

APPROVED MINUTES  
REGULAR MEETING OF THE  
CITY OF ALAMEDA PLANNING BOARD  
MONDAY, JULY 22, 2019

1. CONVENE

President Curtis convened the meeting at 7:00 p.m.

2. FLAG SALUTE

Board Member Ruiz led the flag salute.

3. ROLL CALL

Present: Board Members Curtis, Cavanaugh, Hom, Rothenberg, Ruiz, Teague.

Absent: Board Member Saheba.

4. AGENDA CHANGES AND DISCUSSION

President Curtis moved a portion of STAFF COMMUNICATIONS to the beginning of the meeting. He introduced the new City Attorney, Yibin Shen.

City Attorney Shen introduced himself and thanked the members of the board for their service to the City.

5. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

**\*None\***

6. CONSENT CALENDAR

**\*None\***

7. REGULAR AGENDA ITEMS

**7-A 2019-7106**

*PLN17-0538 - Final Architectural Design - 1825 Park Street - Applicant: Paul Patel for Ganesha, LLC - Public hearing to consider the final architectural design for a four-story, 96-room hotel. The property is located within the NP-G, North Park Street Gateway zoning district with a MF, Multi-Family Residential overlay. Approval of the final architectural design for the hotel is not subject to CEQA under McCorkle Eastside Neighborhood Group v. City of St. Helena (2018) 31 Cal.App.5th 80, which found that design review for by right projects is a ministerial decision under Public Resources Code section 21080*

Linda Barrera, Planner II, gave a presentation. The staff report and attachments can be found at:

<https://alameda.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=4063218&GUID=0C8F98BF-BFB2-4ECC-96AC-E2AFEB4D8A81&FullText=1>

Board Member Hom said the Council discussion asked for a redesign to a classical style building. He asked why the applicant stayed with this design.

Staff Member Barrera said there were lots of conflicting comments at the Council meeting. She said they are trying to shift away from the Streamline Moderne style to a more modern looking building which is consistent with the Gateway District.

Board Member Teague asked if the Planning Board is constrained by what is in the City Council resolution.

Celena Chen, Assistant City Attorney, said the Council gave some examples but no exact direction. She said the Board needs to consider the direction, but has some leeway in the final design of the hotel.

Paul Patel, applicant, thanked the Planning Board and city staff for all of their help through the long process. He said he hopes we are in the final phase of approval and can move forward with the project. He told his personal history coming to this country and city and the work he has done to reach this point. He said the process can be frustrating but the community support has not let him quit.

President Curtis opened the public hearing.

Janet Magleby, Executive Director of DABA, said the business district strongly supports the project. She said the hotel will support the major street fairs and compliment downtown amenities.

Sharan Cao spoke in support of the project.

Norris Bethke said it can be hard to find accommodations nearby for visitors and expressed support for the project.

Ralph Ednalino said he has travelled a lot and this is a good location that will bring lots of business to the area.

Chun Yan Zhang said she has seen hotels drive local economies and bring jobs. She said Alameda feels like home to her, but is missing amenities that this hotel will bring to serve her business needs.

Rich Krinks, commercial real estate broker, said it is time to get shovels in the ground. He said the design has no restaurant or bar, because they want to benefit the other businesses on Park Street. He asked the Board to approve the hotel tonight.

Sunil Lama said he supports the project.

Christopher Buckley, AAPPS, referenced several points in their letter to the board. He said they are comfortable with the Streamline Moderne vocabulary of the design. He said the windows should be made symmetrical. He said the granite bulkheads should be substantial slabs and not small tiles. He said the fin should be restored to the previous height.

Holden Lim said a hotel like this will reactivate the downtown area. He expressed support for the project.

Lan Shaw said crossing the bridge from Oakland does not present an attractive welcome to Alameda. She said the hotel will change the landscape and attract business. She expressed support for the applicant and identified with his personal story.

Lars Hanson said he supports the project.

Greg Barron said the hotel does not conform to the North Park Street Plan. He said it needs retail and more parking. He said he spoke with the developer about ways to mitigate impacts on the neighbors that the Board should consider as conditions. He suggested a 20 foot wall on the property line and lowering the light standards to prevent light intrusion. He said he has worked in good faith with the City in the past and hopes to be able to on this issue.

