

APPROVED MINUTES  
REGULAR MEETING OF THE  
CITY OF ALAMEDA PLANNING BOARD  
MONDAY, OCTOBER 11, 2021

1. CONVENE

President Asheshh Saheba convened the meeting\* at 7:00 p.m.

*\*Pursuant to Assembly Bill 361, codified at Government Code Section 54953, Planning Board members can attend the meeting via teleconference.*

2. FLAG SALUTE

Board Member Alan Teague led the flag salute.

3. ROLL CALL

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

Absent: Vice President Teresa Ruiz and Board Member Xiomara Cisneros.

4. AGENDA CHANGES AND DISCUSSION

None.

5. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

None.

6. CONSENT CALENDAR

None.

7. REGULAR AGENDA ITEMS

**7-A 2021-1379**

*Public hearing to consider a conditional use permit application PLN21-0037 for Astra Space, Inc. for rocket research, development, light industrial manufacturing, indoor rocket engine testing, perimeter security fencing, and outdoor storage and work areas at and adjacent to 1900 Skyhawk Street and 1690 Orion Street within the Enterprise District at Alameda Point.*

Andrew Thomas, Director of Planning Building and Transportation, introduced this item and gave a short presentation. The Staff Report and attachments can be found at <https://alameda.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=5158515&GUID=D4AEB9A9-DCE7-4963-84C2-665805D64029&FullText=1>.

Matt Ganser, Vice President of Business Operations for Astra, also gave a presentation.

President Saheba opened the board's clarifying questions.

Board Member Teague wanted to know if this was consistent with Public Trust and Exchange Act and Agreement.

Director Thomas explained that this land was not within the Public Trust Exchange lands. He explained where those lands were.

Board Member Teague asked for clarification on the zoning of the various areas of the project. He also wanted to know how the site's toxic ground compared to other areas on Alameda Point.

Director Thomas shared a zoning map and the Site Plan and discussed the different areas and zoning. He then explained how the majority of Alameda Point had been cleaned up by the Navy and there were still areas actively being cleaned. He was very clear that you could not build housing over the toxic areas.

Board Member Teague asked if Astra was fully compliant with Alameda's Noise Ordinance. He also had questions about the Sound Vibration Study and wanted to know if ambient noise had affected it.

Director Thomas said that Astra was compliant with the Noise Ordinance and he then discussed what they had noted about noise at various locations compared to the Astra noise.

Board Member Rona Rothenberg was interested in the management of hazardous materials. She wanted to know how the hazardous materials and use would be represented in the Conditions of Approval.

Director Thomas answered that there was a series of steps and goals they had laid out for Astra. He explained those steps and what the overall process was. These steps would require a significant investment by Astra and would require a wide range of approval from different agencies.

Board Member Hom stated that he had been invited and had attended a tour provided by Astra. He had questions about the noise analysis that was done, he wanted to make sure the engine noise test that was done would be consistent with the level of noise for future engine tests.

Director Thomas discussed how the Use Permit addressed the different types of engines that could be tested in the future with different noise levels. He further explained the provisions in the Noise Condition and how Astra was complying with Alameda's Noise Ordinance.

Board Member Hom wanted clarification on what the scope of the Use Perm was. He wanted to know how much it allowed for growth before the Use Permit needed to be

amended and how was traffic going to be addressed. He also wanted to if the Historical Advisory Board had to approve anything.

Director Thomas discussed transportation plans and zoning for Alameda Point and what was expected from the tenants. He clarified what the Use Permit covered and what in the future would require an amendment. He also clarified that none of this property was within the Historic District so the HAB would not be involved. However, if they wanted to demolish a building the HAB would be involved.

Board Member Teague also disclosed that he had met with the applicant as well.

Board Member Curtis disclosed that he had also taken the tour, he thought it was a very impressive operation. He wanted to know if changing the no-engine testing time from 10 pm - 6 am to 6 pm-7 am would materially affect Astra's operations.

Mr. Ganser answered that it would.

Board Member Curtis wanted to know why Astra was having to pay to replace the infrastructure at Alameda Point. He thought it was counterintuitive to attract business.

Director Thomas said that Alameda needed to replace all the infrastructure left behind by the US Navy, the infrastructure that was there now was falling apart did not meet any standard. No outside agency, such as East Bay MUD, would take ownership or provide maintenance as it is now. The city has looked at the cost to replace infrastructure and then divided that total by the number of acres. They could waive that expense but the city did not have an alternative way to pay that.

President Saheba also disclosed that he had attended a tour at Astra. He had questions about how Astra's premises were being defined in the packet as well as a lot acreage diagram in the packet.

Director Thomas explained the diagram from the packet and clarified that the lease premises could change in the future.

Peter Benoit, Architect with Astra, also helped explain the lot acreage diagram.

President Saheba opened public comment.

Mary Ellen McMuldren, a nearby resident, took issue with the professional noise study that was done. She said that it was not true that the jet engine tests were not heard as a distraction and had accessibly vibrated her bedroom windows. She was concerned that the future would be filled with more disruptive testing.

John Atkinson, Executive Director of the Alameda Transportation Management Association, discussed the current and future plans for transportation to Alameda Point. He felt that Astra had shown a great ability to be a good neighbor and this expansion included making sure their employees had other options for transportation than private vehicles. He also discussed the great TDM options Astra was providing their employees.

