

APPROVED MEETING MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING OF THE
CITY OF ALAMEDA PLANNING BOARD
WEDNESDAY, MAY 30, 2012

1. CONVENE 7:03 p.m.

2. FLAG SALUTE: Board Member Henneberry

3. ROLL CALL: Present: President Zuppan, Vice-President Burton, Board members
Ezzy Ashcraft, Henneberry, Knox White; Köster (arrived at 7:10
p.m.)

4. MINUTES:

Minutes from the Regular meeting of April 9, 2012

Board member Henneberry motioned to approve minutes as amended

Board member Burton seconded motion

Motion carried 4-0, 1 abstention, Board member Knox White

Minutes from the Regular meeting of April 23, 2012

Board member Ezzy Ashcraft motioned to approve minutes as amended

Board member Henneberry seconded motion

Motion carried 5-0, 1 abstention, Board member Knox White

Minutes from the Regular meeting of May 14, 2012 (Pending)

5. AGENDA CHANGES AND DISCUSSION

Andrew Thomas, Planning Services Manager stated that the applicant for item 9D has requested to be moved up on the agenda.

Board member Ezzy Ashcraft asked where the agenda item would be moved to.

President Zuppan answered that the placement of the item depends on the board member who makes the motion.

Board member Knox White motioned to re-order the agenda items to the following: 9A, 9C, 9D, and 9B.

Board member Ezzy Ashcraft seconded motion.

Motion carries 5-0, no abstentions.

6. STAFF COMMUNICATIONS

Approved Meeting Minutes

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6.A. Future Agendas

Andrew Thomas, Planning Services Manager, provided an overview of upcoming projects.

7. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

Anyone may address the Board on a topic not on the agenda under this item by submitting a speaker's information slip, subject to the five-minute time limit.

NONE

8. CONSENT CALENDAR

Consent Calendar items are considered routine and will be enacted, approved or adopted by one motion unless a request for removal for discussion or explanation is received from the Planning Board or a member of the public by submitting a speaker slip for that item.

NONE

9. REGULAR AGENDA ITEMS

9-A 1716 Webster Street. Design Review and Zoning Text Amendment– PLN10-0153 – Delong Liu. Alteration of a gas station/convenience store use in the C-C, Community Commercial Zone. Proposed project includes a proposed zoning text amendment to allow reduced setback requirements for gas station convenience stores and Design Review for the construction of a new 2,575 sq ft convenience store with reduced off-street parking.

Andrew Thomas, Planning Services Manager gave a brief presentation

Board member Ezzy Ashcraft asked when the appeal will go to City Council.

Mr. Thomas answered in July, and he will advise the Board of the precise date.

Board member Knox White asked if the Zoning Amendments are adopted by City Council will the City will retain the ability to require an applicant to abide by certain requests, i.e. maintain a certain setback or a specific building height, even if the original drawing is in compliance with the zoning amendments.

Mr. Thomas replied that the City does retain a certain amount of control, via the design review process.

Board member Knox White asked if the City has sufficient design guidelines on Webster Street to insist that an applicant adhere to certain requirements by the Board and staff.

Mr. Thomas answered that guidelines are not required to approve a project, but findings with supporting evidence are required.

Board member Köster asked what the actual side yard setback for the house on Webster Street is.

Mr Thomas responded that the side yard setback is approximately three feet and definitely fewer than five feet and the setback for the front yard is less than 20 feet.

Dave Franklin, property owner on Buena Vista, during public comment stated that he would prefer to see plan A1.

Board member Ezzy Ashcraft stated she was pleased to see the project come back and thanked the architect for presenting four plans for review. She stated she concurs with staff and prefers Plan B1 (Option 2).

Board member Knox White stated he will support either Plan A1 or Plan B1. He stated that before choosing a plan, the Board really needs to think about what they would like to see on Webster Street.

Board member Köster stated he agrees with the wording of the text amendment and prefers Plan B1 with at least a 5 foot setback. He stated he would like to see another option showing the extension to the street while keeping the 30 foot elevation.

Vice President Burton thanked the architect and applicant for agreeing to the continuation and staff for working through the process. He stated he agrees with the text amendment, stating it gives adequate flexibility.

President Zuppan concurred with the comments by the Board. She expressed concern regarding pedestrian safety for customers walking from the pump to the convenience store and having to walk in front of the Webster Street entrance.

Board member Ezzy Ashcraft requested clarification on the circulation of vehicles and if they are able to enter and exit from Webster Street.

Mr. Hoy responded that they have not finalized the circulation pattern with Public Works for entering and exiting the station.

