

APPROVED MEETING MINUTES

REGULAR MEETING OF THE
CITY OF ALAMEDA PLANNING BOARD
MONDAY, MARCH 14, 2011
7: 00 p.m.

1. CONVENE: **7:08 p.m.**
2. FLAG SALUTE: Board member Kohlstrand
3. ROLL CALL: Present: President Ezzy Ashcraft, Vice-President Autorino, Board members Ibsen, Kohlstrand, and Zuppan.

Absent: Board member Lynch and Wallis

4. MINUTES:
Minutes from the Regular meeting of November 8, 2010. Kohlstrand moved, seconded by Autorino to approve the minutes. Approved 4-0-1 Zuppan abstained.

Minutes from the Regular meeting of January 24, 2011. Autorino moved, seconded by Ibsen to approve the minutes. Approved 5-0.

Minutes from the Regular meeting of February 28, 2011 (Pending)

5. AGENDA CHANGES AND DISCUSSION: None.

6. STAFF COMMUNICATIONS:

Written Report

6-A Future Agendas

Margaret Kavanaugh-Lynch, Planning Services Manager, provided an update on future agenda items.

6-B Zoning Administrator Report

Margaret Kavanaugh-Lynch, Planning Services Manager, summarized the approved projects at 1417 Broadway (Use Permit) and 1246 Saint Charles (Use Permit & Major Design Review & Certificate of Demolition) on the meeting of 3/1/2011.

7. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS: None.

8. CONSENT CALENDAR: None.

9. REGULAR AGENDA ITEMS:

9-A 2010-2011 Election of Planning Board Officers. The Planning Board will elect a
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new President and Vice President for the upcoming (remaining) year, as required by the Planning Board By-Laws.

Continued until full Board present

9-B Major Design Review – Islander Motel-2428 Central Ave– City of Alameda – Housing Authority. The applicant requests approval of a Major Design Review for the rehabilitation of a 62-unit affordable (workforce) housing project .The site is currently the location of the Islander Motel, within the C-C, Community Commercial District zoning district. The project is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to the CEQA guideline section 15332 (In-fill Development Projects) and Public Resources Code (PRC) section 21159.21 (Affordable Housing Project Exemption).

Margaret Kavanaugh-Lynch provided a summary of the project.

Ms Lisa Motoyama, Housing Resources Development Director for Resources for Community Development, presented the company developing the project.

Anne Phillips, Architect, provided an overview of the project components and the design features.

Board member Ibsen commended the project. He asked about the security features surrounding the access points.

Ms Motoyama explained the security aspects of all access points and how the on-site manager would monitor access.

Board member Ibsen asked about the landscaping features.

Ms Motoyama explained that edible landscaping and gardens in other developments are regularly maintained by residents. She anticipated that this would also occur at this location.

Board member Ibsen asked about the use of photovoltaics on site.

Ms Kavanaugh-Lynch explained that the site is being wired for photovoltaics and that as additional funding becomes available photovoltaics would be added.

Board member Kohlstrand asked about the traffic circulation on site and asked how the photovoltaic slats shown on the materials boards would be applied.

Ms. Phillips explained the traffic circulation and explained the material choice.

Vice-president Autorino asked for clarification on the material selection of the tower staircase element.

Ms. Phillips explained that the translucent material choice, allows light and air circulation, while also allowing obscured visible access to the interior of the structure from the outside. The idea was to create visual access from the neighborhood.

Vice-president Autorino asked for clarification on the number of units and proposed interior remodeling.

Ms Kavanaugh-Lynch explained that the number of units will remain, but that all the interior is being replaced.

President Ezzy-Ashcraft asked for the number of ADA accessible units and what features these units will have.

Ms Phillips explained that ADA accessible units would have lower fixtures, countertops, as well as wider doorways. 26 units tentatively planned.

Board member Zuppan asked for clarification on the use of tile on the exterior surfaces.

Ms Phillips explained that no tile will be used on the exterior, but that the exterior concrete block masonry would receive some staining to color the exterior.

Board member Zuppan asked how the future tenants would be selected.

Ms Motoyama explained that the on-site management would ensure that future tenants undergo strict screening.

President Ezzy-Ashcraft asked for a clarification on whether the building is a soft-story building or not and how it seismic stability would be ensured on this site.

Ms Phillips explained that the building is not a soft-story building and that is cement masonry with rebar enforcement. It is a high functioning structure that could withstand a 300 year earthquake experience.

