

Minutes of the Special Planning Board Meeting
Monday, March 3, 2005 – 6:30 p.m.

1. CONVENE: 6:30 p.m.
2. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Mayor Beverly Johnson, President Andrew Cunningham and Chair Lee Perez welcomed everyone to the workshop.

3. ROLL CALL: Mayor Beverly Johnson, Andrew Cunningham, Anne Cook, Rebecca Kohlstrand, Lee Perez, Diane Lowenstein, Elizabeth Johnson.

Also present were Andrew Thomas, Steven Proud, Project Manager, Jim Adams, ROMA Design Group, Walter Rask, ROMA Design Group, Frederick Knapp, Page & Turnbull, Melissa Boudreau, Page & Turnbull (Project Manager), Jim Musbach, Economic Planning Systems, Andrew Barnes, Economic Real Estate Consultant, Matthew Ridgeway, Fehr & Peers, Seleta Reynolds, Fehr & Peers, Peter Russell, Russell Resources.

4. PRESENTATION OF PRELIMINARY DEVELOPMENT CONCEPTS FOR ALAMEDA POINT

Mr. Andrew Thomas noted that ROMA Design Group would make a presentation, and public comment would be taken after the presentation. He noted that the results of the community discussions held at the previous two workshops were available on the City website. He noted that a Preliminary Draft Development Concept would be developed soon, based on a financially feasible development concept for the Base. Development alternatives would also be explored. He described the future timeline of the development and environmental review process, and encouraged public feedback regarding the information on the website. He encouraged residents to take advantage of the Base tours provided by the City.

Mr. Walter Rask, ROMA Design Group, presented a PowerPoint presentation.

5. COMMUNITY COMMENTS AND DISCUSSION

A community member noted that the O Club was a beautiful building that needed upgrading, and that it had historic value. He believed it was worth keeping, and believed the Big Whites were more trouble than they were worth.

Mr. Thomas noted that the O Club served as a functioning social center in Alameda.

A community member thanked staff for the additional options, and inquired whether the non-Measure A-compliant option would be affected by the groundwater contamination.

He inquired whether a constrained view of the economic viability of the project was being presented.

Mr. Stephen Proud noted that they were concentrating on the Phase I plan, but that there was flexibility in the later phases. The timing of the property delivery was an important part of the economic analysis.

A community member favored the non-Measure A-compliant options, and believed that increasing the density and value of the options would be positive. He inquired about the effect of the number of parkland acreage on the acres-per-thousand-population. He inquired about the \$22 million deficit.

Mr. Thomas noted that the Citywide analysis had not been performed, although a similar open space analysis in the 2003 General Plan Amendment EIR had been performed.

Mr. Proud noted that there was no \$22 million slush fund attached to the project, and explained the expenditures needed to service the project.

A community member appreciated the contrasts between the Measure A and non-Measure A options. She favored seamless integration, vibrant new neighborhoods, establishing neighborhood centers, and did not see those items in either options. She would like to see a design that worked with the mitigations that would also be economically feasible. She did not believe that Phase I followed good planning principles, and was disappointed in the design.

A community member thanked staff for the illustrations of how the project would look if Measure A was modified. She preferred single-story residence designs.

Mr. Proud noted that the City would acquire all the buildings when the Navy completes the ownership transfer; they are currently being leased, which is the chief source of revenue to offset the costs.

A community member inquired about the time lag between property expenses and property sales, and how the money was made up.

Mr. Proud noted that was the reason for having a Master Developer, who was responsible for putting in the backbone infrastructure and preparing for later property owners.

A community member inquired about transportation on the Base, and inquired whether there would be bike trails. She inquired whether the parking would be maintained, and suggested that one of the large hangars could be used to accommodate large events.

Mr. Thomas noted that bike routes were planned and that the site would be bike-friendly. The transportation program would be examined at the March 23, 2005 workshop.

A community member inquired about the Phase I development, and the housing density in that phase. She inquired whether there would be any innovative or eco-friendly architecture.

Mr. Walter Rask noted that the density would be approximately 12 units per acre, which was roughly comparable to Bayport. He noted that there would be no walls, and that the blocks would be exterior-oriented; there would be no gated portions of the neighborhood. The buildings would feel very public and friendly in nature. There was an overall goal of the project to achieve sustainability objectives; green building measures and recycling would be used.

A community member supported retaining the Enlisted Men's Quarters, and believed that turning them into condos may bring more diverse populations into Alameda. She inquired about the contamination on sites for non-Measure A and commercial uses. Mr. Rask displayed the mixed use areas, and noted that conventional housing would not be possible in that area if there was groundwater contamination.

A community member inquired about the groundwater and soil contamination, and suggested that those areas not be developed until the contamination was cleaned up.

