

City of Albany
Planning & Zoning Commission
Minutes of September 28, 2016 Meeting

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

3
4 **Regular Meeting**

5
6 1. **CALL TO ORDER:** The regular meeting of the Planning & Zoning Commission was
7 called to order by Chair Giesen-Fields in the City Council Chambers at 7:00 P.M.
8 on Wednesday, September 28, 2016.

9
10 2. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

11
12 3. **ROLL CALL**

13
14 Present: Donaldson, Kent, Menotti, Giesen-Fields
15 Absent: Friedland
16 Staff Present: City Planner Anne Hersch
17 Associate Planner Christopher Tan
18

19 4. **CONSENT CALENDAR**

20
21 City Planner Hersch advised that Commissioner Menotti had submitted written comments
22 to identify minor corrections to the minutes, which had been incorporated into the
23 document submitted to the Commission.

24
25 A. **Planning & Zoning Commission Meeting Minutes from September 14, 2016**

26
27 B. **PA 16-068 Conditional Use Permit for Sales Office and Warehousing of**
28 **Saunas at 1077 Eastshore Highway.** The applicant is seeking Conditional
29 Use Permit approval to operate a mixed use office and warehousing of
30 prefabricated sauna equipment (Infrared Saunas) at 1077 Eastshore
31 Highway. The business is proposed to operate Monday to Sunday from 8:00
32 A.M. to 5:00 P.M. The applicant proposes to allocate 5,000 square feet to
33 office space and 11,000 square feet to warehouse usage. This space is
34 16,000 square feet and thirty-five (35) off-street parking spaces are provided
35 in the parking lot. The business will have 12 to 15 employees at any given
36 time. **Recommendation: Review and approve subject to the findings and**
37 **Conditions of Approval attached to the staff report dated September 28,**
38 **2016.**

1 *CEQA: The project is Categorically exempt pursuant to Section 15332 "In-*
2 *Fill Development Projects."*

3
4 **Motion to approve Consent Items 4A, as amended, and 4B pursuant to the**
5 **staff report dated September 28, 2016.** Menotti

6 Seconded by: Kent
7 AYES: Donaldson*, Kent, Menotti, Giesen-Fields
8 NAYES: None
9 ABSENT: Friedland

10 ***4A-Motion passed, 3-0-1**
11 **4B-Motion passed, 4-0-1**

12
13 *Abstained on Item 4A

14
15 Chair Giesen-Fields identified the 14-day appeal period.

16
17 **5. PUBLIC COMMENT**

18
19 There were no comments from the public.

20
21 **6. DISCUSSIONS AND POSSIBLE ACTION ON MATTERS RELATED TO THE FOLLOWING**
22 **ITEMS:**

23
24 **A. PA 16-051 Design Review and Parking Reduction for a Second Story**
25 **Addition at 726 Madison Street.** The applicant is seeking approval for Design
26 Review and Parking Exception for a second story addition at 726 Madison
27 Street. The subject site is 5,000 square feet with an existing 1,196 square foot
28 two bedroom, two bathroom house built in 1929. The applicant is proposing
29 a 433 square foot first story addition and a 763 square foot second story
30 addition. The addition includes a new family room, master bedroom with
31 a balcony, an additional bedroom, a new bathroom, as well as a large
32 deck and sitting room space. This will result in a four bedroom, three
33 bathroom, 2,711.2 square foot home with a maximum height of 24 feet 4
34 inches. The existing Spanish Revival style is proposed to be carried through
35 in the design through matching roof materials and wood railing details. A
36 parking exception is required to allow an off street parking space in the
37 front yard setback. ****Continued from the September 14, 2016 Planning &**
38 **Zoning Commission hearing** Recommendation: Review and approve**
39 **subject to the findings and Conditions of Approval attached to the staff**
40 **report dated September 28, 2016.**

41
42 *CEQA: The project is Categorically exempt pursuant to Section 15303 "New*
43 *Construction or Conversion of Small Structures."*

44
45 Ms. Hersch presented the staff report dated September 28, 2016.

1 **Francisco Matos**, the Project Architect, described how the Commission's
2 recommendations from the September 14, 2016 meeting had been addressed to reduce
3 the height of the home and the size of the balcony, but noted that the slope of the roof
4 had not been switched as suggested.

5
6 PUBLIC COMMENTS OPENED

7
8 **Katie Smith**, Jackson Street, reiterated her concern for the height of the property.

