

APPROVED MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING OF THE
CITY OF ALAMEDA PLANNING BOARD
MONDAY, JANUARY 28, 2019

1. CONVENE

President Sullivan convened the meeting at 7:00pm

2. FLAG SALUTE

Board Member Mitchell led the flag salute.

3. ROLL CALL

Present: President Sullivan, Board Members Cavanaugh, Curtis, Mitchell, Rothenberg, Saheba.

Absent: Teague.

4. AGENDA CHANGES AND DISCUSSION

President Sullivan said should would like to handle item 7-B first.

Board Member Curtis made a motion to swap the order of items 7-B and 7-A. Board Member Rothenberg seconded the motion. The motion passed 6-0.

5. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

None

6. CONSENT CALENDAR

None

7. REGULAR AGENDA ITEMS

7-B 2019-6476

PLN18-0564 - Lot Line Adjustment - 2607 Santa Clara Avenue. A proposal to reconfigure the parcel lines between two existing properties. The project is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15305 - Minor Alterations in Land Use Limitations

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

<https://alameda.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=3838556&GUID=8D276246-7AE7-48FD-803B-44246EB093F2&FullText=1>

Board Member Curtis made a motion to approve the staff recommendation. Board Member Mitchell seconded the motion. The motion passed 6-0.

7-A 2019-6476

PLN18-0564 - Lot Line Adjustment - 2607 Santa Clara Avenue. A proposal to reconfigure the parcel lines between two existing properties. The project is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15305 - Minor Alterations in Land Use Limitations

Staff Member Barrera gave a presentation. The staff report and attachments can be found at:

<https://alameda.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=3838556&GUID=8D276246-7AE7-48FD-803B-44246EB093F2&FullText=1>

Paul Patel, applicant, said the project will be a win-win for everyone.

Board Member Mitchell noted that the applicant operates the Coral Reef Inn and asked what the plan was for operation of this hotel.

Mr. Patel said he will be the operator, but would have a whole new team that is different from the Coral Reef Inn.

Board Member Curtis asked who would own the new hotel.

Mr. Patel said he would be 100% owner. He said he has many partners at the Coral Reef.

President Sullivan asked if there would be any food operations on site.

Mr. Patel said that because of the lot size and neighboring businesses that are available they would only have a "grab and go" deli on site.

President Sullivan asked how many employees would be at the hotel.

Mr. Patel said approximately 12.

President Sullivan said that if half of the employees drive it would severely reduce the available parking on site.

President Sullivan opened the public hearing.

Gretchen Pearson said she supports the project. She said it would keep visitors on the island.

Rich Krinks said they like what he and his client have come up with. He said he thinks the parking issues can be addressed. He said the city can use the tax revenue.

Arthur Mercado said he is in full support of the project.

Janet Magleby, Downtown Alameda Business Association, said they support the project and that it would be a good amenity for the area.

Michael McDonough, Chamber of Commerce, said this project will be a big improvement for the gateway district. He said TOT tax will go a long way towards addressing our long term budget issues.

Alex Bretow said his family never has a place they want to stay on the island until now. He said this hotel would be a major benefit for the island.

Alicia Shu said that this hotel can help business grow in Alameda.

Steve Busse, DABA, said he rents out a cottage regularly and more than half the time they do not have a vehicle when they stay at his property.

Bill Phua said he is happy to see this project coming.

Brooke Abbasi said she supports the project.

Donna Layburn said it is exciting that this project is finally coming to their downtown. She said when they host people they have to stay in Jack London Square. She said our downtown needs to be a destination.

Sam Patel said he brings clients to Alameda often and this hotel would be the perfect place to house them.

Leonard Goode who owns the property said this is an opportunity to do something great for the gateway and leave a good legacy for Alameda.

Greg Barron said this project is not the best use or design for the location. He said there is no parking in the area and this will make that problem worse. He said the project would look directly into his backyard.

Kari Thompson, Chamber of Commerce, said she supports the project.

Ty Hudson, UNITE HERE, said he opposes the project. He said the parking study is not satisfactory. He said this is one of the few housing opportunity sites in Alameda and create only low wage jobs.

John Frangoulis said the positives of this project far outweigh the negatives. He said it will provide customers to all the businesses in the area.

Joe LoParo said we need to improve the north of Lincoln area. He said the hotel parking lots are never full anymore. He said he strongly supports the project.

Kyle Conner said he supports the project. He said it will help offset the budget deficit and improve foot traffic in the area. He said the customers will have no problem finding parking. He said the project is creating parking that doesn't currently exist.

Anita Ng said she supports the project. She said always looks for hotels that are in walkable areas with transportation to the airport.

David Burton said he is generally supportive of the project. He said the design has improved. He said the blank wall needs something like a mural. He said the ground floor windows need to be recessed and coordinated with the windows up above.

Christopher Buckley, AAPS, said the project is greatly improved but still needs some improvements that are outlined in their letter.

Dania Alvarez said she supports the project and supports David Burton's recommendations.

John Schmidt said the project is short one third of the parking. He said he could never get away with that on his own home. He suggested removing a floor of the hotel if necessary.

Tina Blaine said she supports the project. She suggested a portion of the transient occupancy tax be dedicated to our public art fund to draw people to Alameda.

President Sullivan closed the public hearing.

Board Member Mitchell asked why the Oak and Clement intersection was not studied.

The applicant's traffic consultant said they looked at the trip generation and distribution which indicated that only 10% of the trips would go towards Oak St. so they did not study that intersection.

