

INDEX

REGULAR PLANNING MINUTES

JANUARY 18, 2005

<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</u>
	<u>AUDIENCE ITEMS</u>
	<u>CONSENT CALENDAR</u>
	A. QUARTERLY CODE ENFORCEMENT REPORT.
	B. PLANNING APPLICATION NO. 05-05; APPLICANT: RED BRICK PIZZA; LOCATION: 550 DEEP VALLEY DRIVE #141-A; A PRECISE PLAN OF DESIGN FOR TWO WALL SIGNS WITH A LOGO.
2	<u>BUSINESS ITEMS</u>
	A. PLANNING APPLICATION NO. 03-05; APPLICANT: MR. & MRS. WILLIAM SZYMCZAK; LOCATION: 11 WILDHORSE LANE; A NEIGHBORHOOD COMPATIBILITY TO DEMOLISH THE EXISTING SINGLE-STORY HOME AND CONSTRUCT A NEW TWO-STORY HOME WITH RELATED SITE IMPROVEMENTS, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO A SWIMMING POOL, RETAINING WALLS, ETC. A MINOR DEVIATION IS REQUIRED TO DECREASE THE FRONT YARD AREA BY LESS THAN 10%. A GRADING APPLICATION IS REQUIRED TO ACCOMMODATE THE NEW SITE IMPROVEMENTS.
3	<u>PUBLIC HEARINGS</u>
3-5	A. PLANNING APPLICATION NO. 04-05; APPLICANT: MR. & MRS. IVAN BENAVIDEZ; LOCATION: 5030 RANGE HORSE LANE; A NEIGHBORHOOD COMPATIBILITY FOR FRONT, SIDE, REAR AND SECOND STORY ADDITIONS TO A SINGLE STORY HOME. A VARIANCE IS REQUIRED FOR PROJECTING BEYOND THE FORWARDMOST BUILDING LINE. A GRADING APPLICATION IS REQUIRED TO ACCOMMODATE A NEW SUBTERRANEAN GARAGE.
6	<u>COMMISSION ITEMS</u>
	<u>DIRECTOR'S ITEMS</u>
	<u>MATTERS OF INFORMATION</u>
	A. PARK AND ACTIVITIES MINUTES (NOVEMBER 16, 2004).
	B. CITY COUNCIL ACTIONS (NOVEMBER 23, 2004)
	<u>ADJOURNMENT</u>

MINUTES

REGULAR PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING

JANUARY 18, 2005

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 KILLEN.

2. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

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

3. **ROLL CALL**

Commissioners Present: Conway, Rein, Vanden Bos, Chairman Killen
Commissioners Absent: Bayer, O'Day
Staff Present: Planning Director Wahba

4. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

COMMISSIONER CONWAY moved, seconded by COMMISSIONER VANDEN BOS,

TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE REGULAR PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING OF NOVEMBER 15, 2004 WITH ONE CHANGE TO THE SPELLING OF CHAIRMAN KILLEN'S NAME AT THE TOP OF PAGE THREE.

There being no objection, CHAIRMAN KILLEN so ordered with that change.

5. **AUDIENCE ITEMS**

None.

6. **CONSENT CALENDAR**

The following routine matters will be approved in a single motion with the unanimous consent of the Planning Commission. There will be no separate discussion of these items unless good cause can be shown by a member of the Commission or the public expressed under audience items prior to the roll call vote.

- A. QUARTERLY CODE ENFORCEMENT REPORT.
- B. PLANNING APPLICATION NO. 05-05; APPLICANT: RED BRICK PIZZA; LOCATION: 550 DEEP VALLEY DRIVE #141-A; A PRECISE PLAN OF DESIGN FOR TWO WALL SIGNS WITH A LOGO.

COMMISSIONER CONWAY moved, seconded by COMMISSIONER VANDEN BOS,

TO APPROVE CONSENT CALENDAR ITEMS A AND B.

There being no objection, CHAIRMAN KILLEN so ordered.

7. BUSINESS ITEMS

- A. PLANNING APPLICATION NO. 03-05; APPLICANT: MR. & MRS. WILLIAM SZYMCZAK; LOCATION: 11 WILDHORSE LANE; A NEIGHBORHOOD COMPATIBILITY TO DEMOLISH THE EXISTING SINGLE-STORY HOME AND CONSTRUCT A NEW TWO-STORY HOME WITH RELATED SITE IMPROVEMENTS, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO A SWIMMING POOL, RETAINING WALLS, ETC. A MINOR DEVIATION IS REQUIRED TO DECREASE THE FRONT YARD AREA BY LESS THAN 10%. A GRADING APPLICATION IS REQUIRED TO ACCOMMODATE THE NEW SITE IMPROVEMENTS.

