

**CITY OF MANHATTAN BEACH
[DRAFT] PLANNING COMMISSION
MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING
JANUARY 25, 2012**

A Regular Meeting of the Planning Commission of the City of Manhattan Beach, California, was held on the 25th day of January, 2012, at the hour of 6:30 p.m., in the City Council Chambers of City Hall, at 1400 Highland Avenue, in said City.

1. ROLL CALL

Present: Andreani, Conaway, Gross, Seville-Jones, Chairperson Paralusz
Absent: None
Staff Present: Richard Thompson, Director of Community Development
Esteban Danna, Assistant Planner
Jack Rydell, Traffic Engineer
Recording Secretary, Sarah Boeschen

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – January 11, 2012

Commissioner Gross requested that the fifth sentence of the second paragraph on page 7 of the January 11 minutes be revised to read: “He commented that while the process of evaluating the project has not been perfect, he does not feel it is ~~not~~ sufficiently flawed to change the outcome.”

A motion was MADE and SECONDED (Andreani/Conaway) to **APPROVE** the minutes of January 11, 2012, as amended.

AYES: Andreani, Conaway, Gross, Seville-Jones, Chairperson Paralusz
NOES: None
ABSENT: None
ABSTAIN: None

3. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

4. PUBLIC HEARINGS- CONTINUED

01/11/12-2 Planned Development Permit Amendment for Renovation, Small Addition, and a Membership Increase at the Manhattan Country Club Located at 1330 Parkview Avenue

Director Thompson indicated that the 2004 traffic study for the site which was requested by the Commission at the last hearing is included with the staff report. He commented that a memo from the traffic engineer is also included with the staff report which includes his conclusion that there is a surplus of parking for the club and that there is consistency between the 2004 and 2008 traffic studies that were prepared for the site.

Audience Participation

Sara Nielson, representing the applicant, stated that they understand the obligation of the Commission to ensure that the operations of the club do not adversely impact the availability of parking in the surrounding area. She indicated that a 17 percent increase in the club membership as proposed would not have an adverse impact on the surrounding area. She pointed out that they found that 42 of the 149 spaces in the club lot were vacant in doing a count of parked cars during peak operation at the club. She indicated that they also did a count

with the traffic engineer in the morning on January 11, 2012, and found that the lot was at 75 percent occupancy. **Ms. Nielson** pointed out that there has not been a claim made that there is a parking issue for the club or that an increase in membership would create a parking issue. She indicated that the conclusions of the 2004 parking study are consistent with the results that they have observed. She also stated that the methodology used in the 2004 study is consistent with that used by the traffic engineer and staff. She said that the conditions on the site have changed since the report was prepared in 2004. She indicated that the site included 11,000 square feet of commercial office space in 2004. She said that there also was 10 percent fewer spaces allocated for the office building located at 1334 Parkview Avenue and 42 percent fewer spaces allocated for club members in 2004 than are available currently. She indicated that the street parking on Parkview Avenue offered free and convenient parking and was often filled to capacity prior to the parking meters being installed on the street. She commented that parking in the area was considered an issue in 2004 because there were occasions when there was no available street parking on Parkview Avenue. She said, however, that people now park in the allocated lots for the adjacent uses rather than on Parkview Avenue since the parking meters were installed.

Ms. Nielson stated that the club has not changed their policy regarding the use of the lot by club members and managers only. She pointed out that the membership base of the club has never used the allocation of membership parking spaces to their full capacity, which has been verified in four parking surveys between 1999 and 2008 and which she has observed over the past eight years. She commented that the Commissioners and City Council have not heard that any club member has been required to park on the street or that a neighboring resident has been impacted because of parking for the club. She said that the club increased its membership in their previous request by 20 percent with an increase in parking allocated to members of 42 percent. She pointed out that a fitness center of comparable size has parking requirements based on the square footage of the establishment but is permitted to sell a much larger number of memberships than the club with no restrictions. She indicated that a restaurant of comparable size and seating capacity to the restaurant at the club draws from a patron base of 50,000 households. She said that they are requesting to have a patron base of 1,400 in order to financially support renovating the club, which would bring additional business and revenue to the City. She indicated that their plans have been submitted to the building department, and they are ready to proceed with the project if approval is received.

In response to a question from Commissioner Gross, **Ms. Nielson** commented that she has a letter that is signed by the parking engineer who collected the data for the 2008 traffic study for the site which states that the survey data is accurate and reflects that the peak utilization of parking was 71 of 149 available parking spaces on weekend mornings and 87 out of 149 available parking spaces on weekday evenings.

In response to a question from Commissioner Gross, **Ms. Nielson** indicated that their agreement with Kinecta is for the utilization of spaces in their parking lot. She commented that it is not a lease agreement, as they are not paying for use of the spaces.

