

*City of Albany*  
**Planning & Zoning Commission**  
**Minutes of February 8, 2017 Meeting**

1 Note: These minutes are subject to Planning & Zoning Commission approval. The minutes are  
2 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, February 8, 2017.

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 Commissioner Donaldson removed Item 4-1, and Commissioner Kent removed  
22 Item 4-2 from the Consent Calendar for discussion.

23  
24 **4-1. Planning & Zoning Commission Meeting Minutes from January 25, 2017**

25  
26 Commissioner Donaldson requested an amendment to the last paragraph on  
27 Page 4: *Commissioners commented that there appeared to be a disconnect*  
28 *between what had been approved and what was now being submitted by*  
29 *Sprouts, and suggested that few customers would be drawn to Sprouts by the size*  
30 *of the sign.* To Page 5, Line 12: *Vice Chair Donaldson suggested there was not*  
31 *enough margin around the sign on the east elevation, it did not fit into the space,*  
32 *and should be reduced in size.*

33  
34 **Motion to approve Item A, Planning & Zoning Commission Meeting Minutes**  
35 **from January 25, 2017, as amended.** Menotti

36 Seconded by: Donaldson  
37 AYES: Donaldson, Kent, Menotti, Giesen-Fields

38

1 NAYES: None  
2 ABSENT: Friedland  
3 **Motion passed**, 4-0-1  
4

5 **4.2 PA 17-001 Design Review, Parking Reduction, and Conditional Use Permit**  
6 **for 625 Stannage Avenue.** The applicant is seeking Design Review, Parking  
7 Reduction, and Conditional Use Permit approval for a house lift at 625  
8 Stannage Avenue. The subject property is a 3,750 square foot lot with an  
9 existing two bedroom, one bathroom 1,091 square foot home built in 1911.  
10 The applicant is proposing to lift the home by 3 feet 6 inches creating legal  
11 ceiling height on the lower level adding 430 square feet of new living area.  
12 The existing footprint of the home will not expand. A Conditional Use Permit  
13 is required to extend the non-conforming north wall (2 feet 2 inches) and  
14 the west wall (13 feet 4 inches) vertically. This will result in a three bedroom,  
15 two and a half bathroom 1,521 square foot home with a maximum height  
16 of 28 feet. A Parking Reduction is also requested due to insufficient length  
17 in the existing driveway for a second off-street parking space. One off-  
18 street parking space is provided in the existing garage. No work is proposed  
19 for the existing detached accessory dwelling unit. **Recommendation:**  
20 **Review and approve subject to the findings and Conditions of Approval**  
21 **attached to the staff report dated February 8, 2017.**  
22

23 **CEQA: The project is Categorically exempt pursuant to Section 15303 "New**  
24 **Construction or Conversion of Small Structures."**  
25

26 In response to Commissioner Kent as to the floor area ratio (FAR), Ms. Hersch advised that  
27 staff had worked closely with the project architect, and pursuant to the provision in the  
28 Code that allowed for exemptions for mechanical equipment rooms, both the mechanical  
29 equipment room and the covered parking were exempt from the FAR.  
30

31 Commissioner Kent referred to a letter from the neighbor to the rear concerned for the  
32 height of the structure that could shadow the property in the rear, but did not believe that  
33 would be an issue. With respect to the landscape plan, he questioned the location of the  
34 drainage for the swale between the two buildings, with the same concern for the pavers  
35 in the driveway. He wanted to make sure the water collected would somehow be  
36 transferred to a storm drain.  
37

38 **Motion to approve Item 4-2, PA 17-001 for 625 Stannage Avenue, subject to**  
39 **the comments related to drainage, and pursuant to the staff report dated**  
40 **February 8, 2017.** Giesen-Fields

41 Seconded by: Menotti  
42 AYES: Donaldson, Kent, Menotti, Giesen-Fields  
43 NAYES: None  
44 ABSENT: Friedland  
45 **Motion passed**, 4-0-1  
46

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

2  
3 **5. PUBLIC COMMENT**

4  
5 There were no comments from the public.

