

**CITY OF BELMONT**  
**PLANNING COMMISSION**  
**SUMMARY MINUTES**

**TUESDAY, MAY 4, 2010, 7:00 PM**

Chair Frautschi called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. at One Twin Pines Lane, City Hall Council Chambers.

**1. ROLL CALL**

Commissioners Present: Frautschi, Reed, Mercer, Parsons, Mayer, Horton, Mathewson  
Commissioners Absent: None

Staff Present: Community Development Director de Melo (CDD), Deputy City Attorney Kane (DCA), Recording Secretary Turning (RS),

**2. AGENDA AMENDMENTS - None**

**3. COMMUNITY FORUM (Public Comments) - None**

**4. CONSENT CALENDAR**

**4A. Minutes of April 6, 2010**

Commissioner Mayer asked that there be some recognition in the Reports, Studies and Updates discussion of the Carlmont Apartment project about his questioning how the City departments and Council became involved in the decision of the Planning Commission, without the knowledge of the Planning Commission, and where they contemplated the overturning of that decision without any process being involved.

As an aside, Commissioner Mayer would like an opinion from the City Attorney on this process.

Commissioner Parsons concurred that Commissioner Mayer's question should be on the record because there is a process for appealing a decision of the Planning Commission. He questioned whether or not the Traffic Committee has the authority to overturn a decision of the Planning Commission.

**MOTION: By Commissioner Mercer, seconded by Commissioner Parsons, to continue the Minutes of April 6, 2010 for revision, to be returned to the Commission at its next meeting.**

**Motion passed 7/0 by a show of hands.**

**5. OLD BUSINESS**

**5A. Belmont Sign Ordinance Amendments – Continued Discussion – Outstanding Questions/Issues/Policies.**

Chair Frautschi outlined the procedure to be followed for this discussion.

CDD de Melo gave the background of the Belmont Sign Ordinance and summarized the staff memorandum. He asked for feedback from the public and the Commission on the policy questions listed in the staff memorandum. A Public Hearing will follow in the near future.

Chair Frautschi asked Commissioners if they had any general questions or additions to the topics to be discussed.

Responding to Commissioner Mayer, CDD de Melo confirmed that the Commission had not previously reviewed the complete version.

Commissioner Parsons initiated discussion regarding whether or not signage would be allowed on public property and whether A-frame signs would be allowed only in designated village areas or would they be allowed throughout the entire city. Discussion further ensued regarding regulation of content of all signs, in particular the revised draft of 23.06.07 which reads: “A non commercial message of any type may be substituted in whole or in part for any duly permitted commercial message.” Chair Frautschi’s understanding of the advice received from the City Attorney was that the only limitations they have are place and overall size – i. e., structural, physical qualities but not content qualities.

Responding to Commissioner Mathewson, CDD de Melo stated that the Sign Ordinance refers to the Master Fee Schedule to determine fees relative to the type of sign.

Commissioner Mercer raised the following items for discussion:

- Referring to item 7, Changeable Copy, and item 9, Exposed Lighting, she suggested that the Commission needed to clarify its stand on internally lit signs. She believed that Changeable Copy signs can be internally lit or not, depending on if they are electronic, and that Exposed Lighting is different than internally lit; there is a category between the two that they need to discuss.
- More clarification is needed on signs on buildings three stories and taller; i.e., what the signage could be, how big it could be and whether or not it is included in part of the allowed total.
- Clarification is needed on how Commissioners feel about temporary signs in residential areas in terms of the total signage allowed.
- Clarification is needed on how long abandoned signs would be allowed to be up before they are removed.
- Clarification needed whether overall sign allotment is based on “building frontage” or “lot frontage” since the two terms are used interchangeably in the document.

Commissioner Horton wanted to discuss the ordinance vs. design guidelines for signage. She believed that the Council is concerned about how they regulate the look of a sign by ordinance and that guidelines would do that, just the same as Single-Family Design Review.

Chair Frautschi opened the meeting for public testimony.

George Burgess, representing the Chamber of Commerce and a business owner, urged that the Commission not have a one-sign-fits-all-areas policy. As an example, he believed the signage on El Camino could be very different than the signage at Carlmont because of traffic and purpose of the signs.

