

# City of Albany

## Planning and Zoning Commission Minutes January 7, 2015 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

- CALL TO ORDER-** The meeting of the Planning and Zoning Commission was called to order by Chair Donaldson in the City Council Chambers at 7:00 p.m. on Wednesday, January 7, 2015.

- PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

- ROLL CALL**

Present: Arkin, Donaldson, Friedland, Geisen-Fields, Kent  
Absent: None.  
Staff present: City Planner Anne Hersch  
Community Development Director Jeff Bond

- 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.)

None.

- PUBLIC COMMENT**

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

**Alexa Hauser**, Diverse Housing Working Group (DHWG)- introduced herself and the work of the DHWG to new members of the Commission.

- DISCUSSIONS & POSSIBLE ACTION ON MATTERS RELATED TO THE FOLLOWING ITEMS**

(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).

- General Plan Housing Element Update Review** - The City of Albany Planning & Zoning Commission will hold a public hearing to consider a recommendation to

1 the Albany City Council for a proposed General Plan Amendment that would  
2 update the Housing Element of the Albany General Plan pursuant to State law.  
3 The Housing Element Update includes a needs assessment, identification of  
4 opportunity sites for development of housing, an analysis of potential constraints  
5 to housing, and policies and programs to achieve housing goals. The  
6 Commission will also discuss and receive public comment on the draft Initial  
7 Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration prepared for the Housing Element.  
8

9 Recommendation: The Planning & Zoning Commission approve the following  
10 resolutions: Resolution 2015-01 recommending that the City Council adopt the  
11 Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration for the Housing Element for the  
12 2015-2023 planning period, Resolution 2015-02 recommending that the City  
13 Council adopt the Housing Element for the 2015-2023 planning period  
14

15 **Barry Miller**, General Plan consultant- gave a brief introduction to the housing  
16 element update process highlighting various aspects including the needs  
17 assessment, sites inventory, constraints, goals, policies, and programs, and edits  
18 made in response to input from the DHWG.  
19

20 The Commissioners asked for clarification about comments from the CEQA  
21 public review period. Anne noted there were general comments made from  
22 EBMUD. Commissioner Arkin and Friedman suggested expediting the Nexus  
23 study. Bond noted this would be added to the work plan and suggested the  
24 Commission make the study as part of the recommendation to City Council.  
25

26 Commissioner Kent- asked about the requirements for the suggested sites. Miller  
27 responded it was primarily based on the ease of developing at that location but  
28 other facts such as the size of the parcel and age of structures on the site were  
29 taken into consideration as well.  
30

31 Chair Donaldson- re phrased part of the aesthetics section and made minor  
32 edits to various other parts of the study.  
33

34 PUBLIC HEARING OPENED.  
35

36 **Alexa Hauser**- asked Commissioner Donaldson about his edit regarding  
37 degrading the visual character of the city. Donaldson explained that there  
38 would not be substantial degradation to the character but wanted to  
39 recognize that the change could lead to some visual degradation to  
40 neighboring properties.  
41

42 **Catherine Sutton**, member of DHWG and Transition Albany- thought the City's  
43 priority regarding the Waterfront should be to find housing for the people who  
44 had were displaced right now. She asked the City to consider allowing greater  
45 than one mobile home on a single lot. She suggested building houses out of  
46 natural or materials such as mud or straw, including tiny homes as part of the

1 secondary unit section, and the possibility of another development site on  
2 Adams.

3  
4 **Alexa Hauser-** voiced other issues for the Commission to consider- including:  
5 adding the leveraging of the City's site on Cleveland in the action chapter if  
6 that would help increase the likelihood it would be acted upon, adding a  
7 program for the anti-displacement policy if it is needed, expediting the timeline  
8 for the Nexus study, identifying a specific group to work on communicating  
9 information to people in the community, and adding encouragement of  
10 organizations and local businesses to open homeless shelters.

11  
12 **Julie Winklestein-** suggested having a committee of volunteers to do  
13 community outreach and to encouraged the Commission to act now regarding  
14 providing housing for people experiencing homelessness.

15  
16 PUBLIC HEARING CLOSED.

