

MINUTES

**CITY OF PACIFICA
PLANNING COMMISSION
COUNCIL CHAMBERS
2212 BEACH BOULEVARD**

May 2, 2011

7:00 p.m.

Chair Campbell called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL: Present: Commissioners Brown, Gordon, Langille, Leon, Evans and Chair Campbell
Absent: Commissioner Clifford

SALUTE TO FLAG: Led by Chair Campbell

STAFF PRESENT: Planning Director George White
Assistant Planner Kathryn Farbstein

APPROVAL OF ORDER OF AGENDA Commissioner Gordon moved approval of the Order of Agenda; Commissioner Langille seconded the motion.

The motion carried 6-0.

Ayes: Commissioners Brown, Gordon, Langille, Leon, Evans and Chair Campbell
Noes: None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: February 2, 2011 Commissioner Evans moved approval of the minutes of February 2, 2011; Commissioner Leon seconded the motion.

The motion carried 4-0-2.

Ayes: Commissioners Gordon, Leon, Evans and Chair Campbell
Noes: None
Abstain: Commissioners Brown and Langille

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: March 21, 2011 Commissioner Brown moved approval of the minutes of March 21, 2011; Commissioner Leon seconded the motion.

The motion carried 5-0-1.

Ayes: Commissioners Brown, Langille, Leon, Evans and Chair Campbell
Noes: None
Abstain: Commissioner Gordon

DESIGNATION OF LIAISON TO CITY COUNCIL MEETING OF MAY 9, 2011:

None.

CONSENT ITEMS:

None.

PUBLIC HEARINGS:

1. **S-109-11 SIGN PERMIT and SIGN EXCEPTION, filed by the owner,
 SE-28-11 Hong Chen, Pacifica Beach View Company, to approve a
 Master Sign Program and to allow wall signage to exceed the
 maximum signage allowed at 5400-5500 Coast Highway in the
 Pedro Point Shopping Center, Pacifica (APN 023-072-060).
 Recommended CEQA status: Exempt.**

Assistant Planner Farbstein presented the staff report.

Commissioner Evans asked which signs were oversized and which were included in the exception or were they all.

Assistant Planner Farbstein believed that they were all over the maximum size allowed and were representative of the applicant's request of 2 square feet of signage per linear foot.

Commissioner Gordon asked if they were in a situation where there was no historical precedence in the City for what was being requested.

Assistant Planner Farbstein responded affirmatively, adding that this was only No. 28. There were very few exceptions approved in a shopping center and they had to do with a free standing sign. She couldn't find any that were similar to this case.

Commissioner Gordon thought the amount of the variance was odd, which seemed to be more than double.

Assistant Planner Farbstein stated that he was correct.

Commissioner Gordon stated that he had to take a step back in these situations. He asked what the purpose was of the ordinance governing the size of the signs such as this one, which seemed to be a ratio of signage to linear frontage.

Assistant Planner Farbstein explained that one purpose was to be consistent throughout the City, but also, if there was a special circumstance, they could make their case before the Planning Commission. She felt it was difficult to make the case in this particular situation because it was not like a typical shopping center. While it looked like one center, in reality there were two separate ownerships, with half of the site already approved with .75 ratio to one linear foot, and it was difficult to make the argument that the other half of the center should get more than double, 2 sq. foot per linear foot. She felt this was an unusual circumstance in that the center was set up with the two ownerships.

Commissioner Gordon asked confirmation that the Fresh and Easy ownership had already gone through the process and followed the guidelines then, after they were approved, this applicant came along and stated that he needed the signage bigger. He assumed, as mentioned in the staff report, that they wanted the signage bigger to have better visibility from the highway, not just from San Pedro. He asked if Fresh and Easy raised that as an issue.

Assistant Planner Farbstein confirmed his thinking and explained that Fresh and Easy was a different circumstance because of having larger frontage and, therefore, bigger square footage of signage. She stated that Christina Horrisberger was the project planner who worked with them and she brought up the idea of a free standing sign but, for whatever reason, that didn't happen, and they felt they had sufficient signage. She mentioned that there were two vacant spaces on the backside which didn't have any frontage toward the highway.

Commissioner Gordon acknowledged that they would really have a visibility issue.

Assistant Planner Farbstein explained that the spaces weren't rented.

Commissioner Gordon acknowledged that she raised a good point about the difference between Fresh and Easy with a lot of frontage and other stores with narrow frontage. He asked what would be a justifiable circumstance for an exception.

Assistant Planner Farbstein stated that she didn't know if she could come up with one, just concluding that she couldn't make a finding in this particular case.

Commissioner Gordon commented that she had just distinguished this situation.

Assistant Planner Farbstein stated that there were two other spaces that don't have signage at the moment and would be limited in the amount of square footage that they could have. She added that there were no other shopping centers in the City with larger signage, including Linda Mar Shopping Center. She couldn't make a case to support the findings, but she acknowledged that the Commission was the decision maker and they had built in flexibility to address things that may change during the meeting.

Commissioner Langille asked what the practical application was if they approved the master sign program but denied the sign exception, such as resulting in the stores applying again with smaller signs.

Planning Director White stated that they would then just have to meet the standard in the code, adding that, if they hadn't asked for the exception, the item wouldn't have to come to the Planning Commission for approval. He reiterated that, if the exception was denied, they would be left with the maximum standard under the sign ordinance.

