

**Minutes of the Regular Planning Board Meeting**  
**Monday, May 9, 2005 – 7:00 p.m.**

1.     CONVENE:             7:04 p.m.
2.     FLAG SALUTE:     Ms. Mariani
3.     ROLL CALL:        President Cunningham, Vice President Cook, Lynch, Mariani, McNamara, and Piziali.

Board member Kohlstrand was absent.

Also present were Building Official Gregory J. McFann, Deputy City Attorney Julie Harryman, Supervising Planner Cynthia Eliason, and Jennifer Ott, Development Manager, Development Services.

4.     MINUTES:           Minutes for the meeting of April 25, 2005.

M/S Piziali/McNamara and unanimous to approve the minutes for the meeting of April 25, 2005, as presented.

AYES – 5 (Kohlstrand absent); NOES – 0; ABSTAIN – 1 (Cook)

5.     AGENDA CHANGES AND DISCUSSION:

President Cunningham advised that staff requested that Item 8-B be heard before Item 8-A.

6.     ORAL COMMUNICATION: None.

7. CONSENT CALENDAR:

- 7-A. **Endorsement of the Webster Street Strategic Plan (BK).** A request for endorsement of the Webster Street Strategic Plan. The Strategic Plan analyzes retail market opportunities and revitalization goals and strategies for the Webster Street Corridor.

M/S Piziali/Cook and unanimous to endorse the Webster Street Strategic Plan. The Strategic Plan analyzes retail market opportunities and revitalization goals and strategies for the Webster Street Corridor.

AYES – 5 (Kohlstrand absent); NOES – 0; ABSTAIN – 1 (Cook)

8. REGULAR AGENDA ITEMS:

- 8-A. **DR05-0041 – City of Alameda (CE/JO).** Acceptance of preliminary design for the Cineplex generally at the corner of Oak Street and Central Avenue on the Video Maniac site. This site is located at 2305 Central Avenue within the C-C and C-C-PD (Community Commercial and Community Commercial – Planned Development) Districts.

This item was presented after Item 8-B.

Ms. Ott presented the staff report, and noted that the DDA (Development Disposition Agreement) was approved by the City Council on May 3, 2005.

Mr. Kyle Connors, Alameda Entertainment Associates, developer, presented an overview of the site plan, and noted that the project architect was very experienced in theater design.

Mr. Rob Henry, Henry Architects, project architect, presented the project in detail on the overhead display.

M/S Piziali/McNamara and unanimous to limit the speakers' time to three minutes.

AYES – 6 (Kohlstrand absent); NOES – 0; ABSTAIN – 0

The public hearing was opened.

Mr. Jon Spangler, 1037 San Antonio Avenue, noted that the project architect did a good job in fitting a lot of function into a small space, which he also believed was part of the problem. He believed there was too much energy in the site, and suggested that one theater be dropped from the project. He suggested that the corner adjacent to the rosette be curved to mirror the historic theater's curve. He noted that the lines did not flow from one theater to the other.

Mr. Kevin Frederick did not like the design of this theater, and did not like the fact that no major changes had been considered by the Board since the inception of this project. He did not agree with the inclusion of the retail spaces, and did not believe they blended with the overall layout of the theater.

Ms. Debbie George disagreed with Mr. Frederick's stated belief that the Planning Board did not listen to proposed changes and noted that PSBA's comments and input had been incorporated into the project. She complimented the architect in meeting the challenge of maintaining the integrity of the neighborhood.

Ms. Annie Rutter, 2329 Santa Clara Avenue, #204, noted that there had been many improvements since the beginning of the project, but did not like the 20-inch overhang. She would like to remove the 26 seats and the four-foot screen, but realized that the project needed to move forward. She liked

the bow window, and believed the signage should be on the front to identify the building.

