

APPROVED MEETING MINUTES

REGULAR MEETING OF THE
CITY OF ALAMEDA PLANNING BOARD
MONDAY, MARCH 22, 2010

1. CONVENE: 7:09 p.m.
2. FLAG SALUTE: Board Member Cunningham
3. ROLL CALL:
Present: President Ezzy Ashcraft, Vice-President Autorino,
Board members Cook, Cunningham, Kohlstrand, and Lynch

Absent: Board Member Zuppan

4. MINUTES:

Minutes from the meeting of February 22, 2010

Approved 5-1 (Kohlstrand abstained)

Minutes from the meeting of March 8, 2010

Approved 4-2 (Cook & Lynch abstained)

5. AGENDA CHANGES AND DISCUSSION:
None.

6. STAFF COMMUNICATIONS:

Written Report

6-A Future Agendas

Staff presented an overview of future Planning Board hearings.

President Ezzy Ashcraft asked why the Transportation Thresholds of Significance item is being continued to a future meeting and not a certain date.

The Planning Services Manager stated that the item is still being worked on in coordination with the Public Works Department. He stated that there will be a specific date by the next meeting.

6-B Zoning Administrator Report

Staff noted the Zoning Administrator meeting of March 2, 2010 was canceled due to a lack of items.

Oral Report

- A. Alameda Point Update
Staff reported that the City of Alameda is still working with SunCal who has submitted a revised alternate development application
- B. Boatworks Update and Draft Environmental Impact Report
Staff reported that the Draft Environmental Impact Report for the project located at Clement Avenue and Oak Street has just been released. There will be a public hearing at the Regular Planning Board meeting on April 26, 2010 to discuss the project.

7. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS:

None

8. CONSENT CALENDAR:

8-A Density Bonus Ordinance – Applicant – City of Alameda. Proposed caps and limits on concessions and/or incentives for Density Bonus Projects on sites in a residential zone district or a site with a general plan land use designation of residential. **Staff is requesting a continuance of this item to the Regular Planning Meeting of April 12, 2010.**

8-B Transportation Thresholds of Significance – Applicant – City of Alameda. The Planning Board will hold a hearing to consider an amendment to the City of Alameda thresholds of significance for use in the environmental review process for new projects subject to the California Environmental Quality Act. **Staff is requesting a continuance of this item.**

Approved 6-0

9. REGULAR AGENDA ITEMS:

- 9-A Civic Center Vision.** A presentation of preliminary concepts for the Civic Center area of Alameda. This item is informational only. No action is required. The presentation is available for public review on the City of Alameda web site at www.ci.alameda.ca.us

The Planning Services Manager presented the project.

Board member Cook stated that the concept is very interesting although she had questions about the process.

The Planning Services Manager responded that the process is different because the conceptual plan has been developed to help elicit input from the community.

Board member Cook asked if there were going to be any community workshops or Planning Board workshops concerning the plan.

The Planning Services Manager stated that there would be workshops but believes having an idea of what could work in the Civic Center area will allow for a more comprehensive discussion.

Board member Lynch stated that he thinks the plan is fantastic and enjoyed the style of the presentation. He asked if the cost for the project has been investigated.

The Planning Services Manager responded that the only building that has had any cost examination is the Carnegie.

Keith McCoy of Urban Community Partners, a Real Estate consulting firm, stated that he worked on the project and worked with a very small budget and tight timeline. They took into consideration the existing assets that the City of Alameda already has and built around that.

Board member Cunningham asked what the City Council's reaction to the plan was.

The Planning Services Manager stated that their reaction was very positive and the main concern is "what's next" and "how do we get it done?"

President Ezzy Ashcraft stated that she loves the ideas for the Civic Center. She is concerned that the Webster Street Business District desperately needs the City's attention and feels that it should be a bigger priority at this time.

Board member Lynch agrees that this type of presentation would be beneficial for the Webster Street corridor and it would be helpful to begin generating interest and that would allow this district to become a civic priority as well. He suggested that the Community Development Department keep that in mind as a future possibility.

