

APPROVED MINUTES  
REGULAR MEETING OF THE  
CITY OF ALAMEDA PLANNING BOARD  
MONDAY, JANUARY 25, 2021

1. CONVENE

President Alan Teague convened the meeting at 7:00 p.m.

*This meeting was via Zoom.*

2. FLAG SALUTE

Vice President Asheshh Saheba led the flag salute.

3. ROLL CALL

Present: Board Members Curtis, Hom, Cisneros, Ruiz, Saheba, Rothenberg, and Teague.  
Absent: None.

4. AGENDA CHANGES AND DISCUSSION

President Teague clarified that Agenda Item **7-C 2021-599** would be discussed in the Staff Communications section of the meeting.

5. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

None.

6. CONSENT CALENDAR

None.

7. REGULAR AGENDA ITEMS

**7-A 2021-587**

*Public Hearing to Consider an Amendment to Alameda Municipal Code to Delete Section 30-12.2 requiring a distance separation of 1,000 feet between bars in Alameda. The proposed amendment is categorically exempt from further review under California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Sections 15061(b)(3), the general rule that CEQA only applies to actions that have the potential to cause a significant impact on the environment, and 15183, projects consistent with a community plan, general plan or zoning.*

Andrew Thomas, Director of Planning Building and Transportation, introduced the item. The staff report and attachments can be found at

<https://alameda.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=4752251&GUID=D35C8154-040E-40F5-ACF9-C9818C25D1CC&FullText=1>.

President Teague opened the board clarifying questions.

Board Member Teresa Ruiz wanted to know the distance between the new bar wanting to open and The Fireside Lounge.

Director Thomas said it was directly across Webster Street.

President Teague opened public comments.

Jim Oddie, a resident, was in full support of this amendment and believed it would be good for all businesses in Alameda as they recover from the effects of Covid-19 closures.

President Teague closed public comments and opened board discussions.

Board Member Ron Curtis was in favor of the change and saw no reason to have 1,000 feet distance. He believed this would only enhance all the bars in the area.

Board Member Hanson Hom was in full support of this zoning change.

Board Member Xiomara Cisneros agreed with her fellow board members and was in support of the change.

Vice President Saheba supported this zoning change.

Board Member Ruiz said in general she saw no issue with the language change but she did have some concerns. The first being competition, it's great that the current owner of The Fireside Lounge is in support but what about future owners. The second was that yes the attitude of bars now has changed and people think positively of them now but that might change in the future. The third was is the board "opening Pandora's Box" about what can change such as the distance between liquors stores. She wanted to hear from her fellow board members about these concerns.

Board Member Rona Rothenberg was in support of this change and thought that the staff report and draft resolution established the terms efficiently to address the items that Board Member Ruiz had raised. She believed this change was meritorious to be approved.

President Teague wanted clarification that this was different than modifying the Planning Code and wanted to know about the process.

Director Thomas said this would be a provision of the Planning Code and explained more about the process.

President Teague was in full support of this change. He was not concerned about the competition aspect since other types of businesses do not have this limitation. He also believed that due to the current climate anything the board could do to encourage and help the business community was a good thing.

Board Member Hom addressed Board Member Ruiz's concern about liquor stores. He believed liquor stores were fundamentally different than bars and didn't see that as an issue.

**Board Member Curtis made a motion to approve the proposed ordinance amendment and send it to the City Council for their approval. Board Member Hom seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken and the motion passed 7-0.**

#### **7-B 2021-588**

*Study Session to Review, Comment, and Provide Direction on Proposed Process and Schedule to Update the City's General Plan Housing Element for 2023 to 2031. No action will be taken by the Planning Board at the study session.*

Director Thomas gave a presentation. The staff report and attachments can be found at <https://alameda.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=4752252&GUID=4F5E4468-A12F-4311-95DC-DA00BDCD34B2&FullText=1>.

President Teague handled the Q&A portion.

*What about the carryover from the previous RHNA (Regional Housing Needs Allocation)? How is that handled? Is that part of this number?*

Director Thomas said no it's not part of this number, but Alameda was on track to meet the full complement of units. In March they would report to the state in their Annual Report where they show what they had done. However, Alameda had not met the affordable requirement.

*Why aren't they looking at the R1 for the special overlay for reusing existing housing?*

Director Thomas said that already under state and local law you could add second units and junior units. It's called R1 because that's what it is zoned as, but you can add up to 3 units. It's the least developed list but the staff is looking into it. He believed this was something the community should discuss more, some cities had even discussed no longer allowing single-family zoning.