6  
7 **6. DISCUSSIONS AND POSSIBLE ACTION ON MATTERS RELATED TO THE FOLLOWING**  
8 **ITEMS:**

9  
10 **6.1 Study Session PA 16-070 Design Review and Parking Exception for a Second**  
11 **Story Addition at 937 Polk Street.** The applicant is seeking Design Review  
12 and Parking Exception approval for a second story addition at 937 Polk  
13 Street. The subject property is a 3,100 square foot lot with an existing two  
14 bedroom, one bathroom, 910 square foot home built in 1924. The applicant  
15 is proposing to excavate the existing lower level to gain legal ceiling height  
16 adding 690 square feet of new living area including a living room, family  
17 room, bedroom, and two bathrooms. The applicant is seeking to exempt  
18 the lower level from the floor area ratio calculations. The proposed 867  
19 square foot second story addition includes a master suite, two bedrooms,  
20 and bathroom. A new front porch and rear deck are also proposed for the  
21 home. Parking is provided in the attached single-car garage. A Parking  
22 Exception is required to allow for the required second off-street parking  
23 space to be located in the front yard setback. This will result in a five  
24 bedroom, four and a half bathroom 1,703 square foot home. The  
25 architectural style of the home is proposed to change from Bungalow to  
26 Craftsman in style. This is a study session and no action will be taken.  
27 **Recommendation: Staff recommends that the Planning & Zoning**  
28 **Commission review the proposed plans and provide feedback to the**  
29 **applicant and staff. This is a study session and no action will be taken.**

30  
31 **CEQA: The project is Categorically exempt pursuant to Section 15303 "New**  
32 **Construction or Conversion of Small Structures."**

33  
34 Associate Planner Christopher Tan presented the staff report dated February 8, 2017.

35  
36 The Project Architect presented the plans for the project and described the purpose of the  
37 project to add additional space to the small home to accommodate the family and  
38 occasional visitors to the home. He described the French drain that would direct the runoff  
39 into the bio-retention area on the south side and explained there would be another bio-  
40 retention area on the north side. In response to questions as to whether just the garage  
41 could be lowered, he described the intention of the basement to offer additional space.  
42 He also commented, when asked, that the groundwater level was pretty low.

43  
44 PUBLIC COMMENTS OPENED

45  
46 There was no one to speak

1  
2 PUBLIC COMMENTS CLOSED

3  
4 Chair Giesen-Fields liked the design overall, expressed concern for excavation as a  
5 loophole to the FAR, and sought an opinion from the City Attorney as to whether there  
6 would be an FAR or egress concern in that case. Based on Code Section 20.24.050(b)(1)(c)  
7 related to the measurement of height, he suggested that should include the stairwells  
8 adjacent to the garage and the light well in the back. Options to address the FAR concern  
9 were discussed while maintaining necessary egress, and the Chair urged the applicant to  
10 continue working with staff to address those issues.

11  
12 Commissioner Donaldson suggested the half floor at the base was a floor and should count  
13 as part of the FAR; suggested digging out for the garage would allow the proposal to stay  
14 within the height limit; and had a problem with a subterranean living area, which should  
15 count as FAR and which would exceed the allowable FAR. He did not see how the rooms  
16 could be downstairs.

17  
18 With respect to design, Commissioner Donaldson suggested the front was attractive. As to  
19 the south elevation, the bedroom window was opposite the south side neighbor's  
20 bedroom window and might have to be realigned. He liked the punch outs on the rear  
21 and on the north side, the treatment of the gables on the south elevation, the windows,  
22 the landscape plan and supported some trees in the backyard, the side lights on the door,  
23 the door, the porch, the Craftsman style columns, and the carriage door on the garage,  
24 although he had preferred the old form of the original MacGregor style.

25  
26 Commissioner Menotti characterized the proposal as very creative but also expressed  
27 concern for the precedent that could be set and he too sought a clarification of the FAR  
28 issue. Speaking to the design, he suggested there should be some symmetry to the rear  
29 facing window.

30  
31 As to whether there was a concern that the bay window detail had not been centered on  
32 the east elevation, the Commission suggested the closet size might need to be reduced a  
33 bit to allow the centering of that element.

34  
35 Commissioner Kent suggested there was a disconnect between the house and the rear  
36 yard and suggested it could be gracefully integrated. He expressed concern there were  
37 no trees, liked the wide driveway that encouraged easy parking, but suggested the  
38 driveway be widened a bit more to avoid damage to the planting and to make it more  
39 functional.

