October 11, 2011

A REGULAR MEETING OF THE LOMITA
PLANNING COMMISSION

OPENING CEREMONIES

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chair Kaneen at 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday, October 11, 2011, in the Council Chambers, Lomita City Hall, 24300 Narbonne Avenue.

2. Flag Salute

At the request of Chair Kaneen, Commissioner Hermenegildo led the salute to the flag.

3. Roll Call

Commissioners responding to roll call by Planning Secretary Schroder were Dever, Hermenegildo, Jones, Roehm, Savidan, Sanchez and Chair Kaneen. Also present were Assistant City Manager Gary Sugano, Principal Planner Alicia Velasco, Planning Technician Laura Vander Neut and Assistant City Attorney Lauren Langer.

4. Approval of Minutes

Commissioner Savidan moved to approve the minutes of September 12, 2011 as presented. Commissioner Roehm seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

None

PUBLIC HEARING

5. SITE PLAN NO. 1137 (CONTINUED FROM SEPTEMBER 12, 2011), a request to permit a front yard setback of 18 feet instead of the Code required 20 foot minimum for a garage and second story addition for the property located at 2418 W. 256th Street in the A-1, Noncommercial Agricultural Zone.

Planning Technician Vander Neut reviewed the staff report. The applicant is seeking a front yard modification for a new second story addition located over the existing attached garage. Currently, the garage maintains a 20 foot front yard setback. However, the applicant is proposing to extend the garage forward two feet into the front yard setback in order to incorporate the stairwell into the design while also retaining the correct parking space dimensions in the garage as required by Code. A total of 52 square feet is proposed to be added to the first story, including the garage extension and stairwell. The proposed
second story addition will retain the 18 foot front yard setback and will be 510 square feet with an additional 115 square feet of balcony space.

At the September 12, 2011 meeting the Planning Commission voiced concerns that the addition would not match the aesthetics of the existing house. Since the applicant was not present at the meeting to discuss the issue, the Planning Commission continued the project. In the meantime, staff discussed the project with the applicant, who stated that he intended to add siding to the new addition to match the house. Staff has added Condition No. 24, requiring that the materials and color of the new addition match the existing house.

The subject property is 5,000 square feet in size and contains an approximately 1,350 square foot single story house and attached garage that were constructed in 1957.

Staff recommends the Planning Commission adopt a resolution approving Site Plan No. 1137 subject to findings and conditions as stated in the resolution.

The public hearing was opened.

The applicant, Ed Chavira, 3006 Laurel Avenue, Manhattan Beach, discussed the proposed project and added that the new addition will match the existing structure.

As no one else wished to speak, the public hearing was closed.

Commissioner Savidan liked the project and moved to approve Site Plan No. 1137. Commissioner Jones seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

6. **CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT NO. 276** - A request for a conditional use permit for used car sales for the property located at 1816 Pacific Coast Highway in the C-R, Commercial Retail Zone.

Commissioner Sanchez recused himself as he lives within 500 square feet of the proposed project.

Planning Technician Vander Neut reviewed the staff report. The applicant is requesting to utilize the 5,465 square foot property for the sale of used cars. A conditional use permit is required for this type of use in the C-R Zone. The applicant is proposing to use approximately 1,875 square feet of the lot for display purposes. The existing building on the lot will be altered and its square footage reduced to 345 square feet and will serve as the office for the business. The subject property will also contain four non-display parking spaces and landscaping as required by Code.

The property is located near the corner of Pacific Coast Highway and Appian Way and currently has vehicular access from both streets. The existing building was constructed in 1958 and is 1,020 square feet in size. The property has been vacant for over two years. Previously, the building was utilized by a dry cleaning business.

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The proposed project is categorically exempt pursuant to Section 15303 (New construction or conversion of small structures) of the California Environmental Quality Act guidelines because the proposed project is a conditional use permit for car sales and the only physical changes to the lot will be the alteration and reduction in size of the existing building from 1,020 square feet to 345 square feet and the addition of landscaping. The project complies with all development standards. No additional uses such as car repairs are proposed in conjunction with sales. The property is one of the more blighted properties along Pacific Coast Highway. The applicant is proposing improvements including a complete remodel of both interior and exterior, new windows and a brick façade. Staff has added other conditions to minimize the impact on adjacent properties. These are that no car repairs be conducted on the property and that no test drive be conducted in residential neighborhoods and that the parking lot lighting be installed in a way that will not add additional glare to adjacent properties. The display area will be approximately 1,800 square feet and they exceed the landscape requirement of 6%. The customer entrance will be from Appian Way.

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission adopt a resolution approving Conditional Use Permit No. 276 subject to findings and conditions as stated in the resolution.

Commissioner Savidan had concerns regarding traffic. There was discussion regarding Pacific Coast Highway and Appian Way.

