

**Minutes of the Regular Planning Board Meeting**  
**Monday, August 8, 2005 – 7:00 p.m.**

1. CONVENE: 7:03 p.m.
2. FLAG SALUTE: Ms. Mariani
3. ROLL CALL: President Cunningham, Mariani, McNamara and Piziali.

Board Members Cook, Kohlstrand, Lynch were absent.

Also present were Assistant City Attorney David Brandt, Supervising Planner Cynthia Eliason, Planner III Allen Tai, Planner II Dennis Brighton, Planning Intern Stefanie Hom.

4. MINUTES: Minutes for the meeting of July 25, 2005.

A quorum to consider these minutes was not present. They will be considered at the next meeting.

5. AGENDA CHANGES AND DISCUSSION: None.

6. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS:

Ms. Dorothy Reid, Citizens Opposed to SS Target, 2101 Shoreline #276, wished to address comments made by Elizabeth Humstone, on behalf of the American Planning Association, to the Senate Committee on Environmental and Public Works. She stated that “planning was essential to achieving smart growth. Plans help a community establish a common vision of development, and a means of realizing that vision. . . . The plan is the foundation of smart growth agenda, various smart growth policies from open space acquisition to urban revitalization, are only effectively realized in the context of a plan.” She noted that the City’s retail policy had been developed as a result of four public forums. She believed that any big box retail in South Shore Center conflicted with those goals. She commended Doug Garrison in working with her. She believed that Harsch Investments had extraordinary access to planning staff and elected officials that the average citizen did not have. She believed that some of Harsch’s plans were very good, but also that the homeowners deserved consideration. She urged the Planning Board to keep the residents’ interests in mind.

Mr. Piziali noted that he had been on the Planning Board for eight years, and he had never seen a developer who had any unusual access to himself or any other Planning Board member. He stated that not one City staff member had mentioned anything to him, or sent any information, about the Target Store. He advised that he had no more information on that subject than Ms. Reid did.

In response to an inquiry by President Cunningham regarding the project timeline, Ms. Eliason advised that a public workshop would be held within the next month, which would be a presentation by the developer about their proposal before the item is heard.

7. 2005-2006 ELECTION OF PLANNING BOARD OFFICERS:  
**(Continued from the meeting of July 25, 2005.)**

Mr. Brandt advised that it was customary for a full Board to be seated for an election, and that it should be continued until then.

M/S Piziali/Mariani and unanimous to continue this item until a full Board is present.

AYES – 4 (Cook, Kohlstrand, Lynch absent); NOES – 0; ABSTAIN – 0

8. CONSENT CALENDAR:

8.A. **Variance, V04-0002, and Major Design Review, DR03-0146 – Alvin Wong – 2708 Lincoln Avenue (DB).** The applicant requests a Major Design Review approval for the partial demolition of an approximately 842-square foot, two-bedroom, single-story cottage and reconstruction to provide approximately 1,870-square feet, four-bedroom, two-story, single-family residence, which includes partially covered off-street parking for two-tandem vehicles. Variances are required to permit the following: 1) The structure would be built to within 3-feet from the northwesterly side property line, where a minimum 5-foot setback is required; 2) The structure would cover approximately 51-percent of the site, where the maximum permitted main building coverage is 48-percent for residences with attached garages; and 3) The front porch would be relocated and covered and would be setback approximately 7-feet from the front property line, where 20-feet is the minimum required front yard setback. The site is located within an R-1 (Single-Family Residence) Zoning District. **(Continued from the meeting of July 25, 2005; item was re-advertised.)**

Ms. Eliason advised that a letter of support of this item was received by staff.

President Cunningham read a letter of opposition into the record:

“Dear Planning Board and Reviewing Board,

“I think it is ridiculous to even consider letting Mr. Wong build his new home. What is the use of going to the effort of setting limits for size and setbacks, etc., if you are going to let people be exception to the rule? What makes Mr. Wong so special? Will he be allowed to drive 40 miles an hour around town? Do the regulations belong to everyone except Mr. Wong? If he wants this house that he has designed, then let him buy the proper size lot.

Signed, M.B.”

President Cunningham read a letter of support into the record:

“We’d like to say that we support Mr. and Mrs. Wong in their efforts to build a new and larger home. We have felt that for many years, this home was smaller than all others in the neighborhood. We would like for Mr. and Mrs. Wong to be able to build in order to increase the comfort for their family and need that the rest of us in the neighborhood recognize should be fulfilled.