40  
41 Chair Giesen-Fields emphasized the importance of an accurate and up-to-date  
42 landscape plan, liked the idea of the path at grade from the front along the side of the  
43 building to the back to create accessibility to the backyard without having to use stairs,  
44 and supported a single path at grade from the front to the back.

1 In terms of the overall plan, Chair Giesen-Fields urged communication with staff and the  
2 City Attorney and suggested including the whole lower portion in the FAR which would  
3 require the removal of the light well and both of the exterior stairwells, and similarly the front  
4 entryway off the driveway might also have to be excluded. With respect to the floor plan  
5 of the basement level, he did not see the need for exterior access to the basement and  
6 no egress stairwell from the bedroom would likely be required. Another alternative could  
7 be to just excavate the garage and not include the living spaces in the basement level.  
8 He asked the applicant to consider the location of the rear window on the second floor to  
9 better balance that elevation and consider centering that window. He stated the project  
10 was nicely designed, he liked the Craftsman style windows, the eaves and overhangs, and  
11 appreciated the renovation of the front main entry. He suggested the proposal was on  
12 the right track, although some details needed to be refined.

13  
14 **7. NEW BUSINESS**

15  
16 **7.1 Study Session to Review Residential Parking Standards.** With the recent  
17 voter passage of Measure N1, the Commission to review and make  
18 recommendations for required parking standards for new residential  
19 construction in the City of Albany. Staff has prepared draft revisions to  
20 Chapter 20.28 for the Commission to consider. **Recommendation: The**  
21 **Planning & Zoning Commission to review draft Code revisions and provide**  
22 **feedback to staff. This is a study session and no formal action is required.**

23  
24 **CEQA: The project is exempt from CEQA pursuant to Section 15061(b)(3).**

25  
26 City Planner Anne Hersch presented the staff report dated February 8, 2017, and presented  
27 draft revisions to Chapter 20.28 for the Commission to consider.

28  
29 On the review of the draft revisions, the Commission made the following comments and  
30 recommendations:

- 31
- 32 • Amend the definition of Single-Family Dwelling to recognize secondary dwelling  
33 units. (Donaldson)
  - 34 • Make all references consistent to “dwelling units” and not living units. (Giesen-Fields)
  - 35 • Recognize equivalency of secondary dwelling units to State referenced accessory  
36 dwelling units (ADU). (Menotti)
  - 37 • Question the overlap of Two-Family Dwellings and Multifamily Dwellings and  
38 requested a clarification of the differences. (Giesen-Fields)
  - 39 • Include in the definition of Residential Mixed Use Development “physically  
40 integrated structures on a single lot or two contiguous lots.” (Giesen-Fields)
  - 41
  - 42
  - 43
  - 44
  - 45

- 1 • Amend definition of Shared Housing by striking “several households of various  
2 demographics,” and clarify that not all three were required by stating “social,  
3 economic, or housing affordability.” (Giesen-Fields)  
4
- 5 • Amend definition of Senior Citizen Housing Development by stating “Senior citizen  
6 housing development is anything that qualifies under the state and federal  
7 standards.” (Giesen-Fields)  
8
- 9 • Amend definition of Secondary Residential Unit by stating “A secondary residential  
10 unit has a separate entrance from the main home with complete and independent  
11 living facilities.”  
12
- 13 • Focus on Multifamily Housing in meeting Regional Housing Need Allocation (RHNA)  
14 requirements. (Menotti)  
15
- 16 • Regarding Use of Required Yards and whether that could be omitted, the  
17 Commission discussed the pros and cons and decided to keep the language  
18 requiring the granting of an exception for possible elimination after debate and City  
19 Council consideration.  
20
- 21 • Clarify with uniformity bike space, bike storage and bike parking categories in the  
22 draft; define secure bike parking; and potentially include in the bicycle parking  
23 section where bonus bike parking might be considered. (Giesen-Fields)  
24
- 25 • Establish a policy for Car-Share Service, Unbundled Parking, and Electric Vehicles as  
26 a preamble to the definition and determine how to encourage and integrate them  
27 into the Zoning Ordinance. Recommended that unbundled parking be allowed on  
28 affordable housing projects over 50 units. (Kent/Donaldson)  
29
- 30 • Define “Main Building” given references to main building in the document. (Giesen-  
31 Fields)  
32
- 33 • Recommend one space per dwelling unit for residential mixed use with potential  
34 reductions for bike parking, car sharing, and transit access; for commercial use refer  
35 to the other tables. For two-family dwelling units, suggested 1.5 spaces per dwelling  
36 unit, with an exception for the third space with an asterisk and footnote “may be  
37 modified subject to Planning & Zoning Commission review subject to a conditional  
38 use permit, subject to certain exceptions”. Did not support reductions for  
39 motorcycles or bicycles with anything except multifamily. (Donaldson/Giesen-  
40 Fields)  
41
- 42 • Mitigate transportation related to multifamily development parking maximums.  
43 Similar to the El Cerrito Specific Plan. (Menotti)  
44
- 45 • Question whether the design of UC Village was meeting the parking demand.  
46 (Donaldson)

