

*City of Albany*  
**Planning & Zoning Commission**  
**Minutes of March 14, 2018 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 and Zoning Commission was  
7 called to order by Chair Kent in the City Council Chambers at 7:00 P.M. on  
8 Wednesday, March 14, 2018.

9  
10 2. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

11  
12 3. **ROLL CALL**

13  
14 Present: Donaldson, Giesen-Fields, Watty, Jennings, Kent  
15 Absent: None  
16 Staff Present: City Planner Anne Hersch  
17 Associate Planner Christopher Tan

18  
19 4. **EX PARTE COMMUNICATION DISCLOSURES**

20  
21 Commissioner Donaldson reported he spoke with the applicant and neighbors about the  
22 application for 1120 Garfield during his visit to the site.

23  
24 5. **CONSENT CALENDAR**

25  
26 5-1. **Planning & Zoning Commission Meeting Minutes February 14, 2018**  
27 **Recommendation: Approve Planning & Zoning Commission Meeting Minutes.**

28  
29 **Motion to approve** the Consent Calendar. Donaldson  
30 Seconded by: Giesen-Fields  
31 AYES: Donaldson, Giesen-Fields, Jennings, Kent  
32 NAYES: None  
33 ABSTAINING: Watty  
34 ABSENT: None  
35 **Motion passed, 4-0-1-0**  
36

1       6.       PUBLIC COMMENT

2  
3       None

4  
5       7.       DISCUSSIONS AND POSSIBLE ACTION ON MATTERS RELATED TO THE FOLLOWING ITEMS:

6  
7       **7-1. PA 18-015 Design Review for a Two-Level Addition at 1120 Garfield Avenue** - The  
8       applicant is seeking Design Review approval for a two-level addition at 1120  
9       Garfield Avenue. The subject site is a 3,750-sq.-ft. lot with a 2-bedroom, 1-  
10       bathroom 842-sq.- ft. house built in 1922. The applicant is proposing a 562-sq.-  
11       ft. ground-floor addition and a 400-sq.- ft. second-story addition. The ground-  
12       floor addition includes a laundry room, bedroom, and bathroom. The second-  
13       story addition is proposed to be a new master suite. The addition exterior  
14       includes fiber-cement, horizontal siding, and shingles. A combination of flat,  
15       gable, and shed roof forms are proposed for the addition with a composition  
16       shingle roof. A balcony is proposed off the master suite on the second level  
17       and will face the rear yard. The existing architectural style is proposed to  
18       remain and the addition will have a contemporary appearance. This will result  
19       in a 4-bedroom, 3-bathroom 1,804-sq.-ft. home with a maximum height of 25  
20       feet. Parking is provided in the existing driveway.

21       **Recommendation: Staff recommends that the Planning & Zoning Commission**  
22       **review the proposed project and provide feedback to the applicant and staff.**  
23       **Draft conditions of approval and findings are included should the Commission**  
24       **decide to take action.**

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

28  
29       Associate Planner Christopher Tan presented the staff report dated March 14, 2018.

30  
31       **Hanson Wood**, property owner, reported the motivation for the addition is to provide space  
32       for a growing family and to increase functionality of the home. The lot size, the setbacks,  
33       and the configuration of the existing house constrain the design of an addition. He hoped  
34       the Planning Commission would accept the one-story option.

35  
36       **Greg VanMechelen**, architect, clarified that both parking spaces measure 18 feet by 8 1/2  
37       feet. The configuration of the existing home is not typical and will allow development along  
38       the east side only. After subtracting the front and rear setbacks and required parking  
39       spaces, developable area is only 34 feet in length. A fully compliant one-story addition  
40       with four bedrooms and a bathroom would cover a good portion of the limited open  
41       space. The original plans as submitted fully comply with zoning requirements. Option 3b,  
42       a two-story addition, is an attempt to address neighbors' concerns by decreasing the  
43       height and moving the bedroom to face the east. Option 4, the one-story addition, fits the  
44       site and addresses neighbors' concerns but requires a parking exception. If the  
45       Commission directs, landscaping can be added to screen the parking space.

1  
2 When asked, Mr. VanMechelen indicated the square drawn at the east property line is a  
3 portable shed. In option 4, the master bedroom will be approximately 5 1/2-6 feet above  
4 grade to provide some privacy. He explained the differences among the original  
5 submission, Option 3b, and Option 4. If the Commission cannot make the findings for  
6 Option 4, then the owners prefer Option 3b.

7  
8 PUBLIC COMMENTS OPENED

9  
10 **Michael Green**, 601 Kains, stated the two-story addition would have a profound impact on  
11 his home, does not comply with guidelines, and is not compatible with the neighborhood.  
12 Neighbors objected to the original submission but now support Option 4. Neighbors  
13 typically park cars in the front setback.

14  
15 **Eloisa Ebery**, 605 Kains, opposed a two-story addition because it would block her views  
16 and affect her privacy. The proposed second-story balcony would be next to a bedroom  
17 window in her home. She questioned the design being compatible with the neighborhood.