Chair Kaneen asked about a trash enclosure and was told there is space for a trash enclosure but it is not drawn on the plans. She also asked to have a condition that no vehicles be washed on the property due to drainage/run-off concerns.

The public hearing was opened.

Ms. Valerie Zaffran, 1849 Jaybrook Drive, Rancho Palos Verdes, thought the project would improve a blighted property that has been vacant for several years. It will be a small type car lot with access on Appian Way. The cars will be test driven on Western Avenue. The trash enclosure will be set up in the back where it is too narrow for cars. She will work that out with staff.

Ms. Zaffran asked why cars could not be washed on the property and Chair Kaneen explained about NPDES having to do with water run-off from a paved lot and perhaps having to put in a drain and clarifier. Ms. Zaffran stated not washing the cars on site would not be a problem.

Commissioner Roehm asked how many cars would be on the lot for sale. Ms. Zaffran replied the maximum would be 20.

Commissioner Hermenegildo asked why they are closing the entrance to Pacific Coast Highway and only using Appian Way.
Ms. Zaffran’s husband, Harvey Bilich, same address, said the reason for closing off the entrance to Pacific Coast Highway is that it would be very dangerous to the motoring public pulling in and out of the lot.

Jim Palm, who lives on the corner of Appian Way and 259th Street, stated there is already a major parking problem on the street. Burton’s Saw and Lawnmower shop is now renting “things” to move furniture and other items and they are on the street. Traffic cuts from Pacific Coast Highway to Appian Way to Western Avenue to avoid the bottleneck at Western Avenue and Pacific Coast Highway. He asked to go on record that he is opposed to the proposed project.

Jacob Hoy, a Lomita resident, is also opposed to the project. He spoke about bad circulation, the fact that Appian Way is a one-way street at that location. Therefore, a car exiting the car lot on Appian Way can only make a right turn going away from Pacific Coast Highway. He also had an issue with 20 cars on the lot and employee parking. Also, it would not be possible to have to exit right and not go through a residential neighborhood in order to reach Western Avenue to test drive a car. There is already a parking and traffic problem. He said this project was not a good fit for this location and asked that the Planning Commission not approve it.

Linda Repoza, a Lomita resident, is opposed to the project and agreed with what has been said regarding the 20 cars and having to go through a residential neighborhood, etc. The Islamic Center said they would not open the gates on Appian Way, but they have opened them and that adds to the traffic.

Harvey Bilich gave his rebuttal. The only employees would be him and his wife, 20 cars would be the maximum and he just threw out that number, the cars are not insured to park on the street, they would stay on the lot. He is willing to work with the community.

Chair Kaneen asked the applicant to show where he would place 20 cars on the lot. The applicant replied he would not put 20 cars on the lot that was just a maximum. He would not display 20 cars. The display area would be the northwest corner.

Don Filer, a Lomita resident, was originally opposed to the project, but if they exit the lot and go down the nearby alley to Cayuga Avenue without going through the neighborhood and if that could be a condition, and if the applicant could work with the neighborhood which is already overburdened with traffic, it would be appreciated. Mr. Filer also mentioned that Burton’s U-Haul trucks are parked on the street.

The public hearing was closed.

Commissioner Hermenegildo asked staff if the application had gone to the Traffic Commission. He was told no.
Discussion followed on the number of cars that could safely be placed on the lot, the added trash enclosure and displaying the cars on the front part of the lot.

 Commissioner Roehm expressed his concern regarding the right turn onto Appian Way which is such a small street. He agreed that using Pacific Coast Highway was out of the question.

 Commissioner Savidan agreed and stated he would like to hear from the Traffic Commission regarding circulation, turning problems, blocking egress from Pacific Coast Highway. Those are all major concerns. At least have the Traffic Engineer review it and make recommendations.

 Chair Kaneen asked staff what they thought of the suggestion that they exit onto the alley. That would only relocate it onto someone else’s street.

 Mr. Sugano stated that if this was a use that was permitted by right, it would not require any type of traffic review. Typically a car sales lot generates significantly less traffic than a retail use. Mr. Sugano replied he would speak with the County Traffic Engineer and get some feedback on the layout. A viable option may be to close off the Appian Way exit.

 Commissioner Savidan moved to continue the item until the Commission hears back from the Traffic Engineer and in the meantime, the applicant can meet with the residents in the community.

 Commissioner Jones thought that the parking and traffic problems could be solved by closing off Appian Way.

 Commissioner Hermenegildo seconded the motion which carried by the following vote:

   AYES: COMMISSIONERS:  Savidan, Hermenegildo, Dever, Jones, Roehm, and Chair Kaneen
   NOES: COMMISSIONERS:  None
   ABSTAIN: COMMISSIONERS:  Sanchez

 Chair Kaneen asked that Code Enforcement look into the parked U-Hauls that were mentioned. She was told that is already being done.

