

APPROVED MEETING MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING OF THE
CITY OF ALAMEDA PLANNING BOARD
MONDAY, APRIL 28, 2014

1. CONVENE: 7:05 p.m.

2. FLAG SALUTE:

3. ROLL CALL: Present: President Burton, Vice President Henneberry, Board members Knox White, Köster, and Alvarez-Morrone, and Tang. Board member Zuppan was late.

4. AGENDA CHANGES AND DISCUSSION:

Board member Alvarez-Morrone requested getting feedback from Board members that were not on the Alameda Point Town Center subcommittee who are not present tonight. She would also like to hear feedback on written communications.

President Burton motioned to move item 7.C. to first item on regular agenda.
Board member Alvarez-Morrone seconded.
Motion carried, 5-1-0 (Knox White opposed)

5. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS:

Ms. Vicky Vargees, resident of Harbor Bay originally purchased her home in the area because of the Harbor Bay Club as an amenity. They are still active members of the Club. She is requesting for the site not be rezoned, and keep the facility where it is. Mr. Cowan doesn't live in Alameda and doesn't understand the community, and there are no benefits to moving the Club.

Mr. Doug deHaan commented on the dissolution of the Economic Development Commission (EDC). It was the understanding that the PB would take on the roles or work of the EDC. He asked staff why is the PB taking on the role of all issues the EDC once had. He would like to see where those issues are being dealt with by either Boards or staff.

6. CONSENT CALENDAR:

6.A. Alameda Landing Residential Street Names

Board member Knox White motioned to pull the item from Consent.

Board member Knox White provided a handout with updated street names, and provided a brief background and reviewed a couple of rules for names being street names. He would like to see "People of Note", and examples used were Barbara Manning, Don Grant, Lewis McCall, Houchian, BoHowl, George Miller, Nelly Takada, and Arushia. He requested removing navy vessels from the list. The list he provided is equal to the number of streets in the development.

Vice President Henneberry agreed with Knox White and would like to see this come back one more time. He suggested a couple other edits to remove generic names, and to add Terry LaCroix.

Board member Alvarez-Morrone asked if streets could be alphabetized.

Board member Köster asked if things like patriot and freedom be removed from the list, and thanked Knox White for the extra effort.

President Burton supported the suggested names and for this to move forward.

Board member Knox White motioned to accept the additional 16 names, and ask staff to assign street names in alphabetical order.

Vice President Henneberry seconded.

Motion carried, 7-0

Board member Knox White reported he has many other names for street naming and will submit that to staff in the near future.

7. REGULAR AGENDA ITEMS:

7.C. Public Review of the Draft Alameda Point Waterfront Town Center Plan (Plan)- No Action Will be Taken

Mr. Christopher Buckley, AAPS, commented on a letter he had also sent to the PB. He provided an overhead, and reported the main complaint of the Plan is the height of the buildings in front of the Hangers. This height limit should be lower. The in-fill portion of the report is not clear as there seem to be something missing. They recommend that any new buildings be subordinate to any existing structures. He would like for the sense and time and place be preserved.

Board member Zuppan thanked everyone who worked on the Plan. She stated that she would like to hear more on iconic new structures and new development being subordinate.

President Burton commented on the subordinate area being along the view area and on the structures there currently. The iconic building being in the location of approaching the waterfront is the focus.

Board member Zuppan asked that Mr., Buckley's comments be added.

Board member Köster asked if there was a way to do preliminary renderings of what the approach to the waterway could possibly look like. He agreed with the height limits, and is concerned with the water being accessible. He would like to see public slips in the marina area. Specifically, a public dock for short term visiting sailors.

President Burton referred to the pages in the Plan for the boat launch and a small launch.

Board member Knox White asked about the Phasing chapter, he asked about the highlighted pre-phase portion of the project.

Mr. Thomas reported this was added because that area of the town center still needs to be cleaned.

Ms. Ott stated there should be a development schedule in place within the next year.

Mr. Thomas stated that staff is taking public comments until May 15, 2014, and encouraged interested to submit their comments.

Board member Zuppan motioned to continue this item to the May 12, 2014 meeting.

Vice President Henneberry seconded.

Motion carried. 7-0

7.A. Public Review of the Draft Housing Element (HE) for 2015-2023 - No Action will be taken.

Mr. Andrew Thomas, City Planner, provided a briefing and reported on the timeline for upcoming public hearings. The draft HE policy has been reorganized to make it easier to follow. Many public comments and PB comments have been incorporated into the draft HE. There will be improvements made to the background report per a letter received from the State Dept. of Housing. Staff needs to look further into the raising rent issues and feels this shouldn't be part of the HE at this time.

President Burton opened the public comment period.

