CITY OF MANHATTAN BEACH PARKING AND PUBLIC IMPROVEMENTS COMMISSION MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING JANUARY 28, 2010

A. CALL TO ORDER

The regular meeting of the Parking and Public Improvements Commission of the City of Manhattan Beach, California, was held on the 28th day of January, 2010, at the hour of 6:35 p.m., in the City Council Chambers of City Hall, 1400 Highland Avenue, in said City.

B. ROLL CALL

Present:	Adami, Vigon, Stabile, Silver	rman and Chairman Gross.
Absent:	None.	
Staff Present:	Traffic Engineer Zandvliet, Assistant Planner Danna,	
	Acting Community Dev	velopment Director Jester,
	Management Analyst Madric	d, Lt. Harrod and Sgt. Mason,
Clerk:	Weeks.	-

C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

01/28/10-1 November 19, 2009

MOTION: Commissioner Stabile moved for the approval of the Parking and Public Improvements Commission minutes of November 19, 2009 as written. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Adami and passed by unanimous voice vote.

01/28/10-2 January 7, 2010 Joint Meeting with Parks and Recreation Commission

Commissioners Stabile and Vigon expressed their disappointment that the minutes of the joint meeting with the Parks and Recreation Commission on January 7, 2010 were not more detailed, particularly since they will be reviewed by the City Council when they considered Sand Dune Park.

D. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

None.

E. GENERAL BUSINESS

01/28/10-3 Encroachment Permit Appeal – 441 2nd Street

Assistant Planner Danna presented the staff report. He related staff's recommendation to recommend to the Council that the appeal be denied. Assistant Planner Danna described the Code requirements for fences and walls, noting that all non-conformities in the adjoining public right-of-way must be brought into compliance or removed if a house is significantly remodeled or reconstructed, or if any new significant construction is proposed in the public right-of-way. Mr. Danna shared photographs of other encroachments in the area and related the Public Works' Department's lack of objection to either keeping or removing/replacing existing trees on the subject property. He affirmed that this item was properly noticed.

In answer to questions from the Commission, Assistant Planner Danna outlined City procedures for considering encroachment requests. He explained that there are no traffic safety issues associated with the subject retaining wall; that the applicant was initially notified about the encroachment when the first set of corrections were issued during the Plan Check process; that the City typically requires a minimum replacement tree size of 36 inches, but this would be at the discretion of the Parking and Public Improvements Commission; that staff is unaware of any previous encroachment approvals similar to this request; that the Planning Commission considers issues on private property, but this involves the public right-of-way; that there is a storm drain inlet, not a sewer, on the southeast corner of the property; and that the retaining wall raises the grade in the public right-of-way. Assistant Planner Danna clarified that the property owner would like to keep the retaining wall and expand it 12 feet to the north and that the questions before the Commission are whether the retaining wall and fence should be allowed to remain and, if so, whether the wall should be expanded.

In response to a question from Commissioner Stabile, Acting Community Development Director Jester advised that trees with boxes larger than 48 inches require a crane and could present problems with utilities and house foundations, but there is nothing in the Code that says that required replacement trees cannot exceed a certain size; and that due to their large size, it would be next to impossible to replace the existing trees on the applicant's property with trees of similar size.

Audience Participation

Chairman Gross invited public input at 7:10 p.m.

Louie Tomaro, 1001 6th Street, #100, applicant's architect, presented photographs of the project and the existing wall, and a computerized model of the project/yard. He explained that the project began as a remodel; that the approval of the retaining wall 13 years ago included the grade behind it, but not the fence; that the new house is basically in the same location as the old one; that the trees contribute to the charm of the neighborhood; that there are similar encroachments at properties up and down the street, such as 441 1st Street; that the new house was designed around keeping the outside space and the area in question has a low profile; that, at worst case, the wall is 38 inches and, from grade to grade, 30 inches; that an objection expressed is due to concern over pedestrian access along Ingleside Drive; that the new fence would

be much lighter and open and it could be moved in a little bit; and that, according to their arborist, the existing trees are safe but, if the wall is removed and the grade reconfigured to be in compliance, it will be necessary to remove them.

Commissioner Vigon introduced the idea of building a raised planter around the trees to help retain them.

