

**CITY OF MANHATTAN BEACH
[DRAFT] PLANNING COMMISSION
MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING
MARCH 27, 2013**

A Regular Meeting of the Planning Commission of the City of Manhattan Beach, California, was held on the 27th day of March, 2013, 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: Conaway, Gross, Ortmann, Paralusz, Chairperson Andreani
Absent: None
Staff Present: Richard Thompson, Community Development Director
Laurie Jester, Planning Manager
Jim Arndt, Public Works Director
Richard Gill, Parks and Recreation Director
Mark Leyman, Recreation Services Manager
Recording Secretary, Rosemary Lackow

2. REORGANIZATION

03/27/13-1. Reorganization of Commission Officers

Commissioner Conaway presented Chairperson Andreani with a certificate of appreciation and expressed his personal thanks. Commissioner Paralusz echoed Commissioner Conaway's comments, and that it has been a real pleasure to serve under the exemplary leadership and grace that Chairperson Andreani displayed. Commissioner Gross added that Chairperson Andreani has been flexible in adapting to situations as Chair and the Commission has been able to come to a consensus due to the flexibility she showed, allowing people to speak and keeping control of the meeting. Commissioner Ortmann echoed his colleagues comments and thanked Chair Andreani for making his time on the Commission, now almost a year, seem effortless and for her patience for letting him grow into the position. Chairperson Andreani expressed that she enjoyed her term and recognized and thanked her fellow commissioners and staff for their professionalism. She is happy to remain on the Commission, is confident that Commissioner Conaway will do a great job as the new Chairperson, and looks forward to moving ahead.

The Commission changed seats and nameplates and Commissioner Conaway assumed the position of Chairperson.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – March 13, 2013

The following amendments were made by the Commission:

Commissioner Paralusz: On page 4, fourth paragraph from bottom, in the third line, delete "is" after "forward with". On Page 7, second paragraph from the bottom, in the second line: change "absolutely" to "absolute".

Commissioner Andreani: noted to Staff that the presentation by the Mall developers made on March 13th is not yet up on the City website, to which Planning Manager Jester noted that the developer has just posted on their website and staff can now provide a link on the City website.

Commissioner Andreani requested the following minutes amendment: On page 7, third paragraph from bottom, the last sentence should read: “She believes a phased construction plan and timeline, including construction mitigation measures, as well as a 3-dimensional project model with landscaping, would make it easier for the public and the Commission to visualize and understand the proposed mall development and expansion.”

Chairperson Conaway: On page 6: the spelling of the last name of the second speaker from the top should read “Prodromides”. The 7th paragraph shall read in its entirety as follows: “Regarding the plan, he recognized much progress done, but more issues need to be worked through. Even though he understands the urgency to get this done, we need to proceed carefully, as this sets the development pattern for the next 30-6- years. The Staff report neatly summarizes the community’s concerns: to think clearly on the soils issue; will the size, being a 21% increase in square footage, result in the center becoming a regional attractor, and will it fit with a small town atmosphere? Will traffic be adversely impacted or will the mix of uses affect that? He needs to get comfortable with the parking issue, and believes 21% to be a significant increase.”

On page 6, in the 8th paragraph: insert “is” after “parking structures and” and change the next word (“concern”) to “concerned”. The sentence starting “His greatest concern..” and the remainder of Paragraph 8 following should read: “His greatest concern is that the parking strategy is fundamentally flawed; he believes the structure could be consolidated in the northwest corner below street level taking advantage of the natural grade and where soil is not contaminated. He noted that there are examples of local successful retail centers with a single parking structure and further this is a relatively small center; people can walk from the parking structure. He feels the center is overparked. The plan calls for a lot of navigation by drivers before they get to park, and he suggests shifting the parking to the north portion would eliminate a lot of on-site traffic vs. pedestrian problems, with Veterans Parkway more fully utilized in the plan. Sharrows are a minimum on Cedar, need to do more, and transit on Sepulveda and Rosecrans needs to be enhanced. In conclusion, he believes that not enough has changed in the plan and there are real opportunities to improve connections to the community being missed.”