President Ezzy-Ashcraft was concerned about a shared parking agreement that would share the on-site parking spaces with the commercial uses surrounding the space.

Ms Kavanaugh-Lynch explained that this sharing agreement is an effort to mitigate on-street parking demand and would be monitored closely.

President Ezzy-Ashcraft asked for clarification on what “work-force housing” means.

Ms Motoyama explained that this term denotes that this development would serve those individuals and families with a 50 percent of median area income and below. For example, for a family of four that income level would be \$50,000. Rents would be assessed at 30 percent of that income level.

Ms Kavanaugh-Lynch added that for a one person household the income threshold is \$31,650. For a two-person household the income level is \$36,150.

President Ezzy-Ashcraft also asked whether local residents would receive preferential treatment in the tenant selection process.

Ms Motoyama stated that Federal Fair Housing Law governs this development, but that giving preferential treatment to local working residents would be permissible.

Vice-president Autorino asked for the life expectancy of translucent panels.

Ms Phillips stated that they have a long life-expectancy with regular cleaning maintenance.

President Ezzy-Ashcraft opened the public comment period.

Ms. Kugler, neighbor, asked how the development will be paid for and how the management group would be paid for. She also asked if there will be bus and parking passes for the neighborhood. She also asked how the ADA accessibility would be accommodated, where trash receptacles would be located. She suggested that the color be toned down to better blend in with the neighborhood fabric.

Mr. Knight, neighbor, supports redevelopment of the site, but stressed that he would like to see owner-occupied units. He would like to see that the public nuisances as trash, prostitution, and drug use generated on the site etc be addressed. He thinks the property owner should not be given the asking price of 8.2 million, while never abating the issues on site.

Mr. Ratto, Park Street Business Association Executive Director, voiced his strong and unequivocal support of the project that would provide work-force housing. He urged approval of the project to expedite the process, so that funding can be secured for the project. He also suggested muting the color palette so that the project blend in with the neighborhood.

Mr. Meylor, neighbor, discussed the public nuisances that occur on a regular basis at the project site. He supports the redevelopment of the site. He asked that the lighting scheme be reduced so that off-site glare be reduced and that the Board support replacement of windows on his home for the bedroom windows to minimize noise. He also asked that the Board consider policy and procedures to minimize noise on Fridays and Saturdays. He requested that he be able to work with the developer and construction team to make the redevelopment mutually agreeable.

Ms. Pryor supports the redevelopment for low-income working residents and likes the design. She suggested rethinking the choice of London Plains trees, as they have increasingly become diseased throughout the Bay Area.

Mr. Bendure, neighbor, stated that the residents draw suspicious people to the site. He would like to ensure that public nuisance enforcement be stricter and efficient in the future.

President Ezzy-Ashcraft asked staff to look into whether the Use Permit for Scobies should be looked at again given the ongoing nuisance complaints at that location.

Mr. Coustier, neighbor, asked that the trash receptacle enclosure be looked at again to minimize noise. He said that the south side of the building is continually under sun impact. The proposed plans do not show any method how the tenants could shade their units. He also asked that the landscaping be revised to locate landscaping in an area that actually receives adequate amounts of sun to grow plants. He also urged that the material selections be evaluated for long-term impacts of sun and wear and tear to ensure that the site will always look like the proposed drawings show it to be.

Ms. Debbie Potter, Housing Development Manager, acknowledges that this site has been a problem riddled site, and the City of Alameda was targeting this site for redevelopment, to address the issues on the site. She also explained that the housing management group had been extensively vetted for their management experience.

Ms. Motoyama explained that the structure of the building will be modified and will have a controlled access point for residents only with gated parking. This property will have permanent long-term housing, opposed to the transient population on site at this time, with tenants that have gone through criminal background checks and are carefully selected for this location. Professional management will enforce formal house rules and remove tenants for non-compliance with the house rules.

Board member Ibsen asked whether the neighborhood has any opportunity to provide input on the house rules or other property management issues.

Ms Kavanaugh-Lynch reminded the board Ms Motoyama suggested that the south-facing stairwell could be redesigned to address any possible noise concerns.

Board member Kohlstrand asked if the street tree selection could be revised to find a more suitable tree for the sidewalk. She also asked if shading will be provided for sun exposure on the south side and that down-facing of lighting be included in the resolution. She also asked when the project would start. She asked how the stairway would be illuminated at night.

Ms Kavanaugh-Lynch stated that horizontal shading over the windows will allow for shading. The tree selection and lighting issues would be amended in the resolution. The financing of the project would likely be in place by the end of the year.

