

C. PLANNING APPLICATION NO. 38-03; APPLICANT: MR. & MRS GREGORY DELGADO; LOCATION: 11 LARIAT LANE; A NEIGHBORHOOD COMPATIBILITY FOR FIRST AND SECOND STORY ADDITIONS TO AN SINGLE STORY HOME. APPROVAL OF TWO MINOR DEVIATIONS ARE ALSO REQUIRED TO EXCEED LOT COVERAGE BY LESS THAN 10% AND TO DECREASE THE FRONT YARD AREA BY LESS THAN 10%.

Assistant Planner Tran summarized the Staff Report (as per written material) with the listed conditions.

COMMISSIONER BAYER stated that she had a concern of the size at 5,000 sq. ft. and that homes that large really stand out.

COMMISSIONER REIN stated that they should respect the style and the scale of the existing neighborhoods and not simply deny expansion for the purpose of stifling growth, but when it clearly appears to be out of step with the neighborhood, they should review it carefully. He had a comment to Staff about the 2 x 4s in the silhouette on the house as useful for seeing if the new construction would block the existing view but stated that they do not illustrate the bulk and mass of the project. He asked if the neighbors had not only seen the silhouette but had they actually looked at the drawings.

Director Wahba stated that the process does not require the applicant to go to each neighbor with plans.

The applicant, Mr. Delgado, stated that they addressed the interested parties, and have met the cities and neighborhood compatibility requirements. He further discussed their plans and compared their proposed project to those in the immediate area.

COMMISSIONER O'DAY asked about the trees and if they would lose any of them.

Mr. Delgado stated that they are doing their best to maintain all the trees on the property.

CHAIRMAN SOMERS asked if the size and mass bothered any other Commissioners.

COMMISSIONER CONWAY indicated that he supported COMMISSIONER BAYER because there was not any supportive documentation in the findings that support the project and how the findings are compatible with the neighborhood. He further stated that what is requested of the Planning Commission is to support an increase of our 30% coverage and a decrease of the open space in the front yard without sufficient evidence that the project is compatible with the neighborhood.

COMMISSIONER KILLEN stated that in the past they have asked for an analysis of the neighboring houses and asked if this were done for this project.

Director Wahba stated that it is compatible on the specified merits and that COMMISSIONER CONWAY has a valid point in that the Staff Report does not show that analysis in any great detail. He suggested that they could conduct an analysis depicting a breakdown of lot and homes sizes and possibly minor deviations.

CHAIRMAN SOMERS commented that square footage and bulk and mass should also be considered, but it did meet the criteria. He commented that finding #6 should be further analyzed but he did not have a problem with the size.

COMMISSIONER KILLEN stated that COMMISSIONER CONWAY'S point from a policy standpoint is important so that when they move forward with other projects, that they have solid information to work with.

COMMISSIONER KILLEN moved, seconded by COMMISSIONER CONWAY,

TO CONTINUE PA-38-03 TO ALLOW THE APPLICANT AND STAFF TO MAKE THE ANALYSIS FOR NEIGHBORHOOD COMPATIBILITY AND INCLUDE A REVISED NEIGHBORHOOD COMPATIBILITY FINDING #6.

AYES: Bayer, Killen, Conway, Somers

NOES: O'Day, Rein

ABSTAIN:

ABSENT:

Director Wahba stated that this application has been continued to January 20, 2004.

#### 8. PUBLIC HEARINGS

None.

#### 9. COMMISSION ITEMS

COMMISSIONER CONWAY stated that they have received compliments on the Holiday Party.

COMMISSIONER BAYER thanked Director Wahba for all his support and assistance on helping plan the Holiday Party.

COMMISSIONER KILLEN advised the Commission that he would be taking a three-month sabbatical starting January 17, 2004 and returning April 16, 2004.

10. DIRECTOR'S ITEMS

Director Wahba stated that the meeting of January 5, 2004 is cancelled.

Director Wahba discussed with the Commission the City Council plans for Planning Commission chairperson and vice-chairperson and the status of the Planning Commission vacant position.

Director Wahba advised the Commission that Hanh Tran would be leaving on December 22, 2003.

11. CITY ATTORNEY'S ITEMS.

None.

12. MATTERS OF INFORMATION

A. Park and Activities Commission Minutes (November 18, 2003)

B. CITY COUNCIL ACTIONS (November 25, 2003).

C. CITY COUNCIL ACTIONS (December 9, 2003).

COMMISSIONER CONWAY moved, seconded by COMMISSIONER BAYER,  
TO RECEIVE AND FILE ITEMS 12.A, B, C.

There being no objection, CHAIRMAN SOMERS so ordered.

13. ADJOURNMENT

At 8:16 p.m. CHAIRMAN SOMERS adjourned the Planning Commission meeting to January 20, 2004, at 7:30 p.m.

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Judith Trujillo  
Minutes Secretary

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Douglas R. Prichard  
City Clerk