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by the Planning Commission

REGULAR MEETING OF THE
PLANNING COMMISSION
CULVER CITY, CALIFORNIA

March 23, 2005
7:00 P.M.
Mike Balkman Council Chambers

MEMBERS PRESENT: D. Scott Malsin, Chair
Sheila M. Thomas, Vice-Chair
Marcus Tiggs, Commissioner

ADVISORY PRESENT: Sherry Jordan, Senior Planner
Jose Mendivil, Assistant Planner
David McCarthy, Deputy City Attorney
Joe Pannone, Special Counsel
Craig Johnson, Building Official
Jorge Pachas, Senior Civil Engineer
Sammy Romo, Traffic Engineer
Don Marquardt, Environmental Maintenance Manager
Heather Burton, Assistant Planner
Art Kasson, Consulting Traffic Engineer

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CALL TO ORDER

Chair Malsin called the meeting to order at 7:06 p.m.
The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Neil Rubenstein.
Roll Call. Thomas, Tiggs, Malsin present.
Commissioner Muranaka's absence was excused.

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PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

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PUBLIC HEARING

PH-1. Site Plan Review and Height Exception for the Symantec Office Development at 800 and 900 Corporate Pointe.

Vice-Chair Thomas moved, seconded by Commissioner Tiggs and unanimously carried, to receive and file the affidavit of mailing of notices.

Jose Mendivil presented the staff report.

- *Comments received during the public review period were overwhelmingly in support of the project; one individual called and expressed concern regarding the height exception; and, the Playa Pacifica Homeowners Association requested the installation of traffic signals to help mitigate traffic in the vicinity.*

Chair Malsin called for Commissioners' questions.

Chair Malsin

- Why is the City able to approve a height exception when a voter-approved initiative limits buildings in Culver City to 56 feet in height?

Mr. Pannone

- *Culver City passed a provision of the Municipal Code in 1981 permitting a height exception. The exception was created because of the need for certain projects to exceed the height restriction in place and Council's finding that it was reasonable to provide that opportunity.*
- *The exception was first used for the 12-story building at the Corporate Pointe development site, which caused some citizens concern, and an initiative was circulated and subsequently approved by the voters to identify four provisions of the Code where the height would be limited to 56 feet. This did not change the 1981 Code Height Exception section which is still applicable in three project areas of Culver City, including the Corporate Pointe development site.*

Chair Malsin declared the Public Hearing open.

Mark Fuller, Applicant and Director of Facilities, Symantec Americas Region

- Symantec has received a number of ideas about what might be done with the increased tax revenue they will be bringing into the area, all pointing to improving community-centered amenities.
- The enthusiastic volunteerism in the community is clearly evident and Symantec is looking forward to becoming an active participant in the community and calling Culver City "home".

Bill Valentine, of HOK Visual Communications, presented a slide show display to illustrate the architectural and landscape design features of the proposed Symantec project.

Sylvia Landis

- In favor of the project; it is beautiful.
- Concerned about a letter to local residents from Symantec indicating there would ultimately be 4,000 employees at the site. Requested that letter be included as an addendum to the staff report.

Tim O'Connell, of Century Housing

- Looking forward to seeing the property developed.
- Concerned about building massing at the site which will create an 80-foot wall directly adjacent to their property.
- The building would better respect the natural land form if it sloped down with the land by increasing the height of the building on the east rather than the west side, creating a better view of the building from afar.
- Century Housing has challenged the final EIR, believing the traffic report provided was incomplete by failing to analyze traffic impacts on Fox Hills Drive.
- Century Housing has devised several proposals to help relieve some of the traffic impacts of the project, including turn pockets and signage to assist motorists unfamiliar with the area.
- Concerned about construction site issues such as earth removal and the resultant dust and diesel emissions.
- Would support the height exception to the eastern most building, Building B, with Building A being stepped back.

Jackie McCain

- In support; very well designed complex.
- Appreciates that staff has appropriately dealt with the flood waters issue in the area.

