



**Bel Air-Beverly Crest Neighborhood Council**  
**Planning & Land Use Committee Meeting (Virtual)**  
**Tuesday January 10, 2023 5:00 P.M.**

**Minutes**

Name	P	A	Name	P	A
Robert Schlesinger, Chair	X		Stephanie Savage	X	
Robin Greenberg	X		Nickie Miner	X	
Don Loze	X		Jamie Hall	X	
Shawn Bayliss	X		Jason Spradlin	X	
André Stojka		X	Ellen Evans	X	
Steven Weinberg	X		Cathy Wayne	X	
Maureen Levinson		X	Leslie Weisberg	X	
Stella Grey		X	Travis Longcore <i>ex officio</i>	X	

Chair Robert Schlesinger called the meeting to order at 5:04 P.M., shared the preliminary information on the agenda, and led the flag salute. Roll was taken with quorum met. Member Spradlin arrived at 5:06 P.M., Weinberg at 5:12 P.M., and Weisberg at 5:15 P.M. Member Loze arrived at 5:15 P.M. and was promoted to the panelist at 5:25 P.M. [Ex officio member Dr. Longcore left the meeting at 6:35 P.M., Member Weisberg at 7:06 P.M., and Member Evans at 7:09 P.M., with 10 remaining.]

1. The January 10, 2023 agenda was **approved** unanimously, as **moved** by Greenberg.
2. The August 9, 2022 Minutes (Attachment A), November 8, 2022 Minutes (Attachment B), & December 13, 2022 Minutes (Attachment C) were **approved** by all **10 members present** near the end of the meeting, as the vote was inadvertently *not* taken when **moved** by Greenberg, Wayne and Wayne, at the start of the meeting.
3. **General Public Comment:** There was no comment from the public on topics within the Committee’s jurisdiction but not on the adopted agenda.
4. **Chair Report** – Robert Schlesinger had no report.
5. **2401 N LAUREL CANYON BLVD 90046 DIR-2022-4002-DRB-SPP-HCA ENV-2022-4003-EAF**  
**Project Description:** Construction of a new 10,581 sq ft single family dwelling located in the Mulholland Scenic Parkway Specific Plan. Site was previously improved with a sfd constructed in 1928, demolished 2001.  
**Applicant:** Michael Roiff [michael@nightanddaypictures.com](mailto:michael@nightanddaypictures.com)  
**Representative:** Jake Mallot WSDCI [jake@wsdci.com](mailto:jake@wsdci.com)  
**Architect:** Chris Hass. 415-279-4000 [haas@hass-architecture.com](mailto:haas@hass-architecture.com)  
**Attachments** <https://planning.lacity.org/pdiscaseinfo/caseid/MjU4MTcw0>

Mr. Chris Hass, Architect for the project at 2401 North Laurel Canyon Boulevard, shared his screen and provided his Mulholland Design Review Board (MDRB) presentation of the project to the committee. He was accompanied by the applicant, Mr. Michael Roiff, and their representative, Mr. Jake Mallot, who answered questions. Committee member Hall raised issues about this important property on Laurel Canyon Boulevard, including but not limited to that the property is chockfull of various trees, that Laurel Canyon Association (LCA) has concerns as to a fence that encroaches into the public right of way (PROW) on Laurel Canyon Boulevard, not on the property line, and that a strong request of the community is to reestablish the correct property line. They do not want this fence which is taking a huge segment of the Public Right of Way (PROW) and think it needs to be retained as public land. He pointed out LCA’s request that the PROW be retained so they can work with Metro to get a proper bus stop put in there, and that the letters from the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy (SMMC) and Laurel Canyon Association (LCA) related that they’d like to create an

actual carve out so the bus could pull off and pick up people with a formal bus stop there. Another concern Member Hall raised was that there are two driveways, one that the applicant proposes to retain, that has not been used in many years, which LCA and SMMC believe would be dangerous to keep that way, and would like it eliminated. Some reasons include the position of this substandard driveway, close to the corner of Lookout Mountain and Laurel Canyon (images & details provided), and because there is a stream that runs through the property there, a few feet from the driveway. They'd like to see the development as far from the stream as possible...