Mr. Robb Ratto, Executive Director, PSBA, commended the architect for taking the economic issues into account with this project, and for placing the retail space in the area. He liked the inclusion of the public's comments into this design. He believed the 20-inch overhang on the Central Avenue side would be softened by the canopies; on the Oak Street side, the plan for the extension of the sidewalk was unanimously approved by the PSBA Board of Directors. Regarding the number of screens, the DDA was already in effect between Movietex and the City. He liked the design, and realized it would be tweaked somewhat.

Mr. Christopher Buckley, AAPS, 1017 San Antonio Avenue, noted that they would have preferred a less modernistic design, but would address the other concerns such as the integration of different building masses and design elements. He noted that he would submit comments regarding the design elements. He recommended that the vertical columns be made more consistent from the street level to the top to reinforce the established rhythm, and to tie in with the vertical elements of the established theater.

Mr. Dick Rutter, AAPS, 2329 Santa Clara #204, noted that he had been against the 20-inch projection, but agreed that they should be consistent. He believed that fine-tuning could be done, and that the 20-inch depth on the two sides of the corner should be reduced.

Ms. Elizabeth Krase, 3520 Chester Street, noted that she was an architectural historian, and expressed concern about compliance with the Secretary of State standards regarding additions to historic properties. She believed the historic color scheme and finishes should be identified now in order to guide the choices of the colors and finishes on the Cineplex, so it will be compatible with the old theater. She expressed concern that the Planning Board and the HAB may not be able to make an informed decision about whether the project may meet the Secretary's standards until the City has requested the architectural resources group to identify the original exterior colors and finishes of the historic theater. She supported the extension of the pilasters up the front of the Cineplex to suggest the pilasters on the old theater.

Mr. Chuck Millar, believed there was a missed opportunity in that he had not seen any members of the general public without any commercial interest in the theater say that they loved the design. He hoped the actual theater would look better than the design. It bothered him that the design was not site-specific, with the exception of the massing.

Mr. Robert Wood, 259 Oyster Pond, spoke in support of this project, and noted that he was a citizen with no vested interest in the project. He believed the seven theaters were necessary to make the project financially feasible. He believed the 20-inch overhang was a positive aspect by modulating the façade of the building.

The public hearing was closed for Board discussion.

In response to an inquiry by Vice President Cook, Ms. Ott confirmed that there would not be any painting on the exterior of the historic theater.

Mr. Piziali wished to emphasize that this was a separate project on a separate parcel from the historic theater, and was not a historic addition.

Ms. Mariani noted that she did not have a problem with the canopies or the extension any more, and believed it would all blend in together. She would like to see more vertical elements. She believed it was a good project and would like to move forward.

Ms. McNamara asked what elements resulting from the subcommittee meetings were included in the design.

President Cunningham noted that there had been an effort to erode the strong horizontal and vertical lines at the corner. The articulation of the corner was also addressed by adding a dome. He commended the project architect on his work given the budget. The 20-inch setback had been discussed in the subcommittee, which added more shadow; without the setback, the sheer wall would have detracted from the project.

Vice President Cook noted that she was not comfortable with the additional vertical elements. She agreed with Ms. Krase's comments about the color scheme. She agreed that the columns were busy. She noted that the original concept of the project included retail space on the ground floor to enliven the street. Although she did not favor the ball on top, she appreciated the improvements in the corner elements. She liked the increase in size of the Oak Street sidewalk. She requested that the architects do whatever they can to step the new building down with respect to the old theater to soften the connection.

President Cunningham expressed concern about the dark glazing on the upper level, and understood the concerns about the heat gain. He encouraged the use of low-e double-pane glass instead.

Mr. Connors noted that they chose the bronze glass to avoid the reflection inherent in the low-e glass.

Mr. Piziali suggested the use of dark anodized *aluminum* glass.

A discussion of the dome element ensued.

M/S McNamara/Lynch and unanimous to accept the preliminary design for the Cineplex generally at the corner of Oak Street and Central Avenue on the Video Maniac site. The following modifications would be included:

1. The dome would be eliminated;
2. The aluminum storefront would have dark anodized *frames* glazing;
3. The angles on the right-hand side of the building would be softened;
4. The original exterior color would be researched by staff;

5. There would be no uplight wash on the exterior wall; and
6. Possible improvements where the buildings meet would be considered.

