MINUTES

CITY OF PACIFICA	
PLANNING COMMISSION	June 6, 2011
COUNCIL CHAMBERS	
2212 BEACH BOULEVARD	7:00 p.m.

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

ROLL CALL:	Present:	Commissioners Brown, Clifford, Gordon, Langille, Leon, Evans and Chair Campbell
	Absent:	None
SALUTE TO FLAG:		Led by Chair Campbell
STAFF PRESENT:		Planning Director White Assistant Planner Farbstein
APPROVAL OF ORDER OF AGENDA		Commissioner Leon moved approval of the Order of Agenda; Commissioner Evans seconded the motion.

The motion carried **7-0.**

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

Commissioner Brown asked that the minutes be corrected to include his name on roll call, as well as on all motions.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: MAY 16, 2011	Commissioner Clifford moved approval of the minutes of May 16, 2011 as amended; Commissioner Evans seconded the motion.

The motion carried **6-0-1.**

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

DESIGNATION OF LIAISON TO CITY COUNCIL MEETING OF JUNE 13, 2011:

Planning Director White talked about the final version of the existing conditions report for the General Plan, mentioning the process done prior to this final step and he thought it might be a good idea to have a representative from the Planning Commission.

Chair Campbell stated that he would attend as the liaison.

CONSENT ITEMS:

None.

PUBLIC HEARINGS:

S-109-11 **SE-28-11** **SIGN PERMIT and SIGN EXCEPTION, filed by the owner, 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 Clifford referred to the possible discrepancy on how they calculated the size of the signs. If there was a discrepancy, he asked if they could explain it so they were clear on what they were looking at.

Assistant Planner Farbstein stated that the issue was on how the City calculated the area of the sign which was to put a rectangle, square or circle, such as in Nona's kitchen, where they were rectangular and both signs and lines were the same length, but the Fog Zone has a rectangular box over both lettering even though the smoke shop was smaller. She stated that the sign contractor did individual boxes for the Fog Zone and they were coming up with a smaller number than staff. She stated that the signs in question were the signs of Fog Zone and NorCal.

Commissioner Clifford asked what the Fog Zone works out to as staff calculated vs the sign contractor.

Assistant Planner Farbstein thought it was closer to 1.5.

Commissioner Clifford concluded that they would have to do some reduction to make that work.

Assistant Planner Farbstein agreed.

Planning Director White added that, if they approve a sign program, each individual tenant would still be required to get an individual sign permit at that point, and they would verify that the ratio approved by the Commission would apply.

Commissioner Clifford stated that his purpose in bringing it up was for clarification.

Mr. Chen, owner, thanked the Commissioners for their guidance which led to the modifications and also thanked staff for their support of the revision. He stated that they were looking forward to getting the new signs to make the center more beautiful.

Commissioner Evans asked, if they approved this at this time, whether it would be a problem for the one or two signs over the size to be lowered.

Mr. Chen didn't think it would because they tried to help them get what they think they need and they had to justify what they wanted.

Commissioner Evans agreed with staff that it was really just a mistake on how they calculated the signs.

Commissioner Clifford first commented that, even though he was absent when this project came before the Commission, he was watching the meeting on TV, which enabled him to be up to speed on what was happening at this time.

Mr. Chen asked if he was on TV too.

Commissioner Clifford stated that he was, and was also on TV now.

Mr. Chen stated that he hoped it would not be the last time.

Commissioner Clifford stated that his question revolved around a monument sign. He recalled that Commissioner Leon had asked about a monument sign, and Mr. Chen had commented that the property line was not up to the road that ran in front of the mall.

Mr. Chen responded that he was correct.

Commissioner Clifford asked how far back it was, in terms of the NE corner of the mall, from the line.

Mr. Chen stated that the NE corner was almost up to the City's access road.

Commissioner Clifford asked if it was 20 feet or more.

Mr. Chen thought that it just got to the top of the walkway.

Commissioner Clifford asked confirmation that the property line ran up to that point.

