

APPROVED MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING OF THE
CITY OF ALAMEDA PLANNING BOARD
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 2020

1. CONVENE

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

2. FLAG SALUTE

3. ROLL CALL

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

Absent: Board Member Saheba.

4. AGENDA CHANGES AND DISCUSSION

None.

5. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

None.

6. CONSENT CALENDAR

None.

7. REGULAR AGENDA ITEMS

7-A 2020-7727

PLN19-0556 - Phase I Waterfront Park Design Review Amendments - Alameda Point Site A - Applicant: Alameda Point Partners. Public Hearing to consider amendments to previously-approved Design Review for the Phase I Waterfront Park at Alameda Point Site A. The environmental effects of the proposed project were considered and disclosed in the Alameda Point Environmental Impact Report (State Clearinghouse #2013012043). No further environmental review is required

Allen Tail, City Planner, introduced the item. The staff report and attachments can be found at: <https://alameda.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=4331668&GUID=989C2049-B35D-44B7-95E4-8C847C0FA7C0&FullText=1>.

April Phillips, landscape architect, gave a presentation.

Board Member Hom asked what the spacing would be for the promenade lighting.

Ms. Phillips estimated that the lighting would be approximately 50 feet apart and comply with dark sky requirements.

Board Member Ruiz asked for confirmation that the promenade would now drain away from the Bay.

Ms. Phillips said the old design sloped towards the bay but into a trench drain that would require pumping and now they have a more passive drainage design.

Board Member Ruiz asked how tall the shade structures would be.

Ms. Phillips said they were approximately 15 feet high.

Board Member Cavanaugh asked for more information about the future seawall.

Ms. Phillips said that the seawall would be designed and implemented at some point in the future when sea level rise dictates. She said BCDC preferred the wall solution for this urban park as opposed to the alternative levee solution. She said the ground in that area will be strengthened in order to accommodate a seawall and the lowest plants are the most salt tolerant.

Board Member Teague asked what would be chosen if the board asked the applicant to remove the remaining palm trees.

Ms. Phillips said they have a tall piece of art in the plaza and they want the palm trees to frame the art. She added that BCDC preferred keeping all of the palm trees and this plan was a compromise solution. She said a replacement would need to be columnar.

President Curtis asked how long it would take for the plantings to look like they do in the renderings.

Ms. Phillips said they would use a mix of planting sizes. She said they would use 36 inch boxes for the trees but they would take five years or so to mature into something close to the renderings.

President Curtis opened and closed the public hearing.

Board Member Teague said including palm trees would be costly and create new waste material because the fronds are not recyclable, contrary to our zero waste goals.

President Curtis said he would support the plan with the palm trees.

Board Member Ruiz said she was supportive of the selective use of palm trees.

Board Member Rothenberg asked for clarification about which type of palm tree was planned.

Ms. Phillips could not remember the species, but said they were trying to match what was in the shared plaza.

Board Member Hom said he liked the remaining six palm trees to accent and frame the space for the public art piece.

Board Member Teague asked to bifurcate the item to have a vote on the palm trees and a vote on the overall project, stating he wanted to support the project but the zero waste policy prevented him from supporting the palm trees.

The board expressed unanimous support for the project subject to a second vote regarding the palm trees.

Board Member Teague suggested that the palms, if used, should be a maximum height of 30 feet.

The board was evenly split regarding the inclusion of the palm trees. (Ayes: Curtis, Hom, Ruiz; Noes: Rothenberg, Teague, Cavanaugh)

President Curtis stated that the project would be approved, subject to the developer finding a replacement for the palm trees because they were not approved.

Staff Member Tai clarified that the previous votes were not formal motions, rather just polls of the board. He summarized the feedback staff heard from the previous meeting and from BCDC.

Board Member Hom suggested approving the project but defer the decision on the palm trees to the next meeting.

President Curtis made the motion to approve the project and bring the decision on the palm trees back to their next meeting. Board Member Hom seconded the motion. The motion passed 6-0.