AYES – 6 (Kohlstrand absent); NOES – 0; ABSTAIN – 0

8-B. **City of Alameda – 1416 Oak Street (CE/JO).** Applicant requests acceptance of preliminary Design for a 352-space parking structure, at the corner of Oak Street and Central Avenue, generally on the Video Maniac site. This site is located at 1416 Oak Street site within the C-C-PB Community Commercial, Community Commercial – Planned Development Zoning Districts.

This item was heard before Item 8-A.

Ms. Ott presented the staff report

In response to an inquiry by Vice President Cook regarding change in the width of Oak Street, and providing more space for bicycles, Ms. Ott replied that was brought up during the Transportation Commission meeting. It was important that the possibility be maintained for Class II bike lanes to be included; the current plan was to place stenciling on the ground identifying it as a shared bike lane. Public Works agreed with this plan.

Ms. Ott introduced Michael Stanton, project architect. Mr. Stanton summarized the proposal, displayed the site plan on the overhead screen, addressed the modified items since the last presentation, and presented the concepts for the exterior lighting.

The public hearing was opened.

Mr. Christopher Buckley, AAPS, 1017 San Antonio Avenue, noted that he wrote a brief letter to the Board, and distributed a handout to the Board. He commented on the displayed elevation, and suggested carrying the molding above the open bays along the tops of the solid brick walls to provide more continuity to the top. He believed that would relieve the undifferentiated wall masses of the shear walls. He suggested adding a belt course or sill course that ran along the base of the openings to break up the massing into a three-part vertical composition: the base, the shaft and the top, with more focus to the top as the culmination of the design. He suggested enlarging the movie poster boxes to a storefront size. He suggested that artwork or posters for special Park Street events could be displayed in those boxes as well. He suggested that the arch pattern be extended to the stairwell to maintain continuity with the other openings. He suggested that the spandrels between the opening be lightened by using a different material such as delicate or ribbed metal. He suggested that the brick on the bottom level be a slightly lighter buff color.

Ms. Debbie George, treasurer of Park Street Business Association (PSBA), and representing a 30-year business property owner on Park Street, spoke in support of this application. She had waited for many years for this addition to the district.

Mr. Robb Ratto, Executive Director, PSBA, spoke in support of this application. He noted that their Board of Directors supported this design as presented by staff. He believed the public has had sufficient opportunity to comment on this design, and noted that some of their ideas had been incorporated. He believed it was time for this project to go forward, and noted that the additions to

the parking structure must be weighed against the total budget of the project.

Mr. Robert Wood, 259 Oyster Pond, noted that he would reluctantly criticize the design because the parking garage had been anticipated by the area for decades. He believed this structure had the most minimal of design aspirations of almost any structure in the area. He supposed the garage was mechanically ventilated, and was afraid that the massing and scale of the building would be oppressive. He believed a massing study should be done, and that the top two floors of the garage should be set back; he believed that 15 parking spaces would be lost in that scenario. He would like to see a Specific Plan for this area, and was concerned that Long's may develop a 60-foot-high building on the block because the City did not take the initiative to study and provide limitations on such structures.

Mr. Kevin Frederick, 1287 Caroline Street, spoke in opposition to this item and believed the structure was extremely unattractive and uninspired.

Mr. Jon Spangler, 1037 San Antonio, noted that in his seven years of residence in Alameda, he's never had a problem parking on Park Street, partly because he rode a bicycle often, and partly because he did not mind walking a few blocks. He endorsed Mr. Buckley's comments. He agreed with Mr. Woods' comments about the massing, and believed the sunlight would be blocked in the morning. He did not believe the massing would be appropriate, and expressed concern about the visual pollution that would be caused by the uplighting. He believed planters should be interspersed between the storefront-size poster displays. He did not believe artwork and vinyl were compatible; he suggested that a bas relief mural would be appropriate. He believed bike logo signs and bike text signs that specify that bikes are allowed to enter at the bike logo area, and in the main driveway. He noted that this was not the first design choice, and would like the design to be redone so that it is the first choice. He urged the Board to take Mr. Buckley's and Mr. Woods' comments into account.