President Ezzy Ashcraft opened the public comment period.

Richard Rutter of the Alameda Architectural Preservation Society passed out information to the Planning Board members. He spoke in favor of the plan and added some suggestions.

David Baker commented that he is concerned with the idea of three and four story buildings along Oak Street and Santa Clara Avenue. He feels that the large buildings would over shadow the historic buildings in the Civic Center area. He suggested that a pedestrian mall be added between Lincoln Avenue and Santa Clara Avenue along Oak Street.

Dorothy Freeman voiced her concern about the cost to complete the plan and the additional traffic businesses and housing would bring. She mentioned other potential projects that are being considered in the area that would also contribute to the traffic congestion.

Kathy Moering of the West Alameda Business Association stated that she was surprised that all of this effort has gone into this plan and no consideration has been given to the Webster Street Business District. She feels that the Webster Street area has been neglected while the Park Street area has been receiving all of the City's attention.

Corinne Lambden stated that she is very impressed by the design. She is concerned with the size of the proposal for the CVS site on the corner of Santa Clara Avenue and Oak Street.

Christopher Buckley of the Alameda Architectural Preservation Society stated that he is please to see the preservation of the gas station and the Towata Flowers buildings. He is concerned with the proposal for the CVS site and believes it needs more setbacks from the street to preserve the view of the Carnegie Building.

Karen Bay spoke in favor of the project and the fact that there is not a developer in charge of the vision and it is being prepared prior to involving a developer. She believes that the west end needs attention but believes that this project could be a model for the redevelopment of Webster Street.

Nancy Hurd of the Alameda Architectural Preservation Society stated that she is also concerned with the corner of Oak Street and Santa Clara Avenue. She doesn't understand why Alameda feels like it needs to be a big city, it is attractive for its small town feel. She believes that the charm is being removed from the downtown area.

President Ezzy Ashcraft closed the public comment period.

Board member Kohlstrand stated that she thinks the plan is wonderful although she is frustrated that there has been very little input from the Community and the Planning Board and feels that needs to take place prior to any action being taken on this plan. She likes the design and the use of the under utilized parking lots. She agrees that there should be attention given to the Webster Street area.

Board member Cunningham stated that he feels that the plan raises questions, but thinks it is a great start.

Board member Cook agrees with all of the previous comments on the plan. She feels it is important for everyone to be aware of what the process is going to be and referenced the Downtown Vision done in 2000. She mentioned that the previous plan focused around a civic gathering place were the City could hold civic celebrations and she would like to see that concept retained in the new plan. She feels that any idea to hide the side of the parking garage is a good idea. She also mentioned the idea of 'wrapped parking lots' which has the parking on the inside of the site with retail wrapped around the perimeter.

Board member Kohlstrand mentioned that in Portland, Oregon the street level parking lots have street vendors located at the edges of the lots.

President Ezzy Ashcraft asked if the plan needs to wait until CVS is willing to move and if they have shown any interest in moving.

The Planning Services Manager stated that they are not fond of with the location and would prefer to be on Park Street.

President Ezzy Ashcraft stated that she has always found lot C, between Central Avenue and Alameda Avenue, to be problematic and not pedestrian friendly. She also asked that a pedestrian crossing directly outside of the theater be considered. She agreed with the other Board members that the Community needs to be involved in the planning of the Civic Center. She asked staff what the next steps are for the project.

The Planning Services Manager reported that there will be a forthcoming "Vision Book" to accompany the drawings which will have written information and a project schedule.

Board member Cunningham stated the he does believe that having the drawings will inspire good input from the Community.

Board member Kohlstrand stated that there needs to be a balancing of the process between the public and the City.

Board member Cook believes that the process needs to be more transparent to allow the public to understand the plan and process more fully.

10. WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS:

None.

11. BOARD COMMUNICATIONS:

None.

12. ADJOURNMENT: 9:55 p.m.