Mr. Tomaro advised that the trees' drip lines dictate the perimeter of any planters. He stated his awareness of the encroachment requirements at the time of the remodel application.

Commissioner Stabile voiced his impression that the applicant went into this project knowing that the plans included a non-compliant encroachment and he asked for justification to grant a variation from the standards.

Mr. Tomaro contended that there is precedence for approving the encroachment, since it was previously approved in 1997, and that a hardship would be caused in not grandfathering it; and that the encroachment is causing no harm or detriment. He explained that building a new house was cheaper than remodeling the old one and that the applicant was notified the rules would change when the project was modified from a remodel to a new house, which will be approximately 3,500 square feet.

Audience Participation

Bartlett Mel, 441 2nd Street, property owner, presented photographs of the beautiful trees adjacent to his property in the public right-of-way. Mr. Mel discussed that the retaining wall was built 13 years ago and, should it be moved three inches, the health of the trees would be at risk; that the patio would be more interesting for pedestrians to look at than flat landscaping; that the fence was installed for safety purposes after the retaining was built; that his property is one of the most attractive in the area; and that the functionality of the patio should be preserved.

Margo Mel, 441 2nd Street, stated her concern over the negative impact on her dog if a fence is not allowed.

Chairman Gross clarified that it is the retaining wall that is of major concern and that fences built to City standards are allowed.

RECESS AND RECONVENE

At 7:37 p.m. there was a recess until 7:43 p.m., when discussion of Agenda Item No. 3, Encroachment Permit Appeal – 441 2^{nd} Street, continued with all Commissioners present.

At the Commission's request, Acting Community Development Director Jester provided background information on this request and other Encroachment Permit appeals. She related her understanding that, in the past 15 years, trees on walk streets and a trellis, but no other walls, have been approved through Encroachment Permit appeals. Ms. Jester explained that Ingleside Drive is an unusual street, particularly because of the wide sloped right-of-way and very little open space on private property. This request was brought to the Commission since staff does not have the authority toapprove the request, as it does not meet the Encroachment Permit criteria.

Commission Discussion

Commissioner Adami supported an approval of the request. He voiced his opinion that the new house would enhance the neighborhood and that, other than being two-story, it would be very similar to the old one; that rules are very important, but the trees would be attractive and could be negatively impacted if the slope is altered; and that the retaining wall and fence would provide for the property owners' private enjoyment of their yard, for the family and their dog.

Commissioner Stabile recalled a previous trellis encroachment request where the Commission felt obligated by the Code to deny it, but sent a signal to the Council to make an exception. However, he stated his inclination to accept staff's position that there is no precedence for granting this request and he expressed concern over the potentially precedent-setting nature of an approval. Commissioner Stabile explained that the Code serves many purposes, one of which is uniformity; that the applicant was apparently advised of the need for compliance when the plans for the new house were submitted; that, while he has heard many reasons why the property owner desires an approval, he is obligated as a Commissioner to enforce the Code unless there is justification for an exception, which this case does not have; that Ingleside Drive is not a very pedestrian-friendly street, and the issue comes back to uniformity, which will eventually provide for better pedestrian access as neighborhoods change; and that he would hate to see the trees lost and a planter such as that suggested by Commissioner Vigon earlier in this discussion could be built, but, if need be, the trees could be replaced.

Commissioner Vigon admired the fact that the property owners' family attended the meeting to view this process and he assured them that the Code allows for a fence on the property for the dog. He cited Ingleside Drive as a good example of a difficult pedestrian area and stated his agreement with Commissioner Stabile on the facts and the principle involved with this request. Commissioner Vigon pointed out that there is no evidence the trees cannot be saved through different means, such as a raised planter around them, and the applicant had the option to preserve the existing non-conforming encroachment with a remodel, or one that included a rear yard, but chose not to do so. He expressed his opposition to the request and wished the property owners the best.

Commissioner Silverman noted many encroachments on Ingleside Drive and he questioned if moving the retaining wall back three inches would really improve pedestrian access. Commissioner Silverman stated his opposition to extending the wall due to visibility concerns and, commenting that there are exceptions to the Code, in the spirit of the community – particularly the property owners' children, he voiced his support for an approval without an extension of the wall.