The public hearing was closed for Board discussion.

In response to an inquiry by Ms. McNamara regarding parking, Mr. Stanton confirmed that the sixth floor would contain parking on the whole floor. He displayed the façade and stated that the rationale behind the vinyl art wall was that it was a property line wall that required significant four-hour construction. The Building Official believed that penetrations would be inconsistent with safety standards for the City, particularly with a relatively high hazard occupancy like a garage. Given the limited budget for the project, they tried to invest in the best quality materials and desirable on the permanent Oak Street façade. It was hoped that the Long's site will eventually be redeveloped in a way more consistent with downtown Alameda; a corner parking lot on a major intersection was not the standard pattern of Alameda's commercial districts. He noted that vines had been considered, but the north facing façade and height of the building made that impractical. A reciprocal easement with Long's for trees had been explored, but did not pan out. He noted that any art may stay on the façade for up to three years, but that the form and medium was in the preliminary stage.

Ms. Ott described the Public Art Ordinance, and noted that they were making a good faith effort to



include public art in the project. She noted that it would not contain advertisements.

Ms. McNamara supported public art in this project.

In response to Ms. McNamara's request, Mr. Stanton described the shear wall and entrances in detail. He stated the garage was mechanically ventilated, because of the lack of adequate opening to the outdoors prevented natural ventilation. He noted that the mechanical ventilation would activate only when the carbon monoxide sensors detected a buildup; this would be safe and energy efficient.

Mr. Lynch believed the extra costs should be borne by the project. At his request, Mr. Stanton described the different colors and materials of the façade, and how it would relate to long-term maintenance of light colors at the base, moving up the structure. He noted that the sample board represented the original color choices. He preferred a honed finish, which discouraged some forms of graffiti and abuse. He believed a darker, warmer red at the base of the building would be appropriate, and would like further Board feedback.

In response to an inquiry by Mr. Lynch, Ms. Ott confirmed that the garage would not be costed out until after the final design approval.

In response to an inquiry by Vice President Cook whether cars would be visible from the outside, Mr. Stanton replied that the cars should not be visible from the street. He noted that the lighting would be visible, but anticipated that the lighting fixtures would be as inconspicuous as possible. He added that he would create the view angles from across the street, but did not believe they would be visible.

Vice President Cook believed the time had come to have a parking garage in Alameda, and added that the parking availability had become more limited. She was not happy that an appropriate solution could not be worked out with Long's. She noted that with planning, nothing was ever perfect and believed that it was time to move forward. She believed the architect had been responsive to the severe constraints of the site. She agreed with Mr. Buckley's comments, although she did not believe they were all feasible. She liked the idea of arching the area in the tower to match the other arches, as well as having a darker shade at the base to create grounding. She appreciated what the architect did with the doors closest to City Hall. She believed the poster size insets were too small, but did not believe they should be storefront-sized; the poster casing should be framed, perhaps similar to the treatment around the doors. She appreciated the architect's responsiveness on the stair tower.

Mr. Stanton agreed with Vice President Cook's assessment that the posters did indeed look "dinky," and would be happy to bring an alternative back to the Board.

Mr. Piziali agreed that the posters should not be larger, but that they should be framed.

President Cunningham noted that there was an additional speaker due to the reverse order of the items.

M/S Cook/Piziali and unanimous to reopen the public hearing.