Director Wahba gave a brief Staff report (as per written material) and reported that Staff had concern with the square footage, but a survey showed square footage and additions that were approved. This would be among one of the larger homes, but given the design of the home that minimizes the mass, and given that there are others within the vicinity, Staff recommends approval of Planning Application No. 03-05.

COMMISSIONER CONWAY asked Staff if the easement was exclusive to the surface, and Director Wahba suggested that might be a question for the Applicant.

COMMISSIONER VANDEN BOS asked Staff how, in general, a determination is made as to what constitutes a neighborhood, and Director Wahba explained that they look at the area for what is compatible within the vicinity and agreed that it was subjective in this neighborhood and that this neighborhood has a different character and is a unique community.

CHAIRMAN KILLEN commented that several communities are trying to mitigate impacts of scale. Not allowing three-car garages facing the street is one of the ways that communities have started to look at the issue of allowing the larger homes to still be built and still try to reduce the bulk and scale of the building.

There being no further questions for Staff, Arthur Ashai (3035 Kashiwa Street, #102, Torrance), architect for the project, came forward. He told the Planning Commission that the project was designed like a farmhouse where different generations add different wings to the farmhouse. The design has sheltered the second floor so it's surrounded by single story on all sides, providing a large house but no visual mass. Privacy was the neighbors' primary concern, which is being addressed with landscaping.

In response to a question from COMMISSIONER CONWAY, Mr. Ashai told the Planning Commission that he was told by the engineer that the easement does not have control of the surface and is primarily underground.

COMMISSIONER CONWAY expressed concerns over drainage and crossing the easement and the possible need of a license agreement. Mr. Ashai advised that the draining plan could be revised, if needed.

COMMISSIONER KILLEN expressed concerns over the look of the massive driveway and suggested looking at alternative material not as solid but still allowing the cars to pull off to the side and have the other three cars be accessible. Mr. Ashai agreed that would be an option to consider.

John Kooker (10 Wildhorse) came forward. Mr. Kooker owns the property across the street and explained that his concerns were about the construction truck effect and whether the construction would be completed in a timely manner, but those concerns have been worked out, and the project has his full support.

The Planning Commission discussed the proposed Application and agreed with the Applicant.

COMMISSIONER CONWAY moved, seconded by COMMISSIONER VANDEN BOS,

TO APPROVE PA-03-05 AS PRESENTED BY THE APPLICANT.

AYES: Conway, Rein, Vanden Bos, Chairman Killen

NOES:

ABSTAIN:

ABSENT: Bayer, O'Day

8. PUBLIC HEARINGS

- A. PLANNING APPLICATION NO. 04-05; APPLICANT: MR. & MRS. IVAN BENAVIDEZ; LOCATION: 5030 RANGE HORSE LANE; A NEIGHBORHOOD COMPATIBILITY FOR FRONT, SIDE, REAR AND SECOND STORY ADDITIONS TO A SINGLE STORY HOME. A VARIANCE IS REQUIRED FOR PROJECTING BEYOND THE FORWARDMOST BUILDING LINE. A GRADING APPLICATION IS REQUIRED TO ACCOMMODATE A NEW SUBTERRANEAN GARAGE.

Director Wahba gave a Staff report (as per written material) and recommended that the Planning Commission: open the public hearing; take public testimony; discuss the issues and either continue this item to a date uncertain to allow the Applicant, Applicant's architect and Staff to work further on redesigning the project or close the public hearing and direct Staff to bring back a resolution denying PA-04-05.

Director Wahba commented that the subject property is a smaller lot but not uncharacteristic to the lots in the neighborhood. Square footage was a concern, and Staff recommends that it be reduced, along with the points identified in the report under Neighborhood Compatibility. Staff takes issue with the walls going straight up with little articulation resulting in massive appearance of a three-story house and the Spanish architectural style. Staff was not able to make the Variance findings, but if the Neighborhood Compatibility portion of the application were addressed, Staff may be able to make Variance findings. The grading portion of the project and the Minor Deviation applications could not be supported due to the Neighborhood Compatibility Determination made by Staff.

CHAIRMAN KILLEN and Director Wahba discussed that the walls adjoining the proposed driveway meet the code at 2 ft. high, and a stair step effect could be done with proper landscaping to blend them in.

