

**MINUTES OF HISTORICAL ADVISORY BOARD
REGULAR MEETING OF THURSDAY, APRIL 7, 2005
COUNCIL CHAMBERS, CITY HALL
2263 SANTA CLARA AVENUE – 7:00 PM**

Vice Chair Anderson called the meeting to order at 7:10 pm. Secretary Altschuler called the roll.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Boardmembers Lynch, Miller & Tilos.

MEMBERS ABSENT: Chair McPherson, Vice-Chair Anderson.

STAFF PRESENT: Secretary Altschuler, Recording Secretary Debbie Gremminger.

MINUTES:

M/S (Lynch, Miller) to continue the minutes of the Special meeting of March 10, 2005 due to lack of quorum. 3-0-2.

Ayes: 3; Noes: 0; Absent: 2; Motion carries.

AGENDA CHANGES AND DISCUSSIONS:

Staff requested that Item 4 be heard 1st prior to items 1, 2, & 3.

M/S (Lynch, Miller) to hear Item 4 first. 3-0-2.

Ayes: 3; Noes: 0; Absent: 2; Motion carries.

WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS: (Discussion only)

Secretary Altschuler informed the Board of the Historical Preservation Conference in Riverside.

ACTION ITEMS: (Discussion/Action)

4. Transportation Master Plan Policies - Review and comment on the draft TMP policies, and recommend a set of final draft policies to the City Council for approval.

Barry Bergman, Public Works Department, stated that in 2004, the City Council approved the development of a citywide Transportation Master Plan

The TMP will consist of six individual plans: 1) multimodal circulation, 2) motor vehicle, 3) transit, 4) bicycle, 5) pedestrian, and 6) transportation system management/ transportation demand management.

A subcommittee was established to oversee the development of circulation policies for the TMP. These policies were to address all transportation modes on a general level, while policies for the mode-specific plans (e.g. the bicycle plan and transit plan) will include more detail.

Staff would like the Board to review the Draft Policies and give comments, and recommend a set of final draft policies to the City Council for approval.

The Draft Policies were not included in the packet. Staff will forward a copy of this document to the Board and they can submit their comments via e-mail.

1. Adoption of Resolution Commending Judith Altschuler, Secretary for the Historical Advisory Board, for her Contributions to the City of Alameda.

Debbie Gremminger, Recording Secretary, read the Resolution and presented it to Ms. Altschuler.

Board member Tilos opened the floor to public comment.

Scott Brady, former president of HAB, would like to thank Judith for all of her time and effort she has put in over the time of his tenure on the Board. Mr. Brady feels they got a lot of things accomplished in terms of advancing preservation here in Alameda. And Judith did a lot of the behind the scenes work. We have very good amendments to our Preservation Ordinance largely due to her efforts.

Rosemary McNally, would like to encourage the Board to pass this resolution.

Board member Tilos closed the floor to public comment and opened Board discussion.

Board member Tilos would also like to thank Judith for her work on this Board. She has been very helpful.

M/S (Miller/Lynch) to approve the Resolution as presented. 3-0-2.

Ayes: 3; Noes: 0; Absent: 2; Motion carries.

Ms. Altschuler thanked the Board and the members of the community.

2. Review of the Landscaping Plan for planting two Coast Live Oak trees (*Quercus agrifolia*) on the vacant property at 301 Spruce Street. The submittal of a Landscaping Plan (as part of new development proposals on the site) was required as a Condition of Approval by the Historical Advisory Board under Resolution HAB 01-08, which approved the removal of one Coast Live Oak tree in 2001. The site is located within an R-4 Neighborhood Residential District.

Ms. Altschuler gave a brief history of the project. In 1988, the previous owner damaged an Oak tree through extensive trimming. The owners were required to preserve the tree despite it being severely pruned. In 2001 the tree showed signs of deteriorating health, and the Board approved a new owner's request to remove the damaged tree in order to allow a proposed residential development, with the condition that two new oak trees be planted on the property. The Board also required the submittal of a landscaping plan for review and approval by the Board when new construction is proposed on the site. The Board's approval was subsequently appealed to the City Council, where the Board's decision was upheld upon the Council's finding that there was no merit to the appeal.