Ms Potter stated that financing is subject to a competitive bidding process for this project with the State. If funding is secured, the project can move forward. Relocation of all tenants will occur prior to renovation. If existing tenants are eligible then they could return to the housing as new tenants.

Ms Phillips stated that the lighting may have a lantern effect.

Board member Kohlstrand voiced her support for the project and supported the color scheme.

Board member Zuppan questioned whether the landscaping choices will be sustained over time. She urged for a more suitable plant palette.

Board member Ibsen supports the project design, site development and agrees with board member Kohlstrand to revisit the lighting to avoid off-site glare in the tower or staircase element.

President Ezzy-Ashcraft is favorable to the design, but would like to see the mustard yellow color be toned down to allow for a better transition into the neighborhood. She recommended that the shades include photovoltaics if the budget allows. As a bike advocate, she would like to see that the bicycle parking be increased and recommended the bike advocacy group Bike Alameda recommendations.

Ms Kavanaugh-Lynch read the revised conditions of approval in the resolution regarding lighting, trees, bike parking, colors, and stairwell lighting.

President Ezzy-Ashcraft requested that the project return to the board for a review 6 months after occupation to allow the neighbors an opportunity to provide feedback about how the neighborhood's concerns are being addressed.

Board member Kohlstrand seconded that idea.

Ms Potter suggested that the Housing Authority Board would be the appropriate board to hear the project and to iron out the neighbors' concerns.

Board member Zuppan reiterated her concern whether the plants would be sustained by the site access to light and any urban impacts.

Ms Phillips confidently stated that the plant selection will be sustainable.

The Planning Board added the following conditions to the resolution:

1. The architect shall work with planning staff to address the proposed stairwell on the southeastern side of the building. Modifications shall be added to decrease noise generated on the stairway by persons utilizing this structure. Additional modifications should be made to the screening of the staircase to ensure that light spill out onto adjacent residential uses.
2. All exterior lights shall be screened or otherwise directed downwards to ensure no overspray of light onto adjacent residential uses.

3. Staff shall work to identify if Plane Trees are the best choice for street trees for the subject property. This includes attempting to find species of Plane Trees that are more resistant to disease.
4. The architect will investigate the possibility of adding solar collection panels that can be installed on top of the shade structures on the building's south elevation. These panels shall be added to the project, if feasible.
5. The staff of the property management company, (Resources for Community Development, RCD) will create a report six months after issuance of the Certificate of Occupancy, describing the status of the project, as well as issues of concern regarding the interface of the tenants and the surrounding community. This report will be given to City of Alameda Housing Staff for review and comment.

Board member Kohlstrand moved to approve the project as amended above, seconded by board member Ibsen. Approved as Amended (5-0).

9-C 29th Avenue/23rd Avenue/I-880 Improvements. The Planning Board will receive a presentation on the proposed improvements to the 23rd Avenue and 29th Avenue on and off ramps to Interstate 880. The presentation is for informational purposes. No action by the Planning Board is required.

Discussion only no action taken

Mr. Matt Todd, Alameda County Transportation Commission representative, explained the overhead freeway replacement project between 23rd and 29th Avenue. The project addresses the height of several overpasses, on- and off-ramp alignments, and sound wall proofing to protect the adjacent neighborhood.

Mr. Wrights, project designer, showcased the reconfiguration of 23rd and 29th Avenues over 880 freeway, as well as alterations on Clement Avenue in Alameda and the Park Street triangle with images and graphics. The phased project will have detours that will lead through Oakland. Construction will start in late 2012.

Board member Zuppan asked what the level of service will be during the construction period.

Mr. Wright, stated that there will be a reduction in service in the 23rd Avenue corridor during am/pm peak hours by 2035. He also elaborated on the analysis undertaken to evaluate traffic impacts.

Board member Kohlstrand asked why this project is going forward, if it causes long-term reductions of level of service for Alamedans. She also asked for clarification on whether there is a net reduction of ramps.

Mr. Wright stated that the overriding consideration was to reduce travel times on 880 towards Oakland. There was not a reduction of access points, but there would be a consolidation of ramps.

President Ezzy-Ashcraft opened the public comment period.

Mr. Ratto, Park Street Business Association, recommended that the Park Street bridge receive additional signage to redirect traffic to the Fruitvale bridge, which he considers the least utilized bridge of all bridges. He was also concerned about traffic impacts on Park Street during the construction periods. Lastly, he stated that signage on the freeway needs to be greatly improved so that traffic is better directed to Alameda.