Board Member Curtis asked if they studied traffic that includes build out of the northern waterfront.

The consultant said they did study the future build out in their study.

Board Member Curtis noted the study used counts from August, a vacation month, for the study.

President Sullivan said the height, setbacks, tree count, and accessible parking requirements do not appear to be met.

Staff Member Thomas said it does meet the height requirement of 50' and the architectural features can go higher under the code with design review.

Staff Member Barrera said that accessory structures can be on the property line if more than 75' from the front of the building. She said there was an error in the landscape plan and they are required to have 16 trees. She said the CA building code bases the number of ADA spaces on the actual number of spaces constructed, not on the parking requirement.

Board Member Saheba said it is an appropriate use and will generally improve the area. He said he is working on several hotel projects and demand for parking is decreasing. He asked if there were any sustainability features included in the project.

Staff Member Barrera said they can include things like EV charging spaces if the board is interested in that.

Board Member Saheba said he is worried about back of house windows along Clement being covered with blinds and becoming blank windows.

Staff Member Barrera said they flipped the layout to have the corridor activity be visible.

Board Member Saheba suggested moving one of the vertical elements to not fall on a window. He said it might make sense to spend the public art funds on the blank facade even if there is a chance that it would get covered up at some point in the future by an adjacent building. He said the steel canopy and the anodized aluminum are in conflict and they should be the same material or same color. He recommended smooth plaster instead of textured because of the gateway location. He said he would be good approving the project with a condition that the elevations come back for review one more time. He suggested a darker color for the base and upper accent bands.

Board Member Mitchell said the amount of hotel seems oversized for the lot which results in being under parked. He said he is concerned about ongoing maintenance after walking through the Coral Reef Inn. He said he is unsupportive at this point. He said if it moves forward, the signage should be minimized, a public art mural should be required, sustainability features should be included, and reduce the row of compact spaces by one to make them slightly wider, the number of accessible spaces should be based on the required number of parking spaces, not the waiver amount.

Board Member Rothenberg said she concurred with her fellow board members' comments. She said the design guidelines would be consistent with Board Member Saheba's feedback regarding items such as smooth plaster and window features. She said the project should be able to affordably reach LEED Silver standards if building methods are thoughtfully considered. She said she supports the use, but thinks there are too many rooms with only one 700 square foot conference room.

Board Member Cavanaugh said he does want to see planning for electric vehicles. He said he would like to see what the building will look like at night. He said he would like to see as much reuse of water as possible. He said he would like to see what it looks like on the west side from the neighbor's house.

Board Member Curtis said he liked the design. He said his one concern is the parking and worries that it could affect the success of the hotel.

President Sullivan asked what was making the ground floor not seem harmonious with the upper floors, pointing to the many small transom windows.

Board Member Saheba said the transom windows were a part of the problem, but so is the busyness created by the metal at the base. He said the whole floor could benefit from some simplification.

President Sullivan said the look of the first floor should turn the corner. She said the fake windows used at the Walgreens could work well for the blank wall. She suggested that the parking be reviewed in two years to see if additional arrangements need to be made.

Staff Member Thomas said they want to incorporate all of the excellent design feedback into this gateway project. But, he said they need to answer the threshold question about whether the parking situation is acceptable or not with the room count. He said there is a possibility to add a condition of approval to secure additional remote valet parking spaces.

Board Member Saheba said that if the need is there to valet, you can do it on site by using the drive aisles. He said the CBC is clear on how the ADA parking requirements are calculated and that there is not really flexibility.

President Sullivan said she does not like the trash facility being on the property line and would like to move that. She said she would like to reduce the height and size of the green sign.

Board Member Mitchell said he would support the valet parking suggestion.

Staff Member Thomas asked if the board could approve the project with conditions: that the architecture come back; meet LEED Silver; moving of the trash enclosure; electric vehicle charging, or just to continue the item.

Board Member Curtis made a motion to approve the project with the conditions: the addition of a valet parking plan, incorporate the architectural suggestions made tonight, LEED Silver, public art on the blank wall, electric charging stations, and moving the trash enclosure. Board Member Saheba seconded the motion.

Board Member Mitchell asked if the motion would include reducing the row of compact spaces by one in order to widen the remaining.

President Sullivan said she did not want to see the parking reduced any further.

The motion passed 6-0.

8. MINUTES

8-A 2019-6477

Draft Meeting Minutes - November 13, 2018

Board Member Curtis made a motion to approve the minutes. Board Member Cavanaugh seconded the motion. The motion passed 6-0.

9. STAFF COMMUNICATIONS

9-A 2019-6473

Planning, Building and Transportation Department Recent Actions and Decisions

The staff report can be found at:

<https://alameda.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=3838553&GUID=EFE96E9E-9F84-422D-BCFB-8394889D32CF&FullText=1>

9-B 2019-6474

Future Public Meetings and Upcoming Planning, Building and Transportation Department Projects

Staff Member Thomas previewed future agenda items. The schedule can be found at:

<https://alameda.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=3838554&GUID=820E1999-68A5-48C2-AC5B-A4FCF1200DAE>

President Sullivan said the Alameda Marina Boatyard RFQ was not approved before going out and was written in a manner than seemed to be seeking a marine developer more than a boatyard operator.

10. WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

None

11. BOARD COMMUNICATIONS

None

12. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

None

13. ADJOURNMENT

President Mitchell adjourned the meeting at 9:29pm.