

MEETING MINUTES

REGULAR MEETING OF THE CITY OF ALAMEDA HISTORICAL ADVISORY BOARD THURSDAY, February 2, 2012

1. CONVENE: 7:00 p.m.
2. ROLL CALL: Present: Chair Owens, Vice-Chair Rauk, Board Members Hoffman, Jasper, and Lynch
Absent: None
3. MINUTES:

Meeting of December 1, 2011

Board member Lynch stated that on page two the sentence "Mr. Minor stated yes 1897 when it was built to 1944 when the Bruton's left." The word Bruton's should not have an apostrophe because it is not possessive.

Called to approve motion Board member Hoffman, 2nd motion Board member Rauk, approved 5-0.

Meeting of January 5, 2012 (Pending)

4. AGENDA CHANGES AND DISCUSSIONS:

Board member Owens called for board members to approve a motion to move item 7-B ahead of 7-A. Board members approved 5-0.

5. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS:

None.

6. WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS:

Margaret Kavanaugh-Lynch, Planning Services Manager, gave a brief report.

7. REGULAR AGENDA ITEMS:

7-B Restoration Review – Applicant: Dominic Chan Nguyen - 500 Central Avenue.
Modification of the approved restoration plans for 500 Central Avenue. Continued from the meeting of January 5, 2012

Christopher Buckley, Alameda Architectural Preservation Society, stated that the group hasn't submitted a formal statement on the proposal, but some of the members have discussed the issue and are comfortable with the subcommittee recommendation and plans that were submitted, but they would like to see clarification on the railing designs.

Board member Hoffman stated that he and Board member Jasper went to the site and they suggested that the window eyebrows should be removed. He also stated that they didn't want the pinewood, cedar or redwood would be fine. He suggested that the Board talk about the design of the railing and the back porch. Furthermore, he would like to make a decision so the property owner can move on and get this done.

Chair Owens stated agreed that a decision should be made and there was a decision made, but the property changed hands and the new owner drafted new plans.

Board member Lynch stated that on page 3 of 4 within the four drawings Board member Hoffman and Board member Jasper agreed with the two drawings located on the left hand side, the Vertical Boards, but for the railing piece.

Board member Lynch asked if the plans were a reflection of the Draft Resolution.

Board member Hoffman stated that it was in the draft resolution option A, recommended by the subcommittee.

Board member Owens asked Board member Hoffman to make a motion to approve the resolution choosing the option 4A instead of 4B. The motion was 2nd by Board member Lynch. Approved 4-0.

7-A Certificate of Approval – PLN11-0272 – 1518 Park Street – Italo Calpestri. The property owner requests a Certificate of Approval to reconfigure the storefront of a contributor in the Park Street Historic Commercial District and remove the recessed corner entry and square off the building with removable window panels on both facades. This application first appeared before the Board on October 6, 2011. Pursuant to AMC, the Board must act on the application before April 5, 2012. Continued from the meeting of January 5, 2012

Margaret Kavanaugh-Lynch, Planning Services Manager, presented the follow up report to the January 5th report.

Board member Owens asked if the staff report was the same as last meeting.

Margaret Kavanaugh-Lynch replied yes.

Chair Owens called for public comment.

Mario Mariani, Commercial Realtor at Gallagher and Lindsey Realtors, stated that he is in favor of the project. He explained that today's customers are attracted to outdoor cafes and that is a unique thing. If you go to the cities of Emeryville, Walnut Creek, and Berkeley, most restaurants have outdoor seating. Therefore, it is important for restaurants to survive the economic downturn and if that is what it takes please make that happen.

Richard Rutter, Alameda resident, stated that the corner is well executed and it would be a shame to lose it. He recommended that the property owner should save the tiled entry, the top soffit, and the existing door. He also suggested that the owner change the glazing to operable windows on top of the existing bulkhead and to not tear out the existing bulkhead. Furthermore, he believed the building to be a treasure and for the Board to compromise with the property owner by using his recommendations.

Mi'Chelle Fredrick, experienced retail and restaurant designer, spoke about the need to promote adaptive reuse projects that function with the evolving times and neighborhood characteristics. She believed that outdoor seating is a desired amenity and she urged the Board to approve the project.

