

**CITY OF MANHATTAN BEACH
[DRAFT] PLANNING COMMISSION
MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING
NOVEMBER 12, 2014**

A Regular Meeting of the Planning Commission of the City of Manhattan Beach, California, was held on the 12th day of November, 2014, at the hour of 6:30 p.m., in the City Council Chambers, at 1400 Highland Avenue, in said City.

1. ROLL CALL

Present: Vice-Chair Andreani, Bordokas, Conaway, Hersman
Absent: Chairperson Ortmann
Staff Present: Richard Thompson, Community Development Director
Eric Haaland, Associate Planner
Rosemary Lackow, Recording Secretary

2. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION - None

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – September 24, 2014

A motion was MADE and SECONDED (Hersman / Bordokas) to **APPROVE** the minutes of September 24, 2014 with one change to page 3, fourth paragraph from the top of the page, first line, as follows:

“Commissioner Andreani suggested that perhaps the ~~working~~ wording of the existing parking code.....”

AYES: Bordokas, Hersman, Vice-Chair Andreani
NOES: None
ABSENT: Chairperson Ortmann, Conaway
ABSTAIN: None

Commissioner Conaway arrived at 6:35 just after approval of minutes.

4. GENERAL BUSINESS

11/12/14-2. Consideration of a Sign Exception for Projecting Signs on an Existing Office Building at 1888 Rosecrans Avenue (Continental Development Aviation LP)

Director Thompson introduced Associate Planner Eric Haaland who gave a power point presentation, with an overview of the application and summarizing the staff report. Mr. Haaland noted that the address for this site has been changed from 3601 N. Aviation to 1888 Rosecrans Avenue and the building is currently undergoing an extensive remodeling, which includes a new Sign Program to more predominantly identify the building and future tenants. Mr. Haaland explained all the proposed signs in the Sign Program which includes two “projecting signs” (perpendicular and not parallel to the street) and two monument signs that require approval of a “Sign Exception”. Mr. Haaland concluded that Staff recommends that the Commission accept public testimony and subject to testimony, adopt the submitted Resolution of approval.

Staff responded to questions from the Commission.

To Commissioner Conaway, Associate Planner Haaland responded that one condition proposed in the Resolution requires that a proposed corner monument/pole sign identify the project corner as an entry into Manhattan Beach. This is not an official City entry sign as those at other entries to the City, but Staff saw this as an opportunity to work with the applicant to identify the City of Manhattan Beach on the proposed sign.

Commissioner Hersman commented that she found the word “necessary” that is included in one of the required findings that states: “The proposed Sign Exception is **necessary** in order that the applicant may not be deprived unreasonably in the use or enjoyment of their property.”

Responding to questions from Commissioner Andreani, Associate Planner Haaland stated that the preliminary Sign Program was brought to the City staff for review fairly recently during the remodeling design process. Regarding potential for setting precedence, Mr. Haaland explained that commercial Sign Exceptions are much more common and have different criteria or findings compared to Variances and it is possible that similar sign proposals that have projecting types signs could come before the Commission in the future but they would similarly be subject to a Sign Exception approval. Director Thompson added that all Sign Exceptions would come before the Planning Commission for review on a case by case basis; therefore this approval would not be considered precedent setting. Further Mr. Thompson noted that the City’s Sign Code is relatively restrictive. Regarding the timing of the application, he noted it is not uncommon for sign programs to be developed after a project is fully designed because it is important to consider the number and needs of future tenants in the sign design.

Mr. Haaland explained for Commissioner Andreani that the words “City of Manhattan Beach” on the proposed corner monument sign at Rosecrans and Aviation would be supplementary sign copy, smaller than and subscript, or beneath “Continental Park”. The effect is similar to Continental Park properties in El Segundo.

In response to a question from Commissioner Hersman Director Thompson stated that projecting signs are prohibited in the Sign Code because they fall into a category of a sign type that generally tend to stick out visually and may contribute to unwanted sign clutter, like roof or pole signs and therefore they are more carefully regulated.

Vice-Chair Andreani invited the applicant to address the Planning Commission.

Bruce De Young representing the property owner, Continental Development, stated that the owner is very excited about updating and re-tenanting the building and the Sign Program is an integral part of the remodel project. They have read the staff report and agree to all conditions.