Board member Kohlstrand supports adding more signage on the freeway showing the way to Alameda, but she is concerned about the realignment of the overpasses causing more impacts than benefits on the Oakland and Alameda neighborhoods. She is concerned that the Park Street triangle, as proposed, does not show any pedestrian pathways across the triangle. She is uncertain that the proposed realignments will really create a project that is a benefit to the communities it is supposed to serve.

9-D Presentation of the Draft North Park Street Regulating Code. The presentation is for informational purposes. No action by the Planning Board is required.
Discussion only no action taken

Mr. Andrew Thomas, Planning Services Manager, gave a brief overview of this planning effort to develop form-based code for the North of Park Street Regulating Code and asked the board for their comments on the Draft Code.

Mr. Ian Ross, City Design Collective, presented the web-based development code that would allow a developer to easily grasp the development regulations.

Kohlstrand motioned, seconded by board member Zuppan to limit the speaker time to 3 minutes per speaker.

President Ezzy-Ashcraft opened the public comment period.

Mr. Garfinkel, resident in the subject area, liked the web-based form, but is very concerned about the classifications on the land use map. He is concerned that the existing residences would be reclassified to commercial or office uses, when they should be retained as residential uses to protect existing owner's property rights. He also recommended that a public park be included in this area to serve this area.

Ms. Paul, resident in the Wedge neighborhood, stressed that this neighborhood is primarily residential and she would like to see height limits no higher than 3 stories in the Park Street area, and two stories for the residential areas. She also made recommendations on the land use map that makes residential buildings subject to demolition and replacement by commercial development.

Ms. Burdick, resident in the Wedge neighborhood, also stressed that this neighborhood is really residential in nature and not commercial. She also supports the development of a park for this area and the limitation of height on Park Street and residential neighborhoods. She also supports Alameda Architectural Preservation Society's (AAPS) comments on the land use changes.

Mr. Ratto, Executive Director of Park Street Business Association, commented that it is highly unfavorable to submit significant amount of comments on projects at 4 pm on the dates on which a project is heard.

Ms. Turpen, resident of Alameda, spoke about the land use map. She requested that the notation "could be commercially developed" be taken off residentially developed properties backing up against Park Street.

Mr. Köster, resident of Alameda, feels strongly that an open space for park, urban farming, or community garden is necessary in the Wedge neighborhood. He suggests placing such a park or garden on the former Island High School site.

Ms. Miles, Alameda resident, supports the recommendations made by AAPS. She is concerned that residential structures will become targets for demolition. She would like to see the map changed to accurately reflect the actual uses of the neighborhoods. She also seconds previous comments made about gardens or a park for that neighborhood.

Mr. Fokas, Alameda resident, seconds AAPS comments.

Mr. Rutter, Alameda resident, supports returning residential structures to residential uses, and minimizing commercial redevelopment in this neighborhood.

Ms. Lambden, Alameda resident, supports the AAPS comments. She would like to see the residential structures on Lyle, Eagle, Blanding, Clement and Everett rezoned as residential uses.

Mr. Buckley, AAPS representative, supports the planning effort. He elaborated on the comments provided in the letter submitted to the Board. He apologized for submitting a voluminous comment letter with such short time to review the comments.

President Ezzy-Ashcraft closed the public comment period and asked for clarification on the recent demolition of the historic residence on Buena Vista Avenue.

Ms. Kavanaugh-Lynch explained the project history and the demolition process referenced earlier by other speakers.

Mr. Thomas requested that the board provide comments on the draft code.

Vice-President Autorino thanked the speakers for their concise comments. He asked how the areas had received their land use designations.

Mr. Thomas explained that field observations had informed the map. Mixed-use areas received the mixed-use draft zoning designations. He advises against zoning parcels based on their existing uses, because it parcelizes a neighborhood. However, the mixed-use zoning designation would allow both residential and commercial uses housed in buildings that are tailored to fit the aesthetic of the neighborhood.

Vice-President Autorino asked for the possibility of locating a park in that neighborhood.

Mr. Thomas explained that the City does not have funds to purchase the surplus Island High site from the School District, nor does the city have funding to maintain a park in the future.

President Ezzy-Ashcraft asked how the existing residential uses could be maintained but balanced with Park Street development.

Mr. Thomas explained the land use map and suggested that staff would return with a revised map addressing the comments of the neighborhood and the board.

10. WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS: **None**

11. BOARD COMMUNICATIONS: **None**

12. ADJOURNMENT: **11:37 p.m.**