Mary Morrissey Parden, Belmont resident and Governmental Affairs Chair for the Chamber of Commerce, thanked Commissioners and CDD de Melo for reaching out to the community in advance of any public hearing. She asked that consideration be given to the following suggestions:

- In advance of the public hearing, they consider sending all businesses a post card with a link to the actual draft ordinance.
- Creation of other districts besides the Belmont Village District, such as El Camino Real or shopping centers.
- Discussion and clarification of banners on private or publicly owned light standards with the ability to include copy on them instead of art work only.
- Clarification of buildings that are made to look like large signs or signs looking into a window. They want to be able to understand exactly what is allowed and what is not.
- From a business perspective, business owners are not in a hurry and want to be sure that this is done right. They want to be able to come back to the Commission with a reasoned and measurable response after tonight's discussion.

Discussion ensued between the Commission, Staff and the Deputy City Attorney. Due to the late hour, The Planning Commission decided to continue this item to the following meeting for further clarification and discussion.

## **6. REPORTS, STUDIES AND UPDATES:**

CDD de Melo reported as follows:

### **6A. Ralston/US-101 Landscape Project**

No update at this time.

### **6B. San Mateo Development – North Road/43<sup>rd</sup> Avenue**

No update at this time.

### **6C. Parking Study – Downtown Village Areas**

No update at this time.

### **6D. High Speed Train (HST) Project – San Francisco to San Jose**

The community meeting to hear a presentation from the High-Speed Rail Authority on the Alternatives Analysis will be on Wednesday, May 26<sup>th</sup>, at 6:00 p.m. The format of the meeting is still under discussion.

**6E. Emmett House**

No update at this time.

**6F. 1000 South Road**

No update at this time.

**6G. US 101 Pedestrian/Bike Bridge Project**

Work will begin on the west side of 101 with the onset of dry weather and should start on the east side about the middle of June. Negotiations are ongoing with PG&E to relocate a transmission line that was found to conflict with one of the key columns. Two outreach meetings have had sparse attendance but it is expected to pick up at future meetings once noise and traffic problems begin. It is expected that there will be 50 to 55 days of total night work – it is a 300-day project – with completion scheduled for March of next year. A ground-breaking ceremony is scheduled for May 12 at 1:00 p.m. at the Sports Complex.

**Other Items**

Judge Connelly of the California Superior Court of the County of Sacramento ruled against the California Redevelopment Association that afternoon on the **\$2.3 billion raid on local redevelopment funds**. Belmont’s hit is \$2.3 million for this fiscal year and another \$500,000 in fiscal year 2010. He called this action “crippling and criminal”, adding that it will be appealed. Responding to Commissioners Horton and Chair Frautschi, CDD de Melo stated that it will not affect completion of the Emmett House or the recent purchase of lands in the Canyon, other than to raise the City’s debt. Vice Chair Reed added that the pity is that it removes the moral hazard at the State level and encourages continued state incompetence and encourages bad behavior. CDD de Melo added that there will be a measure on the November ballot that will protect local revenues from these kinds of actions in the future.

Commissioner Parsons announced that **Comcast has been installing green boxes on private property without permission**. Residents do not have to accept this and should call the police if they see it happening.

Commissioner Horton asked that all drive by the **Emmett House** to see the **paint job**.

Chair Frautschi asked Commissioners to check their email for a **memo from City Attorney Zafferano regarding the definition of family**.

Chair Frautschi invited Commissioners to contact the City Clerk if interested in attending a session on an **Introduction to Public Service** sponsored by the San Mateo County Employment Relations Consortium, to be held May 19<sup>th</sup> from 1 to 4 p.m.

CDD de Melo reminded all of the May 20<sup>th</sup> **Mayor’s State of the City address** in the Taube Room of the Belmont library at 7:30 p.m.

**7. CITY COUNCIL MEETING OF TUESDAY, MAY 11, 2010**

Liaison: Chair Frautschi  
Alternate Liaison: Commissioner Horton

**8. ADJOURNMENT:**

The meeting was adjourned at 10:00 p.m. to a Regular Planning Commission Meeting on Tuesday, May 18, 2010 at 7:00 p.m. in Belmont City Hall.

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Carlos de Melo  
Planning Commission Secretary

*CD's of Planning Commission Meetings are available in the  
Community Development Department.  
Please call (650) 595-7416 to schedule an appointment.*

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