Mr. Thomas stated currently the gas station can be entered from Webster Street.

Board member Ezzy Ashcraft stated, pedestrians will have to be cognizant of vehicles.

President Zuppan clarified that her concern is that the pedestrian safety between the pump and the convenience store is addressed.

Board member Knox White stated that Plan B1 is the preferred option to provide clearance for the windows and suggested that setbacks be required specifically where the adjacent buildings windows are, and not the entire length of the property.

Board member Köster asked if the residential building next door, which is historic, can be torn down, and inquired if it's owner has spoken with staff regarding the project.

Mr. Thomas stated that the building is historic and there is a demolition process for historic properties.

Board member Ezzy Ashcraft stated the Board's direction to staff, when bringing this back for review, should include the landscaping plans.

Mr. Thomas stated that commercial buildings on the main corridor are reviewed and approved by the Planning Board and that the landscaping will be included in the plans when staff presents the design review to the Board. He clarified that the only reason staff suggested that the board not review the design again is because the board has reviewed the plans twice.

Board member Knox White motioned to approve the staff recommendation with the flexibility that Plan B1's design be allowed to explore the "bulb outs," or other design options around the wing-walls to protect the windows and lighting of the house next door, that landscape plans be included in the design review plans, and that the design be brought back to the Board for approval.

Board member Köster seconded the motion.

Vice President Burton stated that the Board needs to be very careful with how specific staff direction is in regards to the "bulb-outs" and that the architect needs flexibility. He stated that staff and the architect have a good sense of what the Board wants and doesn't think that the Board needs to be very explicit in their direction to staff and the architect.

Board member Knox White replied that it is important that the Board be explicit in their direction, because Plan B1 has a 5 foot setback. He stated that If the Board asks staff to look at building within the 5 foot setback; it is confusing to make a recommendation for a setback without saying its okay to "play around" in the setback a little bit as long as the spirit of the purpose for the 5 foot setback is achieved.

Vice President Burton suggested that the language state a 5 foot setback with provision that the interface at Webster Street can be occupied by a piece of building that is designed to be proportional to the building and does not obstruct the windows on the adjacent building. He stated that the building should not touch the front porch of the house and both buildings need breathing room in order to fit well on their lots. He reiterated that he wants to leave staff and the architect a lot of flexibility to properly work through the set back.

Board member Knox White affirmed that the intent in the motion is to allow staff and the architect the flexibility to build within the 5 foot setback, while protecting the lighting and windows on the adjacent property.

Board member Köster stated he accepts the clarifications to second the motion.

Motion carried 6 – 0; no, abstentions.

Mr. Thomas stated, the zoning text amendment and the appeal will move forward to City Council. Staff will work with the application for the design review process and will bring the design review application for board approval.

President Zuppan thanked Mr. Hoy for his flexibility and thanked Laura Ajello for her hard work.

9-C 2130 South Shore Center PLN12-0021 - Applicant: Jamestown Properties - Amendment to the Sign Program for South Shore Center. The Planning Board will hold a public hearing to consider an amendment to the existing sign program at 2130 South Shore Center (formerly known as Alameda Towne Center)

Andrew Thomas, Planning Services Manager, gave a brief presentation.

Vice President Burton commented that the dock or “shore-like” design of the signs does not have any relation to the actual design of the buildings.

Board member Knox White stated that he would like to see that the floodlights don't reflect back into the residential buildings across the street.

Carol Gottstein, during public comment stated, that A-frame signs are helpful for people who have a hard time walking or are disabled. She requested that the A-frame signs be used or an alternative sign at pedestrian level be.

Board member Köster stated he is impartial to Exhibit A the post-sign. He concurred with Vice President Burton stating the Exhibit B signs seem dated and inappropriate.

Board member Henneberry stated the name change is a step in the right direction. He explained that the “log-like” posts are called piles and they hold up docks, so they never go out of style.

Board member Ezzy Ashcraft stated she disagrees with board member Köster and Ms. Gottstein and opposes the A-frame signs. She explained that while on a site visit she observed that the A-frame signs impeded the area where shoppers are walking and present a tripping hazard.

President Zuppan stated that she likes that the signs tie into the shoreline and the beach, and she likes the trellising, which is classic in appearance and seen throughout the facility.

Todd Falduti, Center Manager Jamestown Properties, stated that all non-approved signage such as literature racks, bug-wing signs, and a-frames were creating visual clutter and were removed from use when Jamestown Properties gained control.

Board member Knox White stated he wants to make sure that the lights are lit from a direction to prohibit reflection.