Ms. Anne DeBardeleben, Alameda Association of Realtors (AAOR), requested the PB move forward with the draft HE and not to address the rent stabilization issues. She reported the Rent Review Advisory Committee (RRAC) within the City has been a successful mechanism for rent disputes with a very high success rate.

Ms. Angie Watson-Hajjem, ECHO Housing, reported many people have been forced out of Alameda by rent increases. ECHO cannot advocate for or against rent stabilization, but she is a private citizen here in Alameda and can voice that she implores the Board to look into the issue. She also stated that the RRAC does not have any teeth, and landlords don't have to appear at meetings.

Ms. Catherine Johnson, resident, stated she had a 25% rent when she opened a daycare in her home, five months later she had another increase, and was told in another few months she would have another increase. She will not be able to sustain the rent increases, and will lose her home and business, which will result on less child care for the community. She asked that the City review Renewed Hope's proposal on rent stabilization.

Mr. Jeffery Levin, East Bay Housing Organizations (EBHO), stated that EBHO is an affordable housing organization and has worked with many cities on their HE's. He thanked staff and the Board for the work put in. He asked for policies on prevention of displacement, include policies to monitor and study a rent stabilization measure. Alameda Point welcomes the commitment of 25% affordable housing and asked for studying the incentives. He suggested an annual progress report should be a formal policy within the HE.

Ms. Margorie Rocha, ECHO Housing, explained the agency's role with the City of Alameda, mainly tenant / landlord disputes and many go to the RRAC. She advocates for the tenants being displaced, as owners /landlords are not required to appear at the RRAC meetings and some of the tenants have been in Alameda many years. She asked the City to look at how to improve the policy for mediation.

Ms. Kelly Harp, City of Alameda Disability Commission, thanked the speakers. She stated that the Commission has formed a working group to gather comments for the HE. She reported the need for more senior housing as well as disabled accessible housing as there is a continued need for barrier free housing. The accommodation ordinance has been implemented. She asked that the Universal Design regulations be implemented into the new HE, and asked for the PB to move this program through the process.

Mr. Bill Smith, Renewed Hope, commended staff for the draft HE, and was glad to see that AP isn't part of the HE. Renewed Hope supports ECHO Housing, and the HE cannot be supported without a rent element into the HE. There needs to be an assessment for the current rental policy within the City, with a study of alternatives. He reported there is a need for something to protect renters. He provided a letter sent to the PB, opposing the HE.

Ms. Debra Arbuckle, resident, reported there is a big need for rental rights being protected in the City. She stated if there isn't something in the HE, there is a good chance this issue will not be taken care of.

Ms. Marilyn Schumaker, landlord, stated that her understanding is if there are comments for rent stabilization in the HE, then the issue rolls up to the state level. The RRAC is a City committee and perhaps the City can get behind the RRAC more. Rent stabilization is not the answer.

Mr. Donald Hardiman, addressed the board and was heard by the RRAC. The rents in his building went up 67%, and noticing for the increases were not done properly. Some of the renters had a disabled child. This wasn't an isolated incident, and it appears new owners can charge anything they want and get away with it. There is a distinction with large developers and owners with a small number of units. This issue cannot be overlooked.

Ms. Louis Pryor, Renewed Hope, she stated that it is vital to include a policy for addressing higher rents.

President Burton closed the public comment period.

Mr. Thomas reported the City is not prepared to make a promise to the state that the City wouldn't be able to keep. We don't want to be coming back to the PB and say we haven't done the work as promised, i.e. Universal Design. There aren't enough resources for things like tracking rents, gathering data, analyzing data, reporting data, etc. In terms of control, the state doesn't control rents but there has been more legislation. Once a program gets into the HE we are required to report annually on this program. The City Council would oversee rent control, not the state.

Board member Alvarez-Morrone commended staff for the boiled down version.

Board member Tang commented on the housing crisis and there is a limited supply of rental units. Building more affordable rentals could alleviate the problem, but landlords cannot raise the rents suddenly after no increases for many years. Perhaps long term goals with developers would be a good idea, increase supply.

Board member Zuppan stated that rent stabilization needs to be addressed, but having it in the HE at this time may not be the way to go. Criticizing resources that are available isn't the best use of time, and the RRAC is an effective body. The Universal Design seems more critical to get this into the HE.

Mr. Thomas hopes to have the draft ordinance of Universal Design by end of 2014. All developers have been talked to as a requirement for all projects.

Board member Zuppan commented on transportation around new developments. She asked about new policy for this issue. She asked staff if there is more we can do. She wanted to thank RRAC for their service.

Vice President Henneberry stated there isn't expertise in getting a rent stabilization policy into the HE, but they can request for City Council to look into this. He suggested adding a sentence in the HE under RRAC to include this comment.