*How are these requirements addressing the housing shortage?*

Director Thomas said everyone was confused by the numbers. The state understood that the City of Alameda doesn't build a single housing unit. Cities play an important role in the ability of others to build housing. The cities establish the zoning for land and review projects. He explained how the housing numbers are broken down and how the city can get its affordable requirements.

*Why are we taking the extra step this time to ask for guidance?*

Director Thomas said the City Council doesn't have to take this advice. Due to the outcome of Measure Z with the community, voting to keep a prohibition on multifamily housing in Alameda, the staff prepared this plan.

*Should we pursue the strategy of asking the government to remove that cap?*

Director Thomas said absolutely, he did not see that happening in the next 18 months.

*The numbers that you show for Alameda Point are those based on removing the cap or as it currently is?*

Director Thomas said these numbers are assuming we can get rid of our cap which is less than the Federal Government cap.

*What is the potential for Alameda Point if the cap is removed?*

Director Thomas said if we remove our internal cap the city could get about 1500 units at Alameda Point. If the local cap was removed then the cap from the Navy is around 1900 units.

*What about the 50,000 dollars per Market Rate to go above the cap? Is that any number above the cap?*

Director Thomas explained about the Navy cap was structured.

*With the pandemic working remotely has become routine. Are ABAG (Association of Bay Area Governments) and the state doing anything to reflect that or is that being ignored as part of the RHNA numbers?*

Director Thomas said that Alameda had a workshop on this issue on December 2nd, 2020 with the City Council and a representative who answered these types of questions and encouraged people to take a look at that video.

*Could Building 8 (Work Live) be rezoned at multifamily?*

Director Thomas said absolutely. He further explained how the Work/Live zoning worked about how it still wouldn't count for housing.

Director Thomas ended the Q&A portion by giving his City of Alameda contact information in case any questions did not get answered. He can be reached at 510-774-5361 or [athomas@alamedaca.gov](mailto:athomas@alamedaca.gov).

President Teague opened public comment.

William Smith wanted to stress that the housing element provides more than just the housing needs, it provides social relations across many backgrounds. He also thought it was important to change the character of neighborhoods for the better (affordable housing, walkability, bike-friendly) but still protect the historical aspects.

Donna Fletcher was concerned by the number of projects and approvals coming down the pipeline, thinking that people would become processing agents rather than being “guardians” of Alameda. She wanted the city to manage this mandate but still end up with something residents would love. Every project that gets built should add value and beauty to Alameda. She also hoped that the board would seriously consider renegotiating the 2014 agreement with the caps.

President Teague closed public comment and opened board discussion.

Board Member Curtis believed that the number of units required was very dimensional and no thought had been given to infrastructure, impact on the quality of life, and the increase in traffic. He wanted more planning to go into infrastructure before the units were built, and he wanted to renegotiate the \$100,000 fee.

Director Thomas said these were valid points but the state is saying the housing issue could not be put off while these issues were addressed. He also clarified that the money would be going to the US Navy and that this was very much a political process. The City of Alameda has to make housing a priority.

Board Member Hom wanted to know more about the rezoning process and if the higher densities would be incorporated into the general plan.

Director Thomas said yes, the game plan was to get all the elements adopted by the Planning board and the City Council this year.

Board Member Hom wanted clarification on the Resolution of Intent to rezone the multifamily sites.

Director Thomas said this was an additional step that wasn't done in 2014 that was recommended by the City Attorney. They are giving notice now that the City Council will be rezoning down the road and if there are any issues now is the time to bring them up.

City Planning Counsel Celena Chen agreed with how Director Thomas explained the Resolution of Intent.

Board Member Cisneros wanted clarification on the housing number presented by ABAG.

Director Thomas explained the new number due to ABAG making a final adjustment, but that number is still not final. He explained more about ABAG's method.

Board Member Cisneros agreed that Category 2 sites that had been identified were a major priority. She also liked the idea of revisiting Alameda Point and maximizing the potential of that site. She wanted to push the need for equitable development and not have everything contracted on the West Side. She also wanted clarification on what was expected in the time frame from 2023-2031, they would not see all the units go up during this time but it's more of a good-faith effort.

Director Thomas said yes, the state knows cities don't build housing but cities need to have the appropriate zoning.

Vice President Saheba wanted to know how the City of Alameda did in the last round of RHNA numbers against what was allocated.