To Commissioner Bordokas, **Mr. De Young** clarified that the signs are intended to improve visibility of the building and tenants to people driving by on Aviation Boulevard and across Rosecrans Avenue. The owner will be doing some new landscaping work but presently they are trimming some trees. Mr. De Young noted that the building’s design with so much glass leaves little opportunity for wall signs and they felt the projecting signs were a creative way to address signage.

To Commissioner Andreani **Mr. De Young** responded that, in addition to trimming, some trees that are unhealthy will be cut out, thinning out the trees, especially along Rosecrans, and they are in the process of developing a permanent landscaping plan and all of the tenants have moved out of the building and will not be returning.

No other parties wanting to speak, Vice-Chair Andreani invited the Commission to discuss the draft Resolution.

Commissioner Hersman stated that she is comfortable with most of the Resolution but had a few comments. On page 2, at the end of condition 6 the word ”Development” appears to be missing; and she wondered why conditions 9 and 10 are included as they do not seem to be related to signage. Associate Planner Haaland responded that these are standard conditions recommended by Public Works and even though construction related to signs will be relatively minor, there will be some work that is authorized by the Sign Exception. Director Thompson further clarified that the conditions will help alleviate any related impacts of the physical sign construction that is authorized by the Commission’s planning approval.

Commissioner Conaway commented that he supports the application because he believes: overall the sign package is very good, doesn’t think that there will be any detrimental impacts, the signage is consistent

with the intent of the Sign Code in that it promotes an orderly and attractive appearance and there is an added benefit in that the City will be identified at an entry point on a monument sign. He echoed Commissioner Hersman's comment that he also thinks the word "necessary" in the required findings somewhat odd but acknowledged it is part of the code. Commissioner Conaway concluded that he finds the proposal reasonable for a relatively quiet commercial site and supports all the conditions.

Vice-Chair Andreani stated her agreement with the foregoing Commissioner comments, finding no detrimental impacts and consistency with the Sign Code and also pointed out that no part of the signs will project into the public right-of-way and believes that the signage integrates well with the building architecture, especially the new updated façade. She agrees with other comments regarding a required finding – that the Sign Exception approval is "necessary" but also understands this is part of the existing code and overall has no problems with the draft Resolution.

A motion was MADE and SECONDED (Hersman/Conaway) to **ADOPT** draft Resolution PC 14 -, approving a Sign Exception for the proposed Sign Program including projecting, pole, monument, and wall signs for an Existing Office Building at 1888 Rosecrans Avenue (Continental Rosecrans Aviation LP), with one correction to finding 6 as noted.

AYES: Bordokas, Conaway, Hersman, Vice-Chair Andreani
NOES: None
ABSENT: Chairperson Ortmann
ABSTAIN: None

Director Thompson advised that the application is approved, initiating a 15-day appeal period. The Commission's approval will be placed on the City Council agenda with recommendation to Receive and File for the meeting of December 2, 2014 unless an appeal is prior filed.

6. DIRECTOR'S ITEMS

Community Development Director Thompson noted that this was to be his last Planning Commission meeting, after 38 years in city planning, the last half which have been with Manhattan Beach. He expressed that he truly loved the planning process and particularly enjoyed working with the Commission. This announcement was followed by applause and best wishes from the Commissioners.

7. PLANNING COMMISSION ITEMS

The Planning Commissioners all thanked Director Thompson. Vice-Chair Andreani expressed that it has been a pleasure to work with him as he consistently gave reasonable and thoughtful guidance and handled many difficult issues very professionally.

Director Thompson noted that a new Director has just been selected who is coming from the City of Oceanside and will be starting December and he will stay on till then.

8. TENTATIVE AGENDA – November 26, 2014

Director Thompson indicated that there are no items scheduled so far and the meeting being the day before Thanksgiving will be canceled as will the meeting scheduled for December 24th.

9. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 7:05 pm to Wednesday, December 10, 2014 in the City Council Chambers, City Hall, 1400 Highland Avenue.

ROSEMARY LACKOW
Recording Secretary

ATTEST:

RICHARD THOMPSON
Community Development Director