Richard Beaver

- Concerned about what the City is allowing to happen to the small town atmosphere of the community, the increased amount of traffic, and overdevelopment of the area.

James Forte

- In full support of the project; Symantec is the equivalent of the studio industry with plenty of jobs and good revenue for the City.

Joel Davidson

- In full support of the project; encouraged Symantec to make their buildings environmentally friendly and set an example as a good corporate neighbor.

Dr. David Robinson

- Symantec's coming to Culver City is a very serendipitous event; a good strong company that will benefit Culver City in the long run.

Neil Rubenstein

- Impressed with the project and a proud supporter of Symantec; grateful to see they will be bringing 2,000 high-paying jobs to Culver City rather than sending the work abroad.

Chris Debold

- In favor of the project; superb addition that will upgrade the entire neighborhood with an excellent design.

Chair Malsin read the written comments received. The following persons submitted comments in favor of the project generally calling out the increased tax revenue and jobs Symantec will bring to the community:

Mike Marand, Anthony Monroe, Gloria Carter, Michael Landau, Charles and Susan Deen, Lemuel Daniels, Margie Cunningham, Mel and Renee Barmazel, Doug Cunningham, Jeff Haas, Doug Nichols, Philip Grob.

Chair Malsin summarized some of the points in a letter from the Board of Directors of the Playa Pacifica Homeowners Association as follows:

- In favor of the development proposal and the anticipated jobs and tax benefits.
- Concerned about the increased traffic flow, which is already a tremendous problem on the Playa/Overland section between Jefferson and Sepulveda.
- This problem could be alleviated by replacing the flashing stop signs with proper traffic signals. The current flashing stops are inappropriate for the volume of traffic and traffic signals would be much safer for pedestrians.
- West L.A. College has agreed to pay to install the signals so there seems no sensible justification not to proceed.

Chair Malsin named a number of other authors who submitted correspondence unanimously in favor of the Symantec project.

Commissioner Tiggs moved, seconded by Vice-Chair Thomas and unanimously carried, to receive and file the correspondence.

~~Vice-Chair Thomas moved, seconded by Commissioner Tiggs and unanimously carried, to close the Public Hearing.~~

Chair Malsin requested that staff obtain a copy of the letter referred to by Ms. Landis to include in the public record.

Chair Malsin requested staff's response to comments.

Mr. Mendivil, Mr. Romo, Mr. Kasson, and Mr. Pachas

- *Regarding overdevelopment, the City's vision is that this site be developed for office purposes and the project is consistent with the General Plan and zoning for the area.*
- *Mitigation measures in the EIR address any impacts created by building massing.*
- *The massing is, in effect, softened by the design of the buildings, the landscaping, and the decrease in slope.*
- *Playa Pacifica's proposal for traffic signals on Overland Avenue has been previously suggested and evaluated, but there was significant opposition from neighboring residents to installation of traffic signals.*
- *West L.A. College has agreed to install the signals as a mitigation measure in their EIR.*
- *Many of Century Housing's proposals do have merit and are being evaluated, specifically the left-turn lanes on Slauson Avenue and the directional signage to aid*

travelers. Additional traffic mitigation measures might be included based on some of their ideas.

- An evaluation of the intersection of Fox Hills Drive and Hannum Avenue in January indicated that morning and afternoon peak traffic periods were operating at the optimum Level of Service A. The traffic added by Symantec would not seriously impact that Level of Service since the highest volume of traffic in the morning coming out of Fox Hills Drive and turning onto Hannum Avenue is proceeding away from the project. The a.m. peak hours count registered 250 cars turning left and only 16 turning right so even a large increase in traffic would not in any way change the operation of that intersection.*
- Regarding construction operations, the Engineering Division will require a dust control plan in the conditions for issuance of a grading permit.*
- A Construction Management Plan will be also be required which, among several items, includes providing timely notification to adjacent property owners, preparation of a traffic control plan for surrounding streets, and prohibits hauling of materials during peak traffic periods.*

Mr. Fuller, Symantec

- There is no way 4,000 staff could be fit into the complex as the facility was always designed for 2,000 employees; perplexed by the reported discrepancy.