In response to a question from Commissioner Andreani, **Ms. Nielson** said that each membership does allow use of the club by household family members. She commented that the average membership includes a family of three. She indicated that 49 of their 50 allotted corporate memberships are currently filled.

In response to a question from Chairperson Paralusz, **Ms. Nielson** stated that corporate memberships allow for a business to have up to five assignees on an account. She commented that the Conditional Use Permit for the club allows for 50 corporate memberships, and the corporate memberships have basically remained at full capacity. She said that the average

number of assignees for corporate memberships is 2.5. She indicated that corporate memberships also apply to household family members of the assignees.

Commissioner Gross suggested changing item 8 in section 2 on page 3 of the draft Resolution to also allow parking for club visitors and members as well as employees at the adjacent parking lot.

Commissioner Seville-Jones pointed out that the wording specifies that employees shall park in the adjacent parking lot or other designated parking area. She commented that the wording of the condition as stated is silent regarding visitors and club members parking in the adjacent lot.

Chairperson Paralusz said that she would not see the current language of the condition as restricting parking in the adjacent lot by club members or visitors.

Ms. Neilson pointed out that the agreement between the club and Kinecta restricts parking for club members in the Kinecta lot and only allows for club employee parking. She indicated that the valet service has a separate agreement with Kinecta for use of their lot for overflow parking, which is compensated separately. She said that the wine auction is the only event where there is an agreement for use of the Kinecta lot by visitors of the club.

Chairperson Paralusz closed the public hearing.

Commission Discussion

Commissioner Conaway said that he learned from the 2004 parking report that there was a 15 percent contingency factor that was added to the numbers. He stated that he agrees with the analysis of the traffic engineer. He commented that the 2004 study also indicated that the utilization of the parking was slightly less in 2008 than 2004. He indicated that the parking lot was not full when he visited the site, and there were no cars parked on Parkview Avenue. He stated that there is ample adjacent parking to the club. He indicated that he also appreciates the investment that the applicant is making in the community. He said that he supports the project.

Commissioner Seville-Jones said that she also supports the project. She commented that the Commissioners have now had an opportunity to review the 2004 parking study for the site and to consider the traffic engineer's review. She said that she is convinced that there is surplus parking for the site. She indicated that the club has every reason to continue to manage the parking in order to accommodate their members in order to justify their investment. She commented that there has been no additional information provided by **Ed Caprellian**, and there was ample time for any information to be submitted to staff and the Commission. She pointed out that she does not feel there is as conflict in the Commission considering this application, as the Commission is not the operating agency that is making any decision regarding the lease for the club. She said that the role of the Commission is to determine whether the parking that is being provided is sufficient for the proposed expanded membership for the club.

Commissioner Gross commented that he is in favor of the project. He said that the only issue before the Commission is whether the parking is sufficient to accommodate an additional 200 members as proposed. He pointed out that there is not a formula for addressing the parking for the subject site because it includes a mix of uses. He commented that the only relevant factual information to consider is whether there is excess parking with the current club membership of 1,200, as there is not a formula for addressing the parking. He indicated that he does not feel there are inconsistencies in the 2004 and 2008 studies for the purposes of the parking in relation to the number of members. He pointed out that there is an agreement for the use of the

20 spaces for employee parking at Kinecta. He stated that there are also 84 street parking spaces that are available along Parkview Avenue. He said that he is comfortable with the supply of parking for the club, although he does feel that the capacity for memberships is beginning to reach close to the maximum available parking with the proposed expansion in memberships.

In response to a comment from Commissioner Gross, Director Thompson suggested that the wording in items 2 and 3 under item H in section 1 on page 2 of the draft Resolution be changed to read: “. . . detailed parking survey conducted for this ~~project~~ property.”

Commissioner Gross commented the residents who spoke at the previous hearing gave an impression that the Commissioners would not be doing their duty if they did not review the 2004 traffic study. He said that he appreciates that members of the public did bring up issues regarding the project but is concerned that staff and the Commissioners were surprised at the last hearing by the allegation that the additional information must be considered before the Commissioners vote on the project. He said that it would have been better if the members of the public had informed staff well in advance of the hearing so that staff would have had an opportunity to review and address the issues that they raised in the staff report or for staff to be able to say at the beginning of the hearing that they need additional time to address the issues. He commented that he is not certain of the reason why the members of the public did not address their concerns to staff in advance of the meeting.