Mr. Chen responded affirmatively.

Chair Campbell opened the Public Hearing.

Chris Porter, President of Pacifica Chamber of Commerce, stated that she was present with Courtney Conlon, who was the CEO of the Chamber. She congratulated the Commission on taking this step forward. She stated that she has been in business in Pacifica for 26 years and felt that previous Commissions had done quite a lot to stagnate business in the town with all the restrictions. She referred to the proposed increase in size which she thought was great because signage was the major part of advertising a business, and if people don't see the signs, there was no reason to stop. She then expressed concern about the fact that, even if it was passed, every business had to come back individually with their sign for approval. She felt that they have given restrictions but every business had to come up again. She asked if she was wrong.

Chair Campbell stated that the Planning Director would answer when she finished.

Ms. Porter thought if she was wrong, it was great, but she felt we needed to work on streamlining the processes. She added that the Planning Director was meeting with the Chamber the next day. She felt they all had the same reasons, bringing money into the City. The business people can do it, but they needed cooperation from the Planning Commission. She added that the lot needed to be paved and striped. She stated that she saw a lady take a fall. She also felt there was green waste which needed to be cleaned up. She suggested that they call her and she would pick it up. She asked that they clarify her question.

Planning Director White explained that the signs didn't have to return to the Planning Commission for approval, but there was a sign permit required to ensure that it adhered to the applicable building regulations, etc., and there was a ministerial process to get a permit at the City level.

Ms. Porter reiterated the process and asked whether they could get things moving within a couple of days.

Planning Director White stated that, in some cases, it could be merely an over the counter permit, adding that he couldn't speak for the building side.

Ms. Porter was pleased, adding that some of the restaurants were involved in Taste of Pacifica and needed the patronage.

Chair Campbell closed the Public Hearing.

Chair Campbell asked if the applicant wanted to return to respond to the paving issue which was raised.

Mr. Chen asked if they were talking about the striping.

Chair Campbell stated he thought the speaker from the Chamber was asking about the striping and the repaving.

Mr. Chen explained that they hadn't been required to stripe in the northern part of the parking lot in the past. He then explained the process with the Planning staff to do the striping, adding that they might do more than they needed.

Commissioner Evans referred to the previous meeting when the owner mentioned that he had planned on doing some paving and remarking. While he understood the applicant's plight of not knowing how many parking spots were needed, he asked if he had planned on paving or resurfacing the northern section.

Mr. Chen stated that, for the northern section, they were thinking about the seal coating and they were agreeing to whatever was required.

Commissioner Leon agreed that this conversation took him back to the first meeting but it had nothing to do with the application. He recalled that they were so complimentary to the applicant about what he planned for the parking lot such as the paving and striping.

Commissioner Gordon asked the Planning Director on what type of followup had happened as far as the unapproved uses in the parking lot and the handicapped spaces, referring to the unauthorized setting up of picnic tables in the handicapped spots.

Planning Director White thought that they had resolved the issue of unapproved use and the striping and handicapped issues were waiting until the applicant had returned with a new plan which they felt was the appropriate time to deal with it.
Commissioner Gordon reiterated that they were planning on the improvements and staff could help him and would confirm that they were meeting all the standards especially for handicapped accessibility. He asked the applicant if he had a plan to repave the lot.

Mr. Chen stated that they were in the process of repairing it and bringing the quality up.

Commissioner Gordon commented that the Fresh and Easy portion of the parking lot looked nice and paved, and it now looked like a rich man's half and the rest was the poor man's half.

Mr. Chen thought it was nice to have a rich man as a neighbor, but they were trying very hard to do what was needed.

Commissioner Gordon commented that it sounded as though there was really nothing on the table in the near term.

Mr. Chen reiterated that there was a permit in progress which was not done yet. The striping plan was approved, but they were going to review the number needed. He didn't think striping was hard and they would come to a new understanding. He didn't think it was a big deal.