- 1 • Consider minimum parking standards for multifamily dwelling units such as up to one  
2 space per unit with a basic Transportation Demand Management (TDM) package  
3 in target areas, such as along San Pablo, Solano, and the area of El Cerrito Plaza,  
4 providing transportation services as opposed to parking. A counter suggestion  
5 proposed a one parking space per unit with exceptions and a TDM package.  
6 (Menotti/Giesen-Fields)  
7
- 8 • Consider employee parking standards for transitional or supportive housing such as  
9 a minimum of one space for every two employees.  
10
- 11 • Include a policy statement for TDM plans which could result in a parking reduction,  
12 with a footnote with use permit provision to allow a reduction on a case-by-case  
13 basis based on the TDM practices incorporated in the actual development.  
14 (Commission)  
15
- 16 • Request update on the car ownership ratio in Albany as part of the parking  
17 standards. (Donaldson)  
18
- 19 • Require secure interior bike parking for multifamily and residential mixed use.  
20 (Donaldson)  
21
- 22 • Reduce car parking requirement potentially by 10 percent if bike parking is  
23 provided. (Donaldson)  
24
- 25 • With respect to exceptions for non-residential uses in a residential mixed use  
26 development, Ms. Hersch proposed to strike out some language which could be  
27 addressed through the use permit process. Commissioner Menotti wanted to revisit  
28 that after seeing the recommendations from the Economic Development  
29 Committee, although Chair Giesen-Fields wanted to keep in the provision for  
30 residential use but strike out the 50 percent. To be discussed with the next review.  
31
- 32 • Suggest off-site parking be considered for commercial uses. (Donaldson)  
33
- 34 • With respect to findings (on Page 16) recommended "Any required off-street  
35 parking spaces which are permitted in front yard areas are designed to minimize  
36 aesthetic and noise intrusions upon any adjacent property." (Giesen-Fields)  
37
- 38 • Consider steep slope parking standards. (Menotti)  
39
- 40 • Consider in-lieu fees for projects of public improvements within the CIP for Solano  
41 and San Pablo. (Commission)  
42
- 43 • Reconsider the required dimension of a parking stall, from 20 feet long to 18 feet  
44 long. (Kent)  
45

1 Commissioner Menotti thanked staff for the preparation of the parking standards so soon  
2 after the election.

3  
4 The proposal would return to the Commission in a more formalized draft form for  
5 Commission formal recommendation to the City Council in late March.

6  
7 PUBLIC COMMENTS OPENED

8  
9 There was no one to speak.

10  
11 PUBLIC COMMENTS CLOSED

12  
13 **8. ANNOUNCEMENTS/COMMUNICATIONS/DISCUSSION**

14  
15 **8.1 Chair and Vice Chair for 2017**

16  
17 **Motion to select *Erik Giesen-Fields* as Chair of the Planning & Zoning  
18 Commission for 2017.** Menotti

19 Seconded by: Donaldson

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

21 NAYES: None

22 ABSENT: Friedland

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

24  
25 **Motion to select *Doug Donaldson* as Vice Chair of the Planning & Zoning  
26 Commission for 2017.** Giesen-Fields

27 Seconded by: Menotti

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

29 NAYES: None

30 ABSENT: Friedland

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

32  
33 **9. ADJOURNMENT**

34  
35 The meeting was adjourned at 9:42 P.M.

36 Next regular meeting: Wednesday, March 8, 2017 at 7:00 P.M. at Albany City Hall

37  
38  
39 \_\_\_\_\_  
40 Submitted by: Anne Hersch, City Planner

41  
42  
43 \_\_\_\_\_  
44 **Jeff Bond, Community Development Director**  
45