Madlen Saddik, President and CEO of Alameda Chamber of Commerce, said she and her board members had toured Astra. She discussed the great job Astra had been doing at hiring a diverse workforce. She also discussed the great job Astra had been doing for all of Alameda and she hoped that the board would support Astra's continued growth.

Lauren Gularte, Manager of Government and Regulatory Affairs at The Water Emergency Transportation Authority, discussed the new ferry terminal at Seaplane Lagoon and how many of Astra's employees took advantage of this transit option. She discussed how Astra was actively encouraging their employees to take alternative transportation routes. WETA was in full support of this Use Permit.

Ruth Abbe, Community Action for a Sustainable Alameda (CASA), discussed the joint work they had been doing with Astra at Alameda Point. She was very impressed with how Astra was using the space at the Point and their commitment to Alameda as a whole.

Kelly Lux, Chair of the Alameda Chamber of Commerce, discussed how impressed she was with a tour she took of Astra. She was also impressed with the adaptive reuse they were planning with this project. She also felt that Astra had been a good neighbor and encouraged the board to approve this Use Permit.

Mark Epperson, CEO of the USS Hornet Sea, Air and Space Museum, discussed the community events Astra had joined them in. He also discussed all the exciting future events and educational programs they had planned together. The Crew of the USS Hornet fully supported this Use Permit.

Monique Palmer, an Alameda resident, discussed the tour of Astra she had taken and was blown away by Astra's openness to the community. She was very excited about the educational programs Astra was working on for Alameda's school children and the other programs that would benefit all of Alameda.

Hazel Ybona, Community Manager, discussed how helpful Astra had been to her by housing their employees at one of her properties. She said this was just a small example of the growth that Astra brings to Alameda and their continued growth would be great for the businesses of Alameda.

Jeff Vaccari, Director of Customer Success at SHIFT, discussed their partnership with Astra. He talked about all the benefits of working with Astra and fully supported this Use Permit.

Kris Smith read an email from Reid Watly that discussed how excited they were to have Astra in Alameda. Mr. Watly thought it was an excellent use of the area and fully the Use Permit.

President Saheba closed the public comments and opened the board discussion.

Board Member Rothenberg supported the Use Permit. She suggested they add to the engine testing criteria something about ground-borne vibrations and she wanted to make sure it would come back to the board for Design Review. These suggestions were for consideration and she looked forward to seeing the full Design Review.

Board Member Teague thanked the public for speaking and the staff and applicant for the presentation. He discussed the importance of looking at the zoning and wanted a note added that stated: "whereas the use was consistent with the Public Trust Exchange Act and Agreement as it lies outside of the area covered". He also wanted it called out that this was Adaptive Reuse and was glad that staff had pointed out that this land was in no way useable for housing. He thought what Astra was doing with these buildings was an excellent use. He fully supported this Use Permit.

Board Member Hom thought this use was an ideal use for these existing buildings and was excited for the opportunities Astra was bringing to Alameda. He discussed the noise analysis and thought the conditions covered the noise issues. He suggested that the hours of limitations on engine testing should also include trucks backing up and unloading.

Board Member Curtis felt that his concerns had been addressed. He believed this was a great operation and he fully supported the Use Permit application.

President Saheba discussed how this was an important step of many to get Astra where it wanted to go and he appreciated the long-term thinking behind this Use Permit. He also appreciated that this was an adaptive reuse of existing buildings and he did not think they should put a restriction on trucks backing up since that was covered by the Noise Ordinance.

Board Member Hom asked the staff if the Noise Ordinance included truck activity as part of the noise-limited construction hours.

Director Thomas discussed how they had dealt with these issues in the past.

Staff Member Tai clarified that the Noise Ordinance had a provision for loading and unloading with the hours limited to 7 am to 10 pm.

**Board Member Teague made a motion to approve the Use Permit with the addition of two whereas clauses, one "whereas the use is consistent with Public Trust**

**Exchange Act and Agreement as it lies outside of the area covered by said agreement” and second “whereas the proposed use is an adaptive reuse of existing buildings and structures”. Board Member Rothenberg seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken and the motion passed 5-0.**

**8. MINUTES**

**8-A 2021-1377**

*Draft Meeting Minutes – September 13, 2021*

Board Member Hom clarified his comments about the Harbor Bay Club’s rezoning.

President Saheba opened public comments.

There were no speakers.

President Saheba closed public comment and opened board action.

**Board Member Teague made a motion to approve the minutes as amended. Board Member Hom seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken and the motion passed 5-0.**

**9. STAFF COMMUNICATIONS**

**9-A 2021-1363**

*Planning, Building and Transportation Department Recent Actions and Decisions*

Recent Actions and decisions can be found at

<https://alameda.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=5158508&GUID=FB0D1996-E749-4CFD-B95D-707D5D6D52DC&FullText=1>.

No board member wanted to pull any item for review.

**9-B 2021-1365**

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

Staff Member Tai said the next meeting would be Monday, October 25th and they would have two workshops, the General Plan for adoption and a Housing Element Workshop.

Director Thomas discussed the changes, what to expect, and the next steps for the General Plan and that it was available to view on the city’s webpage.

**10. WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS**

None.

11. BOARD COMMUNICATIONS

None.

12. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

None.

13. ADJOURNMENT

President Saheba adjourned the meeting at 8:57 p.m.