City of Albany

Planning and Zoning Commission Minutes March 27, 2013 Meeting

Note: These minutes are subject to Planning and Zoning Commission approval. The minutes are not verbatim. An audiotape of the meeting is available for public review.

Regular Meeting

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1. CALL TO ORDER- The meeting of the Planning and Zoning Commission was called to order by Chair Eisenmann in the City Council Chambers at 6:30 p.m. on Wednesday March 27, 2013.

Chair Eisenmann mentioned that there were speaker cards in the back for those who wished to speak.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

3. ROLL CALL

Present: Arkin, Donaldson, Eisenmann, Moss

Absent: Pilch

Staff present: City Planner Anne Hersch

Community Development Director Jeff Bond

4. NEW BUSINESS

Consent Calendar items are considered routine and will be enacted by one motion. By approval of the Consent Calendar, the staff recommendations will be adopted unless otherwise modified by the Commission. There will be no separate discussion on these items unless a Commission Member or a member of the audience requests removal of the items from the Consent Calendar.)

A. General Plan Update Review & Presentation – This is the first in a series of Planning and Zoning Commission Study Sessions on the Albany 2035 General Plan Update. This Study Session will include an overview of the General Plan Update work program and schedule, a summary of the legal requirements for the General Plan, and a recap of the existing (1992) General Plan. The Commission will be convening Study Sessions on the Plan for the next 14 months, with the goal of producing an updated General Plan and Environmental Impact Report by Summer 2014. Each meeting will include an opportunity for public comment.

Recommendation: This item is a study session and no Commission action is required.

Barry Miller, General Plan consultant- noted this would be the first of anywhere from 8-12 study sessions they will hold over the course of the next year and a half on the

General Plan. Miller provided an introduction to the plan and gave an overview of the current plan as well as a brief history of older plans. He presented summaries of the legal procedures and work program, scope, and schedule. He noted that this plan has a horizon year of 2035 and is meant for long term use. He explained the plan was a project under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and was subject to EIR requirements. In addition, the plan must be up to date, internally consistent, consistent with state policy, readable and accessible to the public, and consistent with the zoning ordinance. He gave details regarding the goals, policies, and actions of the plan. He mentioned some existing plans that would be incorporated into the new General Plan, as well as ways to engage the community. He presented the website: www.albany2035.org – which provides additional information on the plan as well as a space for residents to offer their own input.

Commissioner Moss-suggested adding the published state guidelines to the site.

Barry Miller-went over the proposed plan structure and introduced the various elements.

Commissioner Donaldson- suggested doing the scope of work as early as possible and doing early work in the EIR. The commission asked in which part of general plan was government code superseded by charter. They also asked about the status of the website.

Barry Miller- noted that the website was in production and content would be loaded in the next few days. He asked the Commission for suggestions on what would be the perfect questions to start asking the community regarding Albany's future. He mentioned possibly bringing in the general plan land use category and regional housing allocation discussion to the next Planning and Zoning study session.

Miller- spent time describing the existing general plan. He highlighted the land-use, circulation, conservation, recreation and open space, and community health and safety elements and made himself available for questions.

Chair Eisenmann- asked about the University's involvement in the past with the General Plan.

Jeff Bond-was not sure how involved the University was in the past but stated UC Village adopted a Master Plan in 2004. The City would try to integrate and reference UC Village's plan into the updated general plan.

Miller- said that they would have to check previous regional models regarding traffic but would also do their own evaluations.

The commission-had questions regarding sea level rise and original noise projections from BART.

Miller- responded that the sea level rise issue would likely be included in the EIR and he could research and bring data regarding BART noise projections to the Commission. Chair Eisenmann- asked if the consultant would continue to work with Albany and work with the plan 5 or 10 years from now. Barry Miller-replied that that would be up to City Council. Chair Eisenmann OPENED DISCUSSION TO THE PUBLIC. Anne Hersch-reminded those wishing to speak to fill out a speaker card. Clay Larson- commented that the speaker cards were bureaucratic and a "solution

Clay Larson- commented that the speaker cards were bureaucratic and a "solution in search of a problem". In response to Commissioner Donaldson's question, Larson said the San Pablo Street Design guidelines were not included in the list but should be. He suggested placing the latest staff report over the existing San Pablo Vision Plan.

