

**MINUTES  
PLANNING COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING  
SEPTEMBER 1, 2009**

**1.0 CALL TO ORDER**

The Regular Meeting of the Planning Commission of the City of Highland was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Chairman Haller in the Donahue Council Chambers, 27215 Base Line, Highland, California.

Present: Commissioners Randall Hamerly, Trang Huynh, Milton Sparks, Michael Stoffel, Michael Willhite, Vice Chairman John Gamboa and Chairman Richard Haller

Absent: None

Staff Present: John Jaquess, Community Development Director  
Lawrence Mainez, City Planner  
Sean Kelleher, Assistant Planner  
Linda McKeough, Administrative Assistant III

**2.0 COMMUNITY INPUT**

There was none.

**3.0 CONSENT CALENDAR**

**3.1 Minutes of June 16, 2009, Regular Meeting.**

On Page 9, Last Paragraph, First Sentence was amended to read as follows: "...would like to see pervious concrete and would be drainable into the swale..."

On Page 13, Last Paragraph was amended to read as follows: " Chairman Haller then asked if the Commission had any further questions or comments for the Applicant."

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**A Motion** was made by Vice Chairman Gamboa and seconded by Commissioner Willhite to approve the Minutes of June 16, 2009, as amended.

Motion carried on a 5 – 0 vote with the abstentions of Commissioners Huynh and Stoffel.

#### **4.0 PUBLIC HEARINGS**

- 4.1 DRB-009-008 - The subject Design Review Application is for the expansion of an existing Gas Station and construction of a New Fast Food Restaurant. The Project is located at 27323 Fifth Street, Highland, CA 92346, the southeast corner of Palm Avenue and Fifth Street and is identified as Assessor Parcel Numbers: 1201-311-26, 30, 31, and 32. Representative: Alex Cuevas, AGC Design Concept, Inc.

Chairman Haller then introduced the Item and called for Staff's presentation.

Assistant Planner Kelleher gave the presentation from the Staff Report, indicated the Applicant's Representative is in the audience, and then concluded his presentation.

Chairman Haller asked if the Commission had questions of Staff.

Discussion ensued between the Commission and Staff regarding there are two (2) sets of Conditions of Approval (COAs) for the proposed Project; one previously approved by the Planning Commission of May 5, 2009, for the Project's Conditional Use Permit and one for tonight's Meeting for the Design Review Application.

Discussion ensued between the Commission and Staff regarding Planning COA No. 14 regarding the trellis' landscaping whether it would include vines, the need to have an attractive landscaped corner, have the Applicant return with the Landscape Plan for final review / approval by the Commission. Staff stated the trellis is a wood trellis and there is no landscaping provided, except for the Fast Food Restaurant frontage and suggested the Applicant could use planters at the base with the trellis and maybe a tree. A comment was made by a Commissioner to encourage the Applicant to use vines on the trellis and how there is a lot of concrete hardscape and that it looks plain. Staff responded and reiterated having the Applicant return with the Landscape Plan for further consideration by the Commission.

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Further discussion ensued between the Commission and Staff regarding the merged Commission and Design Review and how the Commission will be reviewing both Entitlement and Design COAs in the future.

Chairman Haller asked if the Commission had any further questions of Staff. Hearing none, he then asked if the Applicant would like to make a presentation.

Mr. Alex Cuevas, 201 North First Avenue, Arcadia, California, of AGC Design Concept, who is the Applicant's Representative, addressed the Commission. He stated how he has read the COAs and agrees with them, with the exception of the COA of the removal of the existing Monument Signs. The Existing Signs advertise on both streets (Fifth Street and Palm Avenue), as well as on the corner of said intersection and indicated they will keep the three (3) Monument Signs (and are not proposing new ones). Mr. Cuevas then distributed photographs for the Commission for review. Mr. Cuevas requested to keep the existing three (3) Monument Signs and that landscaping was not a problem and if the Commission wants him to install vines then that is fine with him.