Ms. Annie Rutter, 2329 Santa Clara Avenue, #204, did not believe tearing down the design at this point would be very constructive. She believed the project would move forward, and would like to give Mr. Stanton some ideas to work with. She supported the underground vault, and was concerned about the inexpensive materials on the large exterior wall. She liked the color palette and the darker base. She believed the lighting as represented on the drawing looked inaccurate, particular with respect to the upthrow from the fixtures. She hoped the lighting fixtures would be integral throughout the design, and that they would not be removed because of cost concerns. She noted that there was not much design on the façade, and the lighting should be very important. She expressed concern about property and personal security inside the garage, and was disappointed that there would not be a security kiosk in the garage. She believed the handicapped spaces could be closer to the elevators.

The public hearing was closed for Board discussion.

Ms. Mariani would like see the Cineplex in relation to the parking garage.

In response to an inquiry by Ms. McNamara, Ms. Ott replied that a shading study had not been performed on this structure. Mr. Stanton noted that this placement of the parking garage was ideal with respect to minimal shading impact. There may be some morning shade onto the Oak Street right-of-way, but for the most part, the rising sun would be screened by the historic cinema.

Mr. Piziali liked the lighting, and believed they would wash on the building façade more than indicated on the drawing. He supported this project, and believed it would be beneficial for Park Street. He noted that the design could be tweaked forever, and that it may never get built.

President Cunningham fully supported this project, and believed it would be good for Alameda. He agreed with Mr. Piziali's assessment. His biggest concern was the control of the design/build process, and the budget concerns.

Ms. Ott advised that with respect to the design/build team, the Board's specifications would be included in the contract. If the bids exceeded the anticipated budget, and no funding sources could be found or moved around, she advised that it was very likely that a floor of the parking garage would be removed.

In response to an inquiry by Mr. Lynch regarding the performance of the construction management work, Ms. Ott replied that staff was in the process of completing an internal draft of an RFP for those services. She anticipated it would be released in the next few weeks. Mr. Lynch noted that parking garage construction was a specialty field, and that this bifurcated process would force a firm to figure out how to bid on the project. He suggested that staff consider that possibility before sending the RFP.

President Cunningham agreed that the arches on the stair tower should be left as is, and would like to

retain the ability to detail the brick around the posters. He supported the darker base.

In response to Vice President Cook concern about pedestrian safety if a pay booth were to be used, Ms. Ott noted that there would be no pay booth, and there would be two stations at the two exits.

M/S Cook/Piziali and unanimous to adopt Planning Board Resolution to provide acceptance of preliminary Design for a 352-space parking structure, near the corner of Oak Street and Central Avenue, generally on the Video Maniac site. The following modifications would be included:

1. The darker base as recommended by the architect;
2. No additional arches on the tower building;
3. Framing or detailing around the posters; and
4. Where possible, a change in the brick courses to add interest to the large facades.

AYES – 5 (Kohlstrand absent); NOES – 0; ABSTAIN – 1 (Cook)

President Cunningham called for a five-minute recess before Item 8-A.

9. WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS: None.

10. BOARD COMMUNICATION:

- a. Oral Status Report regarding the Alameda Point Advisory Committee APAC. (Vice President Cook).

Vice President Cook noted that there was much to discuss, and would like to agendize the item to give a complete report.

- b. Oral Status Report regarding Northern Waterfront Specific Plan (Vice President Cook).

Vice President Cook advised that there was nothing new to report since the last meeting.

- c. Oral Status Report regarding the Golf Course Committee (Board Member Piziali).

Board Member Piziali advised that there was nothing new to report since the last meeting.

- d. Oral Status Report regarding the Golf Course Committee (Board Member Mariani).

Board Member Mariani noted that the last meeting had been canceled, and that another meeting would be held in two weeks.

Vice President Cook requested that the current staffing situation in the Planning & Building Department be agendized for discussion.

10. STAFF COMMUNICATIONS: None.

11. ADJOURNMENT: 10:21 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Gregory J. McFann, Interim Secretary  
City Planning & Building Department

These minutes were approved at the May 23, 2005, Planning Board meeting. This meeting was audio and video taped.