Assistant Planner Farbstein clarified that, in Condition No. 2, page 6, the 0.75 sq. footage per lineage frontage wording was out of the code.

Commissioner Evans referred to the mention of 0.75 sq. feet, and pointed out that the report mentioned the code limiting it to 70%.

Assistant Planner Farbstein stated that it was a different requirement. She thought it would be easier if they made it 1 per sq. foot. She explained that it was 0.75 sq. feet per linear foot. The 70% to which he referred was the width of the sign across the frontage of the building. She added that the adjacent owner's master sign program was going with the 70% and this applicant was requesting 75%, which was the width of the sign across the frontage.

Commissioner Evans questioned that just 5% difference was still over twice the allowed by code.

Planning Director White stated that it was in sign area.

Commissioner Evans acknowledged that it was in area, not in linear length.

Chair Campbell asked if we had any visual representation of what the signs will look like by code, if they conformed.

Assistant Planner Farbstein responded that we didn't; we just had what the applicant was presenting.

Commissioner Gordon asked if the square footage maxed out on each store and if they were trying for 2.5 times.

Assistant Planner Farbstein stated that it was two times, up from 0.75. She added that she hadn't calculated that, and she guessed that they probably were not because those were maximums and she thought it was sometimes difficult to arrange the sign. She thought they were beyond 0.75 but did not actually reach the requested two times.

Commissioner Gordon commented that he probably could do it himself if he was better at math because he has the figures.

Commissioner Brown stated that he did the math. He thought that, going from south to north, High Tide was .55 sq. feet per linear foot which was under; La Playa was .96, 25 or 30% over; Nona's was .59, which was under; Nor-Cal was 1.5; Fog Zone was 1.65; and AnnaBee's was 1.5, based on the data that they had. He stated that, if he added up all the signs and all the store frontage, he came up with around 1 sq. foot per linear foot and, in total, they come pretty close to the guidelines. He thought they were trying to keep all the font size roughly similar, adding that some had three times the store frontage as others. He thought it would be strange for one store to have three times the size as someone next to them in a strip. He commented that the Fresh and Easy sign was quite large compared to all the rest because they had so much square footage. He understood the rules, having a pure width limit and a square footage limit. He asked if the font sizes on any of the signs were out of the normal range of other stores.

Assistant Planner Farbstein stated that she didn't know if she could answer that because they typically used the square footage maximum. She agreed with his point of wanting the center to look more uniform in terms of the size of the signage. She mentioned the Linda Mar Shopping Center and thought it did vary with a store with longer frontage having bigger square footage of signage. They tended to do that because they were paying more for that space and they felt they should have larger signage. She then mentioned that, even if it was being proposed, if the master sign program was approved with up to two times, the signage could increase with new tenants in the future.

Commissioner Brown asked what the average store front width was in Pacifica.

Assistant Planner Farbstein stated that the property owner, who was present, was more capable of answering that question. She agreed that there were some stores that were double in size and others narrower.

Commissioner Evans stated that information on Extreme Pizza was absent and asked if it was different.

Assistant Planner Farbstein thought they were showing it representationally on the elevation drawings but she agreed that she didn't have a smaller copy of that business. She explained that the smaller copies with colored renderings were produced by the sign contractor as examples, and she didn't ask for every single one. She suggested that the property owner might be able to address that issue.

Commissioner Evans wondered how it fell into the numbers compared to the others.

Assistant Planner Farbstein didn't calculate that one, but agreed that it appeared smaller.

Commissioner Gordon asked Commissioner Brown if he would mind giving him his calculations.

Commissioner Brown had High Tide at .55, LaPlaya at .96, Nona's at .59, Nor-Cal at 1.5, exactly two times the limit, Fog Zone at 1.65, more than two times and AnnaBee's at 1.5.

Commissioner Gordon asked confirmation that they didn't have anything on Extreme Pizza.

Assistant Planner Farbstein confirmed that they didn't submit one for that commercial space.

Hong Chen, applicant, stated that he was a partner of Pacifica Beach View Company, owner of the north end of the shopping center. He was impressed by the questions they were asking, making their positions clear. He was sure that the store owners were not trying to compete with each other with the biggest sign but merely putting the sign as practically as possible within their store front, with the smallest being about 15 feet. He thought that, when the store name was so long as in AnnaBee's, using the standard size, the letters were too small and almost like having no sign. He felt that the problem was the differences in footage. He loved the idea of averaging the sizes based on the total front footage and thought it would make the signs look better. He thought that the big difference in sizes was exactly what they were trying to prevent. He explained that there was no sign proposed for Extreme Pizza because he didn't want a new sign and the Planning Department had explained to him that the stores with older signs were not required to change and he had no authority to demand that they change their sign. He thought that, if they must stick to a certain sq. foot per linear foot for a store's frontage, maybe the city should have an ordinance regarding the minimum store front footage, because he thought it made some impractical. He mentioned that he didn't know this when Maureen Murray rented her store. It presented a dilemma for them and they were looking to the Commissioners to help them find a solution for this. He then explained that the red marks on the paving in the parking lot were to identify the areas in need of repaving. He was ready to answer questions.

