

DRAFT MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING OF THE
CITY OF ALAMEDA PLANNING BOARD
MONDAY, OCTOBER 12, 2020

1. CONVENE

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

This meeting was via Zoom.

2. FLAG SALUTE

Board Member Rona Rothenberg led the flag salute.

3. ROLL CALL

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

Absent: None.

4. AGENDA CHANGES AND DISCUSSION

None.

5. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

None.

6. CONSENT CALENDAR

None.

7. REGULAR AGENDA ITEMS

7-A 2020-8375

General Plan Update - Public Forum #2: Preservation and enhancement of Alameda's unique historic neighborhood character.

Andrew Thomas, Director of Planning Building and Transportation, introduced the forum topic. The staff report and attachments can be found at

<https://alameda.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=4655558&GUID=35512E0E-A704-46D9-B687-36D688D01315&FullText=1>.

Amy Mcphee, from the Cultivate Group, described the process and schedule for the General Plan update.

Sarah Henry, Public Information Officer of Alameda, talked about public engagement efforts and how someone can stay informed, offer feedback, and take the surveys on the General Plan. She also explained how you could enter a comment or make a public comment during the meeting.

Director Thomas continued the presentation.

Staff Member Henry read questions and comments submitted by the public.

Comment: another important part of Alameda's character is that it's bikeable as well as walkable.

What does remove barriers between neighborhoods mean?

Director Thomas answered that this means they want to avoid sound walls, cul-de-sacs, and anything that makes it hard for neighborhoods and areas to be connected by foot and by bike. Things should be well-knit together.

Does every policy take into consideration the consequences, impacts, and opportunity costs?

Director Thomas said yes, this is a guide book for all future decision making. Also, this is the purpose of the Environmental Study.

The historic neighborhoods from the 18th and 19th centuries need to be protected and enhanced but what does the General Plan do to encourage 21st-century architecture and surfaces?

Director Thomas answered that new architecture needs to complement and not to mimic but as of now there is not a policy about that. He added that it was a great question and warranted more thought.

Please define affordable.

Director Thomas said in the context of housing it is defined by the County and staff will be adding a definition of affordable in the second draft.

Policy LU26 mentions the term "historic" in regards to demolition, who decided what is historic?

Director Thomas said the Historic Advisory Board (HAB) and the City Council make landmarks, called monuments. Anything before built pre-1942 is considered potentially historic. If you want to demolish or make major changes to anything considered historic the HAB has to take a look at the project.

What can we do in Alameda that goes beyond what we are provided by AC Transit? Could we have a free shuttle to Park Street?

Director Thomas said yes, it all depends on funding priorities and what taxpayers want to fund.

Does the plan encourage business diversity on Park St and Webster?

Director Thomas answered that the General Plan does support a diversity of businesses, but it doesn't mandate.

Comment: Since it takes only a 3-2 vote to eliminate the demolition protection, this is not a protection.

Director Thomas said this is a law, this is how a City Council works. He went on to say that there is no reason why the City Council would rescind the Historic Preservation Ordinance (HPO).

How does this plan take into account transportation needs for the elderly and individuals with disabilities?

Director Thomas said there are a series of policies that address the needs of the disabled and yes the General Plan has taken into account Seniors' needs in regards to transportation.

Will there be parking restrictions with new developments?

Director Thoams said yes there will be limits to new parking allowed.

Will the city have architects involved with the process of new historic guidelines? Will they have guidelines to ensure affordability and other concerns?

Director Thomas answered there are many architects and planners, who are residents of Alameda, who have reviewed the ordinances and policies.

For revising and reviewing the Historic Preservation Ordinance about pre-1942 buildings, would this include a new historic building survey?

Director Thomas answered no that is not something that staff would recommend.

What are we doing to encourage a strong commercial base instead of relying on housing as the primary way to earn taxes?

Director Thomas answered that Alameda does not rely on housing as a primary way to earn taxes, that is a misconception. Alameda is building houses because the state required it.

Would the city consider incentives for maintaining and enhancing historic buildings, such as the Mills Act Program?

Director Thomas agreed, it just needs to be added to the City Ordinance. He thought it was a great idea and made a note to add it to the policies.

Will there be a public list of guidelines to determine if a building qualifies as historic or needing to be preserved?

Director Thomas said no that is a judgment call that is made by the Historic Advisory Board.

Are more stop signs and stop lights being considered?

Director Thomas said that ways to better manage traffic were always a concern and that roundabouts are being considered.

What plans have been created if people needed to leave the island in an emergency?

Director Thomas gave examples of worst-case scenarios and what the course of action would be.

Does this plan rely on Measure Z passing to achieve its goals?

Director Thomas said that this plan supports a diversity of housing types, providing housing for everyone regardless of income is the main goal. Measure Z will affect the second draft so whatever happens after the election staff can integrate into the second draft.

President Teague opened up public comment.

Betsy Mathieson was concerned about the word “historic” being absent on a list of themes about Alameda’s character. She also disagreed that certain housing was missing in Alameda and she fully supported more new mix used space on Park St and Webster St.