Mr. Russell noted that the contamination in the Phase I area was relatively minor, and described its nature in detail. A non-Measure A-compliant design would allow for podium parking on the ground, with the residences on top; the chemicals would never reach the residences. Among the chemicals were dry cleaning solvent, nail polish remover, gasoline.

A community member inquired whether PAHs were in the ground water. Mr. Thomas replied that they were not water-soluble and were not a groundwater issue.

A community member inquired about how malleable the wildlife refuse was to being moved.

Mr. Proud noted that the issue of wildlife transfer is an issue of property transfer between agencies, to the Veterans Administration rather than Fish & Wildlife.

A community member noted that he was a real estate consultant, and noted that a relatively good job had been done in this project. He noted that the lagoon was a significant amenity. He believed that plan was biased toward single-family housing, and noted that high-rise residences had been built successfully in San Diego. He believed the commercial land sale figures were optimistic. He expressed concern about the transportation linkages. He proposed that the lagoon and the golf course be linked.

A community member noted that the main advantage of Measure A was the greater diversity of housing, including middle-level housing.

A community member inquired what kind of planning overview was used to create community activity hubs, and did not see those hubs in this plan.

Mr. Adams described the 1400 housing units, and noted that a series of smaller retail center could not be supported.

Mr. Christopher Buckley noted that there was an assumption that the grade must be raised due to the 100-year flood, and suggested the use of a levee. He inquired how 115,000 square feet of retail was derived, and how much of the anticipated retail demand from the residential uses would be absorbed by that retail.

Mr. Thomas noted that the levee question was examined, and that they decided to raise the level instead, rather than create a seawall along the edge of the site. He noted that would create a visual barrier to the water.

Mr. Proud noted that they had to compact the bay mud to accept more load.

Mr. Rask noted that they did not wish to overbuild the retail spaces, nor did they wish to cannibalize other retail areas in Alameda.

A community member noted that the new residents would also need libraries, schools and youth centers, and inquired where they were included in the plan.

Mr. Thomas replied that community centers were programmed into the project, including the O Club and the original Navy Mess Hall. Police and fire services were included in the financial *pro forma*, as well as a small library. He noted that once the planning became more solidified, they would address the impact on the school district in more detail.

A community member noted that the Big Whites would involve an expensive process, and inquired why they were included in the non-Measure A option if they would handicap the option.

Mr. Rask noted that they had not reconciled all the elements of that plan yet, and they were working with the first version of the financial details.

A community member noted that she was recently appointed to the HAB, and had taken the tour, which she believed was very illuminating. She believed that the air traffic control tower should be retained on the site. She believed it was emblematic of the purpose of the Naval Air Station and should be added. She noted that there were discussions to extend the live/work boundaries to Alameda Point, which would give more flexibility to the reuse of the site.

Tim Royal, Pastor, All Nations Fellowship, would like the character of Alameda to carry on to Alameda Point. He noted a lack of churches on Alameda Point.

Mr. Adams noted that several sites were identified for being suitable for churches, and pointed them out on the site plan.

A community member thanked staff for exploring Measure A and mixed use possibilities. He expressed concern about the phrase “less clean housing,” and took offense to the concept and the language.

Mr. Proud reassured the audience that that wording was not intended to cause offense, and described the Restoration Advisory Board’s role in site remediation. He added that they did not blindly follow the Navy’s directives. He noted that part of the cleanup process may be privatized, and that unsuitable sites would not be used to residential reuse.

Mr. Adams noted that lead paint had historically been used at Alameda Point, and that demolition of such buildings and remediation was very closely regulated. He noted that lead was not easily water-soluble, and that it could easily be scraped from the surface of the soil.

A community member inquired how they determined the value from the sale of the land.

Mr. Proud described how the residential land values were determined, and added that the master plan developer was instrumental in that determination.

Mr. Tom Matthews, Renewed Hope, inquired why the \$54 million for the affordable housing component was a public cost, and believed that should be the developer’s responsibility.

Mr. Thomas noted that was a developer cost and part of the overall financing of the project. Mr. Rask noted that it was a project cost, not a public cost.

A community member inquired about the different traffic scenarios and whether the cost of traffic was figured into the project costs; he inquired whether the low traffic scenario would lead to increased savings. He inquired whether any information was available on the price ranges for the market-rate units.

Mr. Rask noted that the typical single- and multi-family house trip generation analysis was used.

Mr. Bill Smith noted that he had information about a potential investor in the Brownfields project.

Reverend Pamela Kerst, Twin Towers United Methodist Church, apologized for her earlier flippant remarks regarding the churches on Alameda Point. She inquired how economic diversity was measured for moderate- and low-income public employees, and how they fit into Measure A and affordable housing. She inquired whether the minimum

required by law would be provided, or if more would be provided. She inquired about Mr. Adams' definition of "eco-friendly." She recalled Mr. Proud's comments about landfill on the flood plain, and whether that would be eco-friendly.

