

APPROVED MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING OF THE
CITY OF ALAMEDA PLANNING BOARD
MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 14, 2020

1. CONVENE

President Alan Teague convened the meeting at 7:00 p.m.

This meeting was via Zoom.

2. FLAG SALUTE

Board Member Ron Curtis led the flag salute.

3. ROLL CALL

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

Absent: None.

4. AGENDA CHANGES AND DISCUSSION

Andrew Thomas, Director of Planning Building and Transportation, recommended that they move the public comment, the main item, to the first item on the Agenda. They would be taking public comments on the General Plan throughout this Agenda item. For anyone who had a comment on items not relating to the General Plan to save those to the end of the forum before the remaining items on the Agenda.

There were no objections from the board on this.

5. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

None.

6. CONSENT CALENDAR

None.

7. REGULAR AGENDA ITEMS

7-A 2020-8301

General Plan Update - Public Forum #1: Developing a healthy, equitable, and inclusive City.

President Teague reminded the board that this is a forum and they would not be making decisions. They would be making suggestions, providing their thoughts to the staff and the public. This would be an ongoing process and in no way near anything final.

Director Thomas gave a presentation on behalf of the General Plan team on the first theme. The General Plan Draft presentation on "Developing a Healthy, Equitable and Inclusive City" and attachments can be found at:

<https://alameda.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=4631380&GUID=B2E79DC6-E52D-485C-9D8A-E2DDA1E4B1C1&FullText=1>.

Director Thomas also pointed out the General Plan's website, <https://www.alameda2040.org/>, where more information could be found. This is also where the public could leave comments, concerns, and questions about the General Plan. He also encouraged Alameda residents to take the surveys.

Director Thomas had the board fill out Poll #1.

Board Member Curtis asked about what the percentages on the map represented.

Director Thomas explained what they meant.

President Teague asked for the public questions that had been collected.

Sarah Henry, Public Information Officer, presented questions from the public submitted during the presentation.

Would the city be considering changing street or park names the public considered offensive or is that for another discussion?

Director Thomas said they do not currently have a policy in the draft General Plan about tree/park name changes but one could be added.

How many people had responded to the surveys?

Director Thomas said over 500 people had responded, and the surveys would be available for the rest of the year.

What was the outreach plan for inclusivity in this process? It looked like everyone participating so far was white and middle age.

Director Thomas said they are reaching out to different groups and neighborhoods to try and increase participation in areas that are lacking. They can already tell they are not reaching youths, so they are working with school districts, youth groups, and afterschool programs.

Does the city plan to put low-income housing in every neighborhood on the city map?

Director Thomas said they would talk about where housing would go later in the meeting. Staff sees opportunities for growth happening in every neighborhood but there are very few locations in Alameda where they can significant numbers of new housing.

Is there a map showing the density of every neighborhood?

Director Thomas said they don't have that map but they can create that map.

How will the housing policies reflect the ever-changing demands of the pandemic?

Director Thomas said when they started the draft for the General Plan the pandemic had started. This first draft does not deal with the pandemic at all. The safety element of the General Plan would be the right place to start introducing those concepts, staff has learned so much in the last 6 months about dealing with the pandemic.

Does the city have definitions of what is equitable and inclusive? If so, what are they?

Director Thomas said this general plan does not have measures for them. Once they introduce measures, metrics, and definitions into the next draft there will be a way to see if they had met them.

In Policy LU1 neighborhood needs to be defined. What does neighborhood mean what is shown on survey 1 or exhibit 1 map?

Director Thomas said they were thinking much more about the conceptual concept of neighborhood.

In Policy LU1 how literally are the action reference statements to be taken for all neighborhoods? Specifically action number 5?

Director Thomas answered that what the General Plan is saying complete neighborhoods have to address all these needs. These needs exist in all neighborhoods. Some of these items will have conditional use permits that is how these things will be managed.

Recently state law requires the creation of an environmental justice element or integrating environmental justice into the General Plan. Does Alameda plan to incorporate such an element? HUD recently rescinded the affirmatively further fair housing rule, does Alameda plan to continue to work towards those goals?

Director Thomas answered that they have integrated environmental justice throughout elements of the General Plan. They would be reviewing the first draft carefully against the state law requirements.

President Teague opened up board discussions.

Vice President Asheshh Saheba believed it was critical to get the output from all the different neighborhoods and was very glad this was happening. He agreed that tying the housing policies into each of the neighborhoods was important.

Board Member Teresa Ruiz echoed the sentiment of how important reaching out to communities underrepresented was. She believed the General Plan was the backbone for future planning and creating equity inclusive neighborhoods was a noble idea and a goal to strive for. She did voice that some of the wording in the policies was rather broad. She was concerned about putting the housing policy in the general Plan since the state is constantly changing its requirements.

