



PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION

Virtual Meeting
Albany, CA 94706

MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 2021

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1. CALL TO ORDER / PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chair Watty called the regular meeting of the Planning and Zoning Commission to order at 7:00 p.m. on Wednesday, February 24, 2021.

2. ROLL CALL

Present: Donaldson, MacLeod, Momin, Pilch, Watty
Absent: None
Staff Present: Planning Manager Anne Hersch
Associate Planner Christopher Tan

3. EX PARTE COMMUNICATIONS

None

4. CONSENT CALENDAR

4-1. Planning & Zoning Commission Meeting Minutes of January 27, 2021

Recommendation: Staff recommends that the Planning & Zoning Commission review and approve the meeting minutes.

PUBLIC HEARING OPENED

None

PUBLIC HEARING CLOSED

When asked, Planning Manager Anne Hersch advised that the Commission continued the hearing for 1248 Portland to March 10, 2021.

Motion to approve the meeting minutes of January 27, 2021 as presented. Donaldson
Seconded by Pilch

AYES: Donaldson, MacLeod, Momin, Pilch, Watty

NAYES: None

ABSTAINING: None

ABSENT: None

Motion passed, 5-0-0-0

5. PUBLIC COMMENT

None



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- 1 **6. DISCUSSION & POSSIBLE ACTION ON MATTERS RELATED TO THE FOLLOWING ITEMS:**
- 2
- 3 None
- 4
- 5 **7. NEW BUSINESS**
- 6
- 7 **7-1. 2023-2031 Housing Element Study Session** – The Planning & Zoning Commission will
- 8 receive a background report on the Housing Element update process for the 2023-2031
- 9 cycle.
- 10
- 11 **Recommendation:** Staff recommends that the Planning & Zoning Commission receive
- 12 the consultant presentation. This is a Study Session and no action will be taken.
- 13
- 14 **CEQA:** Staff will work with a CEQA consultant on a proper analysis of environmental
- 15 impacts.
- 16
- 17 Barry Miller, Housing Element Consultant, presented the staff report dated February 24, 2021.
- 18 He reviewed the Housing Element contents, goals in the existing Housing Element, the Regional
- 19 Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA), income categories, RHNA for the Bay Area and Albany,
- 20 methods to fulfill the RHNA, sites in the current Housing Element, changes to site selection, new
- 21 requirements, community engagement, and next steps.
- 22
- 23 PUBLIC HEARING OPENED
- 24
- 25 **Eric Biber** suggested the Commission consider the probability of development as a metric for
- 26 determining the number of sites needed and an increase in floor area ratio (FAR) throughout the
- 27 City. Staff could engage UC Berkeley regarding the design of the University Village project.
- 28
- 29 PUBLIC HEARING CLOSED
- 30
- 31 Commissioner MacLeod believed up-zoning could help the City meet the RHNA, particularly along
- 32 Solano Avenue. Staff has proposed a good and timely process for updating the Housing Element.
- 33
- 34 Chair Watty remarked that accessory dwelling units (ADU) will help the City increase density and
- 35 meet the RHNA. The Update process may be an opportunity to weave the City's zoning standards
- 36 with adjacent cities' standards for parcels along the borders. She hesitated to make dramatic
- 37 changes to standards for Solano Avenue, but there may be zoning constraints that make
- 38 residential development, particularly on upper floors, impractical on Solano.
- 39
- 40 Commissioner Momin indicated funding and real property will be challenges for the production of
- 41 very-low-income units. Converting single-family residences to four-plexes may be too extreme
- 42 for Albany, but converting duplexes to four-plexes may be acceptable. Perhaps the San Pablo
- 43 Specific Plan can include carry-over parcels. Cities that are similar to Albany and that are also
- 44 short on inventory sites may have developed strategies that could help Albany.
- 45



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1 PUBLIC HEARING REOPENED

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3 **Derek Sagehorn**, East Bay for Everyone, looked forward to working with the Commission,
4 community, and organizations to identify sites that meet the RHNA.

5
6 PUBLIC HEARING CLOSED

7
8 **7-2. Parliamentary Procedures** – The Planning & Zoning Commission will discuss the
9 parliamentary procedures for applicant video streaming during public hearing items.

10
11 **Recommendation:** Staff recommends that the Planning & Zoning Commission discuss
12 the matter and provide direction to staff.

13
14 **CEQA:** N/A

15
16 Planning Manager Hersch requested direction regarding turning on video for applicant
17 presentations.

18
19 Chair Watty preferred to maintain the status quo.

20
21 Commissioner Pilch remarked that turning on the applicant's video was similar to an in-person
22 hearing.

23
24 Commissioner MacLeod indicated no preference.

25
26 Commissioner Momin suggested turning on the video for the applicant or an applicant's
27 representative, but staff should control the applicant's presentation.

28
29 Planning Manager Hersch advised that staff will give applicants the option to appear in Zoom
30 meetings, ask applicants to name one representative, and conduct a trial during the March 10,
31 2021 meeting.

32
33 PUBLIC HEARING OPENED

34
35 None

36
37 PUBLIC HEARING CLOSED

38
39 **8. ANNOUNCEMENTS/COMMUNICATIONS/DISCUSSION**

40
41 **8-1. Planning Commissioner Email Correspondence**

42
43 Planning Manager Hersch reported Commissioners have forwarded correspondence regarding
44 long-range planning efforts to staff to forward to the Commission. Based on advice from the City
45 Attorney, staff will no longer forward such emails.

46



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1 Commissioner Donaldson was upset that he could no longer share his research and data with
2 Commissioners or obtain Commissioners' thoughts on issues. He agreed with limiting comments
3 to long-range planning topics.
4

5 Commissioner MacLeod noted the constraints of addressing topics during a meeting and
6 appreciated the opportunity to develop an argument, point of view, or detailed information and
7 share it with Commissioners. He inquired about examples of communications being detrimental
8 to the decision-making process.
9

10 Commissioner Pilch advised that when he sent such emails, he directed staff to include the emails
11 in the public record. Such emails could be an equity issue if a Commissioner has more free time
12 to prepare comments than other Commissioners.
13

14 Commissioner MacLeod clarified that Commissioners' comments have been sent to staff for
15 distribution to Commissioners and inclusion in the public record.
16

17 Chair Watty suggested Commissioners request agenda items for discussion of specific or
18 narrowly defined topics.
19

20 Planning Manager Hersch announced training on the Brown Act is scheduled for March 18, 2021.
21

22 **9. NEXT MEETING** – March 10, 2021, City Hall Council Chambers, 1000 San Pablo Avenue or
23 virtual meeting pursuant to state and county guidance
24

25 **10. ADJOURNMENT**

26 The meeting was adjourned at 9:20 p.m.
27
28
29
30

31 _____
32 Submitted by: Anne Hersch, Planning Manager
33

34 _____
35 Jeff Bond, Community Development Director