

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR PLANNING BOARD MEETING  
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 2009  
COUNCIL CHAMBERS, CITY HALL  
2263 SANTA CLARA AVENUE – 7:00 PM**

President Kohlstrand called the meeting to order at 7:07 p.m.

FLAG SALUTE: Board member Cook led the flag salute.

ROLL CALL:

PRESENT: President Kohlstrand, Vice-President Ezzy Ashcraft, Board members Autorino, Cook, and Cunningham were present upon roll call.

Board members Lynch and McNamara were absent.

STAFF PRESENT: Andrew Thomas, Planning Services Manager/Secretary to the Planning Board; Douglas Garrison, Supervising Planner, Obaid Khan, Public Works, Eric Fonstein, Development Services, Althea Carter, Executive Assistant/Recording Secretary

4. MINUTES: Minutes from the meeting of December 8, 2008  
**Continued to the meeting of February 26, 2009**  
Minutes from the meeting of January 12, 2009  
(pending)  
Minutes from the meeting of January 26, 2009  
(pending)

5. AGENDA CHANGES AND DISCUSSION:  
None.

6. STAFF COMMUNICATIONS:

**6-A.** Future Agendas- Staff provided the Board with an update on future agenda items.

**6-B.** Zoning Administrator Report – Meeting of February 3, 2009 – **Canceled**

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 5-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. Workshop on the Parking Management Plan for the Park Street and West Alameda Business Districts.** The applicant, the City of Alameda, is requesting that the Planning Board review a parking management plan for the Park Street and West Alameda Business Districts. The parking management plan outlines a series of actions that the City could take in the future to improve the supply and management of on and off street parking to support the business areas. (AT/EF). **Continued from January 12, 2009.**

Staff presented the report. At the December 8, 2008 Planning Board meeting, when this item was first presented, Staff was directed to return with responses to questions posed by the Board. This staff report focuses on off-street parking requirements for new businesses in the Park Street and Webster Street business districts. The proposal is a comprehensive plan focusing on maintaining economic viability of the business districts. The proposed parking strategy is supported by the Webster Street Business Association (WSBA). The Park Street Business Association (PSBA) is scheduled to complete review of the proposal on February 25, 2009. Staff is requesting Board input regarding off-street parking, in-lieu fees and waivers. Staff will return to the Board with a draft ordinance as well as comments and suggestions by PSBA at a future meeting date.

President Kohlstrand stated that staff was requesting specific direction from the Board in four areas: demand-waivers, off-street parking, alternatives to parking in-lieu fees, and parking waivers. She stated that there are two types of waivers: a demand waiver focuses on conditions of the surrounding neighborhood including transit and off street parking facilities, other waivers refer to site use. The Board should focus the discussion on these two items and the requirement of a parking study as well as how parking zones are established for meter pricing.

Vice President Ezzy Ashcraft commended staff on the report. She inquired why staff was limiting the parking provisions to Park and Webster Street business districts only and not proposing regulations for citywide business districts. She stated that during a visit to a business on Park Street between Otis and Shoreline there were big rigs parked along the street. She stated there were no parking restriction signs in this area and this situation should be looked into by Public Works.

Public Works staff stated that the municipal code restricts commercial vehicle parking on city streets and any vehicle parked for more than 72 hours in the same spot. Residents should contact the Alameda Police Department to report violations.

Vice President Ezzy Ashcraft stated she believes restricted parking signs should be posted.

President Kohlstrand believes the comment regarding citywide business district parking restrictions is relevant. Discussions regarding big rig parking should be heard in a different forum.

Staff stated that Public Works, the Planning Department and Development Services staff discussed including other neighborhood business districts during the discussion regarding Park and Webster business districts. The Wilbur Smith study focused on commercial district parking along Park and Webster Streets. Staff plans to revisit neighborhood business district parking at a future date. These areas have different issues including loading and unloading restrictions. Access to transit in these areas is different compared to Park and Webster Street business districts. Because of these differences, staff did not want to lump these areas into this discussion.

President Kohlstrand stated these were valid issues for a future discussion.

There were no public comments and the public hearing was closed.

President Kohlstrand stated the Board discussion should focus on demand waivers and in-lieu fees.

Board member Cunningham stated that uses in business districts may change but the amount of square feet available is fixed. He believed planning should revolve around the number of parking spaces required for the amount of retail space available. He believes staff should take a holistic approach to parking that will eliminate the need for many waivers. He stated it appears that the City is requiring different business owners in the same location to pay for the same thing.