Anita Ng said the project would be a big improvement to the gateway of Alameda.

Harold Lueders said it would be nice for his family to have a good place to stay when they visit.

Bikash Suintu expressed support for the project.

Carlos Quan supported the project and its design.

Olga Maribel Cantu said she thinks the hotel will be very nice and benefit Park Street.

Ezequiel Galbado expressed support for the project.

Dolores Jeanpierre urged support of the project.

Swapan Munshi expressed support for the project, saying it will bring tax revenue and benefit downtown.

Eric Relos said the project will be a good addition to the island.

Miyoko Ohashi supported the project. She said it is hard for her visiting family to find good places to stay.

Ana Reynoso said it is a lot of work to get folks to invest in your city. She expressed support for the project.

Michelle Yuan said the location is very good for a hotel.

Shawn Flynn supported the project and thanked the applicant for spending so much effort to develop in Alameda.

Haley Welsch said she supports the design.

Sanjiv Patel applauded the applicant for his persistence over the years. He said the hotel will bring tourists to the city.

Tarun Gaur said he supports the project and has confidence in the applicant.

Sandy Glendinning said she lives behind the hotel location. She said her kitchen window view currently shows the Mormon Temple and will be lost with this project. She said parking has become much more difficult in recent years.

Carlos Rosales expressed support for the project and its design.

Camille Hammand said Alameda does not have good options for hotels and that the project would be a good addition.

John Ball said he supports the project.

Ann Sekhon said people need a place to stay when they visit Alameda. She asked the Board to approve the project tonight.

Bob Sekhon said the hotel will be a great addition and help small businesses.

Vincent Ma said he supports the project and believes in the applicant.

Mark Skolnick said having a hotel in the downtown area will benefit the whole city.

Madlen Saddik said the Chamber of Commerce supports the project.

Alicia Shu expressed support for the project. She said the mural would be good for attracting people to the city.

Kyle Conner said that every time the process gets delayed it costs a lot of money for the developer.

President Curtis closed the public hearing.

Board Member Teague said the design has improved and he supports the project with some conditions that staff can deal with without coming back to the Board. He agreed with Mr. Buckley, saying the granite base should be larger and more solid. He agreed that the fin should be restored to the original height with the sign. He asked staff to resolve the question about the tree plan. He said the project will benefit the city. He asked that the ride share information be provided upon check in.

Board Member Hom said he thinks the delay was the right choice because the project design has improved substantially. He said he supports the project and agrees with the comment about the tile being more substantial. He said the fin strikes him as somewhat generic and could be improved, consistent with the Streamline Moderne approach.

Board Member Rothenberg agreed with the other members' comments. She suggested that the motion address AAPS comments 1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 9, and 11 be considered in the final design in a practical manner that not impede but rather improve the construction.

Board Member Ruiz concurred with the previous comments. She said the fin should be more of a marquee part of the project. She said the pilasters should have three dimensionality and the back elevation should have some vertical articulation that can be addressed at the staff level. She said the circulation in the parking lot may need to be one way to prevent vehicle conflicts with the ride share queue.

Board Member Cavanaugh agreed with other board members about the design. He said he liked the design a lot and thinks it should be approved.

President Curtis said there is a point of diminishing returns with trying to improve the design with minor changes such as the fin height, which translate to expensive delays and changes for the developer. He said he supports the project and asked Board Member Teague to make the motion.

**Board Member Teague moved approval of the project with the following changes: ride share information be provided to guests upon check in and be included with in-room materials; add the condition that large slabs of granite, or granite simulated material, establish a solid base; restore the fin to the previous height and let staff and the applicant decide whether or not to restore the "H" to the fin; staff will review the street trees in response to the AAPS letter. He said that if the applicant decides that having symmetrical window configuration is doable, that staff can approve that change without returning to the Planning Board. Board Member Rothenberg seconded the motion.**

Allen Tai, Planning Services Manager, summarized the motion on the floor.

**The motion passed 6-0.**

President Curtis declared a five minute recess.