On page 6, the ninth paragraph should read: “The developer should be encouraged to see how enhanced mass transit can mitigate traffic concerns and should look at how multiple parking structures will impact policing.”

A motion was MADE and SECONDED (Gross/Paralusz) to **APPROVE** the minutes of March 13, 2013, as amended.

AYES: Andreani, Gross, Ortmann, Paralusz, Chairperson Conaway
NOES: None
ABSENT: None
ABSTAIN: None

4. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

Viet Ngo, advocate for anti-corruption of City Council, wants to put the Planning Commission on notice that he has filed a report with the District Attorney of Los Angeles County alleging that the Library project architects have violated state law and that their contract should be void and invalid. He requested that a County representative inform the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors about this. He requested that the Planning Commission uphold the law and not mislead the public.

Bill Victor, Manhattan Beach property owner since 1979, thanked the Commission for listening and having an open discussion.

Chairperson Conway stated that the Commission is holding a public hearing on the Library project on this agenda.

5. PUBLIC HEARING

03/27/13-3. Consideration of Use Permit, Coastal Development Permit and Lot Line Adjustment, and Related Utility Easement, to Allow Demolition of the Existing Library and Construction of a New Public County Library and Related Improvements at 1320 Highland Avenue.

Community Development Director Thompson made introductory remarks, noting that the plan to be presented tonight is the final plan that was approved by Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors on March 12, 2013, and pointed out a scale model is located in the lobby. Project entitlements include: Use Permit, Coastal Development Permit and Lot Line Adjustment (which includes a related utility easement). The Role of the Commission is to make the required findings as outlined in the attached resolution.

It was suggested by Commissioner Paralusz that the scale model be kept for public view at City Hall as it is a great model and very informative. Director Thompson stated that anyone interested can contact him and he will arrange a viewing.

Director Thompson recounted the Library project planning and guidance over many years, and the limited authority that the City has, though the City has been very involved in the process. He summarized the next steps including City Council hearing on April 16th; and plans for the library closure in June, demolition in July, construction in the fall and completion in spring 2015. County staff and City staff is present to answer any questions. The project architect will make the main presentation for the public hearing.

Jim Favaro, Project Architect made an extensive PowerPoint presentation showing what the building will look like from the inside and outside, detailing how the space will be utilized, and special architectural, structural and operational elements so that the building responds to the needs and desires of the community. The presentation also showed the context of the building in its physical setting in the Civic Center Plaza and adjacent to City Hall which is not being altered. Mr. Favaro's main points included the following:

1. The light and space architectural movement in Los Angeles inspired the design, with a integration of the beach, light, space, and color variations.
2. The project features a large amount of open space including the setback on Highland, plaza and a walkway; and the open space will be passive, but will be able to be used for many functions.
3. Service trucks and vehicles will be separated from the public areas on a south side "walkstreet".
4. Physical attributes: inside on the west side an undulating wood ceiling, 2 ground floor entrances inviting access from south (downtown) or north (City Hall).
5. At northeast corner there will be the children's library occupying most of ground floor responding to documented use by families.
6. Other ground floor interior amenities: ceiling with blue metallic waves in the children's area to give an animation feeling, community room.
7. Other use areas: services/adult study rooms/ young adult library, with sound attenuation, seating and study areas.
8. At southeast corner - administrative services.
9. Second level will have a 270 degree panoramic view of the Santa Monica Bay. Height was limited to capture this view without impacting other nearby homes.
10. Transparency achieved with generous use of glass (special glass design on both floors) that captures climate and light effects to create sense of minimalist beauty and human liveliness, and emphasizing the complexity of the community makeup. The glass is not reflective, and is double clad for energy efficiency.

In response to a question from Commissioner Paralusz, Mr. Favaro noted that the building is designed to withstand earthquakes.

In response to a question from Commissioner Andreani regarding potential glare impacts, Mr. Favaro stated that heat and glare are long time concerns and the ground floor glass will be transparent and similar to a traditional retail storefront.