9
10 **Sara Garabedian**, an immediate neighbor, expressed concern for the addition that would
11 loom over her backyard and impact the privacy of her home.

12
13 PUBLIC COMMENTS CLOSED

14
15 Commissioner Kent suggested the architect had designed the addition to avoid impacts
16 to the neighbors' views, and stated the landscape plan should be prepared by a
17 professional landscape architect or a landscape designer.

18
19 Commissioner Donaldson reminded the Commission of the strict interpretation of the
20 Zoning Code with respect to the requested parking reduction, and expressed concern that
21 the gables of the original home had not been matched by the addition.

22
23 Chair Giesen-Fields clarified that the parking exception was to allow a second parking
24 space within the front yard and the potential creation of a third space to help mitigate the
25 on-street parking problems. He agreed that the applicant had done a decent job
26 reducing the height of the proposal and recommended a modification to the roof to
27 reduce the height of the building by a foot and a half for an overall height of 21 feet 9
28 inches over the stairwell. He also presented recommendations to the landscape plan with
29 a stepped or tiered wall system and to break up the walls enclosing the parking.

30
31 Commissioner Menotti stated the architect had attempted to address the concerns
32 expressed by the Commission at the last meeting. He supported the parking as proposed.

33
34 When asked, Mr. Matos explained that he was open to the recommendations.

35
36 **Sharif Ahmed**, the co-applicant, expressed agreement to modified hours to
37 accommodate the neighbors with limited hours during the weekend.

38
39 **Shahreen Basunia**, the co-applicant, clarified that there was agreement to limited
40 construction hours from 10:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M. on Saturdays, although they would like to
41 retain the City-allowed hours of construction on Sundays from 10:00 A.M. to 6:00 P.M.

42
43 **Motion to approve PA 16-051 for 726 Madison Street, subject to:**

44 **1) the preparation of a professional landscape plan by a landscape**
45 **architect or landscape designer, to include landscape screening to be**
46 **worked out between the applicant and the neighbor to the south and**

1 west boundaries of the site to incorporate the Chair's suggestions for the
2 retaining wall design;

3 2) the roof level over the stairwell to be reduced per the Chair's
4 suggestions;

5 3) subject to a reduction of the allowable construction hours on Saturdays
6 from 10:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M., and

7 4) pursuant to the staff report dated September 28, 2016. Donaldson

8 Seconded by: Menotti

9 AYES: Donaldson, Kent, Menotti, Giesen-Fields

10 NAYES: None

11 ABSENT: Friedland

12 **Motion passed**, 4-0-1

13
14 Chair Giesen-Fields identified the 14-day appeal period.

15
16 **B. ** Study Session ** Preliminary Review of a New Mixed Use Building at 841**

17 **Key Route Boulevard.** The subject site is a 3,270 square foot lot with an
18 existing 627 square foot two bedroom, one bathroom home built in 1924.
19 The site is zoned SC-Solano Commercial which allows for commercial and
20 mixed uses by right. The applicant is proposing to demolish the home and
21 construct a two-story mixed use building. The lower level will include dental
22 offices, 1,636 square feet in area. The second story will include a 1,306
23 square foot three bedroom apartment. Building height and elevations
24 have not been developed. Two off-street parking spaces are proposed
25 and will serve the apartment to comply with the requirements of Measure
26 D. Due to the narrow configuration of the lot, the project will require a
27 variance to waive eight (8) off-street parking spaces for the dentist use.

28 **Recommendation: This is a study session and no action will be taken.**

29
30 *CEQA: The project is Categorically exempt pursuant to Section 15332 "In-*
31 *Fill Development Projects."*

32
33 Ms. Hersch presented the staff report dated September 28, 2016.

34
35 **Dr. Scott Levine**, Berkeley Dentistry, described his plan to build a dental office on the ground
36 floor of the building with a three bedroom apartment on the second floor, and
37 acknowledged the concerns related to parking. He explained that he had a small
38 practice open four days a week, Monday through Thursday, 8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M.; not a
39 clinic with high turnover of patients, most days there were three employees in the office
40 and at any given time three patients would be served, and four treatment rooms had been
41 proposed.

42
43 PUBLIC COMMENTS OPENED

44
45 **Edward Adams**, Key Route Boulevard, expressed concern for the parking and noted the
46 issue was not patrons but the employees, particularly at the southern end.

