

APPROVED MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING OF THE
CITY OF ALAMEDA PLANNING BOARD
MONDAY, NOVEMBER 9TH, 2020

1. CONVENE

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

This meeting was via Zoom.

2. FLAG SALUTE

Board Member Xiomara Cisneros led the flag salute.

3. ROLL CALL

Present: Board Members Curtis, Hom, Rothenberg, Cisneros, Ruiz, Saheba, and Teague.
Absent: None.

4. AGENDA CHANGES AND DISCUSSION

None.

5. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

Joe Cohen gave a prepared statement about support for CARP (Climate Action and Resiliency Plan) and the vision to repurpose the Air Navigation Tower at Alameda Point into the Climate Control Academy and Tower. He spoke about these plans and how Alameda could be at the forefront of climate action in the Bay Area.

David Vasquez, a member of Nor-Ca Climate Action, also talked about urgent climate action plans and echoed the comments started by Mr. Cohen.

6. CONSENT CALENDAR

None.

7. REGULAR AGENDA ITEMS

7-A 2020-8463

General Plan Update - Public Forum #3: Protecting the environment, responding to the climate crisis, and meeting regional responsibilities.

Andrew Thomas, Director of Planning, Building, and Transportation, introduced the item. The staff report and attachments can be found at <https://alameda.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=4680800&GUID=7C16C129-0DC4-45F9-BCE1-B4B872DECC14&FullText=1>.

Amie MacPhee, from Cultivate, also explained what to expect from tonight's forum and what to expect in the coming months, and how they were integrating everyone's input.

Sarah Henry, City Public Information Officer, spoke about how citizens can share their feedback. She also walked attendees of the meeting through pole questions.

President Teague opened public questions.

Staff Member Henry read questions submitted by the public.

Is there a way to confirm that the surveys are being answered by actual Alameda residents?

Staff Member Henry answered that the surveys are anonymous and they do ask which neighborhood you are from but a person could misrepresent themselves.

ABAG (Association of Bay Area Governments) excluded consideration of risks from climate, earthquake, and other natural risks like wildfires when setting housing goals for all the cities. Does that lock Alameda into assuming that it can't consider managed retreat as a response to climate change in its General Plan?

Director Thomas answered no not at all. What ABAG discussed and then decided is that every city in the Bay Area has to help with the regional housing needs and every city has its lists of natural risks to consider. Alameda will work on its housing needs as well as making plans for natural hazards. In some areas in Alameda retreat isn't an option so there will be a variety of options to deal with natural risks.

Someone commented that they were concerned about language being used such as "requiring transit-oriented" and "prohibiting single family".

Director Thomas explained that they are still refining some of the wording in the General Plan. The main goal is that transit locations like AC transit on Park St, it would be a waste of land to do single-family detached homes there. Also, you want the mixed-use on the ground floor.

How does the defeat of Measure Z affect these plans?

Director Thomas said the City of Alameda will still find ways to do transit-oriented mixed-use developments in Alameda. The defeat of Measure Z is a shame and it is hindering the community's ability to meet its objectives around transportation and climate change. However, the staff will find ways for Alameda to get to where it needs to be.

What is the city's green infrastructure plan?

Director Thomas said that was in the works but the plan is to make everything from sewer systems to roadways will be as green as possible. He then explained what they had in mind.

Is a goal of the General Plan to come as close as possible to promoting a balanced mix of affordable and market-rate housing as set forth by the state in its RHNA (Regional Housing Needs Allocation) goals?

Director Thomas answered yes.

How does the balance of housing affect transportation emissions?

Director Thomas said yes it would be wonderful if Alameda could build a lot of affordable housing and meet our RHNA goals and take care of transportation needs. However, it's the private sector that builds housing. Alameda requires 15% of every housing project to be for low-income families, anything more than that the housing project doesn't get built at all.

Can you specify what constitutes affordable?

Director Thomas answered that affordable is defined by the state and then the region. It is related to the area-wide median income.

Can you include the climate impact on all agenda items on boards and commissions? There seems to be a focus only on parking and traffic impact but not climate.

Director Thomas said that was a great idea. Taking the City Council format and using it for all boards and commissions would be great.

Since the IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change) now says we have roughly 10 years to drastically reduce GHGs (greenhouse gases) is the board open to hearing about strategies that could reach 0 carbon emissions sooner than 2040?

Director Thomas said that was a great question for the board, he was interested.