No one else wished to speak. Chair Eisenmann brought the discussion back to council.

Commissioner Donaldson- commended Barry Miller's work thus far and looked forward to his further presentations.

Commissioner Arkin- welcomed Barry Miller and suggested a few questions for the "Albany Speaks" section of the new General Plan website: 1) "Over the next 20 years, I hope Albany ______ " 2) In Albany, _____ needs fixing

Commissioner Moss- wanted the plan to dwell more in positive light and maybe include more of what is already working in Albany and should be continued.

Chair Eisenmann- looked forward to continuing the process. She called for a break until 8:00 pm when the Commission would reconvene and start their regular meeting.

5. CONSENT CALENDAR

(Consent Calendar items are considered routine and will be enacted by one motion. By approval of the Consent Calendar, the staff recommendations will be adopted unless otherwise modified by the Commission. There will be no separate discussion on these items unless a Commission Member or a member of the audience requests removal of the items from the Consent Calendar.)

Chair Eisenmann- asked members of the public if any of them had any comments or questions on any of the items on the consent calendar. No one wished to speak.

1 Commissioner Moss- requested to pull item 5A for discussion.

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Motion to Approve item 5B: Eisenmann Ayes: Arkin, Donaldson, Eisenmann, Moss

Nayes: None. Motion Passes, 4-0

A. PA 13-003, Conditional Use Permit for a 2nd story addition at 1067 Curtis - The applicant is seeking Conditional Use Permit to extend a non-conforming wall for an approved second story addition at 1067 Curtis. Design Review and Parking Exception approval for the addition were granted by the Planning & Zoning Commission on February 27, 2013. A site survey later revealed that the side yard setback is slightly less than 10% of lot width at 3'3.5", not the required 3.75 ft. The existing home is 1,081 sq. ft. with three bedrooms one bathroom home. The second story addition will include three new bedrooms, two bathrooms, and a new laundry area. The first floor will be reconfigured to include a remodeled kitchen, new office room, family room, dining area, and living room. The new home will be 2062.4 sq. ft. on a 3,750 sq. ft. lot and will be 25' 6" in height.

Recommendation: Approve project subject to findings and conditions of approval.

Anne Hersch- presented the staff report.

PUBLIC HEARING OPENED. No one wished to speak.

Commissioner Moss- concerns were:

 1) Has the applicant done an area takeoff for the windows on the sides that are a little less than three and a half feet from the property line?

 2) The flash water heater is exposed and there is a sewer vent running outside of the building.

He noted that this has never been allowed before in the city of Albany. For the windows, there must be protected openings. The project must also be fire speculated and have 25% opening on the wall. Overall, he felt the vertical extension could have been brought into setback. He said there are code problems with the existing application.

Anne Hersch noted that what was sent in the packet on Friday reflected the new setback.

Commissioner Arkin- asked the architect to see if the tankless water heater vent and plumbing vent could be placed within the building wall and whether or not the 25% limitation on glazing has been considered.

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Alexander Sheets Saikely, architect and project applicant-said that she had confirmed with an outside plan check firm that the windows had to be 3 ft from prop line or greater if the building is sprinklered. She also stated that the window themselves were not required to be protected using fire sprinklers just the building.

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Commissioner Moss- noted the code is ambiguous.

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Ms. Saikely-noted that she did not believe they were near the 25% threshold for glazing. She said the vent for the water heater did not need to go the roof; it could just go the eve. She was not sure about the plumbing vent.

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Commissioner Arkin-said the dryer vent could exhaust the wall or go into the wall. He suggested making a condition that there be no exposed pipes other than the downspouts.