Mr. Falduti replied that they will work with Aero Signs to help address technical issues such as light reflection.

Board member Knox White clarified that the A-frame signs are for special events only.

Mr. Falduti replied in the affirmative stating that Jamestown owns the signs, and that retailers must request use of the signs for a specified amount of time (i.e. a 3-day sale).

Board member Ezzy Ashcraft asked if there is a limit to how many A-frame signs will be placed around the center at any given time.

Mr. Falduti replied that the center has not yet specified a limit to the amount of A-frame signs. He estimates that no more than 20 signs will be provided and that should accommodate the sales, special events, directions, etc. He stated he would like to have the flexibility to provide the signage as needed.

Board member Ezzy Ashcraft clarified if there will be specifications on how far away from the buildings the A-frame signs can be.

Mr. Falduti, stated that new pylon signs have been placed at all the entrances, which directs people into the center.

Board member Ezzy Ashcraft stated that she can now support the A-frame signs.

Mr. Falduti addressed the concerns raised by the Board in regards to the actual aesthetics of the signs stating they would have graphics redesign based on the boards comments.

Board member Ezzy Ashcraft motioned to approve the sign program as amended.

Board member Henneberry seconded the motion.

Board member Burton, during discussion, stated he will vote “no” to express his displeasure with some of the graphics.

President Zuppan asked staff if the changes made to the signs will come back for review.

Mr. Thomas answered that the Board can approve the signs as is, or approve the motion on the floor.

President Zuppan clarified that if the signs are changed in response to Board comments, then the signs will come back for review.

Board member Knox White stated he will vote for the motion.

Motion carried five – one; no abstentions. (Ayes: Zuppan, Henneberry, Ezzy Ashcraft, Knox White, Köste; : Noes: Burton)

9-D Review and Comment on Proposal for 1600 Park Street-Applicant: Foley Street Investments LLC. The Planning Board will review and comment on a proposal to build two new retail buildings at 1600 Park Street.

Board member Burton recused himself

Planning Services Manager Andrew Thomas gave a brief presentation.

Ken Carvalho, Foley Street Investment, gave a brief presentation.

Board member Ezzy Ashcraft reported that she met with partners from Foley Street Investments and stated that not every tree in the Master Tree Plan needs to be used.

Mr. Carvalho stated that the intent is to group trees together.

President Zuppan stated that with Form-Based Code, if something were to happen, whatever was in that building could come out and something else could go in. She asked if a tenant wanted to replace the window box with a real window, if the boxes are constructed in such a way to allow that.

Mr. Carvalho replied that the window boxes are real windows and the boxes can be taken out and used as either a “real window” or as doors.

Board member Ezzy Ashcraft asked if the Park Street door will always be a door that is accessible or if that door will serve solely as an emergency exit.

Mr. Carvalho replied that Foley Street Investment prefers that as a condition of approval for the use permit, that the two doors remain unlocked and accessible during business hours. .

President Zuppan clarified that the windows along Park Street can be converted into doors later on if necessary.

Mr. Carvalho replied in the affirmative.

Board member Ezzy Ashcraft stated that the use and design need to fit the street and since this is a downtown street, pedestrians should be able to see the activity going on inside the business and not business advertisement. .

Board member Knox White asked if the windows that face the Pacific Street “cut-through” are real or if they are box windows.

Mr. Carvalho answered that those are box windows.

Board member Knox White asked if the only natural light available in the building is coming through the two doors.

Mr. Carvalho replied that natural light is provided by the doors as well as the top of the arched windows.

Jamie Keating, Foley Street Investment, encouraged the Board to look at the project is an entire block, starting at the Marketplace and extending down to the new CVS building.

Board member Ezzy Ashcraft stated that the drive-through pharmacy window is not a foregone conclusion and the parking circulation would be improved by removing the drive-through. She stated that CASA limits drive through businesses because of exhaust and fumes generated from idling motors.

Mr. Carvalho replied that some medical insurance providers do not cover both Walgreens and CVS.

Mr. Keating stated that CVS is motivated to move to this site because a more efficient operation can be developed.

President Zuppan asked if the flat iron design on the corner has been discussed with Public Works, citing a similar issue with a nearby building. .

Mr. Carvalho stated that the corner radius issues have been discussed with Public Works who have determined that a 25 foot radius is preferred for pedestrian safety and traffic flow.

Board member Ezzy Ashcraft asked if the drivers parked in the handicapped spaces for PAD A (CVS) will be backing out into the line of traffic created by entering from Park Street.

