

**A REGULAR MEETING OF THE CITY OF SIGNAL HILL  
PLANNING COMMISSION  
June 9, 2015  
7:00 P.M.**

**CALL TO ORDER**

Vice-Chair Fallon called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

**ROLL CALL**

The Commission Secretary conducted roll call.

Present: Vice-Chair Jane Fallon  
Commissioner Devon Austin  
Commissioner Shannon Murphy  
Commissioner Rose Richárd

Excused Absence: Chair Benson

Staff present:

- 1) Community Development Director Scott Charney
- 2) Associate Planner Colleen Doan
- 3) Assistant Planner Selena Alanis
- 4) Assistant City Attorney David Kwon
- 5) Sr. Engineering Technician II Anthony Caraveo

In addition, there were 4 people in attendance.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Vice-Chair Fallon led the audience in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

**PUBLIC BUSINESS FROM THE FLOOR**

There was no public business from the floor.

**OATHS OF OFFICE FOR REAPPOINTED COMMISSIONERS**

The Commission Secretary administered the oaths of office for reappointed Commissioners Jane Fallon and Rose Richárd to serve on the Planning Commission (terms to expire on 5/31/2019). The Commissioners took their oaths aloud and thanked the City Council for their reappointment.

## **REORGANIZATION**

The Commission Secretary stated that nominations for the Chair were now open. Commissioner Richárd nominated Commissioner Fallon. Commissioner Fallon accepted the nomination and thanked her fellow Commissioners.

The following Roll Call vote resulted:

AYES: COMMISSIONERS AUSTIN, FALLON, MURPHY AND RICHÁRD  
NOES: NONE  
ABSENT: COMMISSIONER BENSON  
ABSTAIN: NONE

Commission Secretary Scott Charney turned the meeting over to Chair Fallon.

Chair Fallon called for nomination for Vice-Chair. Commissioners Fallon and Murphy nominated Commissioner Austin. Commissioner Austin accepted the nomination.

The following Roll Call vote resulted:

AYES: COMMISSIONERS AUSTIN, FALLON, MURPHY AND RICHÁRD  
NOES: NONE  
ABSENT: COMMISSIONER BENSON  
ABSTAIN: NONE

## **PUBLIC WORKSHOP**

### **1. Revised Plans for a New Single-Family Dwelling at 1995 St. Louis Avenue**

Community Development Director Scott Charney read the form of notice and gave an introduction, and Assistant Planner Selena Alanis gave the staff report.

Chair Fallon opened the public workshop.

The following members of the public spoke regarding the project:

- 1) Lyn Hutchison, Signal Hill resident, expressed concerns about construction noise. She felt the design was still not in character with the neighborhood and resembled a box. She was concerned that her view of the fireworks from the Queen Mary would not be visible with the new house.
- 2) Seth Sor, project designer, introduced himself to the Commission.

Commissioner Murphy stated she was not in favor of the new front covered balcony and noted the square footage had only been reduced by 115 sf because the library was converted to a bedroom. She also asked about financing for the project.

Mr. Sor stated the covered balcony in the front was added to protect the house from weather elements, that the bathrooms on the second floor were the owner's preference, and he estimated cost of construction is \$350,000 and would take approximately 8 months. He indicated the property owner had funds available to complete construction.

Chair Fallon asked what the pillar on the north elevation is.

Mr. Sor explained the pillar is an architectural feature to break up the blank wall that is a stairway in the interior of the house. The feature will also serve as a tool storage area with a small door and have an exterior light.

Vice-Chair Austin asked if the trees that are visible in the view photos would be removed.

Mr. Sor indicated the majority of the trees would be removed. However, the mature trees seen in the view photos are actually on the adjacent neighbor's property.

Chair Fallon asked Mr. Sor if landscape plans were in process and would like to see drought tolerant landscaping. She also did not see the need for the second washer and dryer.

Mr. Sor said he can look at the landscape plans again. He also explained that the owner wanted a washer and dryer for her elderly parents on the first floor and a washer and dryer for herself on the second floor.

Commissioner Richárd asked if there would be drought tolerant landscaping. She was also concerned that there had only been a reduction of 115 sf and did not like the front covered balcony.

There being no further public testimony, Chair Fallon closed the public workshop.

Vice-Chair Austin stated the design still resembles a box, but liked the new colors. She thought the house was still large in comparison to the neighborhood, but was not sure what could be done to improve it.

Commissioner Murphy stated she was not in favor of the new front covered balcony or the floor plans. She would like the bathroom on the second floor to connect to the bedrooms.

Chair Fallon stated the configuration of the bathrooms in the hallway was odd and that the design of the house as a whole was still large.