**7-B 2019-7107**

*Final architectural elevations, landscape plan, and lighting plan for a five-story hotel with 172 guest rooms, a freestanding restaurant and coffee shop in the Harbor Bay Business Park adjacent to the Harbor Bay Ferry Terminal. The property is located within the C-M-PD, Commercial Manufacturing - Planned Development zoning district*

Henry Dong, Planner III, gave a presentation. The staff report and attachments can be found at:

<https://alameda.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=4063298&GUID=CE421D4D-709E-43B5-9AB4-9490EF5A0330&FullText=1>

Board Member Hom asked for clarification about the changes in the footprint and the setback from the water.

Staff Member Dong said the required setback is 35 feet. He said the restaurant is set back 35 feet, but the hotel was set back an additional five feet to accommodate patios being provided to guest rooms. He said the building had been widened an additional 25 feet to accommodate desired design changes.

Board Member Ruiz asked what the change in footprint would do to the overall square footage of the project.

Staff Member Dong said the overall project has stayed approximately the same size.

Board Member Teague asked if the footprint has changed since the May 28 meeting.

Andrew Thomas, Planning, Building and Transportation Department Director, said the footprint has not changed since May 28. He explained that the staff report clarified that information in response to the appeal of the May 28 decision.

Board Member Hom disclosed that he met with the applicant before the meeting. He asked if the landscape barrier for the headlights needs to be further clarified before approval.

Staff Member Thomas explained the options discussed with the neighborhood about what type of barrier would be provided. He said they left the condition open to multiple options, but that the Board could express a preference if it desired.

Board Member Cavanaugh asked why the landscape barrier on the northern edge would not be a mound similar to the treatment in front of the Bay Trail.

Staff Member Thomas said that there was not as much space on the northern edge, adding that the area had to also accommodate the storm water treatment needs of the project.

President Curtis said that a wire fence may not turn out well and that the wall option may be more desirable.

Board Member Teague asked if the landscape wall would have gaps for wildlife to traverse the area.

Staff Member Thomas said that the condition is written to include holes at the bottom specifically to allow wildlife to move across the space.

Board Member Cavanaugh asked if building a landscape barrier for the neighbors was raised as an issue when the adjacent property to the south was developed.

Staff Member Thomas said that issue was not raised in connection with the McGuire and Hester project. He added that the difference was that it was an office building, so there was not the same concern with light intrusion from vehicles at all hours in the way that the hotel would have.

Board Member Teague received clarification from Staff Attorney Chen that the footprint, height, use, and parking plan are all approved already, so the only items being focused on are specific design and landscaping aspects called out in the previous meeting.

President Curtis opened the public hearing.

Ed Sing said the residents have agreed on the landscaping and lighting plan. He said the color option renderings were promised and not provided. He said you can't tell from the imagery provided how the different color option would look and asked that the promised renderings be provided to the community. He said the public expects that the project information be, complete, accurate, and consistent with a transparent rationale. He said the drawings and landscaping features do not match the landscaping plan. He said the items should not be approved as conditions, but should be in the plans that the public can look at now and in the future. He said the Board approved a 35 foot setback, not a 40 foot setback. He said the 25 foot increase in footprint between the December and May approvals was not explained during the May meeting. He said the conference room space has been significantly reduced. He added that the coffee shop and restaurant should not be up for approval because the dimensions, designs, and colors have not been discussed with the community.

Brian Tremper said the trees in the plan will be bent and blown over and leafless. He said the appeal was made because information is conflicting and the community does not know

what is happening. He asked that the approval be postponed until after the appeal and until the plans accurately reflect what is expected.

Madlen Saddik said this will be a great hotel which Alameda needs. She said the Chamber of Commerce supports the project.

Pat Lamborn said she supports what Brian and Ed have said. She asked the Board not to approve the project until the plans reflect the changes. She said the changes regarding the landscape screening are very important. She said the community does not like the solid grey structure. She said the project is over-parked. She said the plants do not reflect the community input. She asked for a delay.

Dave Ross thanked the Board for all the work they do. He said there is no such thing as perfect. He said waiting costs money. He said the neighbors signed disclosures when they purchased their homes that say they lived next to a business park. He asked the Board to approve the project.

Robert Leach, applicant, said he respects the residents who oppose the project. He said this will be the nicest hotel in Alameda. He said they have not asked for variances and have complied with every requirement there is and have tried to listen and accommodate as many changes as possible. He said they have a qualified landscape planner and a union labor agreement in place for construction and operations. He said the neighbors liked the blue color, but that they believe the tone on tone design will keep the hotel from becoming dated.