Member Hall also mentioned a request for permanent land protection over a portion of the property that is to remain undeveloped. Hall related that the representative stated that they have no intention to develop that but technically they could, so as a mitigation for the loss of 18 trees, many native, SMMC has asked for either a conservation easement or a deed restriction. Hall would like to understand whether the applicant will agree to that. He noted that the Conservancy is also asking for wildlife permeable fencing for wildlife where the driveway is, because there are wildlife corridors coming through the property. Member Hall provided detailed list of all that the community is asking for, including but not limited to concern about the size of the house, 10,000 square feet, which is not seen in the community. He noted that the biggest issue is wanting some sort of permanent land protection over the remaining undeveloped portion of the property, the reestablishment of property lines, the removal of that fence encroaching into the PROW, the installation of permeable fencing where the old driveway is and eliminating the driveway off Lookout due to public safety issues.

Mr. Michael Roiff responded that they met with BABCNC PLU Committee members Jamie Hall and Stephanie Savage and talked through a lot of this, and that he has followed up in email. They are waiting for MDRB's response and will go back and figure out what makes the most sense to keep everyone happy moving forward. They want to be good stewards of this land and good community members and neighbors. He noted that they are now listening and hearing. Discussion was held on the fence, to which Mr. Roiff noted it is an existing condition; they were designing things to avoid the need to make significant changes, avoid more permitting than necessary; however, are not interested in stealing public land and are interested in removing that wall and being able to build a replacement wall.

Member Savage noted that she and Hall met with the owner, walked through and mentioned many things, including setbacks, looked at fire hydrants and various things. She had a list of 20 things that she gave to the MDRB when they went to their hearing. She noted that they discussed that LADOT restricts driveways near major intersections, and told them to talk to Wes Pringle, Transportation Engineer at City of Los Angeles. She noted that it is a very dangerous spot to exit a property at that corner at the steep angle of Lookout Mountain, where you couldn't get a car in and out other than a Smart car. She noted that it is always packed there and that she had recommended they take a look on any given morning at how packed it is. She noted that it would make more sense to go in and out of the access point, the easement that they'll be provided in the future by the City further up Laurel Canyon, the main point being that the access point is a hazard, and she doesn't think it would be allowed. Ms. Savage noted that the other item of concern is occupying City property. She noted that they would demo those walls, could rebuild the walls onto their property, with a height limit, and if they wanted to increase it, they could ask for an entitlement added in to what they were doing. It didn't make sense to her to occupy a property that could be a possible bus stop... in addition, there are other properties that they could build on if they were going to build on those in the future. She noted that they were also concerned about the biological report but her two main concerns were safety and occupying City land.

Member Wayne reiterated a number of comments already given. She described the corner at most hours of the day, with a left hand turn signal at Laurel Canyon to Lookout, where cars speed up the road. The angle of the road is extremely steep and there is a mini-curb on the outside of the wall he was describing and the proposed driveway on Lookout. She noted that people from the bus stop walk up that path so between cars turning in and these people walking up this path, it becomes near impossible for anybody to use that as a driveway. On the other side, she noted, it is always backed up when coming from Lookout onto Laurel Canyon Blvd, and there is a right-turn signal that goes onto Laurel Canyon Boulevard. It backed up all the way up to the school every morning. Member Wayne noted that for them to decide to use that as a driveway is infeasible to her and recommend that he stand on the lot for a day to watch the traffic. Member Wayne also noted that in the last couple of days that the stream there has turned into a river, and suggested he take a peek at that before he wants to build on it or above it, and if the stream is attached or local to that driveway lot on Lookout, that is also a problem. It is a very difficult lot with a lot of issues, and she is grateful that he is trying to be sensitive to the issues, but thinks he needs to take into account the importance of traffic; there's only two lanes up Lookout; up and down, with nowhere to expand it. She hopes he addresses these concerns.