Shadi Movafagh, General Manager of Linguini's Restaurant in Alameda, spoke on behalf of the General Manager of Havana and the other employees. She explained that the building must be revitalized in order to compete with other businesses, especially businesses that have patio seating.

Kathi Young, Alameda resident, stated she approved the project because it will create more jobs and revenue for the city. She acknowledged the fact that the open space design was necessary so waiters and waitresses can safely serve patrons.

Nancy Hird, Alameda resident, stated that outdoor seating is a great idea but the issue lies within the National Park Service guidelines, also known as The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the treatment of historical properties. Therefore, she doesn't want to see the building's character diminished.

Robb Ratto, Executive Director of the Park Street Business Association, stated that Park Street Business Association and board members support the project. The association does not believe the design will be a detriment to the historical nature of the district. He also urged the Board to approve the project as soon as possible.

Christopher Buckley, Second VP for the Alameda Architectural Preservation Society, explained that he wanted to focus on the bigger issue. He supports the sidewalk-seating concept, but what concerns the organization is why some of the options suggested to the property owners won't work. The Board chair suggested folding doors and his organization would like to know why this option didn't work for the owner. He also stated that staff organized extensive discussions and various options were explored, but the options didn't work out. Thus, he wanted to know why they didn't work and he was concerned that modifying the building and others in the district will jeopardize the Park Street District's historical status.

Italo Calpestri, project architect, stated that he supported the application and mentioned to the Board that there were a number of items to bear in mind. In regards to the folding doors, he explained that the corner is retained when the doors are open (usually when the restaurant is open) so they don't lose the corner except for late at night. He also talked to the property owner at length about the project and they are keeping the polychrome tile design, which will extend into the building as a way of supporting the desire of the historical element and present a more inviting entry. He believed that outdoor seating was good for the business and having the doors open will add circulation and give people on the sidewalk separation.

Board member Lynch asked whether the corner would be lost when the doors are opened.

Mr. Calpestri stated the column at the corner will remain, but when the doors are folded back then the corner will be open on both sides of the street.

Board member Lynch asked if the doors would be open for most of the restaurant's operating time.

Mr. Calpestri stated yes, but depending on weather conditions.

Board member Lynch stated that she didn't see that indicated in the last meeting's drawings and she would like to see that illustrated in the next meeting.

Chair Owens asked if the configuration would be the same as present, but substituting the folding storefront system for the historic storefront fabric.

Mr. Calpestri responded by stating that they did discuss that option, but not at great length and the design did not meet the standard of how the restaurant would function.

Chair Owens asked instead of replacing the corner storefront section replace the non-historic section.

Mr. Calpestri replied that the design option would not serve the restaurant's operating function well.

Jack Dudum, Owner of Havana's Restaurant, stated that the restaurant's access to that corner would be from 10 a.m. until 11:30 p.m. on weekdays and from 10 a.m. from 12:30 a.m. on weekends (Saturday and Sunday). So, in order to employ staff and to be a competitive restaurant in Alameda, he needs to create outdoor seating. He responded to a question that imagines the folding storefront following the exact same line and he explained that following the HAB plan would be cost prohibitive for the restaurant and would ultimately quadruple the cost.

Board member Lynch asked to outline on the plan where the outdoor seating would be. She also asked, based on the design; if the first 1/3 of the building (5 panels) would fold back and would fold back overlapping onto each other.

Mr. Dudum stated yes and they would fold back.

Chair Owens asked whether the property owner would save the tiles on the ceiling, since they are similar to the floor pattern.

Mr. Dudum stated yes and the only changes for the building would be to take the sliding doors and bring them to the corner. Also, he stated that the City of Alameda and Alcohol and Beverage Control (ABC) approved outdoor seating on Webster and Park Streets.

Board member Lynch asked how many seats would be placed outdoors.

Mr. Dudum replied that the approximate number of outdoor seating would be 30 total for both sides.

Board member Lynch asked whether that would significantly add more customers to the restaurant.

Mr. Dudum replied there are 50 seats right now, so that would bring the total number of seats to 80. And that is a fair size for a restaurant owner to try to earn a living.

Chair Owens called for the Board to discuss the project.