18  
19 **Maria Mejia**, 1124 Garfield, preferred the single-story addition and supported the  
20 Commission granting a parking exception for it.

21  
22 **Max Weintraub**, 415 Cornell, supported the Commission granting a parking exception as  
23 the neighbors' support for the project should be respected.

24  
25 **Cody Schrey**, 612 Kains, favored the one-story addition as the two-story addition would  
26 block his views.

27  
28 **Robert Noonan**, 609 Kains, expressed concern about a two-story addition blocking views  
29 and sunlight to solar panels.

30  
31 **Maureen Sandidge**, 529 Kains, supported the single-story option. The impacts of a parking  
32 exception would be minimal compared to a two-story addition.

33  
34 PUBLIC COMMENTS CLOSED

35  
36 Commissioner Donaldson could make the findings for a parking exception. He liked Option  
37 4 and felt it was an appropriate design for the addition. He was impressed with the  
38 neighbors' comments and affinity for the neighborhood.

39  
40 Commissioner Jennings appreciated the neighbors' attendance at the meeting and  
41 written comments to support the project. Based on information presented, she could find  
42 a way to support a parking exception if the applicant presents that as their preference.

43  
44 When asked, City Planner Anne Hersch explained the noticing requirements contained in  
45 Government Code Section 65090. The City does not have a formal policy regarding the

1 applicant's outreach to neighbors, but staff does encourage it. Story poles must be  
2 installed ten days in advance of the hearing. The crux of the findings is a design that  
3 minimizes aesthetic and noise intrusion upon adjacent properties. The single-story design is  
4 the least intrusive design to adjacent properties.

5  
6 Commissioner Watty could make the findings for a parking exception. Of the plans  
7 submitted, Option 3b is a better, more integrated architectural design based on massing;  
8 however, she would have no concerns about proceeding with Option 4 should plans be  
9 submitted.

10  
11 When asked, Mr. VanMechelen explained that Options 3b and 4 have basically the same  
12 footprint; however, Option 3b has two stories. To achieve four-bedrooms in one story, the  
13 footprint will have to expand. By eliminating one legal parking space, the one-story  
14 addition can expand to the front of the lot. If both parking spaces are required, the one-  
15 story addition will have to expand to the rear.

16  
17 Commissioner Giesen-Fields would be receptive to findings for a parking exception. If the  
18 applicant proceeds with review of Option 4, he requested the applicant consider reducing  
19 the alcove/play area to create a buffer between parking spaces and the sidewalk.

20  
21 Mr. VanMechelen indicated the distance between the sidewalk and front property line is  
22 4 feet.

23  
24 Chair Kent noted the conflicts between expanding a home, maintaining open space, and  
25 impacts to neighbors.

26  
27 **7-2. PA 17-067 Design Review for a Second-Story Addition at 721 Talbot Avenue -**

28 The applicant is seeking Design Review approval for a second-story addition  
29 at 721 Talbot Avenue. The subject site is a 5,000-sq.-ft. lot with a 3-bedroom, 2-  
30 bathroom 1,263-sq.-ft. house built in 1910. The applicant is proposing to raise  
31 the home to accommodate legal ceiling height for the existing basement  
32 level. The proposed first level (former basement level) is proposed to include  
33 two bedrooms, a bathroom, laundry room, kitchen, living, and dining rooms.  
34 The second story is proposed to include 3 bedrooms, a bathroom, and a  
35 master suite. Existing setbacks are nonconforming, and the proposed design  
36 will conform with all setback requirements. This will result in a 6-bedroom, 3-  
37 bathroom 2,313-sq.-ft. home with a maximum height of 21'-6". Parking is  
38 provided in the existing driveway. The existing architecture of the home will  
39 remain the same.

40 **Recommendation: Staff recommends that the Planning & Zoning Commission**  
41 **review and approve the proposed project subject to the attached findings and**  
42 **Conditions of Approval.**

43  
44 **CEQA: The project is Categorically exempt pursuant to Section 15303 "New**  
45 **Construction or Conversion of Small Structures."**  
46

1 Commissioner Donaldson recused himself from this item as he owns property located within  
2 500 feet of the subject property.

3  
4 Commissioner Watty recused herself from this item as she is a party to a trust that is located  
5 within 500 feet of the subject property.

6  
7 Associate Planner Tan presented the staff report dated March 14, 2018.

8  
9 Tom Biggs, architect, advised that the property owner has a large family, and the home  
10 needs work to be functional. He reviewed design changes made in response to  
11 Commission comments and to improve functionality.

12  
13 PUBLIC COMMENTS OPENED

14  
15 None

16  
17 PUBLIC COMMENTS CLOSED

18  
19 Chair Kent felt the current layout of the interior is vastly improved and functions well.

20  
21 Commissioner Giesen-Fields reported the current architect has responded to Commission  
22 comments. He appreciated the palette of materials, the horizontal-width siding versus  
23 stucco, and the formal front entry. The simplicity of the design serves the house well. He  
24 encouraged the applicant to fatten up the water table, perhaps give it a dimension to  
25 match the eave. The Design Guidelines discourage the use of vinyl windows. Natural  
26 wood or wood clad windows would be appreciated.