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Motion to Approve Item 5A incorporating conditions outlined in staff report with the additional condition that there are no exterior pipes other than downspouts: Arkin

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Seconded by: Donaldson

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Ayes: Arkin, Donaldson, Eisenmann, Moss

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Nays: None

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Motion passed, 4-0

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B. PA 11-038, Goodwill Industries Conditional Use Permit Review for the store at 501-505 San Pablo Ave.-The Planning & Zoning Commission will review the Conditional Use Permit for Goodwill Industries store located at 501-505 San Pablo. The Planning & Zoning Commission approved the use permit on July 26, 2011. The store opened in August 2012. The conditions of approval require the Commission to review the Use Permit for compliance six months after retail and donations commenced. To date, the store has been operating in full compliance with the project conditions.

Permit.

Recommendation: Review compliance report for the Conditional Use

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Item passed, see above under consent calendar.

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PUBLIC COMMENT 6.

For persons desiring to address the Commission on an item that is not on the agenda please note that each speaker is limited to three (3) minutes. The Brown Act limits the Commission ability to take and/or discuss items that are not on the

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agenda; therefore, such items are normally referred to staff for comment or to a future agenda.

Anne Jennings, resident on Kains Ave- was uncomfortable with the direction of new Albany businesses such as the increase in the number of massage parlors and nail salons. She wanted more information regarding the unproportional size of the front sign on the massage parlor at 919 Solano.

7. DISCUSSIONS & POSSIBLE ACTION ON MATTERS RELATED TO THE FOLLOWING ITEMS

A. PA 13-002, Design Review for Pets a Go-Go at 1124 Solano Ave. -The applicant is seeking Design Review approval for new business signage for Pets a Go-Go located at 1124 Solano Ave. The applicant applied for and received administrative approval for a new business sign with a white background with black lettering. In actuality, a pink sign with black lettering, which was not approved by the City, was installed instead. This discrepancy was brought to the City's attention after receiving an anonymous complaint about the new business signage. The business owner is seeking Commission approval to keep the existing pink business sign.

Recommendation: Option 1: Require the sign size to be reduced and require that applicant install the white sign as originally proposed.

Option 2: Require the sign size to be reduced and approve the pink sign installed by the applicant.

Anne Hersch presented the staff report.

Alex Shepard, employee of Pets a Go-Go and representative for Coco Tsui (applicant)- stated that when the permit was approved, there was not a note about the color and so the applicant did not recognize there was a problem. She said there may have been miscommunication between the applicant and contractor or the applicant and the City. She noted that the applicant had modeled the sign size after the adjacent hair salon's sign and would be willing to reduce the size. The applicant, however, would like to keep the pink color as this was her store colors. She showed a color sample to the Commission.

Carlos Ramirez, business owner on Solano- noted one business could affect the businesses around it. He felt the pink sign was awkward and out of proportion. He suggested the sign be rescaled and reverted to the original approved white background.

Commissioner Donaldson- did not like the pink and felt the sign should be cut down to size. He suggested using the hang down banners and signs in the window for visibility.

Commissioner Moss- noted the sign blocked some windows and was out of proportion. He had no problems with the color but discouraged the pink. He said the sign was not up to the standard of other signs on Solano and proposed cutting it down as well.

Commissioner Arkin- noted there was a substantial overhang on the building so the sign is hard to see. He said the size ratio should be enforced. He did not have problems with the color.

Chair Eisenmann- did not like the pink and felt graphically the sign was more difficult to read because there was not high contrast. She agreed the sign size should be reduced.

Commissioner Moss- noted that the blade signs were part of the square footage as well.

Motion to approve item 7A with the condition that the sign be brought under City regulations. The color scheme is acceptable as presented and the applicant has the option to how they would like to bring the sign into compliance: Moss

Seconded by: Arkin, with the following amendments:

- Sign presented is okay with white or pink as long as it is under the required sign regulations
- Recommendation of sign program with blade sign hanging from the awning

Ayes: Arkin, Eisenmann, Moss

Nayes: Donaldson Motion passes, 3-1

B. PA 10-019, Design Review & Parking Exception Variance for new commercial building at 1600 Solano- The applicant seeking Design Review and a Parking Exception Variance for a new building at 1600 Solano Ave. The applicant has proposed to demolish the existing building and construct a new two-story 6,200 sq. ft. commercial building containing ground floor retail space approximately 1,200 sq. ft. in area and dental offices approximately 4,000 sq. ft. in area. Maximum building height is proposed to be 31'9". The applicant is also seeking a Parking Exception Variance for six parking spaces. The applicant is proposing to include 14 parking spaces, with three accessible by vehicle lift. The subject property is a 5,127 square foot lot with an existing 2,766 sq. ft. commercial building on the southeast corner of Solano and Ordway near the Albany-Berkeley border. Action may be taken at this hearing.