Mr. Carvalho stated that the drivers will back out of the handicap spaces into that traffic.

Board member Ezzy Ashcraft responded that she has concerns with cars backing out of spaces directly into the traffic entering off of Park Street because Park Street is so busy.

Mr. Carvalho replied that disabled parking spaces cannot be made in the public right-of-way. Handicapped parking is also close to the door to prevent an additional area of traffic having to be crossed. .

Board member Ezzy Ashcraft stated that the handicapped parking spaces can be moved closer to the door nearest the parking lot if the drive-through pharmacy window is removed.

President Zuppan asked if a Reciprocal Easement Agreement (REA) has a term, like a lease.

Mr. Carvalho replied that usually REAs are in perpetuity; however some terminate after a certain number of years. He stated that they are attempting to negotiate an REA with a term of 15-20 years

Board member Knox White reported that he met with the applicants. He stated that he is struggling with the request to approve inactive windows along Park Street.

Board member Köster asked staff what street the actual front of the building faces.

Mr. Thomas replied that the staff has only considered the front and side of the building for set-back requirements.

Board member Köster asked if there has been any consideration to build a third structure on the site.

Mr. Carvalho replied that a third structure is not a viable because the minimum number of required parking spaces is determined by the building's square footage.

Josh Eisenhut, Armstrong Development, stated that the project is an opportunity to improve CVS' business and also correct some issues.

Board member Ezzy Ashcraft stated that since the site plan significantly deviates from other stores, and building is occurring in a historic downtown, then the project should fit into the location.

Mr. Eisenhut replied that in order for the project to be viable, the business has to be profitable.

Board member Ezzy Ashcraft asked what the square footage of the current CVS store is and whether it is comparable in size to the proposed location

Mr. Eisenhut replied that the current store is just over 16,000 square feet, and the proposed site is 15,000 with the flat-iron design or 14,500 with the square design.

Carol Gottstein, during public comment stated that the name "Alameda Station" seems boring, and she is concerned that it will be as resented as the name "Alameda Towne Center." She suggested renaming the development to "Tilden Station" or "North of Lincoln Station," something that would be more geographically identifiable.

Mr. Keating replied that the name "Alameda Station" commemorates the historic Alameda train Station, which was located at that site.

Board member Knox White stated that it is an exciting project but he wants the Board to be mindful of the plans that are being approved so he is not willing to fast-track the approval process.

Board member Köster stated he also met with Foley Street Investments. He said an entrance on the corner of Park and Tilden makes sense in terms of Park Street events.

Board member Ezzy Ashcraft stated the development needs to be pedestrian friendly and accessible by automobile.

President Zuppan stated that she is excited for the project, likes the design and building style and is interested to see how the flat-iron concept will work with the style. She shared that she is more comfortable making some of the decisions, because the developers are local, active community members.

No action required

Mr. Thomas stated that staff will continue to work with applicants on the remaining issues.

9-B Consideration of Proposed Fiscal Year 2012-2013 Capital Improvement Plan's consistency with the City of Alameda General Plan. The Planning Board will make a determination as to whether the proposed Fiscal Year 2012-2013 Capital Improvement Plan is consistent with the City of Alameda's General Plan.

Barbara Hawkins, City Engineer, gave a brief presentation.

Board member Köster requested clarification on the term "sinking fund".

Ms. Hawkins replied that a "sinking fund" is an account that accumulates money for a number of years. She stated that the project would not be done right away, but money would be put aside for it.

Board member Köster asked for clarification on how the projects are ranked and if all the projects have been ranked.

Ms. Hawkins stated that each category has points associated with the projects outcome.

Board member Köster referenced the "Trash Debris and Vegetation Removal of the Alameda Beltline Property" project and asked if the City has considered using volunteers to help with projects similar to these thereby saving money.

Ms. Hawkins replied that the City does host "Coastal Clean up Days" and a number of similar volunteer days. She stated there is higher risk associated with the Beltline project which includes power garden tools.

Board member Knox White stated he found the report very confusing. And the comments listed below are to provide guidance and direction for future reports. He said he hopes in the future the reports are presented earlier, so there is an opportunity to ask questions. He stated the project ratings does not make sense, and doesn't appear to have any internal consistency to it, and there doesn't appear to be much discussion on how the items interact. He said he would like to see the project scores. He requested clarification between the "Maintenance" (Storm Drain Maintenance, New Street Sweeping Signs) list and the "Project" (Ballena Bay Bridge Major Maintenance, Crack and Slurry Seal Maintenance on Roads) list, and how one is distinguished from the other. He stated that after reviewing the project list it appears to only be maintenance projects, not new projects. He requested more clarity and consistency with the reporting, and include the plans from the general policy that are applicable to the listed projects. He stated that staff should have all the required information provided to make the requested determinations. He requested that projects that don't make the list be listed separately, but in addition to project list, for follow up purposes.