Commissioner Evans pointed out that AnnaBee's showed a request for a sign but, on the drawing, it had two signs and he asked if it was going to be one or two signs.

Assistant Planner Farbstein explained that there were two businesses, one is AnnaBee's and one is Club AnnaBee's. AnnaBee's is a retail pet boutique and Club AnnaBee's is the dog daycare/boarding, which are two different types of businesses operated by the same owner.

Commissioner Evans stated that he was questioning it because it only showed the boutique café in the colored rendering.

Assistant Planner Farbstein stated that he was correct, explaining that it was just to give them an idea, but they weren't given every single signage, and they may not have decided what they were going to do with Club AnnaBee's at that point.

Commissioner Leon asked, in addition to the signs requested, if they had considered a large sign to advertise the center, mentioning the three eating establishments, adding that it didn't seem as though they would have to put a lot of information on it.

Mr. Chen stated that the property line did not extend to the Coast Highway and mentioned the limitations that created and why they weren't making that proposal now but it might come to a point where they would submit such a proposal.

Commissioner Leon referred to the staff report indicating that he was asking for a 2 sq. feet per linear foot exemption to the sign requirements, but their calculations showed the largest sign was at 1.65 sq. feet. He thought that he appeared to be asking for more than what was in the plan.

Mr. Chen stated that the 1.6 sq. feet was good enough for them, adding that he didn't get into the details of the program which was actually written by his sign contractor.

Commissioner Leon stated that he wasn't trying to pin him down to the specific number but was checking on whether he was aware of what was being asked for as opposed to the actual dimension.

Mr. Chen stated that, if they were able to do the individual proposed signs, he was happy, and 1.6 would be good enough for them.

Commissioner Leon then mentioned that he had at least two businesses that were under, adding that they didn't know what Extreme Pizza was.

Mr. Chen acknowledged that he did not know either.

Commissioner Leon referred to the photo representation and how the signs were fastened to the buildings and back lit condition, and asked if each letter was physically attached to the building with its own wiring coming through or on a hard frame on which it was suspended.

Mr. Chen stated that there was a wire behind the wall, and the plan was that the sign installer can go inside the box and do all the required installations. He didn't really know the details.

Commissioner Leon stated that he was looking at the profile, and the drawing looks like each letter is independently affixed to the building.

Mr. Chen understood that was how it was supposed to be.

Commissioner Leon reiterated that he was trying to imagine how the sign would look because he was unclear when looking at the photo representation, pointing out that the Nor-Cal sign looked like it could be on a wood back that was in keeping with the façade.

Mr. Chen thought they were supposed to be sticking out with a small distance between the wood and the sign.

Commissioner Leon thought they looked like a fairly complicated installation with a fair amount of work.

Commissioner Gordon asked the applicant to repeat his explanation of the red striping in the parking lot.

Mr. Chen stated that they were trying to repair the paving. His workers were identifying the areas that needed work and he would go and confirm whether he approved or needed to make changes. He stated that, by the end of July, it will all be sealed and striped. This was the initial process.

Commissioner Gordon asked confirmation that he was saying that he had plans to repave the whole northern section of the parking lot to be consistent with the southern section.

Mr. Chen responded affirmatively, adding that Assistant Planner Farbstein made sure he did that.

Commissioner Leon referred to the agreement for the plan which appeared to no longer allow for painted signs on the buildings themselves but only the signs before the Commission for approval.

Mr. Chen stated that it was their intention.

Commissioner Leon mentioned the picture for Nona's which had a tablecloth painting on the wall and asked if that would no longer be there.

Mr. Chen stated that it came under the category that it was already there and did he have the authority to ask them to take it down or replace it.

Commissioner Leon asked if he was talking about not allowing any future changes.

Mr. Chen confirmed that they would not allow it in the future, but they cannot make them change what they have now.

Chair Campbell stated that, if they approved his plan, they were approving a maximum, but he was worried about the minimum and what assurance we would have that there would be consistency.

Mr. Chen stated that he didn't know, and thought they might need a lawyer.

Chair Campbell reiterated that he was worried about approving the maximum and then only a few stores do that and the rest are minimal.

Mr. Chen stated that he didn't know how to address that, other than taking his word for that.

Chair Campbell opened the Public Hearing.

Maureen Murray, AnnaBee's and Club AnnaBee's, Pacifica, stated that her store fronts were both 15 feet long, and asked what it would give her in a sign.

Assistant Planner Farbstein thought it was around 11 square feet.

Ms. Murray thought that was about 5 x 5 or 5 x 2? She stated that they didn't want signs going all the way across but it has to look right. She showed a draft of how it would look at about 9 feet by 3 feet, which was a bit more than the 1.5. She thought it looked good and 1.5 or a little more didn't seem too extreme to her. She stated that she would like a sign that looks proportionate. She thought the bee was what was causing her sign to be bigger, and she requested that the bee not be included in the whole.

Samer Jweinat, High Tide and Fog Zone, Pacifica, explained that they weren't at Linda Mar and since customers have to go out of their way to come to them, their only signage was the one in front and they needed to be organized. He stated that High Tide's store front was bigger than La Playa but La Playa's square footage was bigger. He felt, if it was equal, it was better for everyone. He again reiterated that his store was bigger in the front than in the back, but High Tide looked bigger and Fog Zone was narrow. He reiterated that La Playa would be higher than .75 and High Tide would be under .75 but they would be the same, making them uniform.