Board member Knox White stated that he strongly supports and encourages a program to address the issue of rent stabilizing, and a process for all parties to be at a table to talk about the issue. He would also like to see a timeline for when this would be addressed. He suggested changes to the Universal Design language (deadline). Creating transit friendly neighborhoods and green building should include our housing stock be built to be included. There is a 45 year old parking plan for residential. Housing and transit costs should be monitored. He asked that all new landlords check a box stating they understand a business license is required.

Board member Köster commented on the need for senior housing, secondary units and could the quantified measure be included. He appreciated the pipeline document from the Housing Authority. He agreed with the rent comments from the others.

President Burton thanked all who spoke and staff for the work on the HE. He commented on the annual review and could this be on the schedule. He commented that the rent stabilization is an issue as half of the residents rent. He agreed this needed to be a very thoughtful process starting with a community wide forum. He agreed with a sentence or two being added to the RRAC process.

Board member Tang asked about turning residential areas to commercial property and suggested if they aren't using the property for residential require them to build affordable in another area of the city.

Mr. Thomas stated this will be back in early June 2014.

7.B. Public Workshop to Consider a Draft Master Plan (PLN14-0059) for the Rehabilitation, Reuse, and Redevelopment of the Former Del Monte Warehouse Site located at 1501 Buena Vista Avenue

Mr. Thomas provided a report on the project.

Mr. Michael O'Harra, Tim Lewis Communities, introduced his team. He provided an update of the adaptive reuse to the project, and reviewed the Master Plan.

Ms. Paula Krugmeir, Architect, provided an update and presentation on the project.

Board member Köster asked about the parking spaces around the outside of the building. Ms. Krugmeir there is one stall on site per unit, some more depending on size of unit. The spaces on the street are public, on site are private.

Vice President Henneberry asked about the paseo entrance, which doors enter the building.

Ms. Krugmeir stated this is a work in progress, which is why it looks unbalanced.

President Burton commented on the completion of Clement Street and how it connects with other businesses. He asked about the cross Alameda Trail cutting through Jean Sweeney Open Space.

Mr. Thomas reported on Clement Street extension the intersection at Sherman will be completely redone, and brought forward where the edge of Windriver. The north side will be bike and walking trails. The Alameda Trail will cross the extension. This has been in the works for the past ten years.

Board member Alvarez-Morrone asked for the timeline on getting this project completed.

Mr. Thomas stated building permits by Fall 2014. This is the first serious proposal for this building in the past 12 years.

Board member Köster asked for staff comments on the transit hub.

Mr. Thomas stated there is currently a shuttle from BART to Windriver. This project will pay into that service, but staff is hopeful a private water service can be in place across the estuary.

President Burton opened the public comment period.

Mr. Lester Cabral, resident, stated the project is too dense for the area and will affect the neighborhood. He feels the building is too high, and doesn't want government controlled parking. There should be two spaces per unit and additional visitor parking

Mr. Gabriel Wise, resident, spoke on the parking issues and green space. There should be no un-coupled parking for the project. Financial burden cannot be placed on the residents in the area. The open space is planned, but no green space in the area until Jean Sweeney Open Space Park is completed. He suggested a contingency that timing connect both projects be completed at the same time.

Ms. Alison Green, resident, stated that Littlejohn Park is busy on weekends but this is a fine thing. She talked about comparing parking issues with SF and Berkeley, and there are no services to the project. The retail space probably won't have medical care. The housing numbers don't jive in the plan and the density numbers. Affordable housing owners shouldn't have to pay to support services like a water taxi.

Ms. Deborah Arbuckle, resident, spoke on the density and effects on LittleJohn Park. The project is too big and too dense and doesn't fit the neighborhood. There won't be enough money to support the water service or shuttles.

Ms. Dorothy Freeman, resident, spoke on the density affecting Littlejohn Park, and the project should help fund the non-funded project of Jean Sweeney Open Space Park (JSOSP). She spoke on problems arising with visitors or owners of the project using the parking lots at Windriver and JSOSP.

Mr. Nick Cabral, resident, spoke on the density and traffic in the area stating it is very loud and disruptive. He stated it has been 40 years of talking about this project. Not everyone will be pleased about the project. He wasn't to see a positive turnout for the project. He praised staff and PB, they are trying to improve the neighborhood.

Mr. Frank Thorsberg, spoke on traffic and parking and doesn't want to pay a fee to park in his neighborhood. He is concerned with the trucks in the area, and will the road change be done in connection with the project being completed.

Mr. Christopher Buckley, AAPS, sent a letter and commented. He is pleased the project is moving forward. He commented on the building height, and suggested story poles be in place in the plan. He reported on the design changes, and materials, windows, doors and stated the rhythm is off.

