

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR SHEILA KUEHL

February 23, 2016

Project No. R2013-02633-(3) is a request for a conditional use permit ("CUP") to authorize the continued operation of a dog boarding and training facility located at 1558 Will Geer Road in Topanga, known as the Canyon View Dog Ranch ("Ranch").

On August 26, 2015, the Regional Planning Commission held a public hearing on the project and approved the CUP. In doing so, the Regional Planning Commission imposed strict operational conditions on the Ranch, including limiting the Ranch to a maximum 30 dogs, except during specified holidays, when the Ranch is allowed a maximum of 45 dogs. Other conditions included requiring a shuttle service to take dogs to and from the Ranch, limiting the number of visitor vehicle trips to five per day, and requiring that visitor vehicle trips be by appointment only and outside of the morning peak hour, 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. The Regional Planning Commission's approval was appealed by both the owners of the Ranch, who asked that certain conditions of approval be modified and/or clarified, and by members of the community, who asked that the CUP be denied.

The Ranch provides an important service to dog owners in Topanga and the

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surrounding area. Many have testified or submitted letters in support of the Ranch and the unique amenities it provides. At the same time, concerns have been raised by the community regarding the Ranch's violation of permit conditions. However, the Ranch has recently demonstrated that it can operate within permit conditions, and since September 2015 has limited its operation to 30 dogs consistent with the conditions of the CUP approved by the Regional Planning Commission on August 26, 2015, even though the Ranch's owners have stated that operating at 30 dogs is not financially feasible. Additionally, the strict conditions imposed by the Regional Planning Commission are designed to directly address the neighbors' concerns raised during public testimony.

Operation of the Ranch, including access to and from the Ranch, is consistent with surrounding agricultural zones. However, based on the evidence in the record, which includes testimony from neighbors and members of the community, operation of the Ranch should be limited to a maximum number of dogs to ensure operation of the Ranch is compatible with the surrounding community, which includes many single-family homes. The conditions of approval, as amended below, strictly regulate the Ranch's operations and strike an appropriate balance between the Ranch and the concerns of the community.

The Board of Supervisors should not ignore past permit violations by the Ranch, however. The conditions of approval must limit the Ranch's operation until the Ranch has demonstrated compliance with applicable conditions for a period of at least one year, after which time the community can be confident that the Ranch can operate within the limits of the CUP.

Lastly, some flexibility in the CUP conditions is appropriate to allow the Ranch to serve its customers' needs. Rather than limiting visitor vehicle trips on a daily basis, the limit should be calculated on a weekly basis, to allow for variation in day-to-day activity. The permit conditions should also allow the Ranch to take in more dogs during the weeks when most schools have their spring break, which is a popular vacation time. And, although the CUP approved by the Regional Planning Commission prohibited dogs outside of the Ranch's fences, dogs should be allowed outside the fences provided they are leashed and accompanied by Ranch staff, to accommodate the training that takes place at the Ranch.

I, THEREFORE, MOVE THAT THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS:

1. Close the public hearing and deny the non-applicant appeal in full and grant the applicant appeal in part.
2. Find that the project is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act.
3. Indicate the Board's intent to approve Project No. R2013-02633-(3), consisting of Conditional Use Permit No. 2013-00135-(3), with the following amended conditions:
 - a. For a period of 12 months, the Ranch shall be limited to a maximum 30 dogs, except during specified holiday periods, during which the Ranch shall be limited to a maximum 45 dogs.
 - b. If the Regional Planning Department has not issued a Notice of Violation to the Ranch for a violation of a permit condition in 12 months, the Ranch shall be limited to a maximum 50 dogs during normal operation and a maximum 60 dogs

during specified holiday periods. If the Regional Planning Department issues a Notice of Violation to the Ranch for a violation of a permit condition in the first 12 months, the limitation on the number of dogs shall not increase.

c. The week approved by the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) for its spring break, and the one week immediately preceding and the one week immediately following the District's spring break, shall be specified in the CUP as a holiday period during which additional dogs are allowed. All other LAUSD holidays shall constitute a holiday period during which additional dogs are allowed.

d. The number of round-trip vehicle trips to the Ranch, not counting trips by Ranch employees and the shuttle service, shall be limited to 30 per week. These trips shall not occur during the morning peak hour time (8:00 a.m. to 10 :00 a.m.); shall be by appointment only; and must be recorded in a log to the satisfaction of the Director of the Department of Regional Planning, and made available to staff of the Department of Regional Planning as necessary to verify compliance with this condition.

e. Dogs shall be permitted outside of the Ranch's fences, provided each dog is leashed and accompanied by Ranch staff in connection with the training of the dog and are on a one on one basis.

4. Instruct County Counsel to prepare the necessary findings and conditions consistent with this motion, for the Board's consideration.