

APPROVED MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING OF THE
CITY OF ALAMEDA HISTORICAL ADVISORY BOARD
THURSDAY, JANUARY 7, 2021

1. CONVENE

Chair Thomas Saxby called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

This meeting was via Zoom.

2. ROLL CALL

Present: Chair Saxby, Board Members Jones, Lau, Sanchez, Wit.

Absent: None.

3. MINUTES

2020-8572 - Draft Meeting Minutes - October 1, 2020

Approved

4. AGENDA CHANGES AND DISCUSSION

None

5. ORAL COMMUNICATION

None

6. WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

None.

7. REGULAR AGENDA ITEMS

7-A 2020-8573

Historical Advisory Board Meeting Schedule 2021.

Staff attachments can be found at

<https://alameda.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=4735857&GUID=6BCC73FD-58D5-4F4C-8444-5A22094E2CF5>.

Approved

7-B 2020-8574

General Plan Update - Historical Advisory Board public workshop to review and comment on the draft Alameda General Plan 2040.

Allen Tai, City Planner, Board Secretary, and City Planner, introduced this item, the staff report and attachments can be found at

<https://alameda.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=4735858&GUID=4802A84E-8F75-4BC8-8769-8AE7C287B954&FullText=1>. Staff Member Tai also played a recorded presentation given by Andrew Thomas, Director of Planning Building and Transportation.

Chair Saxby opened public comments.

Christopher Buckley, from the Alameda Architectural Preservation Society (AAPS), discussed issues and comments that had been submitted in a letter by the AAPS. He addressed the ambiguity of the General Plan and questioned what was the actual intensity of development that was being proposed. The AAPS was also concerned by the amount of upzoning that was being discussed. He ended by recommending that Alameda should enact the Mills Program, which would provide reduced property taxes in exchange for the restoration of designated historic buildings.

Chair Saxby closed public comments and opened board questions.

Board Member Sanchez wanted to know more about the concept of upzoning that had been proposed.

Staff Member Tai explained the idea of upzoning, to establish regulations that allow the amount of development that could occur on a piece of property. The city is growing and upzoning allows for more development.

Board Member Sanchez gave the example of Alameda Point and that the General Plan is striving for a higher density than what the current General Plan would allow.

Staff Member Tai said that was correct.

Chair Saxby pointed out that the items of the General Plan he had read mentioned a much wider spread of upzoning in Alameda, it's not just isolated areas.

Staff Member Tai said they are mainly focused on the transit corridors where the commercial streets are now.

Chair Saxby wanted to know how the defeat of Measure Z would affect the General Plan provisions.

Staff Member Tai said the City of Alameda must comply with state law, so this is an issue the city would have to address. That's part of the General Plan, how to comply with state law while also dealing with this issue in the city's charter.

Board Member Wit wanted to know what percentage of the total housing stock was committed to low income.

Staff Member Tai said the statewide standard, that Alameda uses, is 15%.

Chair Saxby wanted to know that since Alameda was so far behind in their affordable housing requirements what was being done to correct that.

Staff Member Tai said that many cities in California were having this problem. The state even considered affordable housing requirements a barrier. If the affordable housing requirements are too high it would inhibit development overall. The overall goal is more housing, more housing hopefully means housing prices go down.

Board Member Wit added that without Measure Z then we are pushing out a great percentage of what makes the community great. It could be worth it to look at increasing the affordable housing requirements for developers to maintain the character of the city.

Board Member Lau was still concerned about upzoning and where potential housing would go.

Staff Member Tai said that the General Plan was mainly focused on goals, objectives, and policies. The General Plan was a policy document, it does not specifically say where and what you can build.

Board Member Lau wanted to know how Measure Z could affect upzoning in the future. He was concerned about the height of future buildings.

Staff Member Tai clarified Measure Z, which would amend Article 26 in the city charter. It did not say anything about building height or form. Those are matters that fall under the zoning ordinance. There are also measures in place that require Alameda to approve certain housing projects that are not consistent with Article 26.

Chair Saxby asked more about those measures.

Staff Member Tai explained the Density Bonus Law and Waivers.

Board Member Sanchez asked about the Mills Act Program. He thought that the program was already in place.

Staff Member Tai clarified that state law only sets up the framework for the program but that cities have to formally adopt it. Past Alameda City Councils had decided not to institute the program. Staff believed that its a very good idea and should be included in the Preservation Ordinance.

Chair Saxby suggested that the City Council would want to know more information on what sort of tax impact the program would have.

Board Member Wit asked about affordable child care and child care centers and believed this was something the General Plan should address.

Board Member Sanchez said with the General Plan being so complex he wanted the board to focus their comments on elements that were in the purview of the Historical Advisory Board.

Board Member Sanchez agreed with the action items presented in the letter from AAPS and wanted to hear what the staff thought.

Staff Member Tai said that staff was in the process of addressing those comments. He then explained more about the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) and Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) methodology and how Alameda could contest those findings.

Board Member Sanchez wanted to stress that the bullet points currently not in the language of the draft should be included.

Chair Saxby suggested making this an action item, to make a motion to approve to include these action items. He also agreed with these action items.

Staff Member Tai said an action item was not needed to include these comments. The staff was in the process of incorporating some of these actions.

Board Member Sanchez also suggested that the language around transit corridors be cleaned up and made as clear as possible.

Staff Member Tai said yes but they would not specify the AC Transit line numbers.

Board Member Lau asked if the city should put more restrictions on historic properties in case of development pressure.

Staff Member Tai said the city currently has very strong demolition controls. They would also be adding language in the plan about adaptive reuse.

Board Member Jones added that the language shouldn't come off as anti-development.

Chair Saxby pointed out places where the language could be more clear. He also gave his thoughts on adaptive reuse, green aspects, and reaching the affordable housing goals.

Board Member Wit believed the art aspect was being overlooked in these developments. She believed that art made spaces liveable and it's something that should be addressed.

Staff Member Tai thanked the board for their comments and questions. He said they would be revisiting the language but for the most part, this would be long-term thinking. They can get more specific in the ordinances.

8. BOARD COMMUNICATIONS

None

9. STAFF COMMUNICATIONS

Staff Member Tai updated the board about the status of the Preservation Ordinance. It had not been scheduled on the agenda yet because he wanted to hear thoughts on the General Plan first. Also in the interest of time try and they would have everything prepare at once.

10. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

None

11. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Saxby adjourned the meeting at 8:29 pm.