Staff stated it was difficult to determine how much parking would be provided on each site.

Board member Cunningham stated the question of whether the City wants to encourage on-site parking needs to be answered. Previous discussions have centered on satellite parking areas to encourage pedestrian activity.

Board member Cook did not think the report was clear on what problem staff is trying to solve. She stated there are different problems in different areas of the City. She believes North of Lincoln provides a good opportunity to predetermine a parking strategy but the area South of Lincoln is a different situation including an underutilized garage.

Staff stated that the issue raised in the Wilbur Smith report was that private off street parking garages are not being fully utilized but off street public lots are fully utilized. This observation occurred prior to the opening of the civic garage.

Board member Cook stated she thought there was a residential parking problem in the Park Street area based on her inability to find parking on Park Street. However, she was surprised that in some cases more than half of the residents in the area did not perceive this as enough of a problem to implement a residential permit-parking program. She

questioned whether this was because it was proposed that residents pay for the program.

Staff stated the results depended on the location of the residence. Public Works received a request from a resident on Santa Clara near Park Street for a residential permit-parking program. Public Works wants to make this option available to the public. Staff is proposing an increase of street parking rates, discouraging overflow into residential areas, and increasing the use of off street lots or garages.

President Kohlstrand stated that the Board understands when the parking study was conducted the civic garage was not built. She stated it appears that it may have been a mistake to gather all this information without considering the garage. The garage changes the character of the area and this report states it is only 20 to 30 percent occupied during weekdays and 60 to 70 percent occupied on weekends, which may not include weekend nights.

Staff responded that occupancy of streets and parking facilities is usually determined hour by hour but due to limited resources staff was unable to conduct this type of research. Staff was able to determine the total number of transactions occurring at meters. Turnover information cannot be determined without sufficient staff.

President Kohlstrand stated she understands the limitations but believes the information is necessary.

Staff believes the problem is that there is no clear process for staff to deal with an applicant proposing a new project. The garage may solve many parking issues on Park Street but Webster Street is a different situation.

President Kohlstrand stated that parking is a dynamic situation. One approach may be to define the problem by area and then determine what the overall objective should be. She believes a public parking facility must be part of the solution to facilitate shared responsibility for providing parking. Where the City wants to maintain a certain character, for example the historic business district on Park Street, the garage provides an opportunity to be flexible regarding on site parking requirements. In the northern area of Park Street a site for a public garage should be identified. This will provide flexibility at the onset of discussions. There are similar issues on Webster regarding historic and non-historic districts.

Vice President Ezzy Ashcraft no longer believes a citywide comprehensive parking plan for the business districts is the solution since there are different issues in different areas. Regarding the 25 percent weekday occupancy in the parking garage how does the City justify charging a prospective business owner fees for maintenance on the existing structure or construction of a future structure when the occupancy rate of the garage is so low. Regarding parking waivers she believes waivers should only apply to the requirement for providing automobile parking not bicycle parking. She stated that the staff report seemed to be moving away from the requirement to provide bicycle parking and she would not support that position. It does not appear that many employees are purchasing parking permits and are instead choosing to park in the

residential areas. She disagrees with the PSBA that employees should be given permits to park in residential areas. She asked if enough revenue was being generated by the garage and stated that after 5 p.m. on weekends parking is free during this time and the garage is heavily used.

Staff stated that regarding bike parking, in-lieu fees are being used to provide bicycle racks on Central Avenue across from the theatre.

Board member Cunningham asked if any consideration had been given to encourage a private owner of any future parking structures.

Staff stated that they were not aware of any formal requests for developing and operating a garage. Staff does not believe enough revenue would be generated to justify a new parking structure. In the historic area of Park Street changing the rate charged for on-street parking, along with the addition of the civic garage and surrounding parking lots, the parking problem in this area may be solved. Staff has been struggling with the requirement that new businesses provide five spaces per 1,000 square feet of retail space which is just not feasible in the Park Street area. During this same period staff was requesting development at Alameda Landing provide no more than four spaces per 1,000 square feet.

President Kohlstrand stated she supports using the garage to solve parking concerns in the Park Street business district.

Board member Autorino believes it is premature to adequately determine utilization of the parking garage. He believes requiring a set number of parking spaces for businesses should apply to a shopping center or strip mall not the downtown area. He does not believe in the downtown area the City would want businesses to create additional parking areas. He believes responsibility for providing parking in these areas should be borne by the City and the community. He would support a plan where new businesses in these locations pay a fee to support or develop public parking facilities. He stated that requiring a parking fee for a new business is appropriate but the City should be responsible for providing the parking space.