Board Member Rona Rothenberg felt that economic goals and initiatives were buried in the text and said they should be more explicit. She said that for a Post Covid Era would

current density still apply, and might there be other ways to think about the overall health of the community. She also agreed with Board Member Ruiz about some of the wording.

Board Member Hanson Hom felt that more needed to be done to reach out to youth, seniors, and non-white members of the city. He noted that the Southshore neighborhood was silent and was surprised by the low level of response from Bay Farm. His main conflict was that even though important equity and inclusiveness were, we must be aware of the current density. He also foresaw people having an issue with land-use policies 15 and 16 and believed these needed more work.

Board Member Curtis addressed the cynicism and fear coming from the community. He believed that with clearer policies and credibility they could address these issues. He went on to say that for people to believe these items are going to be done the city has to have creditability.

President Teague asked when the draft for the housing and mobility elements would be available.

Director Thomas said that the current housing element and under state law they have to update by the summer of 2022. All seven elements of the mobility elements are on the website.

President Teague pointed out it was not.

Director Thomas was surprised and said they would double-check the link.

President Teague asked how the Housing Authority had responded with helping with participation.

Director Thomas said they had reached out to them and the Housing Authority would help get the word out to the lower-income population.

President Teague was very much in favor of a theme like this. He also spoke about his experience with discrimination and how can the board help encourage a high quality of life for everyone. He spoke about other word changes he would like to make expectations and goals clear.

The Board took a break from 8:06 pm to 8:16 pm.

Director Thomas recommended letting him continue with presenting the rest of the policies then to answer questions presented by the public.

Director Thomas continued the presentation.

President Teague asked to hear questions from the public and to keep the time under 10 minutes.

Staff Member Henry asked questions submitted by the public.

Can we talk about zoning and which neighborhoods are going to have other uses besides residential?

Director Thomas answered the zoning should be consistent with the General Plan. Once the General Plan is updated then the board can discuss specific neighborhoods and districts they want to amend to implement the General Plan.

A caller felt that having the General Plan discussion at the Planning Board Meeting was unfair due to the board's rule about limiting public comments to three minutes and suggested something more informal that would allow true back and forth discussion.

The West End has been overwhelmed by high-density development and wanted to know why this hadn't been shared with other areas. Why hadn't Bay Farm and Harbor Bay been developed more?

Director Thomas said this was an interesting observation. The policy about where housing should go will be debated for the next four months.

Is there a way to update the survey results before the end of the meeting?

Director Thomas said no, the survey results will be updated before each monthly planning meeting.

Does Alameda currently meet the state's affordable housing requirements?

Director Thomas answered that Alameda still has 2 years of the 8 years to achieve the total units but they will probably not meet the affordable housing obligations.

Does the city count ADUs as part of the RENA?

Director Thomas said the city gets credit for every housing unity they add, so yes.

Where is the link to the written comments? They would like to see the reference to the Preservation Club's letter.

Director Thomas said that has not been posted yet. Staff will go through all the comments and suggestions and see what they will present to the Planning Board. The Planning Board will decide what will go to the City Council.

Why are we discussing philosophy before discussing infrastructure?

Director Thomas said that General Plan deals with many issues, nothing is happening before anything else. Items are happening simultaneously.

Why doesn't the General Plan talk about adding a new bridge or extending the tunnel? New housing means more traffic for Alameda and this needs to be addressed.

Director Thomas answered that the General Plan talks a lot about transportation. There is an entire mobility element including a proposed new pedestrian and bicycle bridge on the West End. This is a very serious item and the fourth forum us all about this issue.

How can Alameda be equitable and inclusive while maintaining land-use policies associated with segregation?

Director Thomas said that staff is trying to write a General Plan that does not exclude or segregate. That's what these discussions are for.

Is there a provision to dedicate a certain percentage of the shoreline for wetland and mixed-use restoration?

Director Thomas said they would talk about both conservation and climate change elements. They have policies and maps are identifying those areas.

When will the proposed maximum land-use intensities be shown?

Director Thomas said they had described existing densities so people could see what the density was of their neighborhoods. The General Plan will have a maxim density for each classification. Measure Z will affect what the Planning Board can or can do about changing densities in different areas.

Has the council approved affordable units that haven't been built yet?

Director Thomas said the council has approved enough units to meet the regional need. However, even if every one of those units was built we would not meet ar Affordable Housing Obligations.

How the future of Alameda Housing is needs to be forecasted?

Director Thomas said all of that was addressed in the introduction chapter to the General Plan and gave a summary of their thoughts.

President Teague opened up board commentary.

Board Member Ruiz felt that with Measure Z on the ballot they should wait until after the elections before continuing the conversations about where to put housing.