Mr. Thomas noted that the actual affordable housing breakdown would be provided at the next workshop.

Mr. Adams noted that much work must still be done in terms of defining the standards that will be put in place for green building and eco-friendly design. He noted that this piece of land was being recycled, and that they were exploring the idea of transit-oriented development. Their goal was to create a development that would depend on transportation means other than the automobile. He noted that the standards for building materials and energy use were still being developed.

Ms. Eve Bach inquired whether there was an assumed reduced income expectation on the affordable housing, and whether that amount to a double accounting.

Mr. Rask replied that it was shown as a cost because the revenues do not cover the cost of building the unit. He noted that they were being sold for less than what they cost.

Ms. Bach inquired about the estimated acreage and cost of parking would be, and whether the supporting studies would be available online.

Mr. Adams, ROMA, replied that there was a vast amount of information, and noted that requests for backup information could be made at his email address. He noted that the project required parking for the viability of each land use was used in the analysis. Each unit had its own parking, whether in garages or parking structures.

A community member inquired whether institutional controls and land use restrictions would be attached to Phase I. He found it difficult to believe that the impact to the school district was not included.

Mr. Peter Russell replied that Alameda's Marsh Crust Ordinance already applied to all of Alameda Point. There may be additional institutional controls in specific areas, and there may be no residential planned for other areas. There may also be prohibition against digging below a certain depth. He added that the need for another school will be analyzed, and that millions of dollars of school impact fees were included.

A community member inquired whether the income from the affordable housing was included in the assumptions.

A community member inquired whether it would be possible for individuals to buy lots. Mr. Adams replied that it was managed by a master developer because of the very large infrastructure cost, approximating \$100 million; it was not the kind of project that would lend itself to individual lot sales.

A community member inquired whether there would be any further delay in the transfer of the Base, and noted that in 1997, the Big Whites were sold to them as a major part of the project. He believed the project was too packed together, and added that he had served on the Base during his military career. He was shocked at the state of several historic buildings that had been vandalized before the property was taken over.

Mr. Proud noted that the delay in the conveyance would have a significant impact on project economics. They had worked very cooperatively with the Navy with respect to Alameda Point, and their open approach during negotiations would be beneficial to the conveyance transfer.

A community member inquired whether the 1% for public art was included in the overall cost. Mr. Thomas indicated that it was.

A community member expressed concern about the middle-income units, and noted that the Warmington Homes were no longer middle-income homes.

Ms. Lucy Gigli inquired about the comparison of the value of the difference properties on the site. She expressed concern that the multifamily units were all bunched together, which increased the density of those blocks. She would like to see pockets of multifamily housing, as well as an evaluation of the mixing of the retail uses, and noted that Bayport and Coast Guard Island don't have any corner stores or cafes.

Mr. Thomas noted that there were combination duplex/small retail possibilities.

A community member inquired what an in-law unit was. Mr. Thomas replied that it was a small unit on the same lot, usually a loft or one-bedroom unit. She suggested that the name be changed because in-law unit implied a non-approved unit. Mr. Thomas noted that the in-law terminology would be changed to "secondary unit."

PUBLIC COMMENT WAS CLOSED.

President Cunningham noted that it was important to clearly identify the goals of the land use, and that there were some misunderstandings about the use. He suggested that use of a "laundry list" to identify what will be provided. He believed it was important to understand the fiscal impacts of the existing structures on the final picture. He believed that social and ecological responsibility was important, and that a sustainable ordinance should be examined if the community wished to engage in sustainable design.

Ms. Kohlstrand believed that a Measure A-compliant option should be examined, and that the density and patterns of development on the Island as a whole should be examined as well. She believed that mixed use and the mix of patterns on the blocks should be looked at, and that the density should be served by transit. She supported the non-Measure A-compliant option, and examining how the transportation network fit in.

Ms. Konrad expressed concern that the Community Reuse Plan and the General Plan both call for walkable neighborhoods on Alameda Point, and did not see that in this plan. She believed that neighborhood centers should be developed so residents could walk to them. She believed the open space should be usable.

Mr. Lee Perez thanked the audience for their comments, and noted that the web page contained a great deal of information on the project. He encouraged the residents to remain proactive in communicating with staff and commissioners during this process.

Mr. Thomas invited additional public comments to be addressed to the City by phone, mail or email. He noted that the entire presentation and maps would be posted on the website. He noted that the Navy always attended the RAB meetings.

6. ADJOURNMENT: 9:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jerry Cormack, Interim Secretary
City Planning Department

These minutes were approved at the April 11, 2005, Planning Board meeting. This meeting was audio and video taped.

G:\PLANNING\PB\Agendas_Minutes\Minutes.05\March 3_Spec.doc