In response to questions from Commissioner Gross Mr. Favaro stated that the space between the glass is 2 feet wide which allows air to circulate in that space, giving access for maintenance.

In response to a question from Commissioner Ortmann, who commented on the beauty and striking design, and how this may date the City Hall building, Director Thompson stated that there have been thoughts about ways to improve City Hall after the Library is built, but there is no real plan at this time. Mr. Favaro stated that the City Hall building did not alone drive the proposed height of the Library – there was also concern for uphill neighbors.

In response to question from Commissioner Conaway, Mr. Favaro stated that the shades will be automatic and the public will not be able to operate them, and with respect to energy efficiency they are trying to attain LEED gold status. He was unable to address the energy efficiency model that was used as this was done by a consultant, but he recognized it was a challenging task.

In response to question from Commissioner Ortmann, Director Thompson affirmed the opening would be in spring 2015.

In response to a request from Commissioner Paralusz, Director Thompson clarified the Planning Commission's role, describing the unique City and County partnership, unusual not only in the process but in designing the services that will be provided. Many surveys have been taken to tap the community needs and desires and as indicated in the draft Resolution, there are specific findings that the Commission must make such as consistency with the City's land use, planning and coastal policies. What is unusual, is that, despite the limit in authority, the City has had a lot of input in the project.

In response to further questions from Commission Paralusz, Parks and Recreation Director Richard Gill outlined the plan to provide temporary services while construction is underway, pointing out that the Children's Librarian for the branch will be working with residents, schools and the City, and her office will be out of the Lawndale branch library. Regarding seniors, Mr. Gill noted that the City will be working a program whereby Dial-a-Ride will take seniors to the Lawndale Library, and taxi vouchers will be provided as a safety net.

In response to a question from Commissioner Andreani, Director Gill replied that the children's Story Hour will be continued in town and a bookmobile program will be provided in the southeast corner of the City Hall parking lot.

PUBLIC HEARING

There being no further questions of staff, Chairperson Conaway opened the public hearing.

Viet Ngo, spoke regarding the Lot line Adjustment, and sated that he noticed that there was no parcel map in the report package that is available for the Commission to review and he asked that compliance with state subdivision law be looked into. Also, regarding the EIR, he asked that it be reported as to whether a new EIR is needed per applicable regulations and he questioned whether the proposed building height will comply with the EIR and a 1997 height limit measurement regulation. He feels the EIR has expired and a subdivision map is also required, and the land exchange is a conspiracy.

William Victor, tax payer since 1979, licensed attorney, said he had a chance to look at a set of scaled plans. He made the following points: the public should be more informed and the height limit should be clearly shown on the plans and the plans posted on the wall, he has concern that the glare from the glass will be an issue, and questions whether the setback on Highland is generous enough or too close to the south property. Regarding the addendum to the EIR, Mr. Victor questioned if it addresses environmental issues sufficiently. He also discussed various findings in the Draft Resolution that he disagreed with. He concluded by requesting the Commission to look carefully at the building height.

There being no further public speakers, Chairperson Conaway closed the public hearing.

Director Thompson made the following points:

1. Info available to public has been available for a couple of years and there has been several opportunities for public input.
2. A public display has been posted in the lobby along with renderings for several months.
3. There are other examples of this type of construction in other cities.
4. Glare prevention has been taken into consideration.
5. The height, setbacks and all code requirements are fully compliant.
6. The Highland setback was reviewed carefully and it was decided to have larger open space towards the rear of the building and the resulting public benefit will include an open plaza and usable public areas.
7. An EIR Addendum is required and has been certified by Los Angeles County, as lead agency.
8. The Lot Line Adjustment has been processed in compliance with the State Subdivision Map Act and this is typically an administrative process. The adjustment is needed for utilities and to address a corner of the proposed building where, without the adjustment would be too close to a property line.

Commissioner Andreani pointed out that the 2-story design is needed to fit all services that are required for the public.

Representatives from Los Angeles County were invited by the Chairperson to speak, but indicated they had nothing further to add.

Commissioner Gross stated that the project with the Lot Line Adjustment will meet all City codes and is an even land swap of 600 square feet and in doing so, the project meets all technical requirements of the City's codes.

