

**A REGULAR MEETING OF THE CITY OF SIGNAL HILL  
PLANNING COMMISSION  
April 8, 2014  
7:00 P.M.**

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Richárd called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

**ROLL CALL**

The Commission Secretary conducted roll call.

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

Staff present:

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

In addition, there were 7 people in attendance.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Chair Richárd led the audience in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

**PUBLIC BUSINESS FROM THE FLOOR**

None.

**PUBLIC HEARING**

1.      **New BMW Dealership at 1660 E. Spring Street**  
         Vice-Chair Benson recused himself and took a seat as a member of the community due to a potential conflict as he owns an automobile-service-related business owner.

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

Chair Richárd asked for any questions from the Commission.

Commissioner Murphy noted the address on the landscape plans should be corrected to Signal Hill and initiated a discussion regarding artificial turf required in Condition No. 11. The Commission noted that although the appearance of artificial turf would differ from other auto dealerships there might be a benefit for water conservation and recommended removal of Condition of Approval No. 11.

Chair Richárd opened the public hearing and asked if there were any members of the public who would like to speak.

The following member of the public spoke regarding the project.

- 1) Patrick Wirz, AHT Architects, and representative of Sonic, owner of the property, spoke in favor of the project and offered to answer any questions about the project.
- 2) Richard Mayer, of Troller Mayer Associates, Landscape Architects, will ensure the address is corrected. He offered comments regarding artificial turf including its abilities for water percolation. He noted that some other cities have artificial turf on their medians adjacent to the auto dealerships.

Commissioner Fallon asked about the lifetime of artificial turf. Mr. Mayor responded it may be 15 or 20 years but stated he could not answer directly at this time. It is also used in athletic fields with cooling systems, and maintenance schedules can be set up to ensure proper cleaning.

- 3) Tom Benson, resident and owner of Bud's Auto Upholstery, thanked staff for the presentation. He commended Sonic and BMW on their performance and stated they have been a good corporate citizen. He suggested the other auto dealers might install artificial turf which could be beneficial in preventing runoff from fertilizers, which falls under federal regulations.
- 4) Robert Sanders, representing Sonic Automotive, Inc, thanked staff for their assistance throughout the review process. Sonic takes exception to some of the Conditions of Approval:
  - a) Condition of Approval No. 1. *Indemnification Clause*. Although the possibility of the need to defend the City of Signal Hill might be small, Sonic does not feel they should be responsible for that defense and they take exception to the condition as it is written.
  - b) Exhibit B, Public Works Condition of Approval - Item No. 5(a). *Undergrounding overhead facilities*. It has been their understanding in discussions with City staff that no under-grounding would be required along Walnut Avenue.
  - c) Exhibit B, Public Works Condition of Approval - Item No. 4(d). *Reconstruction of curb returns on southwest and southeast corners*.

Mr. Sanders stated they will reconstruct the corner adjoining their project, but the southwest corner should not be their responsibility. He stated they have been a good corporate neighbor and citizen, they appreciate the community, and look forward to continuing in Signal Hill.

- Regarding Condition of Approval No. 1, the City Attorney advised this is a standard condition for all projects in Signal Hill and all their firm's clients.
- Regarding Exhibit B, Public Works Condition of Approval, Item No. 5(a), staff advised this was intended for undergrounding of new services on the property from the right of way to the building, and will amend the language.
- Regarding Exhibit B, Public Works Condition of Approval, Item No. 4(d), staff advised they will remove the condition regarding reconstruction of the southwest curb return.

Mr. Sanders suggested their counsel and that for the City of Signal Hill could discuss any indemnification language more amenable to both parties, but that their counsel is not present at the hearing.

Chair Richárd asked for any further questions or comments from the Commission.

There being no further comments, Chair Richárd closed the public hearing.

Staff indicated there seemed to be basic agreement for approval of the Site Plan & Design Review. Staff advised that there options at this time are to continue the public hearing or for the applicant to appeal. Also, there are other steps to be completed including the transfer of the property which may include opportunities to amend the language regarding indemnification.

It was moved by Commissioner Murphy and seconded by Commissioner Fallon to waive further reading and adopt the resolutions for SPDR 14-01, to adopt the amended version of the Revised Recommended Conditions of Approval as referred to by the Commission: remove Condition of Approval No. 11 requiring natural turf, and amend Exhibit B, Public Works Condition of Approval, Item No. 5(a) to clarify on-site undergrounding of utilities and No. 4(d) to remove the requirement for the curb returns at the southwest corner:

- 1) Resolution No. 753-04-14 entitled:

A RESOLUTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF SIGNAL HILL, CALIFORNIA, ADOPTING NEGATIVE DECLARATION 03/14/14(1), RELATIVE TO SITE PLAN AND DESIGN REVIEW 14-01, ASSOCIATED WITH THE BMW AUTOMOBILE SALES AND SERVICE FACILITY AT 1660 E. SPRING STREET