Commissioner Gross stated that he respects the desire of the Commissioners to demonstrate to the Council and the public that all of the available information was considered in making an important decision. He commented that he hopes in the future that the Commission's desire to review all possible information is tempered with the time and cost that is involved. He stated that in his experience as a Commissioner over the past five years, he has found that the most important and useful public input is from residents that are directly impacted by a project. He indicated that the lack of an objection to a project from people who are directly impacted is basically indicating that the project is acceptable. He pointed out that no neighboring residents raised an objection to the subject proposal. He commented that the Commission receives input from a few concerned citizens on a broad range of topics at many meetings. He stated that such input can be valuable but maybe not in proportion to the time and effort that they require. He commented that establishing and keeping credibility with their input affects how a person's comments are viewed.

Commissioner Andreani stated that she is in favor of the project and feels the applicant is a good community neighbor. She said that the applicant has demonstrated with the proposed improvements that they are investing in the future of the club and the community. She indicated that she was sorry that a continuance was necessary but did benefit from reviewing the 2004 parking study. She commented that she feels the draft Resolution is well written for the entire property. She said that parking for visitors, the office building and the club members are addressed in the draft Resolution. She commented that she supports the proposal. She indicated that she would hope that any member of the community feels that they can come to speak before the Commission. She said that the staff report is made available to the public at a relatively late date before hearings and include a great deal of information.

Chairperson Paralusz said that she still supports the project as she did at the last hearing. She said that her opinion has not changed in support of the project after reading the 2004 traffic study and the additional comments of the traffic engineer. She thanked the members of the public who attended the meeting two weeks ago who brought forward the issue of the importance of reviewing the 2004 report and the methodology that was used to conduct the survey. She indicated that she had more comfort in confirming her decision to support the

project with the information in the 2004 parking survey. She commented that she feels it is important to demand due process in approving projects when additional information is available. She said that she does feel that having the additional information was beneficial to the Commission. She also thanked the applicant for being a good neighbor and investing in the project which will benefit many residents and visitors to the City. She commented that she appreciates that the meters being installed on Parkview Avenue resulted in more people parking in the lots for the businesses that they are utilizing rather than on the street. She said that she is confident that the project will be successful and is in support.

Action

A motion was MADE and SECONDED (Conaway/Andreani) to **APPROVE** Planned Development Permit Amendment for renovation, small addition, and a membership increase at the Manhattan Country Club located at 1330 Parkview Avenue with the change to the wording in items 2 and 3 under item H in section 1 on page 2 of the draft Resolution be changed to read: “. . . detailed parking survey conducted for this ~~project~~ property.”

AYES: Andreani, Conaway, Gross, Seville-Jones, Chairperson Paralusz
NOES: None
ABSENT: None
ABSTAIN: None

Director Thompson explained the 15-day appeal period and stated that the item will be placed on the City Council’s Consent Calendar for their meeting of February 21, 2012.

5. DIRECTORS ITEMS

6. PLANNING COMMISSION ITEMS

Commissioner Seville-Jones commented that interested members of the public who do not live directly next to projects have come before the Commission and given valid and important comments. She indicated that all comments are important for consideration even if they are from people that are not directly impacted by a project. She said that it has been a pleasure as a Commissioner to hear views of members of the public.

Chairperson Paralusz commented that testimony from anyone who has an interest in a project is important for consideration. She indicated that the Commissioners can consider the relationship that a member of the public has to a project as part of weighing their testimony. She said that it is important to take all testimony into consideration.

Commissioner Gross commented that he agrees with the comments of Commissioner Seville-Jones and Chairperson Paralusz. He said that his point is that the credibility of members of the public who repeatedly come before the Commission is established by their previous comments. He indicated that previous comments of speakers impact the weight that is given their opinion. He commented that he had the feeling of being intimidated at the last hearing that the Commissioners must consider the additional information from the 2004 parking study. He indicated, however, that none of the additional information impacted the decision that was ultimately reached by the Commission, although it did provide additional information in support of the decision.

Commissioner Conaway said that it is difficult to regulate comments that are received by the public. He indicated that he suggested possibly establishing additional public education to help people who wish to speak in front of the Commission or other City body to organize their

thoughts. He said that the Commission must leave open the possibility of receiving last minute testimony from speakers.

Chairperson Paralusz stated that Leadership Manhattan Beach Class of 2012 is sponsoring mulch day on Saturday, January 28, 2012, from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. on the corner of 15th Street and Valley. She said that Leadership Manhattan Beach is installing a sustainable garden located on the corner of 15th Street and Valley at the Manhattan Beach Chamber of Commerce.

7. TENTATIVE AGENDA February 8, 2012

- A. Capital Improvement Plan
- B. Tin Roof, 350 North Sepulveda Boulevard,- Master Use Permit

8. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 7:20 p.m. to Wednesday, February 8, 2012, in the City Council Chambers, City Hall, 1400 Highland Avenue.

SARAH BOESCHEN
Recording Secretary

ATTEST:

RICHARD THOMPSON
Community Development Director