The applicants have secured the services of a Landscape Architect as required by the Board in 2001 to prepare a landscaping plan and recommendations for the location of the two new trees. The applicants have also secured services of a certified arborist who has provided recommendations for protecting the existing trees during construction.

Board member Tilos opened the floor for public comment.

Patrick Lynch, 305 Spruce St., spoke in opposition of this project. He has several issues with this application. He stated that the Board should be aware that the conditions contained in CA-01-08 have not been complied with and his requests to the City for enforcement have been ignored. In 2002 a grading permit was issued for the development project at the site without requiring replacement trees. He is concerned with the recent changes to Alameda's Historical Preservation Ordinance that allows Oak Trees with a trunk diameters less than 10" to be removed without a Certificate of Approval. The proposed replacement trees will not likely have trunk diameters of this size for 10 to 20 years, and could be removed at the end of the period required for the landscape maintenance agreement. He therefore requests that the replacement trees have a diameter greater than 10" at 4.5 ft. above the ground. He also disagrees with staff's decision that this project is categorically exempt from the CEQA guidelines. The tree removal together with the proposed single-family home project may cumulatively cause additional and substantial adverse change in the condition of the remaining oak trees.

Ms. Altschuler addressed Mr. Lynch's concerns as followed:

1. Mr. Lynch's concern with the issuance of the grading permit does not fall under the prevue of the Historical Advisory Board.
2. To resolve Mr. Lynch's concern regarding the size of the trunk diameters of the replacement trees, the Board can extend the landscaping maintenance agreement to five years and require the replacement tree to be larger than 10" diameter.
3. His issue with staff's decision that this project is exempt from CEQA guidelines do not fall under the prevue of this Board and should be addressed during the design review process.
4. According to city records, the Certificate of Approval CA01-08 was valid on the day the tree was removed. The Board approved the request with the condition that two new oak trees be planted on the property. The Board also required the submittal of a landscaping plan for review and approval when new construction is proposed. The current owners have submitted a proposal to construct a single-family residence on the site. A landscaping plan for the planning of two new Oak trees has been prepared in conformance with Resolution HAB-01-08. The plans for the new construction are currently under review by Design Review staff. Conditions of approval for the Design Review will require protection of the existing trees per the arborist and landscape architect's recommendations, as well as the recordation of a Landscape Maintenance Agreement to ensure maintenance of the oak trees on the property. Staff understands that Mr. Lynch has enjoyed living next to a vacant lot, but the owner is entitled to develop his lot.

Ms. Altschuler advised the Board that the decision before this Board tonight is to approve the location of the replacement trees as stated in the Landscaping Maintenance plan.

Board member Tilos opened the floor to Board discussion.

Board member Miller is in favor of extending the Landscaping Plan to 5 years. He is also in favor of requiring the replacement trees to be bigger than a 10" diameter.

The Certified Arborist, Chris Bowen was present. He suggested that the replacement trees be 24" box, which would be close to 8 ft tall when planted. He feels this would improve the property value.

M/S to approve the Landscaping Maintenance Plan with the following revisions: (1) Change the replacement trees from two 10-gallon trees to two 24" box trees. (2) Extend the Landscape Maintenance Agreement from 3 to 5 years.

REPORTS

3. Consideration and comments on design of proposed 352 space parking structure to be constructed as part of the rehabilitation of the Alameda Theatre and construction of a new Cineplex. The parking structure would be built at 1416 Oak Street within the CC, Community Commercial District. (continued from 2-3-05mtg.)

Jennifer Ott, DSD, informed the Board that this project consists of three parts: the rehabilitation of the Alameda Theatre; the construction of a seven screen, two story Cineplex with retail at the ground floor; and the construction of a 352 space, 60+ foot high parking structure. Tonight staff would like the Board to provide comments on the parking structure and Cineplex.