2) Resolution No. 754-04-14 entitled:

A RESOLUTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF SIGNAL HILL, CALIFORNIA, APPROVING SITE PLAN AND DESIGN REVIEW 14-01, A REQUEST TO CONSTRUCT A 77,810 SQUARE FOOT AUTO SALES, SHOWROOM AND SERVICE FACILITY ON AN APPROXIMATE 5-ACRE SITE LOCATED AT 1660 E. SPRING STREET IN THE SP-4, AUTO CENTER SPECIFIC PLAN, ZONING DISTRICT

The following vote resulted:

AYES: CHAIR RICHÁRD; COMMISSIONERS AUSTIN, FALLON AND MURPHY

NOES: NONE

ABSENT: NONE

ABSTAIN: VICE-CHAIR BENSON

The motion carried 4/0/1.

Vice-Chair Benson returned to his seat.

## **DIRECTOR'S REPORTS**

### **2. Certification of 2013-2021 Housing Element**

Associate Planner Colleen Doan gave the staff report.

Chair Richárd asked if there were any questions from the Commission.

Vice-Chair Benson asked the number of other cities that had their Housing Element Updates certified. Staff advised that this information is available on the HCD website and that the number of certifications has increased as the State has increased the timing for updated for cities that certify from 4 to 8 years.

Chair Richárd received and filed the report.

### **3. Study Session Regarding Existing Yard and Open Space Regulations for Single-Family Dwellings**

Associate Planner Colleen Doan gave the staff report.

Chair Richárd asked if there were any questions from the Commission.

Commissioner Murphy noted that in retrospect, she disliked the smaller 15' front setbacks for some neighborhoods with adopted Specific Plans.

Staff stated the goal for this study session was to understand that there are fewer regulations governing open space, yards, bulk and scale for single-family dwellings than there are for multi-family dwellings. The study session considered two of the regulatory tools that affect bulk and scale. The focus for this study session was yard setbacks and open space. There is no open space requirement for single-family dwellings.

Vice-Chair Benson reiterated his opinion from the prior study session that if an area is being used as a living space it should be considered as a living space. Vice-Chair Benson also inquired about how the floor area ratio standard affects bulk and scale. Staff clarified that the next study session will address that and other related regulations for consideration by the Commission.

Vice-Chair Benson noted the balcony under construction in the Hilltop area. Staff advised that current standards allow this type of large covered balcony.

Chair Richárd received and filed the report.

#### **4. 2014 Planning Commissioners Academy**

Chair Richárd, asked for feedback from Vice-Chair Benson, and Commissioner Murphy regarding their thoughts on the Academy with the Commission and staff.

Commissioner Murphy complimented the speakers regarding "open data" with budgets and permits available online and the interesting tour of the Presidio, but was disappointed with the opening session.

Chair Richárd agreed about the opening session, and had completed an on-line survey to provide feedback, and also suggested separate workshops for new commissioners. Otherwise she felt the Academy was beneficial.

Vice-Chair Benson noted that public transparency was one of the topics of discussion. One of the goals of the Academy was to obtain more participation from the community.

Chair Richárd received and filed the report.

### **CONSENT CALENDAR**

The Chair stated the following items were on the Consent Calendar for approval.

#### **5. Minutes**

**Recommendation:** Approve.

6. **City Council Follow-up**

Recommendation: Receive and file.

7. **Development Status Report**

Recommendation: Receive and file.

8. **Code Enforcement Report**

Recommendation: Receive and file.

9. **In the News**

Recommendation: Receive and file.

**Commission Received and Filed the Consent Calendar**

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

The motion carried.

**COMMISSION NEW BUSINESS**

Commissioner Murphy asked for more information utilizing bookmarks with Adobe Acrobat, and staff will provide this to the Commission.

Commissioner Murphy also asked about the street improvements at Costco and staff advised that the street improvements are nearly complete and that a new switch for traffic signal timing will be installed.

Commissioner Murphy commented on early street sweeping which occurred and advised staff of noise from a tire delivery at 5:00 a.m. Staff will follow up with the Public Works Director and Costco store manager, and advise that a community meeting will be held 6 months after the gas station opens to discuss operations.

Vice-Chair Benson asked if noise levels are enforced and if the Police Department issues citations. Staff advised they are not required to issue citations and that at this time there is no one in our staff who is trained on staff to do a noise readings.

Commissioner Austin relayed a citizen's comments on the beautification award process.

**ADJOURNMENT**

It was moved by Vice-Chair Benson and seconded by Commissioner Fallon to adjourn to the next regular meeting of the Planning Commission to be held on May 13, 2014.

The motion carried.

Chair Richárd adjourned the meeting at 9:00 p.m.

  
ROSE RICHARD  
CHAIR

ATTEST:

  
SCOTT CHARNEY  
COMMISSION SECRETARY