Mr. William Smith, Renewed Hope commented on the use of multi-family overlay and affordable housing are exciting. He commented as a resident on the parking being an issue. Affordable housing people shouldn't have to pay for services especially if they aren't using the services. The role of the vehicle is changing, youth don't want cars. He stated density helps to expand on open space or green space.

Ms. Karen Bey, commented on being excited about the project and agrees the market is right for the development. She was excited to see the list of public benefits. She asked for the approval of the project. She commented on Tang's issue of demand and supply.

Mr. Doug deHaan, spoke on the need for the developer to pay for amenities and services for the project. He commented on the high density in the area. He warned of examples of the past, and the need for open spaces. Funding should be provided upfront from the developers.

President Burton closed public comment.

Board member Köster reported on this is a great project. He would like to see more ideas on the transit hub, and the retail side. He would like to know about the live/work units. He commented on the paseo and had safety concerns connecting to the park. He is glad to hear the development helping JSOSP, and commented on the area being underserved by open space. He is concerned about noise traveling through the corridors. He agreed with Mr. Buckley's comments, and likes option 2 for the opening. He stated the need for natural light in bathrooms over walk in closets.

Board member Knox White asked about the street cross sections.

Mr. Thomas stated the Master Plan is to provide as much detail as possible.

Board member Knox White commented on planted medians in the road should be used as bike lanes instead, on the north side of the road. He commented on the 'exclusive transit street' detail. He commented on Entrance Road being three lanes. He would like to see some changes to Buena Vista, perhaps strips of green space. He asked the number of truck trips for Del Monte and the number seemed high (25). He spoke on language for transit related streets. He wanted the plan to address sea level rise. He suggested an open space in-lieu fee. He agreed to unbundle the parking. He liked the design.

Board member Alvarez-Morrone commented on residents paying for parking permits instead of just being issued. She saw the developer give a thumbs-up for supporting the JSOSP development. She thanked staff.

Board member Tang commented on the project being positive, and the issues of parking and open space need to be addressed. Perhaps enhancing LittleJohn Park can be done, and add some lighting. He asked where the divide is with Windriver with public land. He suggested a weekend parking agreement.

Board member Zuppan talked also on a shared parking agreement with Windriver for weekend use. She is excited about the project, and is familiar with the area, parking and traffic issues. She suggested Lincoln and Benton be a better pedestrian intersection.

Board member Köster motioned to continue meeting past 11:00 p.m.

Board member Alvarez-Morrone seconded.

Motioned carried, 5-2 (Knox White and Henneberry opposed)

Board member Zuppan commented on the waterfront with the truck route and no landscaping on the waterfront. She asked about land ownership along the water.

Mr. Thomas explained where "Clement Future" is owned by Windriver. There needs to be a conversation with Windriver to acquire land. This will be the slowest truck route in town.

Board member Zuppan suggested street signage for slowing traffic, and would like to see more info in the next packet. She commented on LittleJohn being active and JSOSP is a passive space and that should be addressed. She agreed with Knox White seeing sea level rise being addressed. She stated there is currently a lack of parking in the area, and suggested more community meetings. She agreed with AAPS comments on colors.

Vice President Henneberry stated all the comments he had have already been made. He agreed with Mr. Buckley's comments and is in favor of the project.

President Burton reported on being pleased with the proposal. He commented on liking how the streets will tie the project together. The breaking up of the mass with courtyards will be successful, promenade will be good too. He agreed with Knox White and doesn't like the strip of parking along Buena Vista, perhaps this can be looked at. He would like to see better access for bicycles. The entrance road needs to be narrowed, and agree the truck route dropping part of the right-of-way. He agreed the green median is useless. He wants to see the cross Alameda Trail on the plans. He wants sea level rise to be on the plan, and is pleased to have the developer help with the JSOSP plan. He liked the design of old and new connecting, but stucco work should be reconsidered. The courts seem to be too narrow for people looking across. The infill doors could be a little more fine scale for the store fronts. He agreed with Zuppan for more community meetings.

8. MINUTES:

Minutes of the Regular meeting, March 10, 2014

Board member Knox White motioned to approve minutes as amended.

Board member Köster seconded.

Motion carried, 7-0

9. STAFF COMMUNICATIONS:

9.A. Future Agendas - Mr. Thomas reported on upcoming agenda items.

9.B. Staff Communications - Zoning Administrator and Design Review Recent Actions and Decisions - Mr. Thomas reported there were two approvals since the last meeting.

10. WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS: None

11. BOARD COMMUNICATIONS:

11.A. Report from Alameda Point Town Center Ad-Hoc Sub-Committee - None

12. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS: None

13. ADJOURNMENT: 11:20 p.m.