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

AYES: Conway, Rein, Vanden Bos, Chairman Killen
NOES:
ABSTAIN:
ABSENT: Bayer, O'Day

Louis Skelton (2537-D Pacific Coast Highway, #168, Torrance), architect for the project, came forward. He advised the Planning Commission of some corrections to factual information in Staff report. Under Discussion, paragraph 3, the project is using S-tile, not barrel tile, and everything is wood balconies, not wrought-iron. Wrought-iron was in the original proposal but has been changed. Under Neighborhood Compatibility Determination, paragraph 2, again, everything is wooden balconies, there are fascia boards, and it does have wood railing. Under Neighborhood Compatibility Determination, paragraph 3, Mr. Skelton brought in a model to illustrate the wedding cake design, as directed by Staff. Under Neighborhood Compatibility Determination, paragraph 4, referring to the south elevation façade needing additional articulation, the model will show that a storage room was created off the back to break up that side, as well as the second and first levels having different elevations.

Mr. Skelton explained that many homes in the neighborhood were developed into two-stories prior to the Neighborhood Compatibility ordinance taking effect. The size of this home is within a few square feet of the next size down, showing the trend of the houses in the area. The house is being brought forward, but not exceeding the distance to the curb of the neighboring properties, bringing the house into alignment with the adjacent properties. By rotating the ridgeline parallel to the street, one neighbor will have a better view of the coastline that they currently do not have from their bedroom window. Another neighbor requested realignment of the driveway to address the issue of headlights from cars, which is being done by bringing the garage level with street and approaching the house on a subterranean level, similar to two other houses on Rolling Meadows Road.

Mr. Skelton expressed agreement with the Planning Staff's natural amenities recommendation. The grading was done to accomplish the subterranean garage and a minor remodel of the front landscape. The retaining walls were a compromise worked

out with Staff. The scale was developed so that from the street, the front elevation is similar to the current elevation. With the garage, it does have a three-level appearance, but follows the flow of the topography. The large mass of the second story is reduced to the back of the house and can only be seen from the west and east sides looking from the back yards into the property. For the style, the owners wanted a home reflecting the character of the neighborhood and the owner's heritage. There are four other homes that have red tile roofs, so there's no precedent being set there. There are a variety of styles in the neighborhood.

Mr. Skelton addressed the Variance issue in Staff report. The property has an extreme slope at the rear, so the house had to move forward slightly. The Applicant is not asking to go beyond the 25 ft. minimum, only closer to what the original house was. Mr. Skelton presented a model of the house. The front of the house is minimal, and the second story mass at the rear of the house is remote and not visible, except from the end of the cul-de-sac. The project does have three levels, but because of the setback, it is minimized from any point in the street.

COMMISSIONER REIN expressed his concern over the disconnect between the project and the Planning Department with the significant differences in Staff report. Mr. Skelton explained that the most recent revision of drawings is November 2004, but the most significant revisions were done in September 2003.

Director Wahba acknowledged the wood change from wrought-iron but still found it difficult to see that the architectural style is compatible with the three streets being looked at and stated that the massing of the building is very large. He suggested that the second story be minimized and pushed back. Director Wahba stated that the architectural style is more subjective, but he wouldn't modify his recommendations. He suggested that if the square footage were reduced, it would reduce the massiveness of the building, and reducing that length and bringing it back to the first floor would further reduce the mass.

COMMISSIONER CONWAY discussed his concerns with the number of red flags raised on this project, including front yard coverage almost at the maximum, the lot coverage at the maximum, seeking an encroachment in the front yard setback, seeking a Minor Deviation to decrease the front yard, and building the largest home in the neighborhood on one of the smaller lots. Each individual red flag could be addressed, but together they are overwhelming.

Mr. Skelton pointed out that the additional 400 sq. ft. is from the garage conversion in order to work with the neighbors. The two critical issues to the design are the encroachment into the front yard and the front yard setbacks. The original home was built further back, probably because of the driveway. Eliminating that driveway length provides the ability to utilize a little bit more of the front yard area, so that area is critical to the design. As far as the size of the second and ground floors, there probably could be some architectural solutions. The inconsistency of the neighborhood and diversity of the homes is what makes the project compatible and allow the opportunity to present the project. Square footage and massing could be addressed, but the project must have the front yard Variance in order to work.

Ron Gastelum (5038 Rangehorse Lane) came forward. Mr. Gastelum is a neighbor at the westerly adjacent property. He stated that the process has been outstanding. He likes the eclectic neighborhood. It's not currently a ranch style house, but what is proposed is an improvement, and he is in favor of that. Mr. Gastelum recommend that the Planning Commission give serious consideration to this project that has been a long time coming.

John Stevens (5024 Rangehorse Lane) came forward. He is a neighbor on the same level. He stated that the project is a tremendous improvement over the house that's currently there, which was a small house with a number of additions and some conversion to Oriental style. There are a lot of different styles in the neighborhood. The owners have been working with the Planning Commission to come up with something that is appropriate. Mr. Stevens strongly endorsed cooperation and has no objection to the plans. He advised that the Planning Commission resolve its objections.