Kevin Healy, La Playa, Pacifica, stated that most of the store fronts were in 15-foot sections. He stated that, under the existing ordinance they would be allowed 22.5 square feet of signage which was 9.5 feet smaller than a 4 x 8 foot sheet of plywood. His concern was visibility from the road because they were so far back. He stated that the signs were expensive and no one wants to spend money unnecessarily, but they did want to be seen. He understood the need for uniformity and was in agreement with that. He felt that, if it was too small, it was useless to put it up, and he agreed that oversize would be overkill. He felt that .75 for them, considering the distance from the roadway, was a bit too small for readability.

Chair Campbell closed the Public Hearing.

Commissioner Evans stated he was always the first one to conform to the letter of the law but he was kind of in agreement of uniformity in looks. He knew the signs were very different but, with the overall picture, they looked the same. He knew the Fog Zone was the highest at 1.65, with the next at 1.5, but in the absence of a large sign in the front, he was leaning toward being in favor of the exception. He would like to hear from other Commissioners.

Commissioner Leon thought they could work through this. He did believe there were some special circumstances with the setback and the fact of a frontage road between the shopping center and Highway 1 which added further distance including the added berm. He knows what is in the shopping center, but he was sure they would like more people to know what is there. On the issue of the sizes, for him, he suggested that they look at conditioning each one to the size that they agree based on what they submitted. Then, if anything changes from each location, they would have to come back to the Commission. Pertaining to Nor-Cal, he thought a lot has to do with the colors and the type of font being used, which makes it look much bigger to him because of the type of lettering than the Fog Zone which has more square footage. He was willing to work with each one but condition each one and have something that was pinned down and not up to any whim in the future.

Commissioner Brown was relieved with their comments, since he also struggles with exceptions. In this case, he was leaning toward some type of exception. In approving any exceptions, he would like to see the measurements vetted by the Planning Department. He thought there were

minor inconsistencies on how the different signs were measured and he would like to be sure they were dealing with the same set of numbers other than what he did on his Blackberry. He did like the idea of taking the whole picture, but in referring to Commissioner Leon's point, he thought there might be another approach rather than managing each individual sign. He suggested taking it as one long store front and the total square footage of the signage has to be within .75 rather than each individual store. He thought they were really close and they would probably find that the measurements are all between a 10% and 20% reduction in each sign proportionately. He wondered if the map site plan could be done in a way that, if someone comes in and wants a bigger sign, it would have to take from some other sign rather than having a bigger sign and taking it all out of proportion. He suggested that they take the total linear store frontage, use that as guidelines, stay within 75% and have a maximum cap on any one sign, whether it is 1.65 for Fog Zone or 1.5 and they could achieve visibility for the businesses since there was no monument and they were removed from the road. He also liked the idea of a uniform signage, which he felt was very attractive. He reiterated that there might be a solution in his suggestion.

Commissioner Langille stated that the proposed signs in general looked great and were an improvement over what was there before. She thought there was some middle ground. She wasn't sure she understood how Commissioner Brown's suggestion would work out, and, addressing Commissioner Leon's comments, she acknowledged that Fog Zone and Nor-Cal and AnnaBee's side by side signs stick out more and present more of an aesthetic or consistency challenge with Extreme Pizza. She thought they would want a maximum limit, but she thought those exceeding the maximum could achieve their goals of visibility from the highway. She thought it seemed to be an exception of 1.00 sq. feet per linear foot. She thought that the signs under that limit looked proportional, but those over it looked out of proportion and didn't meet a compatibility standard. She thought Extreme Pizza should not be made bigger to achieve compatibility but rather the others should reduce the footage.

Commissioner Gordon thought it would be a work in progress and they would deliberate to a good solution. He thought the two important goals were visibility from the road and uniformity so it looked professional and inviting. He agreed that the signs were appealing. He asked if there was a consistency between stores in shopping centers in terms of the font size of the letters used.

Assistant Planner Farbstein thought they limited the overall height, which was her recollection at Linda Mar Shopping Center, adding that it was a maximum height limitation and was dictated by the square footage.

Commissioner Gordon was looking for compatibility between the store fronts. The signs looked great, but Nor-Cal and Fog Zone were in bold caps that jumped out at him, but when compared to Nona's sign, he couldn't tell if they were compatible because Nona's was in lower case. She agreed with Commissioner Langille that the compatibility issue was not there. He asked if anyone noticed a reference to the font size or whether they were going by the square footage of the sign.

Chair Campbell stated that he was hearing a general consensus that an exception might be warranted based on the distance of the shopping center from Highway 1 and the fact that there was no monument available. That distinguished it from the Linda Mar Shopping Center and there appeared to be room for bigger signs. He heard that there was a desire for uniformity and a desire for consistency. His concern was that they leave the door open for someone to put a very large sign of 1.5 or 1.6 but someone else chooses not to do that and stays within the ordinance limit.

He sees that playing out now because he sees the Fog Zone as out of proportion compared to the rest, although he did think the signs were good and a big improvement. He just felt that the Fog Zone dominates over the other signs. He liked Commissioner Leon's suggestion of approving what they were seeing and locking each store into that representation. He worried that treating the frontage as one big sign would leave too much play. He was willing to go along with Commissioner Leon but was also willing to hear any other suggestions.