Discussion ensued between the Commission, Mr. Cuevas and Staff regarding the COA and the feasibility of removing the Signs and enhancing the landscaping with possible berming, the Signs are low and how the Commission does not want to block the Signage. Mr. Cuevas responded that he is not a Landscape Architect, and if trees / bushes are installed, they would block the Sign and stated he would talk with his Landscape Architect. The Existing Monument Sign was constructed in 2007, and the Applicant is to match the color of the Proposed Sign to the Existing Monument Sign was discussed.

Further discussion ensued between the Commission, Mr. Cuevas and Staff regarding how the Existing Signage would stay the same and would just one adding one Sign more than normally allowed and that there is no Fast Food Restaurant Monument Sign located on Palm Avenue coming from Redlands. Staff explained the proposed Signage to the Commission and said if the Commission desired, it could remove the Sign located on Fifth Street / Palm Avenue and keep the one on Fifth Street. A Commissioner asked if it was feasible that the Applicant could keep and modify the Sign(s) to raise them up and increase the landscaping. Mr. Cuevas responded he could do that. Discussion ensued regarding the Sign height, the three foot (3') height of the berms and how the berms are measured from the street crown. On Fifth Street, there is some street crown and Palm Avenue there is no street crown and is flat. The IVDA Project was also discussed.

(Note: Vice Chairman Gamboa left the Chambers at 6:20pm.)

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A question was asked by a Commissioner regarding modifying the Sign height and enhance the landscaping and Staff responded how Staff would rather see the Existing Signs with the landscaping and another Commissioner agreed with Staff's response. Drainage flow / runoff, infiltration system and BMPs were also discussed. A comment was made by a Commissioner that with larger landscaping will need at the southwest corner both a berm and swale and further indicated a need for more dramatic landscaping.

(Note: Vice Chairman Gamboa returned at 6:23p.m.)

The following are comments made by the Commission regarding both the Proposed and Existing Signage: 1) likes the berm concept rather than the swale because of landscaping; 2) unable to envision the fourth Sign just for the Fast Food Restaurant; 3) the feasibility of another Monument Sign and not add the Fast Food Restaurant Sign since the Building is going to have signage; 4) the feasibility of advertising the Fast Food Restaurant located on the Gas Signs, and; 5) signage on the Building would be seen on Palm Avenue.

Discussion ensued between the Commission, Mr. Cuevas and Staff regarding the Proposed Sign size, height and location. Mr. Cuevas stated it would be critical for him not having a Monument Sign located on Palm Avenue advertising i.e. Subway, etc. A Commissioner responded with the three (3) Fuel Monument Signs, talked about alternatives and keeping the Signs and then suggested the Sign could read that this is ARCO plus the Fast Food Restaurant that could be located on the corner (Fifth Street / Palm Avenue) with visibility on the north / south intersection and then asked what is the maximum height. Staff responded five and one-half feet (5'6") in height and as long as the Sign is consistent and meets the intent of State Law (regards to gas pricing) with the Monument Sign that would be located on said corner regarding the ARCO and the Fast Food Tenant.

Further discussion ensued between the Commission, Mr. Cuevas and Staff regarding there is not a Drive-thru Restaurant proposed – only the Car Wash, there is no gasoline pricing listed on the corner Sign and the maximum height is five and one-half feet (5'6") and would have twenty-four (24) square footage per side of the Sign, the Car Wash has thirty (30) square feet of signage on the Building, and a Commissioner stated he would rather see that and the Monument Sign on Fifth Street, which would be better for the client rather than the three (3) Fuel Price Signs. Mr. Cuevas stated then it would be the Monument Sign, ARCO, Fast Food Restaurant, Car Wash, and keep the Existing Sign on the Building with the Fast Foot Restaurant on the Building Mounted Sign and Staff responded affirmatively and Staff then explained which Signs are Existing and which are Proposed to the Commission.

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Discussion ensued regarding the feasibility of raising all three (3) Monument Signs up with the landscaping, have the one (1) Monument Sign on the corner to be raised and then the other two (2) Signs that are in place. The following are comments made by the Commission: 1) would prefer to have all three Signs raised, and; 2) the raised Signs would be more visible. A question was asked by Staff if the Existing Sign is maintained and then place it on top of a base pedestal for the Fuel Price Sign and a Commissioner responded that the pedestal would need to tie in with the architecture. Further comments were made by the Commission regarding the Monument Sign: 1) have visibility of both sides of the Sign, and; 2) revise Planning COA No. 10. Staff suggested removal of the Monument Sign and deleting Planning COA No. 10 and have the Commission direct Staff and the Applicant to review the Landscaping Plan. In addition, Staff said a COA could be added to have the Applicant bring back the Monument Sign for further review. Staff also indicated that could be a directive from the Commission for Staff.