Commissioner Gordon mentioned that the Chamber president had made a good point and they were merely following up on it. He felt they all wanted to see the aesthetics of the parking lot improved and they were excited about what he was bringing to the table.

Commissioner Clifford summed up that he was getting ready to do a seal coat or slurry coat, and they had a plan on the striping. He asked if he was hearing correctly that the owner was planning on a slurry coat and working on getting the parking restriped as they get the spaces set up.

Mr. Chen stated that they were also doing repairs.

Commissioner Clifford reiterated that they were doing repairs, a slurry coat and then stripe at some point in time.

Mr. Chen stated that they were doing the repairs first, followed by a seal coat and finishing with striping it.

Commissioner Clifford asked if that was the plan and what he was in the process of doing.

Mr. Chen confirmed that he was correct.

Commissioner Langille asked staff if they were mindful that the runoff from the parking goes into the creek, and she thought they needed an additional layer of oversight regarding what they were putting on the parking lot and what was going into the creek, adding that she understood that it would not be a permeable surface. She concluded that she loved for the parking lot to be improved.

Commissioner Evans brought up the fact that they weren't there for anything to do with the parking lot, but only what was in front of them. He was trying to get them off the topic. He referred to one comment made by the Chamber president, and felt that he and his fellow commissioners were trying to streamline and push for Pacifica business improvements by helping them as much as they can, although he acknowledged that she was referring to past members, not the present Commission. He felt they were trying to change things, and he knew the Planning Director was also. He applauded him for that.

Commissioner Leon reviewed things. He appreciated staff's explanation of the process, and approving what was before them allowed staff to issue permits and get the work done in the office without having to return to the Commission every time they wanted to do something. He added that there was value in the review because staff was looking at each individual sign to verify that they were adhering to the intended dimensions which was reassuring to him. He was in favor of granting the exception in the application. He thought they had a basis of justification why this location should have the exception compared to other locations. He also felt the feel of businesses had a special quality and the signs were not competing with each other but, rather, there was a unique character to each business and they were looking forward to the future with the opening of the tunnel, etc., and they would see a great increase in foot traffic, etc., to take advantage of the expected increase in pedestrian use. He was pleased and felt that, as far as the application, it was reasonable and would work out well.

Commissioner Langille echoed Commissioner Leon's comments, stating that, in this case, an exception was justified because of the visibility from the highway. She thought the applicant did a great job in compromising, adding that the signs looked great and staff did a great job making everything come together.

Commissioner Clifford stated that he was on board with the variance and he liked the signs and was also appreciative of what staff and the applicant have done. He also wanted to introduce an idea which Commissioner Leon had mentioned at the previous meeting which was the monument sign. He stated that, in the program, there was no monument sign asked for, and he suggested that they approve a monument that meets current code as part of the master sign program to be approved administratively by the Planning Director if the owner decides at a future date to put in a monument sign. He felt a monument would truly put the mall on the map. He commented that everyone else had a monument, and even Taco Bell had a monument on the highway. He reiterated that he was asking that they include it in the master sign program. It would be generic because it would have to meet the current rules and, if they wanted a variance in the future, they would have to come back to the Commission. He reiterated that he would like a monument sign folded into the master plan that was presented to them and allow staff to authorize it if asked for in order to save the applicant the trouble of coming back if he decides he really wants a monument sign.

Commissioner Brown thanked the applicant for investing in his property. He felt that they were all impressed in the progress made and the investment and they hoped he continued to do so. He also thanked him for the work done to clear up all the questions the Commission had and made it easier for them to go through and compare the signs. He also thanked Planning Director White and his staff for going through the details to make it easier for review and decision making.

Commissioner Gordon echoed all the comments. He felt the 1.25 ratio made more sense than the previous 2-1 ratio. He felt there was a factual basis for the exception given the unique location.

He was going to make a motion until Commissioner Clifford introduced the monument sign. He stated that he was uncomfortable with making an amendment and giving the director the okay to approve a monument sign, mostly for procedural reasons. He liked the idea of the public having a chance to look at what was going to be proposed and weigh in on it. He felt that, if a monument sign was going to be on the table, the public should know and if they have any views on it, they should have a chance to comment. He would not be in favor of doing it in that manner.