**Public comment:** Caller "Jaren" wished to give public comment but had sound difficulties and left the meeting.

**Board discussion** was held. Member Hall thought it would be good if they'd further reflect on the comments they have received and come back, and if they do not, take a position, take the position of LCA and adopt them as their own. Member Wayne asked for the applicants' response, to which Michael Roiff related that he would push back on any mischaracterization and wanted the committee to know where they are coming from: They are not coming at this arrogantly but trying to come up with a plan that works, and noted that concerns about the driveway were well taken. He noted that Jake Mallot did get in touch with LADOT, and got some info back from them; they were not doing this callously, and noted that it is an existing condition and are trying to maintain what it is. He noted that this is fact finding for them; they want to incorporate these things to the best of their ability, for an easy way to find common ground. Member Wayne related that it would be advisable for them to go to the land at 7:30 to 9:00 a.m., and from 3:00 to 6:00 p.m. to have a much better idea. He noted that the point is well taken, and that they don't disagree.

Member Savage noted that they were asked to return to the MDRB, with five or six items and that they also had concerns about the driveway and other things. She is curious as to what LADOT had said. She acknowledged that they have rights but was concerned about how they initially started this on land that wasn't theirs, using that driveway was boarded up since the 1930s that nobody has ever used. She noted that it is not a practical place to exit the property and it is unsafe. He responded that they didn't design the house to encroach on public lands... Ms. Savage noted that their L6 drawing shows the driveway is fully within that. Mr. Mallot responded that they have documentation on the easement, and the driveway has been there historically and is an easement. He noted that what Mr. Roiff was saying that there was no thought to get a land grab, it was mapping what was there. There was no mis- or mal-intent. Mr. Mallot noted that he had reached out to Metro's Permit Department and to DOT, spoke to his contact at DOT at their Planning & Development office, and asked what if it was within 75 feet of the intersection, to which he was told it was not at all a problem. Mr. Mallot noted that they had discussed with Metro who said there were no plans for a bus stop there at this time to be expanded and has emails of that conversation.

Mr. Mallot acknowledged that that the intersection is busy and offered suggestions to play devil's advocate, that if it is hard to take a left out of Lookout Mountain and hard to take a left onto Laurel Canyon, it might make sense to have the opportunity to take a right on Laurel Canyon and merge with traffic and take a right on Lookout Mountain when you are entering to merge with traffic and by utilizing both of those driveway access points, so that you are never going against traffic and are always with traffic. He noted that while they're happy to come to NC meetings... ultimately they are looking to bring a neighbor into the neighborhood, which begins with a neighbor-to-neighbor conversation. He noted that they just have a guy who wants to build his dream home, to join our neighborhood and be our neighbor. He noted that they have brought in a great many consultants to build a good project. He told Michael that the project needs to be married with the nature, and have studied if they could move the house up, spoke many people, including but not limited to LAFD, and have a good group of people working on it, with everyone trying to do their best. They would like to work together to find a solution.

Member Savage expressed appreciation for the applicant's work and noted that we have invested some time, and have been forthcoming, and that she'd like information such as the access to the easement as well as email from DOT. Member Hall noted that he did not think they were acting maliciously to take public land but doesn't think the iron fence should remain there, as backed up by the Board of Directors of LCA, and he hopes, the MDRB and the BABCNC.

Hall related that he wasn't surprised that there were no plans for a bus stop there as there was an effort to eliminate the 218 bus line, which we fought against and it was restored. He noted that there are ADA issues. He believes what is there is shameful, and is advocating for improvements to the physical space so a bus stop could eventually be installed, and that as to nonconformities such as the driveway, while some things are technically legal, they may not be advisable. He noted that we are especially seeing that now, with the rains, e.g., landslides, etc. Hall believes there are problems maintaining the driveway. He noted we are all volunteers, and if an email goes not-responded to, to call him. He looks forward to working with them if they come back here, and hopes they return to continue the dialogue.

Member Evans asked about 6500 feet of hardscape, to which Chris Haas noted that is the pool area, pads in and around the house, and the driveway, and as to grading, Chris noted it is close to 2500 cy.

Dr. Longcore noted that in our advisory role, there are a couple of options we can do as a committee: Option #1: that this committee, for the sake of the information gathering by the project proponent, endorse the positions taken by LCA, so they know these are requests that this committee as a whole would like to see. Option #2: Say we have heard input and

someone can make a motion to continue this item, or do both: endorse the LCA letter and continue it, as it would be appropriate to do one or both at this time, given where we are in the conversation.

