

APPROVED MINUTES  
REGULAR MEETING OF THE  
CITY OF ALAMEDA PLANNING BOARD  
MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 14, 2015

1. CONVENE

President Henneberry called meeting to order at 7:00pm.

2. FLAG SALUTE

Board Member Board Member Mitchell led the flag salute.

3. ROLL CALL

Present: President Henneberry, Board Members Burton, Henneberry, Knox White, Köster, Mitchell, Sullivan. Absent: Board Member Zuppan.

4. AGENDA CHANGES AND DISCUSSION

**\*None\***

5. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

**\*None\***

6. CONSENT CALENDAR

**\*None\***

7. REGULAR AGENDA ITEMS

**7-A 2015-2051**

PLN15-0030 - 615 Haight Avenue - Applicant: Stefan Menzi on behalf of Joseph and Melanie Snell. An appeal of Design Review approval to allow raising an existing one-story residence a total of three (3) feet to convert the existing crawl space into a new habitable bottom floor. The resultant overall height of the structure will be twenty-one (21) feet tall, where the maximum height limit in the R-4 zoning district is 35 feet. The project is located within an R-4 (Neighborhood Residential) zoning district. This project is categorically exempt from further environmental review pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines, Section 15301(e) - Existing Facilities - additions to existing structures provided that the addition will not result in an increase of more than 10,000 square feet.

Andrew Thomas, Assistant Community Development Director, introduced the item.

David Sablan, Planner I, gave a presentation. The staff report and attachments can be found at:

<https://alameda.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=2452044&GUID=FDD3E822-61D8-456E-A4B8-7D28E87E3CB0&FullText=1>

Board Member Sullivan asked to confirm that the approved height of the applicant's home is still substantially lower than the appellant's.

Staff Member Sablan confirmed that it would be several feet lower (5-7 ft) than the appellant's home.

Board Member Burton asked for clarification of the sill heights of the lower windows.

The project architect said the window sill was about three feet above the floor.

Board Member Burton asked for more information on the historic status of the home.

Staff Member Sablan said the home has an "H" designation and said the project is compliant with standards for treatment of historic homes.

President Henneberry asked what the maximum allowable heights are for a building in that zone.

Staff Member Thomas said 35 feet was the maximum allowable height according to the zoning.

President Henneberry opened the public forum.

Melanie Snell, applicant, explained how their growing family has outgrown their house and the long process they have gone through to come to a satisfactory design that meets their family's needs.

Joseph Snell, applicant, explained the improvements they have made to the home since they purchased it. He said they love the community and just need more room for all of their kids.

Anh Nguyen, next door neighbor, explained the changes and hardships the approved project would impose on their family. She asked that the project be denied.

Bao-Long Nguyen-Trong, next door neighbor, said the project would box their house in, causing increased shadows and very little light to reach their home. He asked that the design be denied.

Zachary Walton, attorney for the appellant, explained the legal objections to staff's approval. He said the shade study plainly showed an adverse impact on his client's home. He said the applicants have other options that would not have the adverse impacts.

Lisa Fowler, a neighbor, shared comments from other residents of the block in support of the applicants.

Carlos Flores said he supports the appeal and that the project would cause a lack of privacy. He said the Golden Mean is there for a reason.

Hallie Von Rock, a resident, said this project would set a bad precedent.

Chase Martin said she was surprised the project was approved due to the close proximity of the two homes. She said the impacts would be extensive.

Steve Aced, of the Alameda Architectural Preservation Society, said they object to the project primarily because of the Golden Mean and said there are available alternatives.

President Henneberry closed the public hearing.

Board Member Sullivan said the design was attractive and that keeping young families in Alameda was important.

Board Member Mitchell said the shading was the key issue and he had not made a decision yet.

Board Member Köster said there were other options given the lot size. He said there are probably alternatives to this design.

Board Member Knox White said this was a difficult decision. He said the code does not give us a lot of flexibility. He said he is likely to uphold the appeal due to the shading.

Board Member Burton complimented the new design. He said there is a way to get around the Golden Mean issue. He said the shading is the real issue at hand. He said the design still has an adverse effect. He said he would be voting to uphold the appeal and hope they could come up with a solution.

President Henneberry said perhaps we could send this back rather than approve or deny the appeal.