Chairman Gross emphasized that we are discussing the use of public, not private, land. He related his understanding that, for the property to be compliant, the fence would have to be removed, the wall would have to be moved back three inches and the grade behind the wall would have to be sloped so that the wall does not act as a retaining wall; that, when the applicant was granted approval for the wall in 1997, that the fence could be moved back from the wall and the area in between landscaped. Expressing his desire to retain the trees and his hope they will survive, Chairman Gross pointed out that the trees were there before the extra soil was put behind the retaining wall and the new foundation was installed so the roots appear to be strong. He discussed his concern over setting a precedent and his confidence in staff's indication that no requests similar to this have been approved since the new encroachment requirements were adopted in 2003. Chairman Gross agreed that the retaining wall should not be extended, but he favored some flexibility regarding the trees, such as a raised planter around them constructed in such a way as to not set a precedent. He disputed the property owner's contention that the patio is a more pleasant view for pedestrians than landscaping.

Traffic Engineer Zandvliet offered input on options before the Commission, noting that the City has the authority to construct planters and raised areas to protect trees or hold back slopes.

Chairman Gross indicated that he would not be in favor of keeping the entire retaining wall to keep the trees, in that it should be brought into compliance as a matter of principle and to avoid setting a precedent.

MOTION: Commissioner Stabile moved to accept the staff recommendation and deny the encroachment permit appeal for 441 2nd Street, with the caveat that reasonable steps should be taken to save the three existing trees, such as creating a raised planter around each tree to retain the grade. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Vigon and discussion continued.

Discussion continued with Commissioner Adami pointing out that the new requirements were adopted in 2003 and, during peak construction in the City, the City has received no other requests similar to this. He explained that he is very propedestrian, but the wall would only have to be moved three inches to be brought into compliance, and staff indicated the wall does not present visibility problems; that he walks through this neighborhood and the trees are very nice; and that, in looking at the big picture and the community, the Commission should approve the request. Commissioner Adami voiced his concern that the trees will not survive, even with a raised planter.

Chairman Gross related his understanding that the intent of the motion was to remove the retaining wall as recommended by staff.

Acting Community Development Director Jester advised that the type of planter necessary to retain the trees would be determined by an arborist, who might recommend keeping some of the existing wall in front of the trees, but the wall would not be flat and contiguous.

As the maker of the motion, Commissioner Stabile clarified that the intent was to save the trees if possible and, if not, remove and replace them; and to remove the retaining wall and reconfigure the wall to conform to the Code. He further clarified that keeping some of the existing wall in front of the trees, as discussed above by Acting Community Development Director Jester, was not part of the motion. The motion passed by a 3-2 majority roll call vote as shown below:

Ayes:Stabile, Vigon and Chairman Gross.Noes:Adami and Silverman.Abstain:None.Absent:None.

Management Analyst Madrid advised that the Commission's recommendation is scheduled to be considered by the City Council on February 16, 2010.

Traffic Engineer Zandvliet clarified that, should the Commission's recommendation be appealed, it will be considered by the Council at a future meeting; and that, if not appealed, the Commission's recommendation will be placed on the consent calendar for the Council meeting on February 16th.

Commissioner Vigon expressed confusion over the process with Community Development Director Jester providing input after the motion was made.

Chairman Gross explained that he allowed input from Community Development Director Jester because this is the first encroachment of this type the Commission has considered, involves legalities and he thought it would be worthwhile to make a decision with as much information as possible.

01/28/10-4 Pennekamp Elementary School Area Study Follow-up <u>Evaluation</u>

Chairman Gross advised that this is the last time Pennekamp Elementary and American Martyrs' Schools will be considered by the Commission as part of the School Area Traffic Studies; but, the Commission could ask that all the measures, or individual ones, be reviewed in the future.

Management Analyst Madrid noted that this is the Commission's second review of the Pennekamp Elementary School Area Study.

During the staff report, Traffic Engineer Zandvliet described the School Area Traffic Study process. He explained that the Commission's recommendations will be considered by the City Council and, subsequently, the plan will be monitored and adjusted administratively as needed; that the Commission should make it clear if they would like to continue to review various items; that pending items will improve conditions; and that a grant for thermoplastic pavement markings and high visibility signs was received and these items will eventually be implemented.