Chair Malsin called for discussion of the project.

Vice-Chair Thomas

- Basically in favor of approval.
- Despite the issues of concern raised, after a very thorough review of the project submittals of both the applicant and their architect, the EIR, and responses to complaints from previous public hearings, finds the applicant to be extremely responsive in trying to address those concerns.

Commissioner Tiggs

- Supports the project.
- Century Housing has raised some very valid points and it is good that staff is examining some of their traffic suggestions.
- Traffic is always going to be an issue especially for the Fox Hills community where the project is located and, although it cannot be stated with confidence that every conceivable traffic concern will be resolved, hopefully, the mitigation measures will help alleviate them.
- Very pleased that Symantec has been extremely proactive and performed community outreach in the early stages of the project.
- The design is aesthetically pleasing.

Chair Malsin

- Supportive of the project.
- Absolutely amazing to witness such an incredible outpouring of support from the community.

- Symantec has a reputation for being a good corporate citizen in the communities in which it operates and they will be a wonderful addition to Culver City.
- The project is very interesting and well designed.
- Sympathetic to the issues raised by Mr. Beaver, particularly in reference to his fears of overdevelopment.
- Symantec will have quite a commanding view from their offices and will definitely create an interesting presence for Culver City's gateway.

Vice-Chair Thomas

- Inquired if there is an approximation of when the site clearing will begin or whether it is anticipated the biological survey for nesting birds required in Item III.C. Biological Resources, as required in the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program, will actually be necessary.

Mr. Fuller, Symantec

- The project's grading schedule has not yet commenced, but they will comply with the Biological Resources requirements as stated in the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program.

Vice-Chair Thomas moved, seconded by Commissioner Tiggs, to adopt the Statement of Overriding Considerations and Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program as stated in Resolution 2005-P010.

AYES: Malsin, Thomas, Tiggs
NOES: None
ABSENT: Muranaka

Commissioner Tiggs moved, seconded by Vice-Chair Thomas, to approve Site Plan Review, SPR P-2005003, subject to Conditions of Approval as stated in Resolution No. 2005-P011 as amended.

AYES: Malsin, Thomas, Tiggs
NOES: None
ABSENT: Muranaka

Vice-Chair Thomas moved, seconded by Commissioner Tiggs, to recommend the City Council approve Height Exception P-2005004 for the construction of the farthest western office building to a maximum average height of 66.02 feet at 800-900 Corporate Pointe in the Commercial C-3 Zone, subject to Conditions of Approval as stated in Resolution 2005-P012.

AYES: Malsin, Thomas, Tiggs
NOES: None
ABSENT: Muranaka

CONSENT CALENDAR

C-1. Secretary's Report.

Commissioner Tiggs moved, seconded by Vice-Chair Thomas, to receive and file the Secretary's Report. The motion carried unanimously.

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ITEMS FROM STAFF

Ms. Jordan advised the Commissioners of their upcoming agenda items and meeting schedule.

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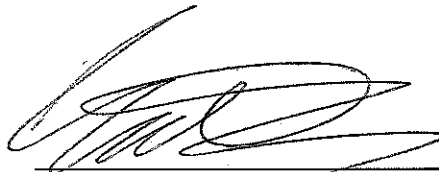
ITEMS FROM PLANNING COMMISSION

None.

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ADJOURN

Commissioner Tiggs moved, seconded by Vice-Chair Thomas, to adjourn the meeting at 8:44 p.m. to April 13, 2005 at 7:00 p.m. in the Mike Balkman Council Chambers at City Hall. The motion carried unanimously.



D. SCOTT MALSIN, CHAIRPERSON
PLANNING COMMISSION
CITY OF CULVER CITY, CALIFORNIA

ATTEST:



SHERRY JORDAN
Senior Planner