Recommendation: Approve the Design Review and Variance requests subject to the findings and conditions.

Chair Eisenmann noted that members of the public wishing to speak were limited to three minutes each. Anne Hersch noted that speakers should turn in their speaker cards to staff.

Jeff Bond asked to the Commission to take comments and give direction to staff and the applicant tonight but postpone making a decision for 14 days to avert an appeal. Supposed errors in staff analysis had been reported and Mr. O'Brien had asked for a continuation. The commission did a quick poll of whether they should close the hearing now or take public comment tonight. The commission felt it should listen to public comment at tonight's meeting before making a decision to continue this item. Anne Hersch continued presenting the staff report.

Chair Eisenmann-asked why the Traffic and Safety Commission did not want the drop off spots and if the shape of the bulb-out shaped has changed. Jeff Bond said he would check his notes regarding the drop-off spots. Anne Hersch replied that only the cross-walks changed.

Commissioner Donaldson asked about estimates of traffic demand management effectiveness in reducing the number of vehicle trips. Staff noted there were not any estimates of traffic demand and angle parking had been discussed at Traffic and Safety Conditions. Commissioner Arkin recommended looking into angled parking. Staff noted there had been some discussion among the Planning and Zoning Commission on angled parking. Commissioner Arkin asked about the existing speed and volume survey on Ordway of 672 vehicles compared to the 1000-5000 cars on other blocks in the R-1 district. Staff said that every street in Albany has been measured at one time or another. The Commission expressed interest in seeing this data. Staff noted the figure of 672 was recent data. Commissioner Donaldson clarified the necessity for a variance. Staff gave some historical context for the variance, referencing a previous project at 1301 Solano where the findings were different but end result is the same. The project is new construction and therefore, according to the ordinance, requires a variance rather than just a parking exception.

PUBLIC HEARING OPENED.

Kava Massih of Kava Massih architects- stated that he had no new information to add. He mentioned the small adjustment of reducing the front parking from five spaces to four and lowering the height to 35 ft to meet height requirements.

Commissioner Arkin asked if there was a need for a curb on the edge of the loading zone or could it be a sloped edge. Massih said he was hoping to avoid curbs because the loading zone is rarely used. He mentioned that 2% is the max slope for the loading zone.

Jeff Bond explained the color coding of the traffic measurement map. He noted it was data from the year 2000. Anne Hersch said that she will call speakers to the podium in order of the speaker cards.

April McMahon, business owner at 1604 Solano- was concerned with traffic issues, parking issues, and traffic speed of Ordway. She added that when she was working by Solano Cellars- loading zones were often used. She asked that the Planning and Zoning Commission make a decision that benefits the entire community.

Anne Hersch- said she will be calling speakers from the speaker cards, two at a time.

The following people all spoke out against the proposed parking variance: Julie Graves, Howard Graves, Allison Grinstead, Tom O' Brien, David Isler, Miriam Kaminsky, Steve Brokken, and Peter Goldberg.

Julie Graves appreciated the process the City was taking in regards to the project. Particularly, she applauded the change in arrangement. She liked the idea of an arborist coming in to look at the existing Oak tree and hoped that a similar tree could be planted there in the event that the project affects the current tree. She appreciated that the applicants attempt to improve parking, but she still had concerns and advocated for an appropriate number of standard parking spaces without the need to back up. She felt this situation was not equivalent to the Orthodontics project on Key Route as that project had a lot more available parking.