The property owner then came forward to speak. Chair Fallon reopened the public workshop.

- 3) Kimberly Ly, the property owner, requested that the bathrooms on the second floor remain open to the hallway. She explained that she does not want the people who clean her house to go into the bedrooms to clean the bathrooms and that she has a strong personal preference that bathroom #3 not be connected to bedroom #4.

There being no further public testimony, Chair Fallon closed the public workshop.

Commissioner Murphy stated the design should be amended to remove the front balcony.

It was moved by Commissioner Richárd and seconded by Vice-Chair Austin for staff to work with applicant regarding the design and to prepare the project for a public hearing.

Motion carried 4/0.

## **DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

### **2. Study Session for Water Conservation and Options for Turf Replacement**

Associate Planner Colleen Doan and Community Development Director Scott Charney gave the staff report.

Chair Fallon asked about maintenance for a grass grid parking and paver driveway included in the presentation. Staff clarified that they are sometimes difficult to maintain and have been removed from approved projects, but that they are not problematic for vehicle access including fire trucks.

Commissioner Murphy stated she had noticed improper maintenance for xeriscaped areas. Staff responded that when the code is amended they will also look at clarifying the property owners' obligations for maintenance.

Vice-Chair Austin asked if the City could offer a rebate as an incentive for property owners to maintain their yards. Staff advised that currently there are no City funded rebates for turf removal or maintenance, but residents can participate in the BeWaterWise rebate for replacement of turf. In addition, the City Council has requested that the City's water agency study to see if it would be feasible to offer a City rebate as a supplement to the BeWaterWise rebate. Staff will forward the suggestion to the water department.

Vice-Chair Austin asked if there was a minimum or maximum standard for artificial turf. Staff advised that at the Landscape Parkway Workshop last year, community

members who participated indicated a general approval for artificial turf. Although standards have not been established, in the future ordinance artificial turf will be required to be water permeable and of high quality.

Commissioner Murphy stated that the landscaping with just rocks was not appealing. She suggested more varieties of plants and different sizes of rocks. Staff offered to create a display board with examples of possible appropriate and inappropriate standards for other types of landscapes and hardscapes.

Commissioner Richárd asked if, given the ongoing drought conditions, staff had considered having another workshop similar to the parkway workshop that was held last year. Staff confirmed that a workshop for landscaping on private property could be scheduled and would promote the workshop in several ways.

Chair Fallon asked if there were guidelines for landscaping and turf replacement in the parkway. Staff advised there are guidelines for parkway areas and that a no fee permit is required only for the parkway.

Vice-Chair Austin said it is important that we also ensure that irrigation systems are adjusted when water tolerant plants were installed to make sure there is no overwatering or overspray. Staff advised that design guidelines should also look at preferred methods of irrigation.

Chair Fallon asked if at the Concerts in the Park series materials might be available at the Sustainable City Committee booth to provide water conservation information to the public. Staff affirmed there will be information and flyers available.

Chair Fallon also complimented the Public Works Department in their quick response and assistance provided to residents with water run-off issues.

Staff advised that when we are changing the Code alternatives to turf will be encouraged, which may assist both individuals and members of homeowners associations. The City has promoted information to the public about water conservation in the *City Views* and in the *Signal Tribune*.

Commissioner Murphy asked why sandbags have been placed at hillsides and drill sites. Staff advised that they are best management practices for oil operators to help control sediment running into the stormdrains during rain events. Staff also advised that similar measures would be included in the Vacant Parcel Ordinance that is in the process of being developed.

The Commission directed staff to begin planning a public workshop to engage the community about landscaping on private property versus the parkway and to obtain feedback before developing an ordinance amendment.

Motion carried 4/0.

## **CONSENT CALENDAR**

It was moved by Commissioner Richárd and seconded by Commissioner Murphy to receive and file Consent Calendar Items 3 to 7.

The motion carried 4/0.

## **COMMISSION NEW BUSINESS**

Commissioner Murphy advised she will not be able to attend the Planning Commission meeting in July.

Chair Fallon stated the American Liver Foundation would be holding its Life Liver Walk in Orange County on June 27, 2015 to raise funds for liver disease. If anyone is interested in joining their team (The Liver Spots Team) they may contact Gary Dudley at (310) 710-9693.

It was moved by Commissioner Richárd and seconded by Vice-Chair Austin to adjourn to the next regular meeting of the Planning Commission to be held on Tuesday, July 14, 2015.

The motion carried 4/0.

Chair Fallon adjourned the meeting at 9:01 p.m.

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JANE FALLON  
CHAIR

ATTEST:

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SCOTT CHARNEY  
COMMISSION SECRETARY