COMMISSION DISCUSSION

There being no further questions, The Commission initiated its discussion regarding the project. Chairperson Conaway reiterated that though the Commission has limited authority, the findings need to be made.

Commissioner Gross recalled in November 2011 former Commissioner Seville-Jones brought up some questions that he wanted some input on: 1) Should we have a condition in the Use Permit that the City has first right of refusal to purchase the County land? 2) Regarding the pocket park, should there be something in the Use Permit that allows the City to use it? 3) Is there anything (mechanical) on the roof? 4) Where there is a walk street – should there be something in the Use Permit that makes sure that there will be bollards? Director Thompson affirmed that bollards are on the plans and that the walk street will never be used by the public for vehicle use. Any significant change would have to come back to the City for approval.

Regarding City use of parkette, Mr. Thompson responded that those services will continue for 30 years under an MOU with the County, along with the library services for that same period. Finally, Mr. Thompson responded that there is already a provision in state law that would allow the City to purchase the Library land from the County.

Commissioner Ortmann indicated he had no issues and supports the project.

Commissioner Andreani stated that the project will be a great benefit to the community and she is convinced that glare , under gold LEED standards, will be properly addressed.

Commissioner Paralusz thanked all for many hours put into the project so far and a lot of input is reflected in the plan described tonight. She commended the County for being a very good partner, responsive to the project evidenced by the children's area and the area devoted for adults. She also pointed out that the footprint is smaller, which has created opportunity for more open space in the civic center plaza. She believes the Planning Commission can make the required findings and most people will be very happy to use this facility. She concluded that she is in full support of the project – and invited the public to look at the model of the project that is located in the lobby.

Chairperson Conaway echoed these remarks and thanked staff, fellow and former commissioners, Los Angeles County and Mr. Favaro for many public meetings over the past two years. He went through and concurred that the findings are met, is in full support and concluded by stating that there will be short term pain, but great long term gain, starting in 2015.

Commissioner Gross reminded that the Library project is partly a result of Strategic Public Facilities Plan and this process helped establish City priorities. It is a brilliant accomplishment that the City had a strategic plan, decided to follow the plan and will accomplish its goal without any bond financing. He also commended those involved and believes everyone will be proud of this building. This is part of the City's eclectic style and the architecture is great.

ACTION

A motion was **MADE** and **SECONDED** (Andreani/Paralusz) to **APPROVE** the resolution approving the Use Permit, Coastal Development Permit and the Lot Line Adjustment.

AYES: Conaway, Gross, Ortmann, Paralusz, Chairperson Andreani
NOES: None
ABSENT: None
ABSTAIN: None

Director Thompson announced that the Planning Commission decision will be forwarded to the City Council on their agenda at the regular meeting of April 16.

6. DIRECTOR'S ITEMS

- a. 04/31/13 Joint meeting between the Planning Commission and City Council.

Director Thompson reminded the Commission this will occur on April 30th at 6:30 at the Public Safety Facility and if any Commissioners have items to discuss, he requested that they give to him in advance. Director Thompson indicated that he will provide a status report regarding mansionization and the mall project.

7. PLANNING COMMISSION ITEMS

Commissioner Paralusz announced that the City is accepting applications for Commission vacancies and interested persons should see the City website, but there are no vacancies on the Planning Commission at this time. She looks forward to continue working together for another year with this group. There are other opportunities for citizens to get involved, and it is a rewarding experience, noting projects they work with such as the Library and mall.

Chairperson Conaway added that all City Commissioners act as volunteers for their work. He also noted that April 11th is the next Veteran’s Parkway public meeting which will be held at the Public Safety Facility.

8. TENTATIVE AGENDA - April 10, 2013

- a. 508 3rd Street – Height variance
- b. Housing Element

9. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 p.m. to Wednesday, April 10, 2013, in the City Council Chambers, City Hall, 1400 Highland Avenue

ROSEMARY LACKOW
Recording Secretary

ATTEST:

RICHARD THOMPSON
Community Development Director