Discussion ensued between the Commission and Staff regarding the added Planning COA for the Sign Plan and Landscape Plan and delete Planning COA No. 10.

The following are comments made by the Commission regarding the Dining Area at the Fast Food Structure: 1) soften the transition between the Dining Area and the Parking Area; 2) soften the transition between the Dining Area and add hedges for privacy for the diners; 3) using / installing a tree well, urns, ornamental trees, flowering pots, etc.

Staff then requested specific directives and the following was suggested from the Commission: 1) break up the paving with the installation of hedges; 2) using pots/urns will soften and buffer the Dining Area; 3) the use of vines, potted plants, smaller trees any or all tree(s) will enhance the area for the Dining Area; 4) the trellis clad in brick on Tower and East Facade; 5) the post features of the trellis are weak – need to “beef them up” – use brick to add mass and presence for the columns; 6) install vines on the trellis; 7) the need for more mass and for it to go up to the beam and up to the trellis, and; 8) break up the East Facade “chimney feature”, but don’t add to it – the “chimney feature” by itself is distracting and appears to be concealing an exhaust hood in the kitchen and if there is no internal reason, then delete it. Mr. Cuevas responded and suggested to delete the “chimney feature” and made the square design even. A Commissioner responded that will draw attention to the Tower Element and that the Tower Element can be popped out to the side into the parking lot more than two feet (2’) and which would give the Tower Element more definition.

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Chairman Haller asked for consensus of the Commission on the Project and the COAs. Comments were made by the Commission that it is consistent with the depth of the reveal, the combination of a two foot (2') reveal plus the brick will add to the Project and the brick to the column posts and with the addition of urns, plants, etc. Staff responded taking the Commission's directives and sharing them with the Applicant which included installing landscaping along the trellis, increase the trellis columns, delete the popout (chimney feature") on the East Elevation.

Discussion ensued between the Commission and Staff regarding Planning COA No. 11 for the Car Wash Signage.

A comment was made by a Commissioner about the drainage on Fifth Street / Palm Avenue in the middle of the planter and how the sidewalk is buckled there and appears to be always flooded there and goes into the street. Staff responded the water out in the street is due to testing by the East Valley Water District. The Commissioner indicated that it is a constant problem even when it rains and that it is flat there, the issues need to be resolved and requested the City look into it. The concrete is deteriorating and the pavement is eroding. Staff responded that Staff would defer to Engineering Staff. Staff added that the (sand and gravel operations) truck traffic will be turning onto Third Street / Church Avenue. A Commissioner stated this is an existing condition of the pavement and sidewalk. Staff responded the City is working on a project located on Third Street / Fifth Street / Palm Avenue. Mr. Cuevas responded there would be a Building Permit issued and indicated if anything is damaged, the Building Inspector tells the Applicant to fix it. A question was asked by a Commissioner if the Applicant is aware of the corner and Mr. Cuevas responded affirmatively. Staff added and read Engineering COA No. 11 on Page 28 of the Staff Report regarding the Applicant to reconstruct of the existing damage to the Commission.

Chairman Haller opened the Public Hearing and asked if anyone in the audience would like to speak on the Item. Hearing none, he then closed the Public Hearing and continued discussion amongst the Commissioners.

Chairman Haller recapped the revised COAs to the Commission.

Staff asked the Commission regarding the gas pump canopy supports listed on Page 40 of the Staff Report that they appear to be tin and out of proportion. As proposed, the brick will not go higher than the pump height and that the shape is rectangle, rather than square. A Commissioner responded how he had looked at

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that and the width is the same as the pumps and pump height and there needs to be some consistency – with 2' X 4' posts, the columns would still look spindly and the roof is heavier with the column(s). A Commissioner asked Staff if Staff wanted the bricks to go up higher and Staff responded it is a decision Staff wanted to bring to the Commission's attention since there had been complaints received on the canopy design of another gasoline station project that was recently approved.

