

**A REGULAR MEETING OF THE CITY OF SIGNAL HILL  
PLANNING COMMISSION  
August 11, 2015  
7:00 P.M.**

**CALL TO ORDER**

Vice-Chair Austin called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

**ROLL CALL**

The Commission Secretary conducted roll call.

Present: Vice-Chair Devon Austin  
Commissioner Tom Benson  
Commissioner Shannon Murphy  
Commissioner Rose Richárd

Excused Absence: Chair Jane Fallon

Staff present:

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

In addition, there were 7 people in attendance.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

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

**PUBLIC BUSINESS FROM THE FLOOR**

Larry Forester, Signal Hill resident, announced that Ellen Ward, a City Council Member for 12 years, passed away that morning. A memorial candlelight vigil was being arranged for August 12, 2015 at Martin Luther King Park. This site honors elected officials that have worked in LGBT leadership and she was one of the first inductees. He also requested the meeting be adjourned in her honor.

**PRESENTATION**

The Beautification Award was presented to Richard Silva and James Gann of Vivir Properties, the developers of the single-family residence at 2799 E. 21<sup>st</sup> Street. The award was presented for the interior design, exterior attention to details, and landscape features including a permeable driveway and use of water efficient landscape materials.

## **PUBLIC HEARING**

- (1) Site Plan and Design Review for 15-04, 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 Associate Planner Selena Alanis gave the staff report.

Commissioner Benson asked about steps from the garage to the exterior, if they would require revisions due to safety concerns. Staff advised the specifications will be reviewed during the building plan check to ensure it meets code. Comments made at previous workshops had been addressed and no additional comments were received requiring changes to the floor plan. Commissioner Benson also asked if the turf block for one of the driveways had been eliminated. Staff referred the question to the applicant.

Vice-Chair Austin opened the public hearing.

The following members of the public spoke regarding the project:

- 1) Teresa Reich, Signal Hill resident at the subject property, stated her concern about the timing between the approval of the project and the demolition of the property which would require her to relocate. Vice-Chair Austin recommended a discussion between Ms. Reich and her landlord to discuss the timing.

Staff clarified that the Public Hearing was for the approval of entitlements for the design but the applicant must still submit building plans for plan check review, which generally takes some time. Permits had not yet been issued for demolition. Staff also offered to provide references for landlord/tenant inquiries if desired.

Commissioner Benson asked the reason for the change away from turf block for the 30' driveway and gave a reminder of the City's water retention goals.

- 2) Seth Sor, project designer, stated that initially the design included turf block with grass in the driveway, however, the owner indicated a preference for block pavers instead.

There being no further public testimony, Vice-Chair Austin closed the public hearing.

Commissioner Richárd stated the family and architect had made a good faith effort in working with the Commission and City staff to revise the design and tile roof concept, and was in favor of the project.

Commissioner Murphy also expressed her thanks for the time of staff, the architect and the applicant. She said the elevations were much improved, and that she liked the stone tile and veneer in front.

Commissioner Benson stated the applicant had made changes to include a larger front porch in keeping with the appearance of the neighborhood which was much appreciated.

Vice-Chair Austin agreed with the Commissioners, stated the exterior appearance much more closely matched the feel of the remainder of the neighborhood, and she felt the applicant had followed the recommendations of the Commission to arrive at a much better design.

It was moved by Commissioner Richárd and seconded by Commissioner Murphy to waive further reading and adopt the following resolution:

City Attorney read the title of Resolution No. 772-08-15 entitled:

A RESOLUTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF SIGNAL HILL, CALIFORNIA, APPROVING SITE PLAN AND DESIGN REVIEW 15-04, A REQUEST TO DEMOLISH THE EXISTING 800 SQUARE FOOT SINGLE-FAMILY DWELLING AND TO CONSTRUCT A 3,072 SQUARE FOOT TWO-STORY, FIVE-BEDROOM, FOUR-BATHROOM SINGLE-FAMILY DWELLING WITH A THREE-CAR GARAGE AT 1995 ST. LOUIS AVENUE IN THE RLM-2, RESIDENTIAL LOW/MEDIUM-2, ZONING DISTRICT

The following vote resulted:

AYES: VICE-CHAIR AUSTIN; COMMISSIONERS BENSON, MURPHY AND RICHÁRD

NOES: NONE

ABSENT: CHAIR FALLON

ABSTAIN: NONE

Motion carried 4/0.

## **DIRECTOR'S REPORTS**

- (2) "Non-Traditional Uses" – "Athletic Training Facilities" and "Online Automobile Sales"

Senior Planner Colleen Doan gave the staff report.

Commissioner Murphy asked if applicants might be confused should there be a change for athletic training facilities and online automobile sales from being classed as non-traditional uses to traditional uses. She also asked about notification to the Finance/Business License Department.

Staff advised that Finance first refers applicants for business licenses to the Planning Department for review of any restrictions on the use and for land use approval prior to license issuance.

Commissioner Murphy asked if existing auto resalers are located in storefront type locations with vehicle displays. Staff advised this non-traditional use is only allowed in industrial zones and that vehicles are not allowed to be displayed.

Commissioner Benson asked if the City received sales tax for these businesses. Staff indicated that minimal sales tax is received from online auto sales.

Commissioner Benson asked if athletic facility businesses also had resale licenses for retail sales. Staff advised some facilities sell minimal items and tax is therefore minimal, and that the Finance Department oversees tax issues.