17  
18 Commissioner Arkin- acknowledged that there needs to be more conversation  
19 regarding housing opportunities especially for homeowner's to add second  
20 units. He noted that tiny homes are not disallowed in the code because they  
21 are usually on wheels and do not need to comply with general state residential  
22 code.

23  
24 Commissioner Friedland- was glad to see that the DHWG had such a dominant  
25 voice at the community meetings and that there was not opposition to  
26 affordable housing as is seen in other less inclusive communities. She  
27 acknowledged that there were sites that could potentially be developed by  
28 were not for sale. She said she would recommend the element for Council  
29 approval.

30  
31 Commissioner Giesen-Fields- clarified that impact fees were proposed as a  
32 positive force to encourage developers to have high density.

33  
34 Commissioner Kent- suggested building housing in areas with lots of  
35 transportation options. He thought there was a disconnect between  
36 homelessness and housing. He did not think this document would provide a  
37 solution for the problem of providing housing for people experiencing  
38 homelessness now. Regarding tiny homes, he was concerned they would not  
39 comply with code and create potential issues there.

40  
41 Chair Donaldson- went through the draft and made minor edits and revisions.

42  
43 Commissioner Arkin- noted there was nothing in the housing element that  
44 precludes the use of natural materials and noted that various natural materials  
45 were slowly being included in the California building code. He clarified the  
46 differences between small versus tiny houses. He noted that small houses were

1 being built in Berkeley and could conform to code but tiny houses did not  
2 because they are considered more like recreational vehicle housing.

3  
4 **Motion to approve Planning and Zoning Commission Resolution 2015-01**  
5 **recommending adoption of the initial study Mitigated Negative Declaration for**  
6 **2015-2023 housing element: Arkin**

7 -including whereas/findings in draft resolution  
8 -including edits made by Chair Donaldson this evening

9 **Seconded by: Friedland**

10 **Ayes: Arkin, Donaldson, Friedland, Giesen-Fields, Kent**

11 **Nayes: None**

12 **Motion Passes, 5-0.**

13  
14  
15 **Motion to approve Planning and Zoning Commission Resolution 2015-02**  
16 **recommending adoption of the 2015-2023 Housing Element to City Council:**

17 Arkin

18 -including whereas/findings in draft resolution

19 -including typos/edits made by Chair Donaldson

20 **Seconded by: Geisen-Fields**

21 **Ayes: Arkin, Donaldson, Friedland, Geisen-Fields, Kent**

22 **Nayes: None**

23 **Motion Passes, 5-0.**

24  
25 Chair Donaldson noted this item would now be set to go to City Council on  
26 February 2, 2015.

27  
28 **B. PA 14-070 Design Review & Conditional Use Permit for 2nd Story Addition at 1042**

29 **Neilson-** The applicant is seeking Design Review & Conditional Use Permit  
30 approval for a second story addition at 1042 Neilson. The subject lot is 3,500 sq.  
31 ft. with an existing two bedroom, one bathroom home built in 1924. The  
32 applicant is seeking approval to add a 942.5 sq. ft. second story addition that  
33 will include three bedrooms and two bathrooms. The first floor will include  
34 reconfigured living space as well as one bedroom and one bathroom. This will  
35 result in a four bedroom, three bathroom home. The new maximum height of  
36 the home will be 27'10.75". The existing appearance of the home is Craftsman  
37 and will be blended with a more contemporary appearance. Parking will be  
38 provided in the existing garage. Previously, the property owner received Parking  
39 exception approval which remains valid.

40  
41 Recommendation: Approved subject to the attached findings and Conditions  
42 of Approval. CEQA: Categorically exempt pursuant to Section 15303, "New  
43 Construction or Conversion of Small Structures" of the CEQA Guidelines

44  
45 Anne Hersch presented the staff report.

46

1 **Stacy Eisenmann**, project architect- asked the Commission if they would be open to  
2 approving both proposed roof styles to allow for flexibility. She noted there was an  
3 existing street tree and that there was a drain running through the property. She  
4 explained the proposed materials and answered questions from the Commissioners.

5  
6 PUBLIC HEARING OPENED.

