

APPROVED MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING OF THE
CITY OF ALAMEDA HISTORICAL ADVISORY BOARD
THURSDAY, MAY 5, 2022

1. CONVENE

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

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

2. ROLL CALL

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

Absent: None.

3. MINUTES

None.

4. AGENDA CHANGES AND DISCUSSION

None.

5. ORAL COMMUNICATION

None

6. WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

None

7. REGULAR AGENDA ITEMS

7-A 2022-1902

Public Hearing to Review and Comment on General Plan Annual Report and Draft Housing Element Update. (Continued from the meeting on April 7, 2022)

Allen Tai, City Planner, introduced this item and gave a brief presentation. The staff report and attachments can be found at
<https://alameda.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=5541273&GUID=B1FD7828-B331-470A-AAAE-93FFB62384F7&FullText=1>.

Chair Saxby opened the board clarifying questions for Webster and Park St.

Chair Saxby asked what the side streets height limits were for Park St. He then asked questions about spacing in the Zoning Code Amendments.

Henry Dong, Planner III, said it was 60ft down to 40ft.

Staff Member Tai discussed spacing and what staff recommended.

Board Member Jenn Witt asked if parking was accounted for in these developments.

Staff Member Tai explained that there were no longer minimum requirements but now there were maximum parking requirements. He discussed different scenarios and what a developer might offer or request.

Board Member Sanchez asked for clarification on the locations and descriptions of the five districts on Park St.

Staff Member Tai went into detail about the districts and explained the areas and meanings of each.

Vice-Chair Lynn Jones wanted those areas to be made clear and distinct.

There was a discussion about meanings and districts.

Board Member Wit wanted clarification on what the average height of a floor was.

Staff Member Tai said that it varied, developers like to provide a 9ft – 10ft ceiling but 8ft was also used.

Chair Saxby said the ground floor was higher than the rest of the building.

Vice Chair Jones brought up the RHNA (Reginal Housing Needs Allocation) numbers and the No Net Loss Law. She wanted to know if they were staying conservative with their numbers and to wait and see what the State says. She also wanted to know how they would prove to the State that they were keeping on top of the numbers.

Staff Member Tai went into detail about what the No Net Loss Law says. He then discussed the Annual Report, where they would report the building permits the city had issued and other important information.

Chair Saxby wanted to know what the RHNA numbers were, they seemed to be shifting.

Staff Member Tai discussed what was causing the numbers to shift and what the State would be looking for.

Vice Chair Jones asked if they could challenge HCD (CA Department of Housing and Community Development).

Staff Member Tai discussed what was happening with other cities and what City Staff had learned. He said the city shouldn't take the position of challenging HCD but should learn from other cities.

Board Member Alvin Lau asked about development on Park St and brought up concerns about traffic and overcrowding.

Staff Member Tai discussed site access and how developers were working within the restrictions presented by Park St. He brought up the corner lots that were being considered and how much development the city would allow.

Board Member Sanchez pointed out places on Park St would be feasible to add more stories.

Chair Saxby opened public comment for Webster and Park St.

Christopher Buckley, Alameda Architecture Preservation Society, pointed out places where standards needed to be reviewed. He went into detail about the Objective Design Standards and waivers around State Density Bonus. He also pointed out places that needed to be "buffed" up. He discussed the historic section of Park Street that needed to be preserved. He wanted to know why Bridgestone Shopping center had not been listed. He added thoughts on unlimited ADUs vs Density Bonus.

Karen Bey, Alameda resident, was very concerned with reducing the height limit on Webster, she wanted the 50ft height limit. She saw the area from Central Ave to Lincoln St as a high resource area, with many amenities such as the Neptune Plaza. The plaza was also a possible development site, and too many restrictions could kill this potential project.

Chair Saxby closed public comment and opened board discussion.

Board Member Sanchez asked for clarification on unlimited ADUs, brought up by Mr. Buckley, could be achieved and how that was different from the State Density Bonus law.

Staff Member Tai explained in detail the Density Bonus Law and Article 26 and how developers have had to work around them. He then discussed the option that Mr. Buckley had brought up and why that was not the best course of action. He did see the unlimited ADU concept as a good idea, but it could not be the only solution to meet the RHNA numbers.

Staff Member Tai then addressed questions from the public. He discussed the reasons for the proposed height limits Park and Webster and the Bridgestone Shopping Center. He also discussed other possible developer sites that had been getting some interest.

Board Member Wit wanted to see Webster St historically protected the way Park St was and asked why it had not been added to the Historical Register.

Chair Saxby discussed the process to get a location added to the Historical Register.

Staff Member Tai added with historical information about Webster's time period and said he was not sure why it had not been previously nominated.

Chair Saxby discussed setbacks and said it was important to preserve the character of a historic district. He wanted developers to respect the existing patterns of development. He also wanted an update on developments at the Naval Air Station and how to get more housing at that location.

Staff Member Tai said that would require negotiation with the Navy and the city was in the process of that. Also, they couldn't "put all the eggs in one basket", all the new housing couldn't go at the point. He then explained the Affirmatively Further Fair Housing Law, they had to distribute the required housing over the entire island.

Board Member Sanchez agreed with Chair Saxby that protecting the historical corridors were important but he added it was important to increase the height. It was possible to increase the height while also protecting the historic characteristics. He also agreed that Webster St shouldn't be treated as an afterthought.

Chair Saxby asked for clarification on if the Design Review process (HAB approval) would apply to new development along the historic corridor.

Staff Member Tai explained State Bill 330, cities can no longer apply subjective design standards after January 2020. He went into detail about what the HAB could focus on. He discussed a hypothetical situation and wanted to know what the board would want to know.

Board Member Sanchez discussed a "checklist" of concerns that would be important to know if there could be a set of criteria for approval.

Chair Saxby voiced his concerns about the Transit Overlay District, the proposed upzoning and proposed increased density.

Board Member Wit suggested bringing this item back now that they had a clearer objective.

Staff Member Tai discussed when they could bring this item back and next steps. He added that staff would like more feedback about Park and Webster St.

There was a discussion on what information and resources would be beneficial for the next meeting.

8. BOARD COMMUNICATIONS

None.

9. STAFF COMMUNICATIONS

Staff Member Tai announced Building Official Greg McFann's retirement.

10. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

Christopher Buckley discussed the great work done by Greg McFann. He also discussed the Historical Study List and that if it was being reviewed there should also be additions.

Karen Bey introduced herself to the board and explained her love of preserving historic homes and districts.

11. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Saxby adjourned the meeting at 9:15 pm.