Signed, Lillian and Bob Rolens”

M/S Piziali/McNamara and unanimous to adopt Planning Board Resolution No. PB-05-30 to approve a Major Design Review approval for the partial demolition of an approximately 842-square foot, two-bedroom, single-story cottage and reconstruction to provide approximately 1,870-square feet, four-bedroom, two-story, single-family residence, which includes partially covered off-street parking for two-tandem vehicles. Variances are required to permit the following: 1) The structure would be built

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AYES – 4 (Cook, Kohlstrand, Lynch absent); NOES – 0; ABSTAIN – 0

9. REGULAR AGENDA ITEMS:

9-A. Appointment of a Planning Board member to the Transportation subcommittee.

President Cunningham advised that at the last meeting, Ms. Kohlstrand indicated she would be willing to serve on this subcommittee.

Mr. Piziali nominated Ms. Kohlstrand to the Transportation subcommittee.

Ms. Mariani seconded the nomination.

AYES – 4 (Cook, Kohlstrand, Lynch absent); NOES – 0; ABSTAIN – 0

9-B. **UP05-0010, James & John Costello- 1645 Park Street (AT).** The applicants request approval of a Use Permit to allow outdoor dining at the rear of the property at McGee's Bar & Grill. The proposed outdoor dining area is approximately 300 square feet in size and will be used between the hours of 10 p.m. and 2 a.m. Wednesday through Saturday. The site is located within a C-M, Commercial-Manufacturing District.

Ms. Eliason introduced Planning Intern Stefanie Hom, who presented the staff report. Staff recommended a condition limiting the extended hours of the outdoor dining area to Fridays and Saturdays only. Staff recommended approval of this item.

The public hearing was opened.

Mr. Robb Ratto, Executive Director, Park Street Business Association, spoke in support of this application, with the new condition, which the applicant accepted. He noted that the applicant was a long-time member of PSBA, and was in his opinion the most responsible tavern/bar owner in the district. He noted that the management staff was exceptional as well. He had no doubt that they would comply to all conditions of the Use Permit.

The public hearing was closed for Board discussion.

President Cunningham believed this would be a good addition to the Park Street district, which would take some smokers to the back of the building, rather than the sidewalk.

Mr. Piziali noted that the same use had been allowed with the Island Club, Kroll's, Scobie's and Lucky 13, and he was not aware of any problems with the other uses. He concurred with staff's recommendation.

Ms. Mariani agreed with staff's recommendation and noted that the only opponent was not in attendance.

Ms. McNamara wished clarification that no music or amplified sound would be allowed in the outdoor areas. Ms. Eliason confirmed that was the case.

Mr. Tai noted that according to the Police Department, most incidents were related to speeding and other traffic offenses on Park Street. No noise complaints had been received.

M/S McNamara/Piziali and unanimous to adopt Planning Board Resolution No. PB-05-31 to approve a Use Permit to allow outdoor dining at the rear of the property at McGee's Bar & Grill. The proposed outdoor dining area is approximately 300 square feet in size and will be used between the hours of 10 p.m. and 2 a.m. Wednesday through Saturday.

AYES – 4 (Cook, Kohlstrand, Lynch absent); NOES – 0; ABSTAIN – 0

9-C. **MDR05-0216 – Regency Centers, LLC. – 2599 Blanding Ave (AT).** The applicant requests sign program approval for the Bridgeside Shopping Center. The site is located within a C-2 PD Central Business Planned Development District.

Mr. Tai presented the staff report, and displayed the various signage options. Staff recommended approval of this item.

The public hearing was opened.

There were no speakers.

The public hearing was closed for Board discussion.

Ms. McNamara inquired why the signs needed to be so large. She expressed concern about the lighting of the tower sign.

Mr. Bruce Qualls, representing Regency Centers, stated that good signage was critical to the success of a retailer. He noted that the size of the monument could be bigger and in a more prominent location. He noted that the Nob Hill sign was 30 square feet, and that the architectural element added cohesiveness and an attractive common element to the center.

Mr. Jerry Weiman, sign consultant, gave a brief background of his involvement in this project, and described his rationale in designing each signage element. He felt that a large panel sign would be inappropriate for the tower signage; using letters were a better method for this element. He noted that would be a visible and bright sign; they still appear to be an open-channel letter. He noted that he used the concept of marine architecture as inspiration for this project. He described each signage element in detail.