Howard Graves, Ordway resident- addressed the staff report section 4 adverse impacts. He felt the project would result in high traffic impact on Ordway. He mentioned there were no hard numbers illustrating the number of patients between the times of 3:00-5:00 pm each day. He mentioned that the parking study done by the City was incorrect, in a separate study he noted there was 90% parking occupancy.

Allison Grinstead- felt the building was not in line and out of proportion in comparison with surrounding buildings.

Tim O' Brien- noted there were errors in parking dimensions staff presented to the Commission. He said the neighbors had conducted a separated parking study based on a 500 ft walking distance rather than the 500 ft radius staff did and found there was significantly less parking then what

staff found. He pointed out the project was not unique should not be granted a variance.

Miriam Kaminsky- noted the majority of the proposed parking spaces were noncompliant.

Steve Brokken, business owner- recommended staff not grant the parking variance as it seemed to be a special privilege for the property owner.

Peter Goldberg, neighbor and business owner- reiterated the difference in surveys methods using 500 ft radius and 500 ft walking distance.

One speaker- said the photo distributed to the public which showed only one parked car was an inaccurate representation of the current parking conditions. He also requested a skin of the proposed building so neighbors could get a feel for what the building would look like.

Commissioner Arkin- asked if there was discussion about the reduction of the parking spaces. He mentioned the possibility of residential parking permit for any block in Albany.

Jeff Bond responded that the focus of Traffic and Safety was on the public right of way.

Chair Eisenmann- asked about the hours on the use-permit. She also asked if the proposed parking dimensions meet Albany's standards.

Anne Hersch- noted there was not a use-permit involved as it was a medical building. This meant the office could operate 5-6 days a week. Jeff Bond said he would have to look into the dimensions, but he did not think there was anything that made the project meet code.

Kava Massih- defended the parking and insisted it was feasible.

Commissioner Donaldson- noted that there were several findings that he did not felt he could make. He said the site may be suitable for underground parking like the parking for the Sunnyside Café building.

Commissioner Moss- noted that other projects have been granted variances in the past. He said it was difficult to make the finding that there is something unusual and different about this particular project. He was concerned about the layout of the parking but not the size. He thought the design was acceptable but agreed there were parking concerns. He mentioned the possibility of using a divider to help with these issues.

Commissioner Arkin- said this was a commercial site and thus was designed as such. He noted the floor ratio, rear setback, and lot coverage numbers were off from what is required. He suggested making a "right turn only" to get out of the parking lot as proposed by the Traffic and Safety Commission. He has no problems with making the findings for the variance at this site. He mentioned that a similar site was granted a variance the past. He suggested adding bike racks to the corner. He also thought it was appropriate that spots along south line were labeled as "customer parking only" and staff be limited using the lifts.

Commissioner Moss- noted that the rear setback should be 0 ft for commercial lots.

Chair Eisenmann- mentioned converting Ordway to a one-way street and implementing angled parking. Jeff Bond said that this, however, was ultimately not a recommendation Traffic and Safety wanted to pass to P&Z Commission.

Commissioner Donaldson- brought up the possibility of having the property owner pay for the striping and other costs for offsite parking spaces and having these spaces be part of the project.

Jeff Bond suggested having a side by side comparison of a 100% compliant project with this proposed project.

Commissioner Arkin- noted the difference between 500 ft radius and walking distance is a good one. Jeff Bond said staff was prepared to do another survey, but the implications would likely be the same. Staff acknowledges this area has major parking issues.

Chair Eisenmann- said it did not make sense to remove spots from the community to allow more parking for this project. She was surprised that the Traffic and Safety Commission did not require additional parking for this project. Eisenmann asked the applicant if most of the traffic would be after school hours and weekdays and 1 day on the weekend since most of the patients are likely school-aged children.

Leila Kasrovi, property owner- indicated the hours of operation are from 8-4:45 pm (last appointment) with the most traffic likely between 3-5 pm. She clarified she was open one Saturday a month between their three locations.

Chair Eisenmann- asked if the six required parking spaces could be put in front of the property. Jeff Bond said staff would have to look into that possibility. The Commission also discussed the option of having two spots as timed parking zones or drop off zones. Commissioner Donaldson

recommended doing a traffic management study which looks at the business and seeks incentives for other modes of transportation for instance biking and walking. Commissioner Moss suggested the property owner to provide mass transit passes to its employees or company bike.