Director Thomas said the city was doing well, they are in year 6 of 8 years. As of last year, they were on track to build 1,700 units over the 8 years.

Vice President Saheba believes that the public process needs to be crystal clear that this is to create a roadmap that is most conducive to the master plan that would be beneficial to the city.

Board Member Ruiz wanted to know more about what qualified as multifamily housing, and if senior housing or age restrictive housing counted. She also questioned if ADUs (Accessory Dwelling Units) were added to staff's calculations.

Director Thomas said yes, senior housing and age restrictive housing counted and he was hoping that the ADU numbers would go up. He explained how they arrived at the ADU calculations.

Board Member Ruiz also wanted more information on hotel conversions into emergency shelters, such as Project Home Key, and if these were also counted in the analysis.

Director Thomas said those had not been counted. If the housing became permanent then they could count it.

Board Member Ruiz also wanted to voice her support of Board Member Cisneros's comment about equitable zoning.

Board Member Rothenberg addressed Ms. Fletcher's concern about considering demographic trends caused by the pandemic. She also wanted to echo the concerns about equitable zoning and agreed with Vice President Saheba about doing a study. She also gave her thoughts on Incentivized Adaptive Reuse and how to engage with property owners on this.

President Teague brought up the site law change and wanted to know how that would affect the sites in Alameda and the ability to build there.

Director Thomas explained that sites need to be available and zoned appropriately. If there is a constraint that prevents the site from being developed, it has to be disclosed. He explained more about why the state changed this law and how this will make sure sites get developed promptly.

President Teague suggested opting into the AB-352 Efficiency Unit Law. He also discussed ways to get Alameda's Affordable Housing units up.

Director Thomas discussed how difficult it is for a city to build affordable housing because Alameda relies on the private sector to build housing.

Board Member Curtis suggested that if older buildings did not have historical value then it would make more economic sense to raze those buildings and build a new unit than to rehabilitate those older buildings for higher density. He of course wanted to protect historical homes but that could be an idea to explore.

## **8. MINUTES**

### **8-A 2021-572**

*Draft Meeting Minutes – October 26, 2020*

Board Member Hom wanted to change the wording in his statement under Agenda item 7-C, the wording should be improved instead of approved.

**Board Member Hom made a motion to approve the minutes with this correction. Board Member Rothenberg seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken and the motion passed 7-0.**

### **8-B 2021-573**

*Draft Meeting Minutes - November 9, 2020*

Board Member Hom corrected Agenda item 7-A, his statement should have said phrasing.

Vice President Saheba said in the 5th paragraph on page 5, the acronym should be BCDC.

Board Member Curtis corrected his statement on page 5, it should just say "what is the effect on homeowners".

**Board Member Hom made a motion to approve the minutes with these corrections. Board Member Curtis seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken and the motion passed 7-0.**

**8-C 2021-574**

*Draft Meeting Minutes - November 23, 2020*

Board Member Ruiz corrected page 5, it should say a “stand-alone agreement”. Then on page 9, 3rd paragraph from the bottom, it should say trail.

**Board Member Ruiz made a motion to approve the minutes with these corrections. Board Member Curtis seconded. A roll call vote was taken and the motion passed 7-0.**

**9. STAFF COMMUNICATIONS****9-A 2021-575**

*Planning, Building and Transportation Department Recent Actions and Decisions*

President Teague asked when these actions were taken.

Director Thomas said that all of these actions were done on January 18th, except the Nason Street project due to some late comments from the Alameda Architectural Preservation Society and that they would bring it back at the next meeting.

President Teague asked about what the other dates meant.

Director Thomas said that was the notice date.

**9-B 2021-589**

*Oral Report - Future Public Meetings and Upcoming Planning, Building and Transportation Department Projects*

**7-C 2021-599**

*Planning Board discussion of proposed amendments to parking and open space zoning ordinances to support economic development and reduce barriers to housing development. No action will be taken at this meeting.*

Director Thomas gave a breakdown of current open space zoning ordinances and what the staff was hoping to achieve with these amendments.

President Teague wanted this to come back quickly as a study session so that the board and the public can give comments and discussion.

**10. WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS**

None.

**11. BOARD COMMUNICATIONS**



President Teague wanted to see the efficiency unit ordinance come back as an Agenda Item.

12. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

None.

13. ADJOURNMENT

President Teague adjourned the meeting at 9:55 p.m.