Board Member Knox White asked what would happen if they sent the item back to staff.

Staff Member Thomas said they would likely either bring it back by lowering the building another six inches if that would satisfy the Planning Board, or they would likely have to do a complete redesign.

Board Member Knox White moved to continue the item to give an opportunity for further discussion between the applicant and appellant, with the sense of the board that the shading issue was the primary concern, not the Golden Mean. Board Member Burton seconded the motion with an amendment to ask staff to work with the applicant to attempt to adjust the siding design in an attempt to more closely meet the Golden Mean. Board Member Knox White accepted the amendment. The motion passed 6-0.

## **7-B 2015-2066**

PLN15-0198 - 1926 Park Street - Applicant: Bridgett Shank on behalf of Park Esquire, LLC. The applicant requests approval of Design Review and a Use Permit to construct an approximately 3,600-square-foot, five-building mixed use complex using repurposed shipping containers. Four (4) buildings will be single tenant office buildings, and one (1) building will be retail/café on the ground floor and a residential unit on the second floor. A Use Permit is required for ground floor office space and outdoor seating in the NP-G (North Park Street, Gateway) zoning district. This project is categorically exempt from further environmental review pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines, Section 15332 - Infill Development Projects.

Andrew Thomas introduced the item and gave a presentation. The staff report and attachments can be found at:

<https://alameda.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=2452051&GUID=310E8344-31B3-41E2-9C69-547BEBB84055&FullText=1>

Marcel Sango, the property owner, spoke about his expectations for the project. He said he wants to create a pedestrian friendly project and fill the offices with tech incubators.

Bridgett Shank, project architect, gave a presentation on the project's inspirations and design.

Board Member Sullivan asked about the possibility of masking the shipping container feel.

Ms. Shank said the design objective was to embrace the aesthetic of the container and welcomed the board's input on whether that was welcome or not.

Board Member Sullivan asked about bringing the tower element out to the corner and adding lighting.

Ms. Shank said there are some design options that could be explored in that direction.

Board Member Mitchell asked where the A/C units would be and asked about surface treatments to prevent corrosion.

Ms. Shank said they would use “mini-split” units that would cut through the walls or ceilings. She said they are designed for use on the sea and are designed to withstand the elements.

Board Member Köster asked about the placement of the security gates and how maintenance of the planter boxes would work.

Ms. Shank indicated the positions of the gates. She said they wanted to see what support there was from the board before getting into the fine details of maintenance plans.

Board Member Sullivan asked about the seven year parking agreement and what would happen after that.

Staff Member Thomas explained that they could make it a requirement to maintain in perpetuity, where they would have to find a new agreement if the original one was not renewed.

President Henneberry opened the public hearing.

Ken Carvalho said he supports the project.

Rich Krinks said he supports the project. He says there is a strong demand for small office space.

Robb Ratto, from the Downtown Alameda Business Association, said their board unanimously supported this project. He said this is the type of innovative, adaptive reuse project that Alameda needs.

Christopher Seiwald, owner of Perforce Software and Little House Cafe said he loves the project.

Bill Pua said he supports the project and that there is a strong demand for office space in Alameda.

President Henneberry closed the public hearing.

Board Member Burton said he supports the use permit. He said he is comfortable with the parking arrangement. He said he is supportive of using shipping containers. He said the Park St. frontage does not meet the guidelines for the gateway district. He said the cafe should be all the way on the corner. He said the retail entrances need to be on Park St. He said the project would need more dynamism in order to justify breaking the rules. He said the A/C unit placement would be very important.

Board Member Knox White said he supports the use permit. He said he strongly supports the design aesthetic of the containers. He said cantilevering is what made lots of the example projects interesting to him. He worried the alcove would not help the retail be successful.

Board Member Köster said he likes the parking approach. He said he likes the overall direction of the project. He said the tower element does not work. He said he supports the idea of cantilevering. He said combining the two retail spaces might work better. He said he would like to see a lighting package when the project comes back.

Board Member Mitchell said the project could either be a huge success or complete failure. He said he is okay with the mixed use. He said he is okay with the containers with some design improvements.

President Henneberry said he supports the use permit and the parking arrangement. He said he likes the containers. He said the tower could stay or go, that the retail door should come out to Park St., and that the planters are not consistent with the design of the project.

