

*Staff recommendation: deny the request for Design Review approval, determine which signs are appropriate, and direct staff to draft findings and conditions of approval based on appropriate signage.*

Assistant Planner Curl delivered the staff report noting that the signage was painted without design review approval. Chair Arkin opened the public hearing and invited the applicant to speak first. Angelo George, Julia George, the applicants and Julie Benton, the owner spoke. The applicant would like to keep the signage on the side of the building and suggested removing the signs in the doorway and stated that there many nonconforming signs in the city.

Maureen Crowley, a neighbor, believes that are other nonconforming signs in the city but it's not justification to allow more. Wayne Black owns the building on the corner and stated that it would benefit his tenants to allow large wall signs and that is was not fair to restrict other businesses and not allow them the same signage.

Commissioner Panian asked if buildings with multiple tenants receive signage on a "first come, first serve basis." Staff responded yes. Commissioner Moss asked if the applicant misunderstood design review approval as needed only for new signage and not painted signs. Chair Arkin noted that allowable signage is provided based on lot width and that this was a narrow lot. Commissioner Panian stated that he quickly noticed the painted sign when it went up. Commissioner Maas echoed that it jumps out at those passing by. Commissioner Hitchcock stated that she could not support approval of the sign and that it was too big for the building. She suggested a maximum of 72sq.ft. be allowed. Chair Arkin stated he didn't know if he was comfortable with 72sq.ft. Commissioner Panian stated that 72sq.ft. was an arbitrary number and that proliferation of signs that large could be problematic.

Commissioner Arkin stated that the signage in the vestibule was okay and should not be counted. He believes the bay window signs to be attractive and is inclined to approve all signs except the northern sign. He suggested that a 50%/10% ratio, like for "in window" signs be used which would allow 40sq.ft. for the second-story business.

Chair Arkin moved to continue the project to allow a new sign program to be proposed by the applicant. Commissioner Panian seconded.

Vote to continue item 6c:

Ayes: Arkin, Hitchcock, Maass, Moss, Panian

Nays: None

Motion passed, 5-0.

**d. 934 San Pablo. Planning Application 06-074. Design Review. Density Bonus.**

**Affordable Housing.** Study session to discuss construction of a new three-story mixed-use building with thirteen residential units and two retail units. A density bonus & other concessions, as described below, are also requested as part of the approval.

*Staff recommendation: discuss, provide direction to the applicant, no action is taken.*

Assistant Planner Curl reported gave the staff report. Commissioner Panain asked for clarification on the inclusionary and density bonus units required. Commissioner Maas asked if the inclusionary housing unit would include as one of or in addition to the density bonus units. Chair Arrkin stated that the elevator/stairwell area could be exempted from the height.

Hass Izimi, the architect and applicant provided a presentation on the project. Chair Arkin moved to extended the meeting until midnight. He continued to ask that a survey be provided and if there was a change in grade from the sidewalk. He asked if the units were going to be handicapped accessible. Commissioner Hitchcock asked if the height of the building could be lowered. The applicant responded yes.

Clay Larson stated that the project cannot meet the development requirements with exemptions and that a daylight plane needs to be provided, regardless of how it is interpreted. He also stated that the increased incentives should result in increased affordable housing.

Ed Fields stated that 13 units is not allowed on a 7,500sq.ft. lot and that it exceeds the maximum allowable for a lot of that size. He stated that the purpose of the density bonus is to provide more affordable housing. He questioned whether lifts were appropriately used as intended and if the developer and a real want to develop affordable housing.

John Nakamura, an Albany business owner stated that the traffic will overflow parking will end up on Adams Street and suggests that auto malls are what the city should encourage. He also questioned whether the parking lifts would be used as intended.

Maureen Crowley stated that 8 were the maximum number of units permitted. She is afraid the building will overshadow the existing single-family homes and would prefer auto repair use than mixed-use on San Pablo Avenue because mixed-use is too large and out of scale. She also expressed concerns about the loss of small businesses along San Pablo Avenue.

Terry Millow stated that finding parking on Adams is horrible, is afraid that overflow will end up on Adams street, and that Albany is losing its quaint feel.

Commissioner Panian stated that mixed-use was the future of Albany's urban fabric. He also stated that Albany has an aggressive parking requirement and people like the city because they can walk to services. He would like to see more affordable housing produced but with more conscious development.

Commissioner Moss struggled with the design because of the density. The FAR, density are maxed out and the quality of design is lost. He suggested adding more articulation to the buildings elevations, especially the side and rear elevations. He also suggested decreasing the size of the units, and providing more functional decks instead of communal roof. He stated that the mechanical equipment could be put in the basement. He feels that the payment of an in-lieu fee is ungenerous in providing affordable housing.

Commissioner Hitchcock believes that mixed-use has a lot of support and is appropriate when commuter buses are available. She stated that there was an inconsistency in the number of

allowable units. She had concerns about the open space being available to the handicapped and does not believe that parking lifts work as intended.

Commissioner Maas stated that many of these issues are driven by Sacramento. He believes that mixed-use is the future of San Pablo. He likes the front façade but believes some more articulation, reduction of units or something needs to be revised to make the project work.

Chair Arkin would like clarification on the requirements of the density bonus and what the state code says. He believes income diversity is important and the point of inclusionary housing is to create more affordable housing. He believes the design of the building is a good start but would like to see a 3-dimensional depiction and details on the materials and colors. He informed the applicant that Caltrans does not allow projections into the right-of-way. He also stated that all daylight planes should be fully complied with and shown on the plans.

Vote to continue item **6d** to allow the applicant to make appropriate revisions:

Ayes: Arkin, Hitchcock, Maass, Moss, Panian

Nays: None

Motion passed, 5-0.

Commissioner Maas moved to extended for 10 minutes

**e. Waterfront Planning Process Final Report.**

*Staff Recommendation: Discuss Final Report and provide comments to the City Council if desired.*

Planning Manager Bond delivered the staff report. Commissioner Panian stated that the report provided a simple, easy roadmap, which provided helpful recommendations, which was exactly what was wanted.

Commissioner Maas believes that the report provided a good opportunity for everyone to be educated on potential options at the waterfront. He added that local input should be provided before a competition is considered.

Commissioner Arkin is not positive that a competition is the best tool but believes it has potential to bring in creative options. He reminded everyone that Magna has not expressed a willingness to participate in planning.

Commissioner Hitchcock believes that a competition is a good tool and that most attendants reviewing the designs are not design professionals. She also stated that a competition makes a statement.

Commissioner Moss stated that a design competition gives everyone a "what could be," which is exciting. He believes that to stimulate interest, the competition should not have a limit on the number of entries.