Discussion ensued between the Commission, Mr. Cuevas and Staff regarding the design / dimensions and proposed materials for the columns of the pump islands / aisles. A comment was made by a Commissioner regarding the dimension is narrow at the pump aisles and if the columns were wider by two feet (2') that with the South and West Elevations, there is no space conflict. The Commissioner then asked Mr. Cuevas what are the dimensions of the column elevations. Mr. Cuevas responded he was not sure, but guessed a little more than one foot (1') and the brick is maybe one and one-half feet (1'6") and is a brick veneer. A suggestion was made by a Commissioner if the brick and width is the same, design / make it then a square column and then the Commissioner distributed a rough drawing for the other Commissioners to review. The Commissioner indicated with the two and one-half foot (2'6") width, it is consistent with the popouts on the Building and on the right hand side, there is a break in the curb splitting the difference. Mr. Cuevas responded as long as it doesn't hit a curb. Chairman Haller asked if the Commission concurs, this would be a directive for the canopy design. A question was asked by a Commissioner if it should be brick all the way or brick and stucco material and Commissioners indicated they wanted uniformity. The following are comments / directives made by the Commission: 1) stopping the brick at eight feet (8'); 2) match the Building Elevations; 3) match the pilasters on the Fast Food Building; 4) the Fast Food Building have similar detail accent band at the base of the arch; 5) match with Facade Elevations Fast Food Elevations with the brick and square the columns to the thickest of the Southeast Facade; 6) if the pumps are taller, then maintain the same height of the Facade as the pumps and, but wants the greater of the two designs.

Discussion ensued between the Commission, Mr. Cuevas and Staff regarding the proposed Directives.

**A Motion** was made by Vice Chairman Gamboa and seconded by Commissioner Hamerly to:

1. Approve DRB 009-008 for the Proposed Site Plan, Grading Plan, Building Elevations and Photometric Plan, all subject to the Conditions of Approval, as amended with the following:

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Planning COAs:

Delete 10.

~~10. (NS) The Existing Monument Sign located at the intersection of Palm Avenue and Fifth Street shall be removed. In its place, the Applicant shall install an attractive landscape statement, as approved by the Planning Commission.~~

15. The Monument Signs and Landscape Plans consistent with the Conditions of Approval noted herein shall be submitted for review by the City of Highland Planning Commission prior to issuance of a Building Permit.

and;

2. Approve the Design Review Findings of Fact.

Discussion ensued whether or not the Findings of Fact were amended in the Motion and they were not.

Motion unanimously passed on a 7 – 0 vote.

## **5.0 LEGISLATIVE**

There were no Items.

## **6.0 ANNOUNCEMENTS**

A question was asked by a Commissioner regarding who owns the alley located on Fifth Street / Palm Avenue and Staff responded that it is a City dedicated alley.

Staff explained the September 15, 2009, Regular Meeting is canceled and further explained Items tentatively scheduled for the October 6, 2009, Commission Regular Meeting.

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Vice Chairman Gamboa explained with regards to the CenterStone Project, only he has the conflict of interest and the other Commissioners do not and Staff affirmed that.

A Commissioner requested the subject of "Art in Public Places" be placed on the Agenda for the next Commission's Meeting and have Staff take approximately five to ten (5 – 10) minutes to explain the City's Policy on it. The Commissioner indicated previously, there has been discussion of art be placed at the corner of a project and a monument sign, and this would be a good opportunity to see about installing real art, maybe a waterfall, etc., something that is beyond a monument sign. The Commissioner had already discussed this with Staff. A Commissioner responded that there is a Vision Statement in Zoning District Areas i.e. how CVS Pharmacy (Base Line / Palm Avenue) had used Citrus Crate Labels in their design and also Lowe's (Greenspot Road). Staff responded and indicated this Item will be placed on the next Agenda for discussion.

## **7.0 ADJOURN**

There being no further business, Chairman Haller declared the Meeting adjourned at 7:13 p.m.

Submitted by:

Approved by:

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Linda McKeough, Community  
Development Administrative Assistant III

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Rich Haller, Chairman  
Planning Commission

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