 7.  **TENTATIVE PARCEL MAP NO. 71504**, a request to allow a subdivision of one lot into two each consisting of 13,145 square feet located at 2067 240th St, in the A-1, Agricultural Zone.

 Principal Planner Velasco reviewed the staff report.
On September 8, 2011, the Los Angeles County Subdivision Committee reviewed the subject Tentative Parcel Map and did not place any holds on the tentative map and recommended its approval with the conditions.

The subject property was originally part of Tentative Tract Map No. 61003 for a five lot subdivision. The tentative map was approved in 2007 by the Commission and the City Council, however the applicant let the map expire and the approval is no longer valid. The original property owner has since sold the subject site to the current owner.

The site is currently one lot located at 2067 240th Street, and consists of 26,290 square feet. The applicant is requesting the lot split to create two lots. Both parcels will consist of 13,145 square feet.

The general plan designation for the subject property is Residential (Agricultural). This land use designation “applies to areas which are lower densities in character and where the keeping of animals is permitted.” Development intensities of up to 8.7 units per acre are permitted. This density is only 3.3 units an acre.

The subject property is surrounded by A-1 zoned properties with single-family residences to the east, west, and south. The City of Torrance borders the subject property to the north with multi-family residential uses.

The project has been reviewed with the applicable city code requirements.

The proposed Tentative Parcel Map has also been reviewed per CEQA requirements. Section 15332 of the guidelines state that projects characterized as in-fill development may be found exempt from the requirements of CEQA. To do so the following requirements must be met:

1. The proposed project is consistent with the General Plan, its policies, and the Zoning Ordinance.
2. The subject site consists of less than five acres and is completely within City limits.
3. It has no value as habitat for rare, threatened, and/or endangered species.
4. Approval will not result in any significant effects relating to traffic, noise, water quality, or air quality.
5. It can be adequately served by all required utilities and public services.

The proposed Tentative Parcel Map meets the above referenced requirements. Therefore, staff has determined that there is no substantial evidence that the project may have a significant effect on the environment and a Notice of Exemption has been prepared.

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission recommend City Council approval of Tentative Parcel Map No. 71504, subject to conditions.
Commissioner Jones asked if it was correct that only one unit per lot was allowed and he asked about on-going construction. Ms. Velasco replied that was correct. There could be one main unit but an accessory second unit would be allowed. As to the construction, it is totally separate from this project. The fenced-off area is another lot, construction is going on and the applicant does have a grading permit.

The public hearing was opened.

Tom Yuge, 2252 W. Carson Street B, Torrance, is the project civil engineer. As previously mentioned, this was approved as a five lot subdivision. However it will only be subdivided into two lots. The density has come down substantially from what was previously planned. He noted that on the County report, page 1/1 from the Department of Public Works Land Development Division there is mention of dedication of 5 feet of additional right of way along the property frontage on 240th Street to accommodate sidewalk transitions at driveway locations, but Mr. Yuge pointed out, it is not necessarily a complete dedication across the entire frontage. He would like to work that out with staff. Other than that, they accept all of the conditions.

Commissioner Sanchez asked Mr. Yuge when construction would start if the application is approved. The reply was that the County takes a long time but the applicant has a potential buyer and is anxious to move forward.

Sharon Houston, a Lomita resident, asked if the parcel next to the subject property that is being developed is a single family house and if the zoning was A-1. The reply was yes, it is a single family residence and the zoning is A-1.

The public hearing was closed.

Commissioner Roehm moved to adopt a resolution recommending City Council approval. Commissioner Jones seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

**WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS**

8. **CITY COUNCIL ACTIONS**

At their September 19th meeting the City Council approved Tentative Tract Map No. 71301, a subdivision for condominium purposes for an existing 20 unit industrial complex for the property located at 2018-2020 Lomita Bl.

**OTHER MATTERS**

9. **PLANNING COMMISSIONER ITEMS**

Commissioner Jones asked that staff look into a storage shipping container that he saw at the furniture store at approximately 1820 Pacific Coast Highway. It is to the rear of the property off Appian Way and he believes that containers are not allowed in a commercial
zone. Commissioner Jones mentioned that the address on Site Plan No. 1137 is incorrect. It should be 2418 256th Street not 2814.

10. COMMISSIONERS TO ATTEND CITY COUNCIL MEETINGS

Commissioner Dever will attend on November 7, 2011 and Commissioner Hermenegildo will attend on November 21, 2011.

11. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR ITEMS

A memo was issued on an update to the Commission on various planning activities and duties.

ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Jones moved to adjourn at 7:50 p.m. Commissioner Savidan seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

ATTEST

JULIA G. SCHRODER
PLANNING SECRETARY