Vice President Ezzy Ashcraft asked if fees would be determined by the type of business or based on the square footage of the business. She asked if these fees would generate enough revenue to fund a new parking structure.

President Kohlstrand stated there should be a distinction between whether square footage is being added or whether it is an existing site with a new use. She stated that CEQA requirements are changing to impose a fee for every auto trip generated. The City should take this into consideration as new policies are developed.

Board member Cunningham stated that if the Board is trying to stimulate growth it seems unfair to charge a new business at the front-end.

Staff stated that in the North Park Street area staff is suggesting identification of a site for a new parking structure in a central location and establishment of an assessment

district for the North Park Street area. The parking structure would be built up front and establishing an assessment district would require repayment over twenty years by each property owner. Setting up assessment districts requires fifty one percent of the property owners to agree.

Board member Cook stated that establishing assessment districts is a common tool used by cities to provide parking, and could be particularly useful North of Lincoln.

Staff stated that the challenge is if fifty one percent of the residents do not support creating an assessment district, the City must provide money up front to build the structure.

President Kohlstrand asked how long it took to reach \$148,000 in in-lieu parking fees and if any funds from the account were used towards the civic garage or for improvements within the City.

Staff replied that none of the funds in the account were used for the parking garage. Staff does not know if funds were used for any City improvements. Staff stated that in six years there had been approximately four or five parking in lieu requests covering four or five parking spaces. This level of activity does not generate a substantial amount of money.

President Kohlstrand stated it is difficult for the City to provide money up front for construction of a parking garage. In lieu fees usually do not result in full recuperation.

Board member Autornio asked if it was unrealistic to require current businesses to pay an annual fee. He suggested dividing Park Street into four or five parking zones and charging a yearly assessment fee to maintain parking in the zone.

President Kohlstrand stated that the Board would like to hear the perspectives of PSBA and WABA.

Board member Cook stated that her approach is to ask what do we want to see both South of Lincoln and North of Lincoln in 20 years. She believes sales tax generating uses that keep the corridor vital and replace the taxes lost from auto row is an appropriate vision for the area. She asked how the City can get high sales tax uses to come to the area. The parking fees and solutions should facilitate the types of uses you want. She believes there needs to be resolution of the issues between residential and business uses. She believes it is unfair that 80 percent of employees are parking on the street yet we are asking residents to fund a residential parking program. The responsibility should be on businesses to facilitate parking for the employees. She stated the City should make it easy to accomplish this by pricing or some other method. She asked what are the problems staff is solving for and suggested that staff structure fees and incentives to resolve those problems.

Staff stated that the residential parking permit program could become a drain on City funds if it is not supported by the residents.

Vice President Ezzy Ashcraft asked if it is possible to structure the fees based on the size of a business or the number of employees or some similar criteria. She stated that businesses could provide employees with permits to park in a city owned parking lot. She asked for elaboration on the proposed changes to CEQA regulations.

A Board discussion ensued on proposed changes to CEQA.

Staff stated that the citywide developmental impact fee is designed to be proportionate to the development. Under state law, impact fees for “new” facilities cannot be assessed solely to the new development.

Board member Cook stated that the City could not mandate an assessment district. A majority of residents and or business owners must vote for it.

President Kohlstrand stated that in the area North of Lincoln on Park Street staff can determine the amount of square footage now and if the area is developed to the maximum potential, the amount of square feet that would exist and the demand for parking. She believes this would allow the City to develop a site as a surface parking lot until such time as it is feasible to develop a parking structure.

A discussion ensued on whether a parking structure should be built first or when it is actually needed.

President Kohlstrand stated that she believes the issue is dealing with market demand for parking. Employees are not parking in lots because they can park for free if they are willing to walk two or three blocks. She stated the City is transitioning and has more intense uses in the downtown area. She believes a residential parking permit program is warranted but she is unsure about how to structure it. She stated employees need to get their cars off the streets and onto a parking lot or structure. She wondered if long term parking fees would be appropriate.

Staff stated that for new businesses the parking requirement would not be waived. If three employees work at the business but the business is unable to create parking on site the owner could purchase annual garage passes for the employees in lieu of the parking requirement.

Vice President Ezzy Ashcraft stated that the staff report proposes making more parking spaces in the garage available for employee parking.

Staff stated that the demand and usage for a parking structure is still being determined but increased use of the garage is anticipated.