7  
8 **Judy Wise**, neighbor- liked the design and respect for privacy given the window  
9 placement. She did not like the roof, saying it seemed incongruous with the look and  
10 feel of the house as well as in comparison to the surrounding neighborhood.

11  
12 Commissioner Geisen-Fields- recommended keeping the spacing as tight as possible to  
13 stay away from an industrial feel.

14  
15 PUBLIC HEARING CLOSED.

16  
17 Commissioner Geisen-Fields- understood the neighbors' concerns but said that this kind  
18 of roof has been used in residential projects as well and has a great lifespan.

19  
20 Commissioner Kent- noted the metal roof was a higher quality roof and pointed out  
21 issues with the patchy quality of asphalt shingle roofs.

22  
23 Commissioner Geisen-Fields- was inclined to approve the metal roof given that the  
24 spacing was kept to be tight and that the colors were of a muted earth-tone  
25 character.

26  
27 Commissioner Arkin- thought the project was handsome. He thought the window on the  
28 south side elevation could also use hardiplank. He thought the metal roof added  
29 strength to the design but thought the design would work with any roof. He had no  
30 issues with the application.

31  
32 Chair Donaldson- thought that the roof was not as massive as some other roofs near this  
33 site. He thought the design was appropriate and the roof was not visible from the  
34 sidewalk. He was concerned about parking and the small distance between the rear  
35 stairs and garage, but thought that this design could work if the stairs came down the  
36 back in a different way.

37  
38 **Motion to approve Item 6B that the applicant have the option that the applicant have  
39 the option to use steel seam or composite shingle roof:** Kent

40 Seconded by: Arkin – noting this was for Planning Application 14-070

41 AYES: Arkin, Donaldson, Friedland, Geisen-Fields, Kent

42 NAYES: None.

43 **Motion Passed, 5-0.**

44  
45 C. **Overview of General Plan Update-** Informational discussion and review of the  
46 General Plan update process to date.

1  
2 Recommendation: Receive Presentation. CEQA: An Environmental Impact  
3 Report is being prepared pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act  
4 Guidelines.

5  
6 **Barry Miller**, General Plan consultant- presented the basics of the General Plan  
7 including the status of the EIR, the land-use element, the transportation element,  
8 housing element, conservation and sustainability element, environmental hazards  
9 element, parks, recreation and open space element, community serviced and  
10 facilities element, and waterfront element. Miller also walked through next steps  
11 and timeline for the General Plan.

12  
13 **7. NEW BUSINESS**

14  
15 None.

16  
17 **8. ANNOUNCEMENTS/COMMUNICATIONS/DISCUSSION**

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

21  
22 A. Planning & Zoning Commission Work Plan for 2015

23 Anne Hersch noted the accomplishments of 2014 P&Z Commission and described  
24 the proposed work plan for 2015's Commission which includes continued work on  
25 Wireless communication ordinance and Measure D parking policy changes.

26  
27 Commissioner Donaldson pointed out the staff report for item 6B was written by  
28 intern Rania Ahmed. Hersch and Bond noted she would be with the Community  
29 Development department at least through June and would be writing more staff  
30 reports and presenting them to Commission in the coming months.

31  
32  
33 B. Planning & Zoning Commission Meeting Schedule for 2015

34  
35 Jeff Bond noted that the this item be kept here until the last new Commissioner is  
36 appointed and the whole Commission has agreed to it prior to forwarding to City  
37 Council for approval.

38  
39 Jeff Bond noted upcoming meetings that may be of interesting including a City  
40 Council meeting on January 20<sup>th</sup> where Council would review recommendation  
41 from the Traffic and Safety Commission regarding street closures around El Cerrito  
42 Plaza, February community meeting regarding the Waterfront and how to bring  
43 that into compliance with regional park requirements, and February meeting  
44 about eliminating the red zone along Buchanan. He noted there was a draft  
45 supplemental report regarding the beach and an impact report regarding dogs  
46 leashed and unleashed on that area to be posted as well.

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**9. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at p.m.  
Next regular meeting: Wednesday, January 28, 2015, 9:40 p.m. at Albany City Hall

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Submitted by: Anne Hersch, City Planner

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**Jeff Bond, Community Development Director**