

APPROVED MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING OF THE
CITY OF ALAMEDA HISTORICAL ADVISORY BOARD
THURSDAY, DECEMBER 6, 2018

1. CONVENE

Chair Saxby called meeting to order at 6:58pm.

2. ROLL CALL

Present: Chair Saxby, Board Members Jones, Lau, Sanchez, Wit.

Absent: None.

3. MINUTES

None

4. AGENDA CHANGES AND DISCUSSION

None

5. ORAL COMMUNICATION

None

6. WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

None

7. REGULAR AGENDA ITEMS

7-A 2018-6278

PLN17-0140 - 1100 Marina Village Parkway - Applicant: Steelwave, LLC. - Public Hearing to consider the historic preservation design features for the Shipways Residential Project, a 329-unit multi-family housing complex with a waterfront park. The project will require the approval of a Certificate of Approval by the Historical Advisory Board but no action will be taken at this public hearing. The environmental impacts of the proposed project were considered in the Alameda Shipways Residential Project Environmental Impact Report (SCH#2017041011)

Staff Member Thomas introduced the item. The staff report and attachments can be found at:

<https://alameda.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=3763445&GUID=92741C3F-123E-4D48-9BD3-FF5B2D665A14&FullText=1>

Staff Member Barrera gave a presentation.

Nathan Herrero, project architect, gave a presentation.

Board Member Sanchez asked what the logic was for having the taller buildings along the water instead of Marina Village Pkwy.

Mr. Herrero said keeping the scale down at the street and providing more units with access to the waterfront views were the reasons.

Board Member Wit asked if keeping the facades of the buildings and incorporating them into the new structures was considered.

Mr. Herrero said the garage walls will be built in those locations and they would not be able to keep the character of the walls.

Chair Saxby opened and closed the public hearing.

Board Member Jones said the celebrating of the history of the site should be enriched in the public spaces of the site. She said she wanted to make sure we took every opportunity to historically and aesthetically celebrate the site. She said she would like to explore making the design more evocative of the design elements of the original buildings. She asked about the process for finalizing the artwork.

Staff Member Thomas said there is a large public art obligation, a desire to honor the history of the site, and a need to create a unique public park. He said the applicant will make a proposal to the Public Art Commission.

Board Member Jones asked how confident we are that the signage can be removed successfully.

Mr. Herrero said he is very confident that they can reinforce and cut out the Shipways signage.

Board Member Lau asked if the park area can be built with a sloped building like the original structure and possibly swap the location of the pool and the park area.

Mr. Herrero said the ability to build with a slope severely limits the usability of the interior space or would require a much higher roof or canopy structure than the original building.

Board Member Sanchez said he would worry that they would be getting into the area of false historicism by replicating the building.

Board Member Wit said the large pictures of old planes above the historic hangars in the Presidio are a good example of what she would like to see on the sides of the buildings.

Board Member Sanchez said the sales office would be a good place to have some of the required imagery on display.

Mr. Herrero said using that imagery on the interior portions of the common areas is in their plans.

Board Member Sanchez said the landscape and waterfront elements are the most successful of relating to the history of the site. He said public access elements and experience of the site were good. He said he is concerned by the massing of the building and that the taller buildings are on the waterfront site. He said the pool areas would seem dwarfed by the taller buildings. He said shorter buildings near the pool, which is on the north side, would enhance the private open spaces on the site by allowing more sunlight to reach the ground there. He said he appreciates the changes that have been made and thinks they have gone a long way towards alleviating the historical concerns given the challenges of the site.

Chair Saxby said the City should include a preservation aspect to this project. He said it was a mistake to allow four historic buildings of local and national significance be destroyed in order to build the project. He said Alameda stands strong on the integrity of its historic character. He said the finding that preserving two of the buildings was not viable came from the developer, who is not really interested in preservation. He said we could look at maybe preserving one of the four buildings. He said he does not think it is a fair choice to sacrifice the public amenities for historic preservation. He said he does not think preservation options have really been studied. He said he is not giving up on the preservation of at least one of these buildings.