Commissioner Evans stated that the closest thing he can see in looking at the representations, it gives the height of each with the majority of them being about 20 inches with Nor-Cal at 43, although it was partially rounded, and the rest were all around a 20 inch average. He agreed that, because of the fonts, Fog Zone, being on a single wide store front, looks much larger than the others. He liked Commissioner Brown's idea of looking at the whole and limiting the whole as one which limits each one. He stated that the only thing that could change that would be if one were three fronts wide and they divide it into two or three shops. That would change the statistic to a big degree because of then having three smaller signs or one-third of what Nor-Cal is now. He reiterated that he wasn't having a huge problem, but they needed some regulation because it was over the code limit. He was torn, knowing there was no large sign and he was sympathetic to the owners trying to increase business and he was trying to support them.

Chair Campbell thought, if what was before him on the proposed site plan was what he was approving, and would be put up, except for the Fog Zone which he felt was too big, he would go along with it. He was wondering how they get there.

Planning Director White stated that there was always going to be a little bit of doubt even if the representations were exactly what was put up on the buildings. That didn't mean it would be that way in the future because the sign program will continue as long as the center was in operation and it would not come back to the Planning Commission for every sign permit that comes in because staff would be working under the master program and staff would issue sign permits as long as they are consistent with the program. He added that, because they would not have that certainty, staff expressed alarm at the number proposed which was 2 and was even greater than what the applicant was proposing on the plan. Theoretically, they could all go up to 2 and they would have some significant signs on the store fronts. He thought that would be a lot of signage for what they were talking about. He reiterated that they could not get certainty short of requiring each sign to come back to them and he wasn't sure the Commission wanted that level of oversight and it would defeat the purpose of the sign program where the Commission approves it and staff administers it.

Commissioner Langille referred to Chair Campbell's comments regarding a minimum, and asked if there was such a thing as requiring a minimum sign.

Planning Director White stated that he had never heard of that, but he wasn't saying it wasn't within the realm of a sign program. He stated that his experience was that, when you create a sign maximum, that was what people strive for, and it was rare that someone would choose a smaller sign. While he acknowledged that there might be such an instance, proportionately it would look odd. He hasn't heard of that, but he thought they could craft a minimum as well as a maximum, adding that, if they did that, staff would want to crunch numbers to make sure signs can fall within the minimum and maximum easily or they might be setting themselves up for a different problem.

Commissioner Langille agreed, adding that she didn't know how Extreme Pizza's sign would fit in there. If businesses change hands and a corporation owner comes in with their specific needs or it changes to a unique business, it seemed that the point of the master sign program was to have a number for each sign. She did think the 2.0 was too large, but she didn't want individual owners to keep coming back, because she thought that was onerous and a waste of resources. She didn't know if the Commission could find a middle ground, stating that she threw the 1.0 out there because they didn't want anyone to exceed these signs. She didn't think a minimum was necessary because she thought every owner wants their business to be seen from as far away as possible and be visible, but she was open to other comments.

Commissioner Gordon thought he was in favor of a simple approach and agreed with Commissioner Langille's comments of staying away from creating too many conditions on what was in front of them. He would like to approve a plan that gave the store owners maximum flexibility to come up with signs that they think will work. He didn't think that would be very workable so he was in favor of a master plan with a number. He thought Commissioner Brown had an interesting idea, and he liked the idea of a formula for consistency, but if you leave it with a number that all the store fronts have to match in the aggregate, the people who were there earlier would have a leg up on those coming later, because they can take up a larger percentage of the pie and leave later people at a disadvantage which didn't seem fair. He also didn't think it would meet the uniformity issues on a store front by store front basis. He thought he had basically shot down everyone's plans. He was in favor of approving a number but he would like more information on what other communities do and was .75 the standard for the maximum. He asked if they had any data on that.

Planning Director White didn't believe they had that readily available from other communities but that was work that they could do. He wasn't sure how it would have any bearing on this proposal or other sign programs that exist in the community. He agreed that they needed to do some more number crunching to give them the information they need to figure out what a reasonable limit or exception was. Their approach was that they couldn't support the exception so that was the recommendation they made. He agreed that, if they would like to get more information, there were ways to crunch the numbers and get other information to help them make a decision, although he wasn't suggesting that they continue the item but could provide the numbers if desired.

Commission Gordon acknowledged that economic times were difficult and he would be in favor of going as high as possible while staying within the aesthetic guidelines that exist in our area. He was in favor of going over .75, then asked if there was a time urgency on this.

Planning Director White thought it would be a question for the owner, adding that for the most part all the spaces are occupied and he thought they would be interested in having signage.

Commissioner Gordon was interested in getting information to find out how we fit in. If we were on the bottom with the most restrictive signage allowed, he would be inclined to go higher than the norm, but he felt he was flying blind.