No action was taken.

#### **7-C 2015-2057**

Recommend that the City Council Approve the City of Alameda Housing Element Annual Report and Implementation Priorities

Andrew Thomas presented the item. The staff report and attachments are available at: <https://alameda.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=2452046&GUID=21D85B46-B9BD-4AC2-91A5-C52A2BAED214&FullText=1>

President Henneberry opened the public hearing.

Laura Thomas, President of Renewed Hope Housing Advocates, said they are pleased to see the progress the City is making. She said more could be done. She said there is not sufficient low and very low income housing in the pipeline. She said the downzoning of the North Housing site has made the City technically out of compliance with the housing element.

President Henneberry closed the public hearing.

Board Member Köster said the progress on Universal Design and changes to the secondary unit ordinance are promising.

Board Member Knox White said that we need to set the bar high for this report since it is the first one and will be a template in future years. He said he will be asking staff to be completing some of the reporting more fully. He said the goals for the Rent Review Advisory Committee should be revised. He said we should look at tracking 60-day evictions. He said the secondary unit ordinance is not working as is and needs to be reviewed. He said we need to be more mindful of what types and sizes of units are built going forward, not just building the biggest houses we can.

Board Member Burton said we need to get the Universal Design ordinance in place as soon as possible. He said changing the second unit ordinance can help alleviate the rental crisis and make homeownership more affordable. He said he would support revisiting and raising the inclusionary housing percentage.

President Henneberry said the rent review portion needed to be toughened up.

Board Member Knox White made a motion to continue the item for further refinement. The motion was seconded by Board Member Köster. The motion passed 6-0.

## **7-D 2015-2062**

### **Board Elections**

President Henneberry asked if there were any nominations for President of the Planning Board.

Board Member Köster nominated Board Member Knox White for President of the Planning Board.

President Henneberry asked if there were any other nominations for President. There were no other nominations for Board President.

Board Member Knox White was elected President 6-0.

President Henneberry asked if there were any nominations for Vice President of the Planning Board.

Board Member Knox White nominated Board Member Köster for Vice President of the Planning Board.

President Henneberry asked if there were any other nominations for Vice President. There were no other nominations for Vice President.

Board Member Köster was elected Vice President 6-0.

8. MINUTES

**8-A 2015-2063**

Draft Planning Board Minutes - June 8, 2015

No action was taken due to insufficient members present capable of voting on the minutes.

**8-B 2015-2064**

Draft Planning Board Minutes - July 13, 2015

No action was taken due to insufficient members present capable of voting on the minutes. Board Member Burton was assigned the task of watching the tape from the meeting in order to be able to vote on the minutes for that meeting.

9. STAFF COMMUNICATIONS

**9-A 2015-2053**

Zoning Administrator and Design Review Recent Actions and Decisions

Andrew Thomas said staff approved five design reviews since the previous meeting. The staff report can be found at:

<https://alameda.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=2452045&GUID=920091B6-71CD-4685-97BF-085EE226D080&FullText=1>

**9-B 2015-2065**

Transmittal of City Council Staff Report Regarding Phase 0 Activities Plan for Site A at Alameda Point.

Andrew Thomas presented the item. The staff report and attachments can be found at: <https://alameda.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=2452050&GUID=C2B6E5EF-7F27-4A2B-B184-164FA93DDAA3&FullText=1>

Board Member Burton said he was very happy with the inclusion of the Tinkering School in Phase 0.

10. WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

**\*None\***

11. BOARD COMMUNICATIONS

Board Member Knox White said he would be out of town for the next meeting.



Board Member Mitchell, as a new Board Member, gave some background on his personal and professional life.

Board Member Knox White said the uncertainty of a potential rezoning of the current Harbor Bay Club site is causing problems in the community. He said he hoped staff would bring a “sense of the Council” item to the City Council in order to begin to move the issue forward in either direction.

Andrew Thomas welcomed the new Board Members.

**11-A 2015-2054**

Report from the Boatworks - Ad-Hoc Sub-Committee

\*Did not meet.\*

**12. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS**

Mayor Spencer welcomed the new members and congratulated the newly elected Board President and Vice President.

**13. ADJOURNMENT**

President Henneberry adjourned the meeting at 10:21pm.