**Motion #1** to support the position and comments offered by Laurel Canyon Association was **moved** by Evans, and **seconded** by Miner. There was no public comment and no further discussion before voting and the motion passed by **10 yeses**, and **1 abstention** by Longcore.

**Motion #2** to have them come back to hear this again in this committee, was **moved** by Longcore, **seconded** by Wayne and **passed** unanimously by **11 yeses**. Mr. Roiff thanked us and noted that he will look forward to coming back. Chair Schlesinger thanked them.

6. **1436 N BELLA DR 90210 ZA-2022-3836-ZAD ENV-2022-3837-EAF**

Lot Area: 167,720.7 sq ft.

**Project Description:** Demo of existing SFD, excavation & construction of new 3-story SFD w/basement, pool & spa structures and site improvements. Project includes haul route to export 9,000 cy.

**Action Requested:** Zoning Administrator Determination to allow relief from a continuous paved road of a SFD at 1436 N. Bella Drive. To Demo a SFD 4.800 sf, built in 1953.

**Applicant:** Falcon Lair Holdings, LLC [westphal@cfolic.com](mailto:westphal@cfolic.com)

**Representatives:** Crest Real Estate [tony@crestrealestate.com](mailto:tony@crestrealestate.com) and Isaac Lemus [isaac@crestrealestate.com](mailto:isaac@crestrealestate.com)

**Attachments** Please see: <https://planning.lacity.org/pdiscaseinfo/caseid/MjU3OTk40> and click on “**Initial Submittal Documents**” to find the 5 documents for Case # ZA-2022-3836-ZAD

Committee Chair Schlesinger introduced Mr. Isaac Lemus from Crest Real Estate. Mr. Lemus noted that he was accompanied on the call by Mr. Tony Russo from Crest Real Estate & Architect, Mr. Anthony Carmola. Mr. Lemus provided a presentation of the project, screen-shared plans, design, grading information, and scope of work, following which he noted that they are not asking for deviations from current code or regulation; they are only asking for a ZAD to allow relief from the requirement of a continuous paved roadway (CPR)... which he noted would be from the project site to the boundary of the Baseline Hillside Ordinance area, from 1436 Bella Drive, connecting onto Cielo, then onto to Benedict Canyon, before going down to and connecting onto Sunset. He noted that they are not requesting relief from the entirety of the street, as the majority of the pathway from their property to the boundary line is already improved to the 20-foot minimum requirement. He pointed this out on other Hillside forms near and connected onto Cielo Drive (pointing to the map.) He noted that the current conditions already have improvements, with minimum requirements met, onto Cielo Drive onto Benedict Canyon, and he provided details of the areas already covered.

Mr. Lemus noted that what is left is from the intersection of Cielo and Bella Drive onto their property, for which they are asking relief. He pointed out photos on Bella Drive and limitations that come along with suggested improvements, noting photos on the left (pointing) demonstrate reasons that there are no opportunities to move the street entirely, and, as seen from the photos on the right (pointing) with the current grade of the mountain, there wasn't room to the left or right of the existing Bella Drive to expand it even a couple of inches to meet that 20-foot minimum requirement. He noted from the photo at top right that the grade is extreme to the left of Bella and upward to the right of Bella Drive such that any improvements would be likely be compromising to the current slope and terrain of the area, if not difficult, would likely be infeasible. He noted that even if feasible, another reason for their request for relief is that this would be an undue burden or restriction to his property as well as to the other three properties in the area (1435, 1440 & 1450 Bella Drive.) He noted that Bella Drive acts as the only means to egress in and out for these properties so if there were improvements that had to be had on the street, and additional construction, noise, pollution as well as possible restrictions in construction timing, it would be an undue burden for them, and the surrounding properties. He noted that previously the lot was for a proposed single-family home, and wouldn't have any change in terms of overall circulation or traffic into or out of the area, so in terms of meeting the demands of what is existing and what is proposed for the current project, they wouldn't be fluctuating much from their project design.