Chair Eisenmann said she felt the project should be given two more spots as a drop off/loading zone. In addition, she asked that an additional four slots be added from the street through restriping or finding additional parking on Ordway. She felt they should mitigate traffic so everyone comes and goes from Solano. She was open to recommendations on how to do this but she brought up the idea of the "right turn only sign". Commissioner Donaldson noted there may be overlap in the parking of the old location on Ensenada and the new one.

Jeff Bond- noted the Traffic and Safety Commission did make a motion directing staff to explore traffic calming measure at Ordway/Marin and Tacoma/Sonoma.

Commissioner Arkin read traffic calming measures already stated in conditions for the permit.

Motion to Approve Item 7B for Design Review and a Parking Exception Variance with the additional items as condition and mitigation measure

- -Waiting spots provided in garage for drop-off and waiting and these be striped and signed as such
- -At least one additional parking space be realized on street
- -Bicycle parking racks located on corner bulb-out
- -Non-lift parking spaces assigned as "Patient Only": Commissioner Arkin

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No second.

Motion to continue item 7B to date uncertain with condition that staff and applicant make revisions to application so that it does not require a parking variance

-This can be done with onsite or offsite modification with financing agreement between applicant and City for additional studies (ex: Transportation Demand Management study): Donaldson

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Commissioner Moss asked property owner, Leila Kasrovi, if she would rather continue the item and make the modifications the Commission suggested or if she would rather have the item denied and appeal it. He mentioned at least six parking spaces could be added with angular parking.

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Jeff Bond suggested continuing the hearing to April 10th. This would allow time to write up the recommendations and present them to the applicant.

Chair Eisenmann clarified that they were granting two tandem spots and requiring just four additional spaces. Chair Arkin suggested the applicant take the recommendations from tonight's discussion.

Motion to continue item 7B to date certain of April 10, 2013 with the direction that the applicant find a net gain of four spaces and for the applicant to talk to city engineer about alternative design for frontage: Moss

Seconded by: Donaldson

Commissioner Donaldson mentioned he was skeptical about permit parking.

Ayes: Arkin, Donaldson, Eisenmann, Moss

Nays: None

Motion passed, 4-0

The Commission said there would be no further notice because the item was being continued, however, the item will be continued at the next meeting (April 10th) and a staff report would be available the Friday before the next meeting for the public.

8. ANNOUNCEMENTS/COMMUNICATIONS/DISCUSSION

(Staff discussion and Commission member announcement of status of previous agenda items and requests for future agenda items. No public comment will be taken on requests for future agenda items).

 Wireless Ordinance Analysis-report and summary of City Council action from March 18, 2013. This will be a future study session item for the Planning & Zoning Commission.

Anne Hersch presented the staff report. She said two items were discussed. The first was pursuing wireless facilities on City owned property. The second was considering amending the City's wireless ordinance. Jeff Bond noted Council wanted specific Pros and Cons.

Commissioner Arkin asked if a second pole was being explored in the city triangle. Chair Eisenmann asked if the City was exploring into repeaters. Anne Hersch noted such systems were typical in areas with greater topographical changes. Hersch said she did not know if it was in the interest of a carrier to do that given Albany's size and topography.

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2	The Commission asked for an update on Saint Mary's.
3	Jeff Bond noted it has been difficult getting all the mediation parties together
4 5	and the topic is predicted to come back to the Commission in one or two months.
6	HIOHUIS.
7	9. FUTURE PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION AGENDA ITEMS
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9	Next Planning and Zoning Commission hearing: Wednesday, April 10, 2013 at 7 pm.
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11	10. ADJOURNMENT
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13	The meeting was adjourned at 11 p.m.
14 15	Next regular meeting: Wednesday, April 10, 2013, 7:00 p.m. at Albany City Hall
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18	Submitted by: Anne Hersch, City Planner
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22	Jeff Bond
23	Community Development Director