Staff Member Thomas asked if Chair Saxby was envisioning preserving one or more of the head house buildings and building over and around it.

Chair Saxby said that is possible and would be very exciting idea architecturally and be similar to how the ships were built at the site.

He said the mitigation measures considered are superficial. He said they are not historic mitigation measures.

Staff Member Thomas said a historic mitigation measure is photography when you have a significant, unavoidable impact under CEQA. He said they are trying to add to that.

Chair Saxby said it would be a shame to write off these historic buildings.

Staff Member Thomas said nobody is trying to write them off. He said we also have an obligation under state law to build housing. He said the City cannot make the development

of the housing infeasible by their mitigation measures. He said he expects the chair's idea for preservation would affect the financial feasibility of the project.

Board Member Sanchez asked how the elevation of the peak of the head house compares to the elevation of the plinth (platform.)

Mr. Herrero said the floor level is about five feet. He said he is guessing the building height is 21 feet up, the driveway entry of the project would be built up to nine feet. He said that would create a cocoon effect around the building.

Chair Saxby asked how that would be affected if they used one of the edge buildings.

Mr. Herrero said they would have to study that, and that impacts to fire department access would be a factor they would have to consider.

Chair Saxby said it is confusing that the EIR is from May 2017 and we still have not seriously looked at the feasibility of preserving any of these buildings.

Staff Member Thomas said they have considered the possibility of preservation, but have to consider financial impacts, and he said he is trying to consider what this building would look like visually submerged compared to the surrounding grounds and buildings. He said that if the City makes a project infeasible they would run afoul of state law. He said the Del Monte project is a preservation project, has been approved for four years, and cannot get financed.

Board Member Jones said she agreed with Chair Saxby about Alameda's historic preservation commitments. She compared the potential of the Shipways site to the historic Alameda Theater. She said we like to push the envelope and wants to make sure this does not look like any other city.

Board Member Wit said she agreed with those thoughts. She said Alameda needs to decide what it wants to be, a suburb or a destination. She said maintaining our history is what makes people want to come to Alameda.

Nicole Bures, project manager, said this has been a large collaborative effort. She said this will be an over one hundred million dollar investment to provide for rent housing in Alameda with 54 deed restricted units. She said no new for rent housing has been built in Alameda since 1973, will open the waterfront to Alamedans, and convert an abandoned site. She asked that the board take these items into consideration.

Mr. Herrero said getting the head houses to meet FEMA requirements for flooding and sea level rise.

Chair Saxby said the building is suitable for occupancy now and is a historic structure on a historic site. He wondered why we are not looking seriously at saving one or more of these buildings.

Staff Member Thomas said that they have come to the conclusion that it is not financially feasible on this site, but have not convinced this board of that. He asked what it would take for the board to reach that conclusion.

Chair Saxby said he does not think it is the board's purview to address the financial feasibility of the project. He said they are looking only at the historic preservation point of view.

Staff Member Thomas said they will be taking the project to the Planning Board in January. He said they will share that this board felt the historic preservation mitigations in the application were good, but that the plan missed the mark by not having a preservation element. He said they would be coming back to HAB for a certificate of approval.

Board Member Sanchez said he would like to go through the process of studying a design that has a preservation element. He said always presents his clients with the "money is no object" solution to make sure that possibilities are not limited.

Staff Member Thomas asked if the board would be able to move their meeting back from the scheduled January 3rd date in order to do the work required.

Chair Saxby said they could coordinate a date offline and make that work.

7-B 2018-6287

2019 Historical Advisory Board Regular Meeting Schedule

Board Member Sanchez made a motion to adopt the 2019 schedule. Board Member Wit seconded the motion. The motion passed 5-0.

8. BOARD COMMUNICATIONS

None

9. STAFF COMMUNICATIONS

None

10. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

None

11. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Saxby adjourned the meeting at 8:20pm.