Christopher Buckley from the Alameda Historical Preservation Society discussed items from a letter the Society had sent to the Planning Board containing recommendations for the General Plan.

Ann Cook, a former member of the Planning Board, wanted to commend the staff and consultants on the General Plan and talked about other ways the waterfront’s importance and historic character could be highlighted.

Denise T applauded the de-emphasis on cars for transportation the plan had.

President Teague closed public comment.

President Teague opened board comments and questions.

Board Member Rothenberg had a number of comments to clarify Sec 1-4 and provided detailed feedback to Director Thomas. She also suggested using letters instead of bullets for the items and that there should be something about public health and safety.

Vice President Asheshh Saheba talked about the nuances of combining character and craft with new buildings.

Board Member Teresa Ruiz asked the staff about LU #3 and that “objective design standard” was mentioned, and wanted to know if this was a generic term or did it refer to Alameda’s specific objective design standards. She also said she was conflicted, the way this theme was worded she feared would perpetuate inequality in the zoning policies. She also thought that LU #27 needed some finesse and offered some thoughts on transportation.

Director Thomas said it was for the City of Alameda's Objective Design Standards.

Board Member Ron Curtis urged the staff to take into account people heavily rely on cars such as the elderly, differently-abled individuals, and visitors to the island. He was also concerned about funding for these projects as well as keeping low-cost housing affordable.

Board Member Hanson Hom offered insight and thoughts on housing and transportation. He also pointed out where the wording was vague and could be made more clear.

President Teague reiterated how the General Plan is a guideline for how the municipal code is to be crafted, it should describe the goals and aspirations. He then offered his thoughts and concerns on the presentation.

7-B 2020-8376

PLN20-0160 -Design Review - 2416 Lincoln Ave - Applicant: Burch Greene on behalf of Alameda NUG Shop. Public Hearing to consider a Design Review for exterior modifications to an existing two-story mixed-use building and associated site improvements. A 1,134 square foot two-story previous addition will be demolished. The space occupied by the addition will be replaced with five surface parking spaces with associated landscaping and fencing. The project is located within the C-C-T (Community Commercial, Theatre Combining) Zoning District. No further environmental review is necessary pursuant to 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. On a separate and independent basis the project is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Sections 15301 - Existing Facilities and 15183 - Projects Consistent with General Plan and Zoning.

David Sablan, Planner III, introduced the item. The staff report and attachments can be found at

<https://alameda.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=4655559&GUID=5B1AB091-D2C4-43C0-9DDF-A8E82E0CB55F&FullText=1>.

President Teague stated that he had reviewed the tape from the meeting when this item was first introduced and said it had been approved with conditions.

Staff Member Sablan explained why this had come back to the Planning Board.

President Teague opened up public comments.

There were no public comments.

President Teague closed public comments.

President Teague opened board comments.

Board Member Rothenberg wanted the applicant to thoroughly address their Good Neighbor Policy. She wanted them to be more clear on their signage, signage location, more lighting information, and the marking of the sidewalk for pedestrian safety.

Vice President Saheba wanted the curb cut to be examined for pedestrian safety.

Allen Tai, City Planner, said the curb cut is existing and no changes were being proposed.

Board Member Ruiz asked that the applicant correct page A-7 where it said El Cerrito Police Department and change it to Alameda Police Department.

Board Member Curtis made a motion to accept the resolution with the corrections. Board Member Hom seconded the motion, a roll call vote was taken and the motion passed 6-0.

8. MINUTES

8-A 2020-8372

Draft Meeting Minutes – April 27, 2020

President Teague said that his first name was misspelled.

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

9. STAFF COMMUNICATIONS

9-A 2020-8370

Planning, Building and Transportation Department Recent Actions and Decisions

Staff Member Tai said they had approved 3 design review applications and the rest were residential projects.

Recent actions and decisions can be found at
<https://alameda.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=4655555&GUID=41BCF30A-CF2A-4EC6-AC78-595DDF143959&FullText=1>.

9-B 2020-8371

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

Staff Member Tai said the next meeting would have a hotel project at Harbor Bay Business Park coming back to the board. Also, a residential development plan for Santa Clara would be coming back and an amendment to allow businesses to take advantage of their outdoor area due to covid restrictions.

Director Thomas added Del Monte had a minor development agreement amendment to extend the completion date for work on Clement Ave, this was a minor issue.

10. WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

Director Thomas congratulated Board Member Curtis for being appointed for 4 more years on the Planning Board and introduced Board Member Xiomara Cisneros who would be filling the empty seat.

11. BOARD COMMUNICATIONS

Board Member Rothenberg noted she had met with staff member Patrick O'Day and his intern by phone and agreed to provide staff with documentation from the American Institute of Architects CA in regards to the all-electric reach codes. She also agreed to review the draft reach code when they are available and provide that to the Planning Board and to the public.

Board Member Ruiz reminded the Board that she would recuse herself from the Del Monte project.

12. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

None.

13. ADJOURNMENT

President Curtis adjourned the meeting at 9:19 p.m.