1
2 **Claire Murphy**, Key Route Boulevard, also expressed concern for the parking associated
3 with the proposed use, particularly given the current traffic and parking problems, which
4 would severely impact the residential neighborhood.

5
6 **Don Murphy**, Key Route Boulevard, explained that the need for parking to accommodate
7 the businesses on Solano Avenue was greater than currently identified, and any study
8 would have to differentiate between the 90-minute parking and unrestricted parking.

9
10 **Leslie Hesdorfer**, Key Route Boulevard, stated the businesses on the north side of Solano did
11 not have off-street parking and employees and customers of those buildings were spilling
12 over onto Key Route Boulevard. In addition, the proposed design was not consistent with
13 General Plan Policy LU-3.7.

14
15 **Francesco Papalia**, Key Route Boulevard, expressed concern for the proposed design and
16 its impact on the adjacent residential uses and stated little had been presented to identify
17 what was being proposed.

18
19 **Derek Daly**, the project designer, explained there would be no windows on the building
20 given that it was on the property line. He described the limitations of the lot and the reasons
21 why the parking had to be squeezed in.

22
23 Dr. Levine responded to the suggestions to consider other alternative sites and explained
24 that he wanted to purchase a building to avoid losing his lease in the future, which was
25 what had precipitated his current request.

26
27 PUBLIC COMMENTS CLOSED

28
29 Chair Giesen-Fields supported the retention of the dwelling unit on the property given the
30 need for housing in the community; acknowledged the concern for parking on Key Route
31 Boulevard but appreciated that the design attempted to provide parking and supported
32 the retention of the on-street parking to the greatest extent possible. He was hesitant to
33 approve a project that would push the commercial zone into the residential zone, could
34 not support the project as presented given the parking variance, and suggested the
35 applicant consider other sites.

36
37 Commissioner Donaldson supported the preservation of the rental unit; supported the full
38 use of the site as residential as opposed to commercial and did not believe a dentistry use
39 was appropriate for the site; suggested the parking on Key Route Boulevard was not all
40 that bad; and could not support a variance.

41
42 Commissioner Menotti commented that he too would have a problem coming up with the
43 finding for a parking variance.

44
45 Commissioner Kent also did not see that the area was over parked, suggested there might
46 be a way to increase the parking spaces through the use of tandem parking; and

1 suggested the parking lot could be reconfigured to get four spaces on the lot; two
2 residential and two business.

- 3
4 **C. PA 16-028 Design Review Second Story Addition at 927 Polk Street.** The
5 applicant is seeking Design Review approval for a second story addition at
6 927 Polk Street. Revised plans have been submitted to the City in response
7 to the July 13, 2016 Planning & Zoning Commission meeting.
8 The subject site is a 5,000 square foot lot with an existing 1,140 square foot
9 two bedroom, one and a half bathroom home built in 1937. The applicant
10 is proposing to add 408 square feet at the rear of the home on the first floor.
11 This will accommodate a new bedroom, bathroom, and staircase. The
12 upper level 408 square foot addition includes a new master suite with a bay
13 window. This will result in a 1,956 square foot four bedroom, three and a
14 half bathroom home with a maximum height of 27 feet 3 inches. Two off-
15 street parking spaces are provided in the detached garage and driveway.
16 The home will retain its Minimal Traditional appearance. **Recommendation:**
17 **Review the revised plans and provide feedback to the applicant and staff.**
18 **Draft findings and Conditions of Approval are attached to the staff report**
19 **dated September 28, 2016.**

20
21 *CEQA: The project is Categorically exempt pursuant to Section 15303 "New*
22 *Construction or Conversion of Small Structures."*

23
24 Ms. Hersch presented the staff report dated September 28, 2016.

25
26 **Sean. Laal**, Form Architects, explained that the comments from Commissioners at the two
27 previous hearings had been incorporated into the plan including consistent trim around
28 the windows and a trellis to screen the east side of the property from the neighbors.

29
30 The Landscape Architect responded to Commissioner Kent's concerns with the flannel
31 bush shown on the landscape plan, and to his concern for the areas that had not been
32 called out, and acknowledged the request for more information.

33
34 PUBLIC COMMENTS OPENED

35
36 There was no one to speak.