Traffic Engineer Zandvliet related staff's recommendation for the following additional traffic measures around Pennekamp School, along with the existing measures and Police Department enforcement as much as possible: Paint a walking lane along the front exit driveway between the School walkways and Rowell Avenue; and Paint red curbs within the intersections of Rowell Avenue at 1st Street, Gates Avenue and Curtis Avenue. He affirmed that painted crosswalks could be installed in a few weeks; but, thermoplastic crosswalks would take longer.

Dale Keldrauk, Principal, Pennekamp Elementary School, noted that no serious traffic incidents have occurred near Pennekamp School during his 14-year tenure at the School; but, it is necessary to ensure that nothing will happen. He confirmed that the measures taken thus far have been positive and that the loading zone lane line painted on Peck Avenue has greatly assisted, particularly during rush hour.

In response to questions from the Commission, **Mr. Keldrauk** related his impression that the additional staff recommendations will be helpful. He explained that parents of children attending kindergarten/developmental kindergarten do not have to sign their children in, but must do so at daycare (before and after-school care), which is located at the south end of the School; and that crosswalks at Curtis Avenue and Rowell Avenue on the north and west legs have not yet been painted (Recommendation No. 9). He complimented staff's efforts to help improve traffic conditions around the School and offered information on enforcement provided by the Police Department; the difficulty of securing parent volunteers and enforcing a carpooling program; and; the Walking Wednesdays program, which is part of the School District's Going Green Program.

Audience Participation

An Unidentified Speaker, No Address Provided, supported the installation of red curbs and crosswalks.

Commission Discussion

Commissioner Vigon related his interest in vigorous carpooling and walking incentive programs (Recommendation No. 14) with some creative options to encourage children to walk to school and help alleviate parent fears related thereto, such as a walking club supervised by parents or volunteers, and utilizing Community Service Officers to work with the schools instead of a parent volunteer program.

Commissioner Adami noted possible liabilities with parents/volunteers supervising a walking club. He entertained the idea of obtaining financial assistance to address traffic safety issues from the Manhattan Beach Education Foundation.

Mr. Keldrauk advised that the Manhattan Beach Education Foundation has historically provided resources for academic items. He thanked the Commission and the City for working together.

Traffic Engineer Zandvliet shared information about Walk to School Day, which was part of Earth Day, in which Pennekamp School participated. He affirmed that Recommendation Nos. 17 (Council and District meet with school administrators to coordinate a program to supervise school loading zones with the Police Department) and 18 (City work with the District to add or enhance off-street loading zones) have not been implemented. Mr. Zandvliet advised the following: that some of the encouragement items, such as a carpooling program and student loading zones should be implemented and the Council and School District could make them an initiative to provide schools with a means of enforcement; that recommendations to the Council could place emphasis on the items the Commission would like to pursue or keep in the

forefront and could include that Recommendations Nos. 17 and 18 be part of the Council's Work Plan; and that the Commission could request that an update on the traffic safety measures around Pennekamp School be provided before the end of the school year.

Lt. Harrod presented information on the Police Department's successful efforts to help improve traffic safety around Pennekamp School, their limitations resulting from the lack of resources and the awareness of parents with regard to the importance of safety around the School.

Sgt. Mason discussed the difficulties of Police Department enforcement with limited resources. He advised that enforcement at Pennekamp School usually occurs on Wednesdays.

It was Commissioner Stabile's opinion that the existing traffic safety measures should continue and that the additional ones recommended by staff should be implemented. He entertained the idea of a Walking <u>Week</u> rather than Walking Wednesdays, and a traffic enforcement task force which goes to schools on varied days so drivers are unable to anticipate when they will be there.

Commissioner Adami related his agreement with Commissioner Stabile's opinion.

Commissioner Silverman thanked the City Council for understanding the importance of schools and neighborhoods. He voiced concern that Recommendation No. 19 (Walking lane along the front exit driveway between the School walkways and Rowell Avenue) could provide a false sense of security for children and mentioned that information about traffic safety issues in the area could be aimed at children in addition to parents. Commissioner Silverman favored revisiting the traffic safety issues around Pennekamp School on a six month basis. He stated that, contrary to School representatives' comments relative to Recommendation No. 2 (Concentrate traffic and parking enforcement around the School campus on a regular basis) the Police Department is making a great effort and has listened and responded within the limits of their resources.