Commissioner Brown stated that, when going to the area now, there were canvas signs up which appeared to be smaller than what was proposed, and they still provided pretty good visibility. He stated that he wasn't comfortable going up to the proposed size. He thought limiting it at 1 square foot would take some of the signs down by 40-50% and that might be a little too low for

him. He thought what they were seeing felt and looked a little too big, and he was worried about making an exception that was so far outside the range of what everything else was. In keeping with uniformity and visibility, he would like to come up with a formula that makes sense. He was fine with his proposal to come up with a formula on total linear footage which was thought by some to be unmanageable, but he would like to know if there was some solution where they can take a look at a stretch of properties rather than individual properties. He also would like to be sure the data coming to them the next time went through staff's calculators and they were looking at the square footage and plans and it tied together. He suggested one other component that made some of the signs jump out was the height. He thought a long name with small letters, such as AnnaBee's, would not be as visible as a shorter name that was very tall might be. He then mentioned Commissioner Evan's point of looking at the font size and coming up with some consistency that way. He reiterated that there might be a formula for the exception that takes them as a whole, provides a cap on any one sign, square footage or maximum height, and they might be able to avoid the issue of a Johnnie-come-lately left with a business card stapled above his door. He would like to see that worked on, with the goals of visibility and uniformity that also caps them so they don't stand out and leaves room for the next people coming down the road and it won't have to come before the Commission and will last the life of the shopping center.

Commissioner Leon thought it was time for the applicant to return and join in on questions and answers. He referred to AnnaBee's sign, and stated that he had some questions about the calculations and dimensions. He stated that, on AnnaBee's, the height seemed to be determined by the tallest letter and the value was the same, even in the lower case letters, as far as the calculation goes which was why it didn't stand out even though it has a bigger number than most of the other ones. He thought that it was important that they have an exact reliable number as far as the calculation of the sign. He thought they took a generic approach with AnnaBee's, and it didn't match up that they were the same size as Nor-Cal or more than twice the size of Nona's and 50% bigger than La Playa. He asked that they get as accurate a number as they can which would help him. He assumed he was asking for a letter by letter calculation, based on earlier statements that each letter will be individually put up, and it wasn't like a billboard sign being put on the wall.

Planning Director White stated that the code did explain how signage was measured. He then read the code, which stated that it was based on the smallest rectangle, circle, square or triangle which can be drawn to encompass all the letters or symbols. He stated that the formula was very typical of many sign ordinances.

Commissioner Leon concluded that the small letter gets the same value as the large one.

Planning Director White reiterated that it was the rectangle, square or circle that can contain all the letters or symbols and they cannot really fiddle with that.

Commissioner Leon thought it was good information for the applicant so that, as the signs are being designed, they know what the impact is from the calculation. He wasn't clear on that and appreciated the information. He asked the applicant if, in talking with each business person, he could communicate with them regarding what he heard from the Commission and ask them what they can come up with on alternative sizes.

Mr. Chen stated that he was encouraged by their discussion and the possibility of a workable solution for everyone. He agreed to talk to the owners and the sign company.

Commissioner Leon asked if he thought it was worthwhile to communicate with the businesses in the center to summarize for them that some signs were way out of size in relation to the others and whether there were some adjustments that can be made on the larger signs.

Mr. Chen agreed that they should discuss that. He didn't think the sign company discussed the overall picture when they talked with the businesses, but he felt they could bring it up now.

Commissioner Leon stated that they would not want to force a solution when they are part of the solution, adding that they could come back with a solution that was different than what was in front of the Commission now.

Mr. Chen referred to one of the questions of whether this was urgent, and stated that they have already been waiting two years and he thought they could wait a bit longer. They were so close, and he would like to get the signs up.

Commissioner Leon stated that this means they would have a continuance and they will ask him when he thinks he can come back. He asked the applicant how much time he would need.

Mr. Chen thought a couple of weeks would be enough time.

Planning Director White thought the earliest meeting that he could come back would be the first meeting in June and, if he wasn't ready, they could continue it further.

Mr. Chen agreed with that time frame.

Commissioner Leon stated that they could continue their deliberations knowing he would come back with some changes. He thought they would continue talking and he would get more information.

Commissioner Evans appreciated Commissioner Leon's comments, as well as everyone else, adding that he thought they needed to give the applicant a little bit more direction rather than just telling him to come back with a better idea. He thought High Tide, La Playa and Nona's weren't an issue at all. Because of AnnaBee's spread out design, it looked smaller than all the others. He was only having an issue with Nor-Cal and the Fog Zone, and he thought limiting letter height would correct the problem. He pointed out that in other shopping centers, except for large stores such as Safeway, most of the signs were equal in height regardless of the number of letters. He reiterated that, if they can get Nor-Cal and Fog Zone down to a more reasonable look compared to the others, he would have no problems so he was pushing for a letter height limit.

Chair Campbell liked Commissioner Evans' comments that they needed to give the applicant some guidance. He thought a continuance was in the cards, and they were in agreement that, because of the location, they needed bigger signs. He wasn't interested in staff doing a comparison of what other communities do. With respect to Commissioner Gordon, he thought this was a unique parcel and he didn't know if that was the best use of staff time. He also liked Commissioner Langille's idea of picking a number, and he would say that they should aim at between 1 and 1.5 if they are picking a number.

Commissioner Langille thought some number might be helpful. She also thought a letter height would work and provide uniformity. She doubted that anyone would take over five store fronts

and be limited by a height. She agreed with Chair Campbell regarding getting information on other communities because this was a unique place, and Pacifica also has a unique feel and look. She didn't think staff needed to work on that.

Commissioner Gordon was trying to determine the letter height on Nor-Cal and he thought it said 43 inches.

