COUNCIL MEETING OF
December 15, 2009

SUPPLEMENTAL #1 TO ITEM 10A

Honorable Mayor and Members
of the Torrance City Council
City Hall
Torrance, California

Members of the City Council:

SUBJECT: 2009 Draft General Plan and Environmental Impact Report

Correspondence was received after the Item 10A was prepared and is attached herewith for your consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeffery W. Gibson
Community Development Director

By _____
Ted Semaan, Manager
Redevelopment & General Plan Divisions

Noted:

_____
Jeffery W. Gibson
Community Development Director

_____
LeRoy J. Jackson
City Manager

Attachment:
A. Correspondence

ATTACHMENT A

Joe, Kevin

From: simie seaman [simieseaman@yahoo.com]
Sent: Monday, December 14, 2009 1:08 AM
To: CDDGeneralPlan; Don Barnard
Subject: Community Plan

December 13, 2009

Mayor Scotto
City Council Members
City Manager
City Attorney

RE: Torrance Community Plan

I would like to introduce myself. I am Simie Seaman, a member of Save Historic Old Torrance (SHOT) Advisory Board and a property owner of Torrance ***.I wanted to go on record in support of ALL Save Historic Old Torrance AKA Olmsted District Preservation Association recommendations for the community plan. SHOT has spent countless of hours in regards to historic preservation for the city and should be included in the wording of the General Plan.***
I grew up in Torrance, but now live in a City of Los Angeles Historical Preservation Overlay Zone and am a member of the Banning Park Wrigley HPOZ Design Review Board Torrance has a special place in my heart and I am concerned about its rich history being chipped away daily. It is time that Torrance adopts a Historical Preservation Ordinance to protect its heritage for future generations.
The indiscriminate tear down of historic structures to make way for a modern structure for want of something new sends seismic shock waves through Torrance 's very historic core. The fear is we may fail to heed importance for preserving our City and our quality of life before it is too late. "Irreplaceable" leaves no wiggle room. Once Torrance is defaced or made non-recognizable, we will lose our history forever. Our City will become just another part of America 's homogenized landscape and history of Torrance that is so important to those of us who live here, will be drastically diminished. Torrance deserves and needs a ***Historic Preservation Ordinance. The purpose of an historic ordinance is to "safeguard the heritage of a city by preserving elements of its cultural, social, economic, political and architectural histories. In doing this it will stabilize property values, strengthen the economy, foster civic pride, and promote the use of historic districts for education, pleasure and welfare of the citizens of the city and visitors to it.***
The Torrance City Council and City Administration, ***SHOT AKA Olmsted District Preservation Association*** business institutions and residents must come together and build upon their efforts to protect the historic fabric of Torrance . It is important that Torrance City Council, City Administration and SHOT provide the leadership to move this process forward, despite difficult economic conditions. A Historic Preservation Ordinance is an investment in the future of our city, which will pay for itself many times over.

Sincerely,
Simie Seaman

LAW OFFICES
WILLIAM J. BEVERLY
FIRST FEDERAL BANK BUILDING
3424 CARSON STREET, SUITE 400
TORRANCE, CA 90503
(310) 793-7766
FAX (310) 793-7765

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COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

December 15, 2009

Mr. Jeff Gibson
Director of Community Development
City of Torrance
3031 Torrance Boulevard
Torrance, CA 90503

Re: TorMed Buildings - CUP04-00018

Thank you for the opportunity to meet with you and the staff on Monday, December 14, 2009, to talk about the General Plan Update hearings. During that meeting, I referred to a letter which I had written and which I realized later does not exist. I was taking credit for Mr. Buxton's letter of October 13, 2009, which is a part of the file in this matter.

I did attend the Planning Commission Meeting on October 28th, 2009, and spoke on behalf or Mr. Buston and the TorrMed buildings. At that time, I elaborated orally on the subject of that letter, the FAR issue generally, and particularly the comment that "the expected FAR for hospital development is closer to 1.0 FAR" as opposed to the 0.6 recommended for adoption.

Our position was that the planning document should reflect the actual anticipated development standard as opposed to an unrealistically low or arbitrary number. As the minutes will probably reflect, Mr. Lowden explained to the commission and the audience that the lower FAR was utilized so that any project in the zone would be subject to discretionary review.

It was pointed out by myself and Mr. Lowden in response to questions from the commissioners that any building over 15,000 square feet already required a C.U.P. which made the expressed reasoning somewhat specious. In addition, all of the Buxton property is currently developed under existing CUPs and, therefore, any additional development would require an amendment to the current CUPs. This would also trigger the sought after discretionary review.

The main point today is that this is a long range planning document. If the city planners believe that this land is to be developed as medical uses supporting the hospital at a 1.0 FAR, now is the time to say so. This is the document in which to say it rather than to abdicate responsibility for the decision to a future body.

LAW OFFICES
WILLIAM J. BEVERLY

There are some additional more practical business reasons why the anticipated higher FAR should be a part of this document. The Tormed Buildings are the only HM zoned property with enough vacant land to allow the addition of large buildings and parking structures near the hospital without the need to demolish the existing buildings. Significant development on the other HM zoned properties is unlikely since the existing building would probably have to be demolished which creates a cost prohibitive project.

Providing the availability for additional support facilities near the hospital is important to the community for a number of reasons. Building on or near the hospital campus will minimize traffic impact because doctors and patients can walk to the hospital. In case of emergency, it is preferable to have doctors immediately available next door to the hospital.

The reality in this market is that, in order to build a significant project, a developer must pre-lease the project so that he can obtain construction financing. The developer needs to know how much space he has to lease before he starts and the prospective tenants want to know what the zoning allows before they sign a lease. In fact, the developer is not likely to even incur the costs of the design and application process without clear leasing commitments and a reasonable understanding of what is likely to be approved.

The significant gap between the proposed FAR and indicated actual FAR is troublesome for its impact on all of these issues. It is respectfully requested that the City consider amending the proposed General Plan to reflect the actual anticipated FAR of 1.0 in the HM zone in order to take the uncertainty out of the process and validated the acknowledged future density. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to call.

Sincerely,

Law Offices of William J. Beverly

William Beverly

WB:kc