Chair Campbell also commended the applicant for investing in his property. He felt it was looking better now. He echoed Commissioner Gordon's concerns, agreeing that the public might benefit from seeing it. He recalled the monument sign for the Safeway, adding that the Commission had a lot of useful things to say about it. He felt it was a good idea to come back for discussion. He agreed that a monument sign made a lot of sense, and he hoped that idea would come back before them so they can grant a clear pathway for the applicant to proceed with a monument sign if he chooses.

Commissioner Langille liked the idea of a monument sign for the shopping center, adding that it would be a great improvement. She was undecided but then felt getting public input was a good idea, especially since it could affect coastal views and she was inclined to put off approval of a monument sign, even though she thought it was appropriate for the shopping center.

Commissioner Clifford stated that the monument sign was a good idea which was why he raised the idea at the previous meeting. He was impressed with these signs, and thought illumination would be a special feature for the businesses for that part of town. He saw Taco Bell as being different because he thought the Taco Bell building had no identification sign on it, with the only sign being the monument sign (clarification: Taco Bell does have a wall sign). He agreed that he would want to look at a monument sign in that location for all the reasons brought up, as well as seeing how the center settles in with the new signs, and taking a measured approach. He gave merit to Commissioner Clifford's idea, but he thought it was too much too soon.

Commissioner Evans commended Mr. Chen for his efforts and achievements so far, having sold the new ideas to his businesses, and returning with what the Commission was asking for. He felt it would be a huge improvement. He asked staff about the monument sign which was not in the present proposal and he felt that, while he liked the idea of a monument sign, he didn't like it now. He appreciated all the comments made by his fellow commissioners and Commissioner Clifford's efforts to streamline things. He wasn't comfortable with adding it and asked staff for their thoughts.

Planning Director White agreed that it wasn't being suggested or requested, but if the applicant was agreeable, they could come to some arrangement if they added it. He felt it was clear to him that the Commission had an interest in reviewing such a sign if it happened in the future and, procedurally, it wouldn't make much sense unless they had the sign in front of them now to look at which they don't. He added that the applicant can always come back and amend their sign program at any time and it would come to the Commission. He thought it would be simpler at this time to put it aside and, if the owner decides they want to pursue a monument sign, they could come back before the Commission and review it in detail.

Commissioner Evans agreed with staff, adding that if they want it down the road, he felt it should come back before them for public comment. He was in favor of the proposal as it stands.

Commissioner Gordon thanked Commissioner Clifford for his out of box thinking.

Commissioner Gordon moved that the Planning Commission find that the project is exempt from CEQA per Section 15301 (g) and **APPROVE** S-109-11 and move that the Planning Commission **APPROVE** SE-28-11. The approvals are subject to conditions 1 through 4, and include adoption of findings contained in the June 6, 2011 Agenda Memo, and the incorporation of all maps and testimony into the record by reference; Commissioner Clifford seconded the motion.

The motion carried **7-0.**

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

Chair Campbell declared that anyone aggrieved by the action of the Planning Commission has ten (10) calendar days to appeal the decision in writing to the City Council.

COMMISSION COMMUNICATIONS:

None.

STAFF COMMUNICATIONS:

None.

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS:

Maureen Murray, owner of Annabee's and Club Annabee's, stated that she didn't have a chance to review the plans that were submitted.

Chair Campbell stated that this looked like a comment of something on the agenda and the time period has passed for that.

Ms. Murray stated that she might have to appeal it if they change her logo.

Chair Campbell stated that she could take that up with the Planning Department, and it looked like Mr. White would help her out.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business for discussion, Commissioner Clifford moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:45 p.m.; Commissioner Langille seconded the motion.

The motion carried **7-0.**

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

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara Medina
Public Meeting Stenographer

APPROVED:

Planning Director White