COMMISSIONER CONWAY moved, seconded by COMMISSIONER VANDEN BOS,

TO CLOSE THE PUBLIC HEARING

AYES: Conway, Rein, Vanden Bos, Chairman Killen

NOES:

ABSTAIN:

ABSENT: Bayer, O'Day

COMMISSIONER CONWAY discussed the question still lingering—the two alternatives that Staff is recommending.

COMMISSIONER VANDEN BOS stated that the architect and Applicant spent considerable time to address what the City is looking for, but the process is not done yet. The third story look with the garage is an issue. Standing in the cul-de-sac and looking back and up the hill, it is a massive structure and looms over the rest of the neighborhood. He appreciates the support of the neighbors, but the issue must be looked at from the perspective of the whole neighborhood. One approval becomes the model child. This test case would set a precedent.

COMMISSIONER REIN expressed his concern over the discontinuity between the drawing package and Staff report. He also addressed the eclectic mix, stating that it works against this project as the Planning Commission strives to unify styles. The garage gives a three-story effect. The car headlights could be blocked with shrubs instead of the extremely expensive proposition of a four-car subterranean garage. Landscaping alternatives should be considered.

CHAIRMAN KILLEN stated that a remodel on the other side would have had a stair step effect in conjunction with topography. There is still a considerable amount of demolition, so he suggested it be moved over there and another solution found for the garage. Without a subterranean garage, there wouldn't be a three-story look and as much demolition, but that is a personal decision. Compatibility is the Commission's issue, and it's difficult with that lower level.

Director Wahba stated that pushing it back would resolve the Variance issue.

CHAIRMAN KILLEN stated that it is a State mandated law that the Planning Commission make the four findings indicating the Variance works in their minds. There is no latitude on that.

COMMISSIONER CONWAY suggested that if the building wasn't so large, there would be no Variance issue. An argument could be made if the building line had to start there, then an encroachment into the front yard could be understood, but not in conjunction with the front yard coverage almost at the maximum, the lot coverage at the maximum, the Minor Deviation to decrease the front yard, and the largest building in the neighborhood. Individually each could be gotten through, but the combination is stunning.

CHAIRMAN KILLEN agreed that he could support the encroachment if there weren't so many other issues to overcome. With regard to the third story feature, they'll have to discuss it amongst themselves how to be more creative with the location of the revised second level. He stated that there was flexibility if it didn't have that look.

COMMISSIONER CONWAY moved, and COMMISSIONER VANDEN BOS seconded,

TO CONTINUE THIS ITEM TO A DATE UNCERTAIN TO ALLOW THE APPLICANT AND THE APPLICANT'S ARCHITECT TO WORK WITH STAFF CONSISTENT WITH THE COMMENTS MADE HERE THIS EVENING.

AYES: Conway, Rein, Vanden Bos, Chairman Killen

NOES:

ABSTAIN:

ABSENT: Bayer, O'Day

9. COMMISSION ITEMS

COMMISSIONER CONWAY commended Chandler's for not accepting the earthquake material from Baldwin Park.

10. DIRECTOR'S ITEMS

Director Wahba advised that the City Council is doing a presentation for Dick Somers, who has retired, on January 25, one week from today, at 7:30 p.m. He invited the Planning Commission to come and say a few words.

Director Wahba advised that the next meeting scheduled for January 31 has been postponed to the following day to do a joint meeting with the City Council for a first look at the Rolling Hills Covenant Church. The meeting will be held Tuesday, February 1, 7:00 p.m. at Rancho Vista School in the auditorium. It will be a workshop approach, not a public hearing.

Director Wahba stated that normally at this time of year, the Council typically appoints a new Chairman for the Planning and Parks and Activities Commissions and that this will take place soon.

11. MATTERS OF INFORMATION

A. PARK AND ACTIVITIES MINUTES (NOVEMBER 16, 2004).

B. CITY COUNCIL ACTIONS (NOVEMBER 23, 2004)

COMMISSIONER CONWAY moved, and COMMISSIONER VANDEN BOS seconded,

TO RECEIVE AND FILE ITEMS 11 A AND 11B

AYES: Conway, Rein, Vanden Bos, Chairman Killen

NOES:

ABSTAIN:

ABSENT: Bayer, O'Day

12. ADJOURNMENT

At 9:00 p.m. CHAIRMAN KILLEN adjourned the Planning Commission meeting to February 1, 2005, at 7:00 p.m.

Julie Cremeans
Minutes Secretary

Douglas R. Prichard
City Clerk