Vice President Ezzy Ashcraft stated the need for flexibility in the approach to parking. She stated that there is spillover into residential neighborhoods and asked why doesn't the City make more employee spaces available in the parking lot then revisit this position in the future. She stated that City vehicles should be parked off the street especially during evenings and weekends.

Board member Autorino agreed emphatically that more employee parking spaces should be opened up at the in the parking lot utilizing the empty spaces.

Staff stated that regarding policy, the Board would like the City to plan for strategically located parking lots or structures in North Park Street and perhaps North Webster Street. Staff asked for Board direction regarding the ordinance and findings.

Board member Cunningham stated that the Board is in agreement that five parking spaces per 1,000 square feet is too much and should be reduced, requiring a traffic study for a small parcel is counterproductive to encouraging business opportunities.

A discussion ensued regarding the approach to different requirements for businesses in different areas of the City. Parking waivers, in lieu fees, pricing, higher fees in higher traffic areas, employee parking, off street parking, delivery trucks, form based codes, existing businesses versus new businesses versus new square feet were all discussed.

President Kohlstrand stated that if the project involves existing square feet parking is not required.

Staff responded that the ability to negotiate employee transit or parking passes would be forfeited with that approach. The minimum parking requirements are a hindrance to infill development and in lieu fees allow for flexibility. Staff is proposing a sliding scale to accommodate smaller businesses.

Board member Cunningham stated that parking demand studies should not be required, there should be a set rate per square footage for new additions and it should be less than five per 1,000 square feet. He suggested 2 spaces per 1,000 and stated there is not much Board support for in lieu fees but he would consider a development fee that includes concessions.

Board member Autorino stated that the Board does not want to encourage the creation of on site parking in the South Park Street District.

Staff stated there appeared to be Board consensus to remove in lieu fees and asked for confirmation from the Board.

Board member Cook asked if there was a differentiation between infill and expansion and new development.

Staff stated that the proposal handles these different situations with the provision of findings.

Board member Cook stated that there should be less requirements for existing buildings along with encouraging employees to park in lots or garages.

Vice President Ezzy Ashcraft stated that she prefers offering a menu of amenities allowing businesses to choose which option they prefer. She asked if staff could explain the distinction made in the proposal between buildings that are over twenty years old.



Staff stated that the provision for buildings over twenty years old has been part of the code for many years.

Vice President Ezzy Ashcraft asked staff to consider removing or revising this reference while the ordinance is being updated.

Staff stated that if the parking requirement is waived and the owner or tenant does tenant improvements Board review would not be required.

Board member Cunningham stated the Board was okay with that.

Vice President Ezzy Ashcraft stated she does not want to relinquish control of the entire process.

Staff stated the ordinance could be more broadly structured.

President Kohlstrand referred to page nine of the staff report. She believes this is more restrictive than the current code. She stated that number one, three, four and five sound reasonable. She would like accommodation made for a modest business expansion without requiring new parking. She stated if a business meets these conditions no parking is required if the conditions are not met and certain measures are taken some or all of the requirements may not be required. She gave the example of a business within a quarter mile of a parking facility or within one block of a transit stop could be considered an exception.

Board member Cunningham suggested staff refer to the United States Green Building Council (USGBC) LEED sustainable site for language that could be used in regards to public transit.

Board member Cook stated that businesses could establish an incentive program to encourage employees to use public transit or off street parking.

President Kohlstrand believes the report does not clearly state that the City does not want to encourage additional surface parking in historic districts especially the Park Street area. She suggested that it is in this area where a fee structure or assessment district would be applicable. She stated that a traffic engineer is not required to conduct the traffic study but someone with experience conducting traffic studies is adequate.

A Board discussion ensued on whether a traffic study is required under any circumstances.

Staff stated that the Board focused on three components. If there is an existing building in an historic district there is no parking requirement since it is assumed that parking already exists, under certain conditions parking will be required but the business can choose from a menu of options to accommodate this requirement, and there are areas North of Lincoln where parking is required and a fee structure should be implemented.

The Board directed staff to return with another draft of the ordinance after discussions with PSBA.

10. WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS:

10-A February 3, 2009 City Council Staff Report: Annual Progress Report on the Local Action Plan for Climate Protection

Board member Autorino stated his disappointment that the establishment of a task force was not listed as an accomplishment in the report presented to Council.

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*

Vice President Ezzy Ashcraft stated the Harbor Bay bike trail is in need of improvement due to tree roots. She stated the Shoreline bike trail is well maintained.

12. ADJOURNMENT: @ 10:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Andrew Thomas  
City Planning Board

This meeting was audio and video taped.