Questions were asked and answered by Mr. Lemus and Mr. Russo. Member Hall asked about the overall size, and was told it was 17,134 square feet, with grading export of 8,562 cy. Hall expressed concern regarding export of dirt on these roads with poor guard rails, and could see possible failure of the road or accidents. As to overall height, lowest to tallest, Tony Russo noted that it is about 60 feet total. Mr. Lemus noted that he has reached out to the neighbors and Mr. Russo sent letters to try to get in touch with the neighbors. Hall reiterated concern about the number of haul route trucks on the very precarious road, with poor condition of guard rails, and some areas without guard rails altogether.

Member Spradlin related that he has been on this road, drove it today; lives in this area, walks his dog there, wonders how the other houses got built because it is a dangerous road... He noted that the thought of an 18,000 square foot house going up, in that first stretch, a) there's nowhere to turn around, b) you'll block traffic to all the residents above it, and c) he'd argue that it is not safe even at 10025 Cielo, above that. He related that he was driving a Range Rover and a Honda Accord barely got by him today between that stop sign and 10025. He noted that it is unfathomable to think about approving this project without any enhancement of that road. It's crazy to him. Mr. Russo related that he is happy to discuss this with him and other homeowners.

Member Savage thinks it would be critical to reach out to the three neighbors, to confirm that they understand what is being built. She looked at the property and is concerned that it should have 40 feet of frontage but there was a street vacation and that property became part of this property which made the street even narrower... and more fragile to access that property. Member Savage noted that the grading is definitely an issue, because one can't easily back in and out with what the architect designed there, and that the roadway has not been legally improved with curb and gutters so any water from either LID planters or just water on the road and from the roofs of the other houses is going to be considerable and dangerous moving forward... She noted the importance of being in communication with those neighbors, as there is no curb and gutter on that street, it was never legally improved, it is old and riddled and looks like a lot of problems there. She noted that there are a lot of practical issues, like LID, as this is a large property with lots of impervious area exceeding 10,000 square feet, and they will need to do a lot of remedies to make sure water doesn't contribute to that poorly-maintained roadway that has to get out somewhere. She'd like more information on these practical issues.

Member Wayne related that she appreciates that they are using a design style similar to the original Falcon's Lair. She knows this road really well; it is extremely narrow, and not 16 or 20 feet in any scope. She suggested as a remedy that they might want to build a new railing along that open downslope, that maybe one concession to provide as safety for the road, as a good intention for this build.

Member Miner noted that there was a property there coined "Falcon's Lair" owned and occupied by Rudolph Valentino, a beautiful piece of property built into the contour of the land, it wasn't very huge; it was a beautiful construction, beautiful architecture in the hillside, conforming with the hillside. She noted that Cielo Drive has some larger homes towards the top, built 100 years ago... and subsequently the rest of Cielo Drive was built with regular sized homes... but she noted the road is dangerous and at Bella it is treacherous... She described it as one of the most dangerous roads in all of Benedict Canyon... She anticipates that they will haul dirt up and down all those streets. She noted that when those streets were developed, trucks were smaller and construction methods were different and that it is unfathomable to think of 17,000 feet of construction of house with everything entailed, all the trucks and years it takes, the whole project is dangerous... She thinks it is unfathomable to think that people think it is a good idea to do that there. She believes that every resident of Cielo Drive would be horrified... She wouldn't dream of approving this without a reaction from everybody along the route... somebody is going to get hurt... She concluded that it is just wrong.

Member Evans asked the size of the basement, which was noted to be 725 square feet, and noted that when conditions are hazardous, it would be good to see a much more robust outreach effort coming into the neighborhood council.

Member Loze noted the need to consider the cumulative impact of projects in this area, that Cielo is a seriously diminished street at the moment, and we need to consider and have foresight on this being a straw that breaks the camel, and need to call attention to cumulative impact of sightlines, and of all the other houses being built in that area. He also noted that we understand cubic yards noted do not discuss fluff, which makes it a ton more, and more dangerous.