Planning Director White stated that, again, it was not actually the letter height. Because of the nature of the sign and logo, they created a large rectangle which included all the copy. The 43 was not the letter height of any individual letter, but was somewhat smaller. He stated that was the difficulty when you have to use the calculation in the code to measure the area of the signage. He agreed with Commissioner Gordon's thoughts that strictly limiting letter height may not get you there, but it might be on the right track. He compared Nona's and Fog Zone, stating that Nona's maximum letter size was actually larger than the Fog Zone. While people seemed to think the Fog Zone was a larger sign, it was actually smaller but the store front was smaller.

Commissioner Gordon commented that the Fog Zone was within the average range in terms of letter height compared to the other stores, but it was also using all caps, adding that he would use caps also to get attention. He added that he didn't want to burden staff because of his request for more information, and was agreeable with the feelings of the rest of the Commission.

Planning Director White responded that, anecdotally, sign ordinances typically used something along the lines of 1 to 1 or less, going a bit higher in intense urban areas.

Commissioner Brown liked the direction that the discussion was going. He requested that the owners bring similar information which includes the sign for Extreme Pizza just so they have a picture of all the signs and aren't leaving one out.

Mr. Chen stated that they were not going to have a new sign for Extreme Pizza.

Commissioner Brown understood that, but he was just requesting the information.

Commissioner Leon stated that there was one other item that they have not considered yet, which was that all the signs were going to be back lit and they will have illumination onto the highway at night and they haven't seen that before. They haven't considered the impact of the size of the signs when they go with light, adding that he thought it would be a good attention getter. He reiterated that they were all going to have the illumination from now on. He referred to AnnaBee's signs, and made a suggestion for her to consider. He suggested that, instead of two small AnnaBee's with the specialization in small letters under both, perhaps they could have one larger AnnaBee's and a specification for each service over the entry of each one. Since they were the same business, he thought they could have AnnaBee's more prominent and the two sides of the business. He agreed that there should be some direction on the size of the letters and he thought it was understood that the size was smaller than the calculation for the two big ones. He would like the signs to be on the conservative side, closer to La Playa. He thought the sign sizes were generous at that calculation. He then complimented the applicant on the progress to date on the shopping center.

Chair Campbell thanked Commissioner Leon for raising the issue of the night illumination. He liked the back lit signage, and he thought the signs were set back far enough from the highway

and the residences that it would not be an issue, but he was curious about the thoughts of the Commissioners.

Commissioner Evans agreed that the signs will look very nice back lit, commenting that he was just recently down there at night and he thought it was pretty dark at that end. He thought any lighting would be a huge improvement. He stated that Fresh and Easy, with all the windows and light, has changed the southern end for illumination and he thought it was a lot safer for people going out to their car. He thought the lighting would actually be an improvement over what it was now. He also agreed with the 20 inch height at La Playa as being a maximum. While he didn't have a problem with the 1.25, he didn't want to see the smaller ones go up to that size so they had to look at all of them, but he wouldn't mind seeing the others come down.

Commissioner Gordon suggested that, since staff has listened to their concerns, they could work with Mr. Chen and come up with a new plan in a collaborative way. He was in favor of a number and it was fine if it exceeds .75, but they were looking for greater uniformity across the signs. He thought the lack of uniformity could be caused by the two stores using all caps and the other signs could look out of place if they were using all caps. He wanted to avoid beating the horse to death and he reiterated that it might make sense for staff and the applicant to collaborate on a revision and come back to the Commission.

Chair Campbell thought that was a good suggestion by Commissioner Gordon. He thought they had some guidance and they did reach a consensus that they warrant larger signs.

Mr. Chen thanked them for opening up the door.

Commissioner Leon moved that the Planning Commission **CONTINUE** S-109-11 and SE-28-11, sign permit and sign exception, to a date certain, June 6, 2011; Commissioner Langille seconded the motion.

The motion carried **6-0**.

Ayes: Commissioners Brown, Gordon, Langille, Leon, Evans
and Chair Campbell
Noes: None

COMMISSION COMMUNICATIONS:

Commissioner Langille wasn't sure if this was the right time to bring it up, but she had not responded to Planning Director White's memo regarding additional meetings on the General Plan existing condition and sea level rise. She apologized for the delay which was due to being out of town. She was interested in moving forward with a sea level rise presentation and looking into coordinating with the Climate Action Plan Task Force for a joint presentation. She was co-chair of that task force and would talk to the other co-chair regarding a presentation.

Planning Director White stated that they had inquired already and the co-chair was receptive. He thought they might be talking in the coming week about a possible time for a presentation on the sea level rise issue.