In response to an inquiry by President Cunningham regarding the color of the materials and colors of the bridge arch figure, Mr. Weiman replied that it would be either aluminum or steel, either powder-coated or painted with a polyurethane enamel. The width of the monument sign would be approximately 12 feet wide, and the columns would be two feet thick.

Ms. McNamara expressed concern that the sign placed at the end of the canvas awning ends up overwhelming the proposed softness, as opposed to putting the sign above the canvas awning. Mr. Weiman noted that was where the roof started, and that was problematic to the placement of the sign. Ms. McNamara noted that she would not favor roof-mounted signs.

President Cunningham noted that the Board was very concerned about open visibility with respect to window signs, and he was concerned that there were no restrictions or criteria to define how much window signage can actually occur.

Mr. Tai advised that staff included the exact language currently in the latest sign ordinance, specifying

that “signs cannot exceed or cover more than 25% of the glazing area.” He added that the glazing area was defined in the ordinance, and that any window sign cannot exceed ten square feet each.

Ms. McNamara believed that the purpose of a sign ordinance was to control the size of retail signs, and was very concerned that the size had been doubled and tripled for retail advertising purposes. She believed the sign ordinance should be adhered to more closely. She believed the current signage was disproportionate to signage in the rest of the city.

Mr. Piziali noted that the Walgreen’s sign did exceed the normal signage in the City, after go to City Council. He would not support the Nob Hill gasoline sign being the same size as the monument sign.

President Cunningham agreed with Mr. Piziali’s sentiments regarding the monument sign.

Mr. Piziali did not see any need for both signs to match physically in height, and added that the service station sign was huge.

Ms. Mariani agreed that the signs, especially the gas station sign, should be scaled down, and suggested continuing the item.

President Cunningham concurred with the Board members regarding the gas station sign, and suggested that the mass be reduced by removing some of the arched elements on top. He would like further discussions regarding the window signs, and believe that 25% window coverage contradicted the intentions of the Design *direction ordinance*.

Mr. Qualls noted that this center faced Tilden, which was a fairly major thoroughfare, and that there were not many homes adjacent to it. He did not feel there was quite as much friction as the Board members perceived. With regard to the window signage, he noted that he respected the Board’s perspective and preferred to focus the in-window signage to the parking lot side, as opposed to the water side. He would like to see a more open perspective to the water.

Ms. McNamara noted that it would be helpful to have a conceptual drawing of how the signs were proportional to the buildings that surrounded them; she believed that would put the project more in context.

Mr. Piziali would like to see an option with slightly smaller signs, and did not believe that people would miss the shopping center without them.

President Cunningham would support concentrating the estuary-side signage more to the parking lot side.

Ms. McNamara emphasized her belief that the bright illumination and very large signs were not necessary.



Ms. Eliason advised that staff would examine other sign programs, and present information on South Shore and Walgreen's signs.

Ms. McNamara requested a summary of the discussion with respect to windows.

M/S Piziali/McNamara and unanimous to continue this item to the Planning Board meeting of August 22, 2005.

AYES – 4 (Cook, Kohlstrand, Lynch absent); NOES – 0; ABSTAIN – 0

10. WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS: None.

11. BOARD COMMUNICATION:

- a. Oral Status Report regarding Northern Waterfront Plan (Vice President Cook).

Vice President Cook was not in attendance to present this report.

- b. Oral Status Report regarding the Golf Course Committee (Board Member Piziali).

Mr. Piziali advised that there was nothing new to report.

- c. Oral Status Report regarding Oakland/Chinatown Advisory Committee (Board member Mariani).

Ms. Mariani advised that there was nothing new to report.

12. STAFF COMMUNICATIONS: None.

Regarding the comments made during Oral Communications regarding big box stores, Ms. McNamara inquired whether the City had a current definition of a big box store.

Ms. Eliason advised that the General Plan did not have any differentiation, and did not recognize “big box” as a definition, but the retail strategy report may have some definitions that have not been included in the General Plan. She noted that the definition was usually based on square footage, and staff would research that issue for the Board.

13. ADJOURNMENT: 8:22 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Paul Benoit, Interim Secretary  
City of Alameda Planning Board

These minutes were approved at the August 22, 2005, Planning Board meeting. This meeting was audio and video taped.