President Curtis closed the public hearing.

President Curtis said the project complies with the zoning requirements, BCDC, and every regulatory issue there is. He said they can only focus on the design and landscaping.

Board Member Teague asked if there is a problem with the Board taking action tonight while the appeal is pending.

Staff Attorney Chen said the appeal does not affect the Board's action tonight.

Board Member Teague said he is in favor of the project. He said he slightly favors the non-blue color option, and would not oppose the brick if that is what the neighbors want. He said the floorplan is up to the developer to decide and not part of the Board's decision making process. He asked that the condition reflect that evergreen plants be used when part of a light barrier.

Board Member Rothenberg said she supports the project. She asked that the drawings be updated and conform to the design changes reflected in the staff report. She said the applicant needs to verify that the changes are reflected in the final drawings. She



suggested that we stipulate that there be an environmentally appropriate landscape screen, subject to mockup and field approval. She said concrete walls and cheap fences can be ugly.

Board Member Hom said he prefers the blue color, but does not have a strong preference. He said he favors a masonry wall instead of a mesh fence given the concern over lighting. He suggested potentially matching the façade of the hotel and the masonry wall.

Board Member Cavanaugh said the landscape wall is an opportunity to do something a little different and artistic. He said he is otherwise okay with the project moving forward.

Board Member Ruiz said she generally agrees with the other board members. She said condition #5 should have stronger language about ongoing maintenance. She said there are other options for the barrier wall, such as living wall trays. She said the color is a tossup and recommends a field mockup for staff to review. She said providing operable windows would be desirable if possible. She said she is otherwise in favor of the project.

President Curtis said he is in favor of the project. He said as long as it complies with the ordinance requirements and statutory agencies, it should move forward.

**Staff Member Tai summarized the Board's comments: condition that evergreen plants be used where barriers are desired, cite the sheets of the landscape plans, add language that the applicant is responsible for timely maintenance and prompt replacement of plants that do not survive, have the applicant work with the Planning Director and the community to come up with a design for the barrier wall as part of the building permit review process.**

President Curtis asked to ensure that the bank along the lagoon be fully landscaped.

Board Member Teague asked if they need to specify blue versus grey in the approval.

Staff Member Thomas said the plans show grey and if the Board would like to change it to blue it should say so specifically.

Board Member Hom asked if swatches could be painted in the field and a decision could be made at that point.

President Curtis asked the applicant if he had a preference.

The applicant said his partners preferred the grey, which reflected the majority of the comments from the neighbors.

**Board Member Rothenberg made a motion to approve the staff recommendation with the modifications outlined by Staff Member Tai. Board Member Teague seconded the motion. The motion passed 6-0.**

8. MINUTES

**8-A 2019-7092**

*Draft Meeting Minutes – June 10, 2019*

Board Member Teague asked staff to remind the board members not in attendance to watch the meeting video before the next meeting.

**8-B 2019-7093**

*Draft Meeting Minutes – June 24, 2019*

Board Member Teague moved approval. President Curtis seconded the motion. The motion passed 4-0-2 (Hom and Ruiz abstained.)

9. STAFF COMMUNICATIONS

**9-A 2019-7090**

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

The staff report can be found at:

<https://alameda.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=4058404&GUID=847949DF-0480-49D2-B2C9-0977BC8B9BE8&Options=&Search=&FullText=1>

Staff Member Tai noted some changes to the attachment since the agenda was posted.

President Curtis asked that posting the plans when the notice goes out be made a priority.

**9-B 2019-7091**

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

Staff Member Tai said the board is off in August and said the Site A Phase II Tentative Map would be coming to the board, along with an Alameda Marina item, and possibly a new building at Harbor Bay Parkway. He said the second meeting in September may have an Alameda Landing Item and a Housing Authority item for the North Housing site.

President Curtis asked when the boatyard RFQ would be coming back.

Staff Member Thomas said that item does not come back to the Planning Board, but will go to the City Council. He said the above ground improvements would be worked out once an operator is on board.

10. WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

**\*None\***

11. BOARD COMMUNICATIONS

**\*None\***

12. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

**\*None\***

13. ADJOURNMENT

President Curtis adjourned the meeting at 9:37 p.m.