27  
28 Commissioner Jennings agreed that the design is simple but elegant. In the absence of  
29 established criteria for exceptional design, it is difficult to make findings for exceptional  
30 design.

31  
32 City Planner Hersh read the criteria for exceptional design from the Design Guidelines.

33  
34 **Motion to approve PA 17-065** for 721 Talbot Avenue with an additional  
35 condition of approval for windows to be wood clad, the manufacturer to be  
36 approved by staff; the applicant to consider the design of the water table;  
37 and pursuant to the staff report dated March 14, 2018. Giesen-Fields

38 Seconded by: Jennings

39 AYES: Giesen-Fields, Jennings, Kent

40 NAYES: None

41 RECUSED: Donaldson, Watty

42 ABSENT: None

43 **Motion passed, 3-0-2-0**

44  
45 Chair Kent noted the 14-day appeal period.

46

1           **7-3. PA 18-017 Minor Use Permit to Allow a Series of Temporary Public Performances**  
2           **on the Albany Bulb** - The applicant is seeking a minor use permit to allow a

3           series of temporary public performances and arts events on the City-owned  
4           Bulb portion of the Albany Waterfront. Anticipated events include: acoustical  
5           music; dramatic and dance performances; storytelling and spoken word  
6           gatherings; and temporary art installations. Events are expected to attract  
7           from 50 to up to 120 attendees including performers. No physical changes are  
8           proposed. The park will be open to the general public during the events.  
9           Public parking is available on Buchanan Street. The details of individual events  
10          will be reviewed by City staff and the Arts Committee as appropriate.

11          **Recommendation: Staff recommends that the Planning & Zoning Commission**  
12          **review and approve the proposed project subject to the attached findings and**  
13          **Conditions of Approval.**

14  
15          **CEQA: The project is exempt pursuant to Section 15061(b)(3).**

16  
17          Commissioner Donaldson reported that he and Commissioner Giesen-Fields as Albany  
18          Community Foundation Board Members do not have a conflict of interest for this item as  
19          determined by the Fair Political Practices Commission.

20  
21          Community Development Director Jeff Bond presented the staff report dated March 14,  
22          2018. When asked, Director Bond indicated the property owner, agencies, and  
23          stakeholders to which notice was sent and explained parking arrangements. The current  
24          meeting is the Commission's opportunity for review. Should problems arise, staff will bring  
25          them to the Commission for review, and the Commission can request a review at any time.  
26          If the Commission directs, staff can update the Commission periodically.

27  
28          Susan Moffat, Love the Bulb, advised that Love the Bulb events provide an opportunity to  
29          educate the public about the history of environmental movements and the history of  
30          informal art. Events bring together diverse audiences. Love the Bulb partners have  
31          successful, well-established relationships with local park districts. Love the Bulb is happy to  
32          contribute to protecting and enhancing the valuable art and culture of the Albany Bulb.

33  
34          In response to questions, Ms. Moffat reported We Players will participate in an event at the  
35          Bulb. Events may be music, dance, theater, or participatory. Events are publicized through  
36          flyers, Eventbrite, and an email list. Some events will be free and some ticketed. Access to  
37          ticketed events will be controlled by the physical characteristics of the location or by  
38          ticketholders wearing a sash or carrying a plaque. Trash is typically not an issue at events,  
39          but containers will be provided and removed. Events will be grouped into a mini festival  
40          over a weekend in the spring and again in the fall. All events are acoustic; no amplification  
41          will be needed.

42  
43          PUBLIC COMMENTS OPENED

44  
45          None

46

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS CLOSED

2  
3 Commissioner Jennings was excited to hear of these events. The events sound as though  
4 they will be complementary to the natural environment. Perhaps Love the Bulb could  
5 report to staff following an event.

6  
7 Commissioner felt this is an opportunity to activate public space and to introduce people  
8 to the Bulb.

9  
10 Commissioner Donaldson shared his experiences with Love the Bulb events.

11  
12 Commissioner Giesen-Fields felt uses of the Albany Bulb can be polarizing, but the  
13 proposed events fit the ideals of good stewardship of the land and will not physically  
14 change the Bulb.

15  
16 **Motion to approve PA 18-017** for the Albany Bulb pursuant to the staff report  
17 dated March 14, 2018. Donaldson  
18 Seconded by: Jennings  
19 AYES: Donaldson, Giesen-Fields, Watty, Jennings, Kent  
20 NAYES: None  
21 ABSTAINING: None  
22 ABSENT: None  
23 **Motion passed, 5-0-0-0**

24  
25 Chair Kent noted the 14-day appeal period.

26  
27 **8. NEW BUSINESS**

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

30  
31 **10. NEXT MEETING: March 28, 2018**

32  
33 **11. ADJOURNMENT**

34  
35 The meeting was adjourned at 8:52 P.M.  
36 Next regular meeting: Wednesday, March 14, 2018 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**