At Alameda Point, the original shoreline was along Main and Central, if the sea is going to rise why are we still building on low lying fill we already have so much shoreline that is vulnerable?

Director Thomas said we have a master infrastructure plan and he further explained which areas are protected and which ones are not.

President Teague opened the public comments.

Chris Buckley from the Alameda Architectural Preservation Society wanted to discuss a letter the society had sent. He addressed the ambiguities in policies CC12 and LU16 and the need for a resource conservation section in the General Plan. He also spoke about the need for a tree preservation ordinance.

Rasheed Shabazz, an Alameda resident, wanted to address environmental justice and how Alameda could benefit from really understanding how climate change can affect people differently.

Mary Spicer wanted the board to add MCWRA (Marine Conservation and Wildlife Recreation Area) language to the open space element in Chapter 6 of the General Plan. Also to create funding and support marine garbage clean-ups around Alameda.

President Teague closed public comments and opened board discussions.

Board Member Rona Rothenberg commented that she would like to see conformance between the Climate Action Resiliency Plan and the content that is throughout the document specifically in Chapter 3. She spoke more about how to make the document more comprehensive and how the language used for objectives could be more straight forward and informative.

Board Member Ron Curtis believed what was missing is a list of the highest priority items and a timetable of when they need to be accomplished. He also wanted each item to have a section on funding and what will be the effect on homeowners. All of these will give people an idea of where they are going. He also offered his thoughts on low-cost housing.

Board Member Cisneros wanted to express her disappointment in Measure Z not passing. She also wanted clarity in the timeline for the Climate Action Resiliency Plan. She also agreed with the comments about parking maximums and environmental justice. She believed there was an opportunity to expand and explore environmental justice.

Board Member Hanson Hom believed that there were some great ideas but more could be done. He wanted to see phrasing that was more definitive and aggressive to push the envelope of what Alameda can do. He agreed with the concept of setting parking maximums. Also, since Alameda has its own power company there are many things that Alameda can do such as pushing green building standards for new construction. He also offered his thoughts on incentives for transportation. He then spoke about some of the confusion on Measure Z.

Vice President Asheshh Saheba discussed CC4 and appreciated creating partnerships with other organizations on how to move forward. He spoke about the importance of on-island generation and how to support it. He thought a good partner could be BCDC (Bay Conservation and Development Commission) and the Coast Guard.

Board Member Teresa Ruiz thought this was a very good beginning. She pointed out that climate change is a danger to public health and that burden is unfairly shared with low-income residents. This is why she believed environmental justice must be included in the narrative in the General Plan. She also thought it would be more helpful to more specific when it comes to collaborations with other agencies. She encouraged the creation of the position of Chief Resilience Officer, Oakland, Berkeley, and San Francisco have this role. She also liked the idea of incentives to promote green power.

President Teague thanked everyone for their comments. He offered his thoughts on the objectives and electric demands in Alameda. For Measure Z, he talked about how the city had found ways to still create development and all the things that were still possible. He also talked about ways to add more affordable housing and what could be asked of developers. He wanted to put the focus on what was possible and not “railing against” election results.

Director Thomas thanked the Planning Board and everyone who had filled out the surveys and for their comments.

8. MINUTES

8-A 2020-8460

Draft Meeting Minutes – June 22, 2020

Board Member Curtis wanted the wording modified on item 11, his last speech as President.

President Teague wanted to change the order of events in the Consent Calendar.

President Teague made a motion to approve the minutes with these corrections. Board Member Curtis seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken and the motion passed 6-0, Board Member Cisneros abstained.

9. STAFF COMMUNICATIONS

9-A 2020-8461

Planning, Building and Transportation Department Recent Actions and Decisions

Board Member Ruiz said it would be helpful that in the report if staff put the location of the demolition. The board can better understand the impact if they know the location.

9-B 2020-8462

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

Allen Tai, City Planner, said that was a great comment from Board Member Ruiz. In two weeks the next meeting will have three items, a use permit for a long-vacant site on Webster Street, a resubmittal on a project at Santa Clara and Broadway, and for the Alameda Municipal Power proposal for a solar farm. Then in December is the fourth forum on the General Plan.

10. WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

None.

11. BOARD COMMUNICATIONS

Board Member Cisneros wanted to express why she thought it was important to talk about her disappointment in Measure Z not passing.

12. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

None.

13. ADJOURNMENT

President Curtis adjourned the meeting at 9:16 p.m.