CINEPLEX:

The Henry Architects Inc, design team gave a presentation on the proposed Cineplex and proposed parking structure. The presentation included various pictures of the proposed Cineplex from different views of Central Ave. to address the concern that the Cineplex would block the view of the Twin Towers Church. Mr. Henry concluded that in order to see both towers of the church, over half of the upper levels of the new Cineplex would need to be eliminated.

Another concern Mr. Henry spoke of is the 20 ft. overhang element on Central Ave and Oak St. Mr. Henry stated that in order to provide a viable Cineplex it is critical to have the proposed overhang. Without this overhang auditorium #7 would suffer greatly, losing 28 seats and reducing the screen size significantly. This will have a severe impact on the quality of the presentation and reduce the ability to compete effectively with Jack London Square. In addition to the severe economic impacts, deletion of the overhang would be detrimental to the architecture. The overhang provides a clear separation of stories and materials thus reducing uninterrupted wall would create.

The last concern Mr. Henry addressed was the corner element. Mr. Henry stated that this design included a great deal of surface articulation to eliminate the box like effect. Vertical recesses continuing the line of the columns from the ground level have been added to the upper sections at the auditoriums along with the horizontal elements to reduce the tallness of the building. They have also rounded the corner "tower" on Oak St. and Central Ave. to match the curved corners of the historic theater and the Starbuck building on Park St. This will also reduce the box like effect shown in previous plans and adds more set back to the corner for better visibility of the church.

Lastly Mr. Henry briefly went over the three different ideas for the color of the proposed Cineplex.

Boardmember Lynch stated she was not in favor of the proposed sign on the new Cineplex. Mr. Henry responded by stating he had no problems eliminating the proposed sign.

Boardmember Tilos opened the floor to public comment.

Ann Rutter stated she likes the new proposed design. She would like to see the Oak St. elevation. She feels this project has been forced on the community. She would like to see more handicap parking spaces closer to the elevators for easier wheelchair access.

David Baker, 939 Taylor Ave., feels that the new proposal is not compatible with the historical qualities of Alameda. He stated that the art deco is missing.

Richard Knight, 1372 Versailles Ave., feels that the primary goal of this project is for the Historic Alameda Theatre to be back in operation. He is concerned with what would happen if this Cineplex went out of business in the future.

John Sargent, 3105 El Paseo, stated he was concerned when he saw the proposed design in the Alameda Sun. He feels that the parking lot should be located on the corner of Oak St. and Santa Clara Ave. The parking garage should include more art deco style and not look so much like a parking garage. He stated that housing should be included on the upper two stories of the parking garage.

Scott Brady, AAPS, feels that in general the design is good. He feels that the vertical elements should be stressed more. The proposed design has impressions of columns, but does not read very strong. This is a very good start.

Kevin Frederick, 1287 Caroline St., stated that the proposed design still feels to "boxie" looking. He stated that he feels that Oak St. is too narrow to support such a huge Theatre and Parking Garage. He does not currently go to movie theaters. He would prefer to rent a movie or download from computer. These days modern technology may prevent huge Multiplex Theatres to be successful.

Doreen Soto, DSD, responded to some of the comments made tonight as follows:

1. Currently Long's Drugs is not willing to participate in this project. The City has to move forward with this project.
2. The City has hired the best economist to work on this project. He has determined that based on the population and demographics, this project will succeed. The parking structure will attract more business to Park St.
3. The proposed Cineplex is not an addition to the Historic Theatre. She feels the new Cineplex will compliment the Historic Theatre.

Board member Lynch requested that the Board hold a special meeting to submit comments on the proposed Cineplex, as she would like more time to review the items submitted tonight. The Board agreed and instructed Staff to schedule a Special meeting to hear comments on the Cineplex only. Staff will forward a copy of the PowerPoint presentation to the Board. The Board will only submit comments on the Parking Structure tonight.