Chairman Gross acknowledged the importance of Recommendation Nos. 17 and 18, which, he said should occur as soon as possible. He voiced his hope that the Council will continue to support traffic safety measures around schools, particularly when the economy improves, and pointed out that the School Board could assist in determining priorities. Chairman Gross commended the Police Department's efforts in recognizing the limited resources available and making the best of them to achieve positive results.

The Commission agreed to revisit the traffic safety issues around Pennekamp School in six months. The following motion was offered.

MOTION: Commissioner Stabile moved to recommend the following:

• That the City Council continue to implement the 18 traffic safety measures around Pennekamp School, with emphasis on Recommendation Nos. 17 (Recommend the City Council have a dialogue

with School administrators to coordinate a program to supervise school loading zones with Police Department personnel, or other volunteers) and 18 (That the City Council shall work with the School District to add or enhance off-street loading zones with the goal for each school of getting as much loading and unloading as possible and reasonable off streets);

- That the two additional measures recommended by staff be implemented: (Paint a walking lane along the front exit driveway between the School walkways and Rowell Avenue) and (Paint red curbs within the intersection of Rowell Avenue at 1st Street, Gates Avenue and Curtis Avenue);
- That the traffic safety measures around Pennekamp School be revisited in approximately six months, or whenever the item can be conveniently placed on a Parking and Public Improvements Commission meeting agenda; and
- That, given their limited resources, the Police Department has responded to complaints and issues to the best of their ability, and will continue to concentrate on enforcement.

The motion was seconded by Commissioner Adami and passed by unanimous voice vote.

01/28/10-5 American Martyrs School Area Study Follow-up Evaluation

Management Analyst Madrid advised that the Commission's recommendations for American Martyrs School are scheduled to be considered by the City Council on February 16, 2010.

Traffic Engineer Zandvliet presented the staff report. He advised that no additional traffic safety measures are recommended at this time; that American Martyrs is a private school with a fairly elaborate loading and unloading zone program; and that, because the School is private, they have a strong influence over parent behavior. He discussed the status and effectiveness of the traffic safety measures around the School; noted one piece of correspondence objecting to the number of uses at the School; and advised the Commission to address only traffic and parking issues.

Audience Participation

Angela Pohlen, Vice Principal, American Martyrs School, shared information on actions taken by the School to improve safety subsequent to previous discussions. She verified the effectiveness of measures taken by the City and related the School's appreciation of the City's collaboration to improve the situation. At the Commission's request, Ms. Pohlen addressed the School's walk to school and carpool programs; the potential for internet-based carpool sign ups; the School's efforts to encourage employees to park in the parking structure; and the School's efforts to assist neighboring residents to help enforce restrictions in the area. Ms. Pohlen explained that the preschool on American Martyrs' property is independent of American Martyrs School; that the preschool children, but not kindergarten, are signed in and out, which requires parents to park; and that the School is collaborating with the preschool to further address traffic safety measures.

Saundra Elsky, 1800 Block of Laurel Avenue, voiced her appreciation that a stop sign was installed. She commended the efforts of Vice Principal Polan and presented photographs depicting her concerns associated with the preschool and the impact on 18th Street.

Carlene Elhart, 18th Street between Agnes and Flournoy Road, discussed that 18th Street is utilized by parents who do not want to wait in the cue line in the parking lot, which results in pedestrian safety issues; that poles on 18th Street make it difficult for pedestrians with strollers to utilize the sidewalk; and that the School's iron gate on 18th Street should be locked.

Traffic Engineer Zandvliet verified that staff will examine what can be done with the iron gate referred to by Ms. Elhart; that the sidewalk on 18th Street is substandard and, in order for it to be improved, trees must be removed; that some of the measures yet to be implemented will improve the situation on 18th Street; that the School needs to collaborate with the preschool to provide better relief; and that there is very little public right-of-way on 18th Street and the Public Works Department could examine the idea of putting a future capital improvement project together to make it possible to walk on the sidewalk.