Board member Jasper stated that given the economic climate it is important to support the project. He explained that keeping the restaurant the way it is would not help the City, especially if it's just to keep the corner door. Finally, he appreciated the project owner's efforts and time to review the project.

Board member Lynch stated that their job is to take care of the City's historical buildings and she understood the hardships for restaurant employees and owners, but she did not support the project.

Vice Chair Rauk stated a lot of her questions had been answered and as an accountant, she understood the restaurant's economic considerations for not being able to follow the existing footprint of the restaurant. She also believes that the project should be supported based on the business association's support of it.

Board member Hoffman stated that the building's changes does not negatively affect the historic district as a whole, but enhances it in other ways. Thus, he supports the project.

Board member Owens asked if the board opposes the outdoor seating.

The Board did not oppose to the outdoor seating.

Chair Owens stated there are a couple of issues: 1) the Board must judge the project based on the Secretary of Interior Standards; and 2) the project owner and the Board should discuss all alternative design options considered. He believed that based on the Secretary of Interior Standards the project's design proposal does not meet the standards because the project would remove historic façade materials, namely the bulkhead, windows, and would change the configuration of the corner, which is a historical corner entry. He opposed the design as it is right now, but he would favor a design that would include the folding storefront in the same plan arrangement, as it exists now.

Board member Hoffman replied that he felt the Secretary of Interior Standards could be interpreted so that the project does lie within the standards.

Board member Hoffman called a motion to approve the resolution with the polychrome tile covering the entire threshold entrance of the building, the soffit would remain above the door area as physically possible and the transit windows would remain unchanged.

Vice Chair Rauk 2nd the motion.

Approved 3-2. Chair Owens and Board member Lynch were opposed.

8. BOARD COMMUNICATIONS:

8-A. Presentation by Board member Lynch on Historic Preservation Season in Alameda

Board member Lynch asked if the Board was able to review the Draft Proclamation (last part of the packet given to the Board) and they had any comments or revisions. She further explained that event # 1 of the Historical Preservation Season will continue to have items added onto it such as Woody Minor making a presentation about the Bruton House.

Margaret Kavanaugh-Lynch stated that the first meeting in March currently has the golf course and housing item plus the monument designation. So, would like to move the item to March 20th.

The Board agreed and Board member Lynch would be present at the monument designation.

Chair Owens stated that Congress is reconsidering the tax credits for historical preservation. For the City of Alameda, the tax credit is an advantage especially for any building on Park Street and the Naval Air Station. He also urged members of the subcommittee, public, and City staff to weigh in with their representatives on the issue. Finally, he voiced to Margaret Kavanaugh-Lynch that the current Secretary of Interior Standards for Rehabilitation contains a couple of wording differences since the last version and he would send the new document to her.

Board member Hoffman suggested that going forward the Board and public to speak louder during recorded meetings.

8-B. Appointment of new sub-committee members for Historic Preservation Committee.

Margaret Kavanaugh-Lynch stated there is no minimum size for a sub-committee.

The Board did not finalize an appointment.

9. STAFF COMMUNICATIONS:

9-A. Implementation of the Sunshine Ordinance as related to the business of the HAB and its sub-committees.

Margaret Kavanaugh-Lynch presented the Sunshine Ordinance requirements and staff would receive new interpretations as they go along with the process. She believed the requirements will have positive impacts on the transparency of the work done on behalf of the Board.

Board member Lynch asked staff how do they notice a subcommittee.

Planning Staff stated they would post the meeting on the website and they only need to record a meeting if there are three or more board members at any point.

Chair Owens asked how far in advance would a meeting date have to be published.

Margaret Kavanaugh-Lynch stated 7 calendar days. Also, in the near future the Board will have to attend training about the Sunshine Ordinance.

Chair Owens asked about the public passing a piece of evidence (diagram, picture, letter, etc.) to the Board.

Margaret Kavanaugh-Lynch stated that if evidence were submitted within minutes of the meeting taking session, then Staff would submit it to the Board. Also, staff will scan and post the evidence to the City's website.

Chair Owens asked about items that come in electronically and whether staff would print and present the information to the Board at each meeting.

Margaret Kavanaugh-Lynch stated yes.

10. ADJOURNMENT:

Vice Chair Rauk made a motion to adjourn

2nd by Board member Jasper

Approved 5-0.