Commissioner Leon stated that he met with the Planning Director regarding the General Plan Existing Condition Report and discussed the subject matter within the report and the possibility of having an agenda item or a study session. His preference was a study session because it was non-binding and there were no minutes which saved on staff recording time. He was looking forward to either option. He thought it was a good idea to have the climate committee involved on a presentation on sea level rising. He felt it was an urgent subject matter, adding that Pacifica was directly impacted by such occurrences. He also reiterated his desire to hold reviews of prior approved projects to see if there was anything they can learn from such reviews. He mentioned that he had gone to the auto repair district to have his car repaired, and the dog Rec Center was next door. He visited it and was thoroughly impressed with the business, adding that the compatibility of various businesses was amazing. He also reviewed the Connemara project's final landscaping plan. The Commission had conditioned the landscaping. He had received some calls regarding the lack of landscaping on Oceana Boulevard on the rear of some of the most visible properties, and found out that there were no landscaping requirements on the back of those properties. He thought they could learn from that. He mentioned that he had reviewed the traffic study in connection with Walgreen's and found that the concern over anticipated gridlock had been documented as being non-existent. He thought the plan has worked well, although there were issues regarding wrong way traffic behind the access driveway. He hoped to hear from his fellow commissioners whether they saw any value in revisiting prior approved projects to see how they came out and if they could gain any knowledge from that. He and the Planning Director also discussed the possibility of joint study sessions with the City Council and he saw value in touching base and reviewing any mutual agenda items to benefit planning in Pacifica.

Planning Director White thought it summed up their conversation. He responded that the concept of revisiting approved projects once they were built was something he was familiar with and had done that, sometimes referred to as "orchid and onion" tours to see what was good and what was not so good. He stated that he would have to look to the Commission to select the projects to be put on the list for a tour, affirming that it would have to be a regularly scheduled and noticed Planning Commission meeting because they would all be in attendance. He thought it was worth doing as a practical way of seeing what happens on the ground rather than theoretically looking at a set of plans. He thought it was good for the staff to look at them as well. He thought they could work together to get something organized, although he didn't know how long it would take. He reiterated that it was worth doing and something they could pursue. He was open if the rest of the commissioners were agreeable and they could get a list and contact those associated with the projects to be present. One caveat on the Existing Conditions Report was that it was finalized but had to go to the City Council for their final blessing. They hoped to get it on an agenda at the end

of May or beginning of June, adding that there was some timing issues that they have to consider. He mentioned that there was also the Alternatives Report coming their way. They originally expected it to come to them in the second meeting in June. He mentioned that when the existing conditions report goes to Council for a final blessing, he thought it would be worthwhile to have a Commissioner there to talk about what should be done to get this information out to the community and possibly get some explicit direction from the Council, on further public outreach. He referred to the possibility of joint meetings, stating that there was no regular schedule for joint meetings and it was on a somewhat topical basis. He suggested that, if the Commission had any topics they were interested in for a joint meeting, they could move forward through the Mayor or City Manager to figure out a time when they could have such a joint meeting.

Commissioner Evans liked the idea of reviewing past projects and was supportive of it, however, he didn't want to add additional time to staff because of the budget crunch.

Planning Director White admitted that there was a budget crunch, but they still had staff. He stated that it wasn't particularly crunch time so it might be a worthwhile exercise in which everyone can participate. He was willing to do it, and they might have to do it on a weekend because it would probably have to be during the day. He reiterated that, if they were willing, staff was willing to work it out. They could return with a proposal and see what the Commission thinks.

Commissioner Evans was up for whenever they wanted to do it and, if he gets staff's approval on the time, it was fine with him.

Chair Campbell agreed that Commissioner Leon's idea of looking at past projects was a good one, and he would be interested in pursuing that further. He also appreciated the recommendation that they get direction from Council with regard to the most valuable discussion pertaining to the General Plan. He was also interested in the results of the consultant's evaluation of the highest and best use for the Beach Boulevard property, adding that he would be happy to be kicked out of the building and have something economically useful happen for the town. He was interested in kick starting that, and thought the Commission was ready, willing and able to lend support there.

Planning Director White explained that he didn't have all the details about what was going on, but there was a highest and best use report which he thought was well received by the Council. They directed the City Manager to go into an arrangement with that consultant to do more work and they will be returning with a more detailed plan. He stated that he can pass their interests along to the City Manager about the role of the Planning Commission, adding that anything that happens on the site would include the Commission because it will involve entitlement, zone changes, General Plan changes, etc., and the Commission would be a participant in that. He will pass that along, although he didn't know what the status of that work would entail. He stated that he will find out and pass it along.

Commissioner Langille was interested in being involved in the process for this property and she was also interested in a review of past projects, possibly in late afternoon or early evening.

Commissioner Gordon agreed that they should have meetings about the alternative use for this building. He also thought it was a great idea to review past projects.

Commissioner Brown supported the suggestion to revisit approved projects, adding that it was a great way to have a closed loop system. He asked if the highest and best use report on this property was posted on line.

Planning Director White stated that it was on the City website, and he assumed it probably still was. He added that, if he looks and he cannot find it, he can let him know and he will get him a copy.

Chair Campbell clarified that it was on the City website.

Commissioner Leon acknowledged Chair Campbell's suggestion and he was in support of that, adding that they have anticipated something happening at this property for so long and it was great to have the report out. He was for any assistance they can give to move it along and make something happen.

STAFF COMMUNICATIONS:

None.

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS:

None.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business for discussion, Commissioner Gordon moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:50 p.m.; Commissioner Leon seconded the motion.

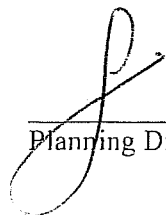
The motion carried **6-0**.

Ayes: Commissioners Brown, Gordon, Langille, Leon, Evans
and Chair Campbell
Noes: None

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara Medina
Public Meeting Stenographer

APPROVED:



Planning Director White