Debra Zelman, 1000 Block of Laurel Avenue, reported that the situation on Laurel Avenue has greatly improved. She described the traffic safety issues in the area.

Traffic Engineer Zandvliet provided input regarding traffic difficulties in the vicinity of Laurel and 18th Street, noting that kindergarten and the preschool are dismissed at the same time.

Commission Discussion

Commissioner Stabile commended American Martyrs School on the actions taken and he said that the effectiveness will be measured by the amount of discontent voiced by neighboring residents. Commissioner Stabile related his understanding that the majority of the traffic safety measures at American Martyrs School have not yet been implemented and he favored continuing this item and revisiting the situation after they are completed. Commenting that, even though the preschool is a separate entity, they are at the same location as the School and should have been represented at this meeting, and he suggested that staff examine issues specific to the preschool and develop recommendations to address them. He noted that the administration at American Martyrs School has addressed concerns when they are made aware of them and, hopefully, this will be the case with the preschool.

Traffic Engineer Zandvliet verified that, should the Commission review the traffic safety issues around American Martyrs School in the future, a representative from the preschool could be asked to attend the meeting.

Commissioner Adami related his appreciation of the cooperation between the City, the public, the School and the Police Department. He voiced his hope that this will be a model for the preschool.

Commissioner Silverman stated his appreciation for the School's efforts to improve safety. He observed that many of the measures have not been implemented, but the situation has greatly improved, and agreed that American Martyrs' efforts should be used as a model for other schools in the area to take initiative.

Commissioner Vigon pointed out that the difference in public and private schools is that public school families live near schools and can walk, and that private schools have the potential to draw more traffic and they have more influence over parent behavior.

Chairman Gross commended the School's efforts and the positive attitude of Vice Principal Pohlen. He pointed out that staggered dismissal times at the School could assist in reducing the traffic problems; agreed that American Martyrs' efforts should be used as a model for other schools; recommended that staff determine which measures used by American Martyrs can be used at public schools; and recalled the recent State of the Union speech in which President Obama encouraged the country to look at how to improve education, which should be the case in this instance.

Commissioner Stabile commented on the need for the School District to participate in finding some solutions to universal traffic/parking problems at schools in the City.

Chairman Gross pointed out that, as in initial Recommendation Nos. 17 (Recommend the City Council have a dialogue with school administrators to coordinate a program to supervise school loading zones with police personnel or other volunteers) and 18 (That the City shall work with the School District to add or enhance off-street loading zones with the goal for each school of getting as much loading and unloading as is possible and reasonable off streets) the Commission previously recommended that the School District be engaged in helping to alleviate traffic/parking problems around schools, but nothing has happened.

Traffic Engineer Zandvliet advised that a brain storming session with representatives from various schools, the School District, the City Council and the Commission, could be held in the future.

Realizing that, because of the poor economic climate, it might be difficult to make this a high priority, the Commissioners related their desire to meet with various schools, the School District and the City Council to discuss possible solutions to universal traffic/parking problems at schools in Manhattan Beach. The following motion was offered:

MOTION: Commissioner Stabile moved to recommend to the City Council that the initial traffic safety measures for American Martyrs School be implemented, with continued Police Department enforcement of traffic and parking violations; that this issue be revisited in approximately six months; and that staff be directed to look into the issues presented by the preschool on American Martyrs' property and attempt to craft some solutions which apply with particularity to the preschool. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Silverman and passed by unanimous voice vote.

F. COMMISSION ITEMS

<u>01/28/10-6 Parking Meter Revenues and Traffic Violation Revenues</u> <u>Report</u>

Commissioner Vigon entertained the idea of the City offering a "Key to the City" parking placard that holds approximately \$100.

Traffic Engineer Zandvliet verified that the idea of offering some version of such a program could be examined.

As noted at previous meetings, Commissioner Silverman called attention to the confusion associated with the deceptively small street parking space on Manhattan Beach Boulevard.

Traffic Engineer Zandvliet advised that changes will be made so that the small size of the parking space in front of Commissioner Silverman's office is more obvious.

G. STAFF ITEMS

None.

H. ADJOURNMENT

At 10:50 p.m., the meeting was adjourned to Thursday, February 25, 2010.