Board Member Rothenberg looked forward to participating in the upcoming forums.

Board Member Hom talked about the importance of this issue and believed some of the polices should be refined and made more clear in their wording. He also stressed the importance of infrastructure is for growth. He also noted that the city needs to address the plans for South Shore and more focus needs to go into public health.

Board Member Curtis agreed with what his fellow board members had said. He was concerned when the units being built, would the City have adequate infrastructure that could handle emergencies from earthquakes and fires and wanted a study to be done.

Vice President Saheba spoke about sustainable growth and how the city could create a housing policy around that. He talked about the importance of looking at many things that are connected to housing needs.

President Teague asked about Coast Guard Island.

Director Thomas said that it is a Federal Facility today, but did ask the question of what the plan would be if the Federal Government vacated Coast Guard Island. If the Coast Guard left that would be a great place for mixed-use housing.

President Teague asked if they would do the same for the Resupply Station.

Director Thomas pointed out that on the General Plan there is a Federal Facility overlay. When and if the government vacated these areas general zoning would apply.

President Teague opened the public comment.

Staff Member Henry asked one more question submitted by the public before letting the commenters speak.

Is there a section on the website about adding schools? With all the units being planned there has to be a discussion about education and the quality of education.

Director Thomas answered that the General Plan does have institutional classification identified on the map and there are policies about schools and the need for land for those schools.

Betsy Mathieson wanted them to determine the actual existing density of every neighborhood as it is now. We need to know what we have now before we plan for the future.

David Burton, a former Planning Board Member, said the General Plan must state clearly the vision for ourselves. The broad themes must be restated in plain and concisely worded headings to make them effective. He then gave examples of what he meant and opinions on each of the themes.

Jay Garfinkel said he did not see scientific problem solving being applied in the General Plan. He also commented that if there is going to be a major development somewhere more notice needs to go out to residents than what is already being done. He is concerned that this process is going on during a time when people are overwhelmed by the elections and dealing with Covid-19. He did not see the point of all of these philosophical items before addressing infrastructure. He was overall very concerned with the way this process was being done.

Dolores Gallagher, a member of the Alameda Architectural Preservation Society, commented that she couldn't give the highest endorsement about the survey because there needed to be more information and details. She suggested lengthening out the process and getting more feedback from the public. She also commented on the lack of trust on both sides of Measure Z and believed that public engagement could help with this.

Roland Angle brought up the issue of 5G Technology installation on the island and that there had not been any health studies done on the effects of 5G. He was disappointed there was no mention of 5G in the General Plan and wanted to know what the city's policy was about installing 5G on the island. He wanted to know how the city would protect the health of the city's residents against 5G.

Rasheed Shabazz, a resident, wanted to encourage the ongoing conversation about racial and economic segregation. He expressed the importance of having clear definitions of equity and inclusion. He believed this process could be an opportunity to address some of the long-standing housing discrimination and to repair the legacy of racial segregation in Alameda.

Doree Miles, a resident, and member of the Alameda Architectural Preservation Society felt the draft was too big and needed to be clearer. She also voiced her concern that this meeting should have been postponed until people could attend in person. The link she was originally sent to attend this Zoom meeting did not work and it took her over 40 min to register to attend. She was very concerned with infrastructure and wanted to know why it wasn't addressed first. She mentioned Alameda's sewer system and is concerned that the city will outgrow the capabilities of the pipes.

Savanna Cheer wanted to echo what Board Member Hom had said about the missing information about the public's health. She believed the city had a responsibility to take care of its citizens and having access to clean air and water is as valuable as housing.

Christopher Buckley wanted the deadline about having comments submitted to the Planning Board more clear. He also addressed the lack of participation from people directly affected by these decisions and blamed the digital divide. He addressed some thoughts on the Density Bonus law and felt that the format of the meeting was too constrained and wanted something with more open discussion.

Joyce Boyd, a board member of the Alameda Architectural Preservation Society, wanted to vote for a more informal discussion and wanted to know if the Historical Advisory Board would be giving input on the General Plan as well.

President Teague closed the public comments.

8. MINUTES
None.

9. STAFF COMMUNICATIONS
9-A 2020-8289

Planning, Building and Transportation Department Recent Actions and Decisions

Staff report and recommendations can be found at
<https://alameda.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=4630184&GUID=D2D79AB6-AC23-4CD7-B468-0A9CF41F0606&FullText=1>.

The board did not call any item for review.

9-B 2020-8290

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

Director Thomas said the next meeting would be in two weeks on September 28th. This would not be a forum, they would be addressing future projects.

10. WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS
None.
11. BOARD COMMUNICATIONS
None.
12. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS
None.
13. ADJOURNMENT
President Teague adjourned the meeting at 9:23 p.m.