37
38 PUBLIC COMMENTS CLOSED

39
40 Chair Giesen-Fields appreciated the rendering of the project which better explained the
41 massing, appreciated the back deck, the window trim details, the color choices, and the
42 refinements, and recommended the elimination of the decorative control joints at the bay
43 window.

44
45 Commissioner Kent expressed concern for the steep steps and recommended ways to
46 address that concern.

1
2 Commissioner Menotti noted that the applicant had addressed most of the prior issues,
3 appreciated the front view with the more symmetrical windows, clarified that the City had
4 received no additional comments from neighbors, and with the landscape plan he was
5 comfortable with the project.

6
7 Commissioner Donaldson stated that great improvements had been made with the
8 design, his problem continued to be with a level main floor all the way through, noted the
9 steep stairs were an after effect of that program, and for that reason he did not support
10 the project.

11
12 Commissioner Kent was disappointed with the landscape plan and requested a complete,
13 functional landscape plan; while he liked the plant choices he suggested they were in the
14 wrong location and potentially the wrong size, had not been thought through, and there
15 were blank areas in the plan.

16
17 **Motion to approve PA 16-028 for 927 Polk Street, subject to:**

- 18 1) a condition that the landscape plan be revised per Commissioner
19 Kent's comments, to return as a Consent Calendar item for Commission
20 review while the project is in plan check;
21 2) staff to verify that the exterior stairs were consistent with code
22 requirements;
23 3) the elimination of the decorative control joints at the bay window; and
24 4) pursuant to the staff report dated September 28, 2016. Giesen-Fields

25 Seconded by: Menotti

26 AYES: Kent, Menotti, Giesen-Fields

27 NAYES: Donaldson

28 ABSENT: Friedland

29 **Motion passed, 3-1-1**

30
31 Chair Giesen-Fields identified the 14-day appeal period.

32
33 **7. NEW BUSINESS**

- 34
35 **A. **Study Session** Residential Design Guidelines Update Study Session.** The
36 Planning & Zoning Commission will review and take public comment on
37 proposed revisions to the Residential Design Guidelines. The Design
38 Guidelines were adopted in 2009 and are identified in the Albany 2035
39 General Plan (Action LU-2.C Amendments to Design Guidelines) to be
40 amended and expanded. The Commission to consider proposed revisions
41 and provide feedback to staff. **Recommendation: No action to be taken**
42 **as the item is discussion only.**

43
44 **CEQA: The project is exempt from CEQA pursuant to Section 15061(b)(3).**

45
46 Ms. Hersch presented the staff report dated September 28, 2016.

1
2 The Commission discussed the draft update and offered the following comments:
3

- 4 • Consider separate design guidelines for multifamily, potentially using the old San
5 Pablo Avenue Design Guidelines as a resource (Donaldson);
6
- 7 • Consider privacy sensitive design tools (Donaldson);
8
- 9 • Consider on-structure decks and patios (Kent/Menotti);
10
- 11 • Consider how to deal with modernism (Menotti);
12
- 13 • Consider topics such as sustainability in design; curb appeal; paint color; roof-top
14 solar; electric vehicle chargers; Juliette balconies; relationship of landscaping to the
15 building; tree protection; utilities such as hiding landscape sprinkler valves, no gas
16 meters in the front, and garbage can storage;
17
- 18 • Include specificity in landscape plans and examples of acceptable site plans and
19 floor plans;
20
- 21 • Extend an invitation or notify local architects to review the Residential Design
22 Guidelines Update (Giesen-Fields);
23
- 24 • Specifically for Element 1, to include the statement: "The front yard and front of the
25 house are a property's contribution to the community and landscaping is an
26 important aesthetic element of home design" (Giesen-Fields).
27

28 **8. ANNOUNCEMENTS/COMMUNICATIONS/DISCUSSION**
29

30 Commissioner Donaldson advised that he would not be available for the next meeting on
31 October 12.
32

33 Commissioner Menotti distributed information on a national Rail-Volution Conference,
34 Building Livable Communities Around Transit, scheduled from October 9 to 12.
35

36 **9. NEXT MEETING:** October 12, 2016
37

38 **10. ADJOURNMENT**
39

40 The meeting was adjourned at approximately 10:30 P.M.

41 Next regular meeting: Wednesday, October 12, 2016 at 7:00 P.M. at Albany City Hall.
42
43
44

45 _____
46 Submitted by: Anne Hersch, City Planner

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5

Jeff Bond, Community Development Director