Chair Schlesinger asked the actual number of cubic yards of export, to which Mr. Lemus related that was 8,962 CY, which includes fluffing factor. Chair Schlesinger noted that they will run 900 trucks up and down the street... on one of the most if not the most substandard streets in Benedict Canyon; running trucks between concrete walls, up Bella and Cielo, one truck at a time, they'll be hauling forever. Chair Schlesinger related that the other issue which was brought up this evening is the narrowness of Cielo and lack of guardrails being an imminent danger in that area; truck drivers will be challenged. Mr. Russo responded that they take these comments to heart... and with regard to hauling and guardrail, they could discuss this with the client and with BOE to see if this can be improved or understand the current condition... In with regard to haul route conditions, Mr. Russo noted that he understands there will be extreme restrictions in the hillside areas, implemented due to the HCR, and the additional construction conditions reducing hours,

limiting trucks, limiting parking, etc. He noted that unlike other sites that come off narrow streets, they have an extremely large turning area on the property... and trucks can loaded seamlessly and turn around because of the large motor court that exists... He thinks it will be a lot more seamless than some of the other projects that we have seen, for the trucks to turn around...

Chair Schlesinger asked for justification for the amount of 9000 CY of grading – to which Mr. Russo related that a substantial amount of remedial grading has to be done on site, per the code, that they don't want to do either. Schlesinger asked where the trucks will be staged before they get to the property, Mr. Russo noted that they will be staged outside the hillside area, either on Benedict Canyon or close to Sunset.

Member Hall asked if there are more than 1000 CY of remedial grading, to which Mr. Russo responded yes. Hall noted that if the Wildlife Ordinance were in place, it would trigger site plan review and asked why this is exempt. Mr. Russo noted that there are some building code provisions that require remedial grading, further down the slope to fix nonconforming building code issues, required to do... and he is only familiar with code-required remedial grading.

Member Savage noted on the sheet, it shows 4700 CY of remedial grading, down-sloped to the west requires 21 piles, a lot of grading that's half their grading. Member Hall asked, and Mr. Russo noted if you do a smaller project you still have to do this grading, you have to bring the entire site up to performance. Further discussion was held on this.

Member Savage continued that it is a large percentage of remedial grading for this site and if you have a large property impervious area to direct towards the road, that is not easily exporting water, it takes the heat off the unstable material downslope. She noted that she would be more confident if she had more information. Mr. Russo noted that they are happy to discuss these concerns with the NC, and want to be sure the project is transparent. He mentioned the cost, and noted that they are doing it and have to comply for the sake of safety. Savage noted that there is a big percentage of their export and would be curious to find out. *[Member Weisberg left at approximately 7:06 P.M. with 11 members and quorum remaining.]*

Member Miner commented more on the dangers of the road even after the project is built; that piece of land does not exist for this type of situation... The roads cannot withstand this kind of construction... Mr. Russo responded to concerns about safety, and he noted that there are things that can be done, and maybe some improvements, that don't require the widening of the road, including Cathy's suggestion. He thinks it would be prudent of the team to discuss what they can do and discuss with the committee members and gave some examples of what they could do. *[Ellen Evans left at approximately 7:09 P.M., with 10 members and quorum remaining.]*

Mr. Russo would suggest a continuance. Member Miner would recommend getting written statements from all the residents on those roads. Russo would like contacts of the neighbors, if you have these contacts. **Motion** to continue this, and request that they return to address the questions addressed this evening was **moved** by Stephanie, **seconded** by Wayne. A list will be provided. The motion **carried** by 9 yeses, 0 noes, 1 abstention from Chair Schlesinger.

**Good of the Order:** Jamie Hall gave comment on rechargeable light bulbs, and discussed the chaos in Laurel Canyon during the rain we have had, and noted that it only takes a couple of hours of water going in the wrong direction that causes problems. He noted that the work we do matters and thanked everyone for participation.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 7:19 P.M. to February 14, 2022.

ACRONYMS:

A – APPEAL	P.M. – PARCEL MAP
APC – AREA PLANNING COMMISSION	P.M. EX – PARCEL MAP EXEMPTION
CE – CATEGORICAL EXEMPTION	TTM – TENTATIVE TRACT MAP
DPS – DEEMED TO BE APPROVED PRIVATE STREET	ZA – ZONING ADMINSTRATOR
DRB – DESIGN REVIEW BOARD	ZAA – ZONING ADMINISTRATOR'S ADJUSTMENT
EAF – ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSEMENT FORM	ZAD – ZONING ADMINISTRATOR'S DETERMINATION
ENV – ENVIRONMENTAL CLEARANCE	ZV – ZONING VARIANCE
MND – MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION	

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