7-B 2020-7728

Planning Board Public Hearing to Review and Endorse the 2019 General Plan and Housing Element Annual Report, and Review and Comment on the General Plan Update Work in Progress. The review of the annual report and General Plan update draft elements are exempt actions under the California Environmental Quality Act

Andrew Thomas, Director of Planning, Building and Transportation, gave a presentation. The staff report and attachments can be found at: <https://alameda.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=4331782&GUID=EF780DFA-F8C7-4267-AB2A-9E276DF7C48E&FullText=1>.

Board Member Rothenberg asked for clarification about the EIR process and timeline.

Staff Member Thomas said they are hoping to put out a draft EIR in summer or fall of 2020, acknowledging the very aggressive timeline.

Board Member Teague asked about state laws that limit our ability to increase our inclusionary housing requirements.

Staff Member Thomas explained the extra review that attempting to increase the percentage would require. He said staff is considering recommending a change in the mix of affordability levels to prevent easy gaming of density bonus rules without significantly increasing the percentage of affordable units.

President Curtis opened the public comment.

Betsy Mathieson said there are great pressures for development and Alameda's historic character needs to be protected. She said there needs to be a more robust public input process.

Christopher Buckley, Alameda Architectural Preservation Society, highlighted some comments in their written letter, including density along transit corridors, more clearly defining terms throughout, and impacts of state law.

President Curtis closed the public comment.

Board Member Teague said making the documents fully indexed and searchable is important. He said allowing online comments could be an easier way to provide feedback.

Board Member Hom said he liked the organization of the document He expressed support for numerous policies included and provided suggestions for possible changes and ways to move forward.

Board Member Cavanaugh asked what the City was doing to address greenhouse gases generated by transportation in Alameda.

Staff Member Thomas said we are working through the projects in the Transportation Choices Plan. He listed a number projects underway and efforts to make streets safer for people who want to walk and bike in Alameda. He said the City is taking climate action very seriously and setting aggressive goals to eliminate greenhouse gas emissions.

Board Member Ruiz asked what the timeline is for addressing the zoning questions for homeless services, assisted living and similar uses.

Staff Member Thomas said staff is trying to develop the General Plan level policies in the Land Use Element first, but could prioritize updating the Zoning Ordinance if the board desired.

Board Member Ruiz suggested including incentives for retrofitting existing buildings to be more energy efficient, as well as making buildings safer by adding sprinkler systems in existing multi-family buildings.

President Curtis said we are looking at 6,000 more housing units in Alameda, which he said would mean at least 9,000 more cars. He asked how the infrastructure would cope with those cars and what we can do about it.

Staff Member Thomas said the community needs to both build housing to meet that need while working on the transportation problem by making it easier for people to get around without depending on single occupancy vehicles.

Board Member Teague made a motion to approve the 2019 Housing Element Annual Report with any changes staff wishes to make based on the Board discussion. Board Member Rothenberg seconded the motion. The motion passed 6-0.

8. MINUTES

8-A 2020-7729

Draft Meeting Minutes – January 13, 2020

Board Member Teague said he apologized for a poor choice of words he used at the January 13, 2020 meeting.

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

9. STAFF COMMUNICATIONS

9-A 2020-7723

Planning, Building and Transportation Department Recent Actions and Decisions

Staff Member Tai said they would bring the call for review of the Building 8 use permit to the March 23 meeting.

9-B 2020-7724

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

Staff Member Tai announced that the City was awarded a grant to pay for updating housing related ordinances. He said HCD staff has asked to use Alameda's updated ADU

ordinance as the model ordinance for the state. He said HCD clarified some interpretation of ADU language regarding how many ADUs a property could add.

10. WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

None.

11. BOARD COMMUNICATIONS

President Curtis acknowledged and congratulated Board Member Rothenberg on receiving the prestigious Thomas Jefferson Award for public architecture by the AIA.

Board Member Rothenberg asked if we could do anything to encourage the VA to not use fuel oil at their future facility at Alameda Point.

Staff Member Tai suggested there may be opportunities to encourage the VA ask they negotiate an easement with the City.

President Curtis suggested acting as quickly as possible.

Staff Member Thomas said that staff could agendize a discussion on the item for the next meeting and would invite the VA to participate.

12. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

None.

13. ADJOURNMENT

President Curtis adjourned the meeting at 9:21 p.m.