PARKING STRUCTURE:

Mr. Michael Stanton, architect, gave a brief summary of what was presented to the Planning Board on March 28, 2005. Mr. Stanton informed the HAB of the comments they received from the Planning Board. The Planning Board preferred the lighter color brick, simplify the lines (on top) of Cineplex behind Longs, more lighting on the disabled bike access of parking garage, stair tower should either be all open or have the same openings as the parking garage, eliminate the on-street parking on Oak St. to extend the sidewalk and add street trees.

Board member Tilos opened the floor to Public comment.

Don Cunningham, Twin Towers Church, is in favor of the lighting and the color. He stated that Twin Towers was built long before automobiles were in use. Not in favor of losing the on-street parking on Oak St. He is concerned with the travel pattern.

Chuck Millar, 2829 San Jose Ave., stated that for safety reasons the on-street parking should be eliminated. All construction should fit in to the surrounding area. He would like to know what the HAB's role in this project is?

In response to Mr. Millar question, Ms. Altschuler stated, there are three items that require approval from the HAB. First, Certificate of Approval for the structural alterations relating to the seismic strengthening of the front façade, second, the new openings between the theatre and the new Cineplex, and third, the new opening for the concession stand.

The Planning Board will give final design approval for the Cineplex and Parking Garage. Staff is just asking for comments from the HAB.

Kevin Frederick, 1287 Caroline St., is not in favor of the exterior design. He feels it is out of place with surrounding buildings.

Don Sargent, is not in favor of façade. He feels the open banks can be treated architecturally. He feels that it might be necessary to take away the on-street parking on the opposite side of the street as well.

Richard Knight is not in favor of design. He feels there are no historical elements. Is not compatible with surrounding area.

Ann Rutter commended Michael Stanton for his work on this project. She would like to see free parking on Sundays. She is in favor of the lighting design, but would like to see more art deco.

Scott Brady, AAPS, feels the Oak St. façade looks to jumbled. The lower level does not tie in with the upper levels. Stair tower should have more glazing. Arches should be increased. He is in favor of the buff colored brick. More attention should be placed on the blank wall facing Long's.

Rob Ratto, PSBA, is in favor of project. He likes the idea of a mural on the blank wall facing Long's. He likes the new proposed design for the Cineplex. The loss of on-street parking spaces will make it more pedestrian friendly. There will be metered parking spaces in the parking garage. Five-hour time limit Monday – Saturday, 9 am – 5 pm, free on Sundays. He stated that this project has limited funds. There will have to be some compromises. It is hard to hide the fact that this is a parking garage.

M/S (Miller, Lynch) to extend the meeting to 10:30 pm. 3-0-2.

Ayes: 3; Noes: 0; Absent: 2; Motion carries.

Boardmember Tilos closed floor for public comment and opened Board discussion.

Boardmember Miller is in favor of the poster boxes because he feels that there will be a maintenance issue with the planting of vines. He is in favor of the glazing on the tower, and is not in favor of the canopy.

Boardmember Lynch does not feel this design is compatible but understands this project needs to move forward. She is in favor of the buff color and prefers the posters to the vines. She likes the idea of free parking on Sundays and is in favor of the mural.

Boardmember Tilos stated that the columns above the main entrance do not blend together. He is in favor of the design for the Cineplex.

M/S (Lynch, Miller) to continue only the Cineplex portion of this item for comments to a Special Meeting. (date to be announced.) 3-0-2.

Ayes: 3; Noes: 0; Absent: 2; Motion carries.

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS:

Boardmember Lynch stated that representatives from Alameda Point will be meeting with AAPS on April 19, 2005 to address the Historic Preservation concerns. Boardmember Lynch would like to be a representative for the Historical Advisory Board if a committee is formed.

Staff took note of this request.

STAFF COMMUNICATION:

Ms. Altschuler introduced Doug Garrison, Planner III. There will also be another new planner starting on Monday, April 11, 2005.

ADJOURNMENT:

M/S (Miller, Lynch) to adjourn meeting at 10:38 pm.

Respectfully Submitted by:

Jerry Cormack,
Interim Planning & Building Director

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