Vice-Chair Austin opened the public comments period. There being no public testimony, Vice-Chair Austin closed the public comments period.

It was moved by Commissioner Murphy and seconded by Commissioner Richárd to remove athletic training facilities and online automobile sales from the uses considered under the City's non-traditional use policy.

The following vote resulted:

AYES: VICE-CHAIR AUSTIN; COMMISSIONERS BENSON, MURPHY AND RICHÁRD

NOES: NONE

ABSENT: CHAIR FALLON

ABSTAIN: NONE

Motion carried 4/0.

(3) Residential Turf Replacement Regulations

Senior Planner Colleen Doan gave the staff report.

Commissioner Murphy asked if the sample photo of a "driveway to nowhere" also had a curbcut. Staff clarified that the Public Works Department has approved curbcuts in prior years for driveways that do not lead to garages.

Commissioner Benson expressed a concern that driveways to nowhere typically result in an excessive number of vehicles being parked in front yards. Staff advised the Code does not specify that driveways must lead to a garage, and that proposed regulations for driveways to nowhere would limit the width to 10' and would also limit parking area in yards.

Commissioner Richárd stated that such driveways might be a convenience for residents with ADA issues.

Staff advised that a driveway to nowhere may only be 10' wide. When the landscape guidelines are developed, items such as this can be included. Currently there are no specifications in the Code or requirement that residents must utilize their driveways or garage to park.

Commissioner Benson asked if there were setbacks for driveways, and staff advised what those regulations are.

Vice-Chair Austin asked if it was acceptable for residents to use grass paint. Staff advised this is not included in proposed regulations, neither was it included in the Workshop on Turf Replacement Alternatives. Vice-Chair Austin asked if semi-circular driveways were permitted. Staff advised the proposed regulation limits the driveway allowance and hardscape, and Public Works may not permit multiple curb cuts.

Commissioner Murphy asked if Public Works' consent was required for a pedestrian walkway access in a parkway. Staff advised there are guidelines for parkways, however, some residents have placed hardscape materials in those areas without going through an approval process.

Vice-Chair Austin asked if there were any public comments.

- 1) Larry Forester, Signal Hill resident, asked if LID stormwater development regulations would be required regarding the hardscape and landscape modifications. He also suggested the City Attorney review homeowner associations' CCRs which conflict with the mandates provided by the State.

Staff advised that current LID regulations may not apply to turf replacement, but they would review them for application to these regulations. Also, new landscape guidelines would include specifications regarding artificial turf to ensure that permeable materials would be used.

Chair Benson stated that in hot temperatures, the surface of artificial grass becomes very hot and that residents should be made aware of this.

The City Attorney advised that CCRs are an agreement between private property owners, and that there are limitations on what the City can require a homeowners association to do. Staff clarified that there are differences between what the City encourages and what it can prescribe. Chair Benson stated that due to changes in times, homeowner associations were more likely to be flexible.

It was the consensus of the Commission to have the following included in the regulations:

- Hardscape not allocated for driveways would be limited to a maximum 25% of front yard setback.
- Allocation for driveways-to-nowhere and 1-car garage: 10' width max.
- Allocation for driveways for a 2-car garage: 20' width max.
- Allocation for driveways for 3-car garage: 30' width max.

Staff advised the above items will be included in the regulations being developed for residential properties. In addition, landscape guidelines will be drafted in the near future and would address street tree removal or replacement, installation of artificial turf, homeowners associations and acceptability of grass paint. Maintenance issues including watering, weeds, trash, etc. will also be included in the guidelines. Considerations for commercial areas will be brought to the Commission for discussion at a future meeting.

The Planning Commission discussed preferences for trees to be replanted when removed on private property, and their impact on views. At the Workshop on Turf Replacement Alternatives, no preferences were expressed about requiring trees to be planted in front yards.

Vice-Chair Austin asked staff if sufficient direction had been provided. Staff reviewed direction and confirmed positively.

## **CONSENT CALENDAR**

### (4) Minutes of the Following Meeting

Regular Meeting of July 14, 2015

Recommendation: Approve.

### (5) City Council Follow-up

Summary: Attached for review is a brief summary on the City Council's action from the July 21, 2015 meeting.

Recommendation: Receive and file.

### (6) Development Status Report

Summary: Attached for review is the monthly Development Status Report which highlights current projects.

Recommendation: Receive and file.

### (7) In the News

Summary: Articles compiled by staff that may be of interest to the Commission.

Recommendation: Receive and file.

It was moved by Commissioner Benson and seconded by Commissioner Murphy to receive and file the Consent Calendar.

The motion carried 4/0.

### **COMMISSION NEW BUSINESS**

Commissioner Benson stated the street trees on Skyline Drive need to be watered. Staff advised the request will be forwarded to the appropriate department.

Vice-Chair Austin recognized Senior Planner Colleen Doan as Employee of the Quarter for her teamwork and leadership in completing the amendment to the Oil and Gas Code.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

It was moved by Commissioner Richárd and seconded by Commissioner Benson to adjourn to the next regular meeting of the Planning Commission to be held on Tuesday, September 8, 2015, at 7:00 p.m., in the Council Chamber of City Hall, 2175 Cherry Avenue, Signal Hill, CA, 90755.

The motion carried 4/0.

Vice-Chair Austin adjourned the meeting at 8:44 p.m. in memory of former Council Member Ellen Ward.

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Chair

Attest:

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Scott Charney  
Commission Secretary