President Zuppan clarified that the ratings were used to develop the first cuts of all the projects for CIP, those projects were then discussed by project manager, and the projects that made the top cut would be prioritized based on funding sources, city budget, and other elements. So the scoring was first cut scores.

Ms. Hawkins added that the City Manager then reviewed the proposed projects and determined final project priority.

President Zuppan stated that explaining more of the process used to determine project priority would help the Board in their understanding of the item while reviewing.

Vice President Burton concurred with board member Knox White's comments, stating this is about a process of communication. He said it is important to design the reports for the people who are going to be making the decisions, and provide all the information needed in order to analyze the reports and make valid decisions. He stated it would be nice to see if projects are compliant with the Local Action Plan for Climate Protection (LAPCP). He asked if the projects are listed in order of ranking or priority.

Mr. Thomas stated that there are policies in the General Plan that are closely related to the LAPCP such as environmental protection and air quality improvements, and there is talk about adopting the LAPCP as an amendment to the General Plan.

Ms. Hawkins stated that the projects are not listed in the order of their ranking.

Vice President Burton concurred that providing a list of projects that did not make a list would be helpful.

Board member Ezzy Ashcraft addressed the comment about the list being all maintenance projects instead of new projects. She stated that maintenance and upkeep are necessary to prevent deterioration, and it is cheaper to maintain, than to build new. She stated she never realized how much Public Works does throughout the City. And that reason why more projects aren't being done is because of the City's financial condition. She echoed the comments regarding the content and format of the reports

President Zuppan reiterated that describing the process more thoroughly, and including why each project is compliant with the General Plan would help Board make the requested determinations. She also stated that providing information about how the rankings were determined would be useful. She cited the Climate Change presentation that discussed how water coming into the sewer system will affect the City, and asked if any of the priority projects listed address the concerns mentioned in that presentation, in terms of the analysis or the actual work to change those structures

Ms. Hawkins replied that the Storm Drain Master Plan project which includes looking at the 55 inch sea level rise addressed issues in the Climate Change Presentation. She said a model was created, the affects of an 18 inch rise was studied, and now the consultant will study the affects of a 55 inch rise. She said once the entire structure has been mapped, the consultants will be able to determine where the water is coming in, and staff will be able to determine if gates or berms need to be added. She said now that the model is in place the infrastructure can be studied

President Zuppan clarified that the core information studies can be now be done to determine that the right, long term solution is applied.

Ms. Hawkins stated that the initial approach would include looking at solutions such as upsizing pipes rather than installing a berm.

President Zuppan asked to what extent this type of work coordinated with AMP, if it is outside of the CIP process, and if projects are discussed prior to implementation.

Ms. Hawkins replied that AMP works with a different board for decisions, which is outside of the CIP process. She stated that AMP and Public Works share upcoming projects at utility meetings, where they discuss impact reduction.

President Zuppan asked what the pink paint on the sidewalk means.

Ms. Hawkins replied that pink paint is for City sidewalk projects usually necessary because of city trees. The particular project in question is work that will be done on the City sidewalks as a result of uplift from street trees in the median. The white paint is property owner repair responsibility due to other deterioration in the sidewalk, possibly from private property.

Vice President Burton motioned to continue the meeting for an additional 15 minutes.

Board member Köster seconded the motion

Motioned carried 5-0; no abstentions

Matt Naclerio, Public Works Director, stated that sidewalk repair work will usually take place within 30 days of being marked with pink paint. After the temporary repair the location is placed on a permanent list, and that list currently has a 4- 5 year period. They will attempt to double the number of permanent repairs this year. The white paint is property owner responsibility. Owners receive a notice and have 60 days to repair the sidewalk.

Board member Knox White motioned to make the determination of consistency with the General Plan

Board member Ezzy Ashcraft seconded the motion

Motion carried 5-0; no abstentions

10. WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

None

11. BOARD COMMUNICATIONS

Board members may ask a question for clarification, make a brief announcement or make a brief report on his or her activities. In addition, the Board may provide a referral to staff or other resources for factual information, request staff to report back to the body at a subsequent meeting concerning a City matter or, through the Chair, direct staff to place a request to agendize a matter of business on a future agenda.

None

12. ADJOURNMENT 10:59 p.m.