



PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION

Virtual Meeting
Albany, CA 94706

MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 8, 2021

1
2
3
4 **1. CALL TO ORDER**

5
6 Chair Watty called the regular meeting of the Planning and Zoning Commission to order
7 at 7:00 p.m. on Wednesday, September 8, 2021.
8

9 **2. ROLL CALL**

10
11 Present: Donaldson, MacLeod, Momin, Watty
12 Absent: Pilch
13 Staff Present: Planning Manager Anne Hersch
14 Associate Planner Christopher Tan
15

16 **3. EX PARTE COMMUNICATIONS**

17
18 None
19

20 **4. CONSENT CALENDAR**

21
22 **4A. PA21-052 Design Review for a Two-Level Addition at 1467 Portland Avenue**
23 – The applicant is seeking Design Review approval for a two-level addition at 1467
24 Portland Avenue. The subject property is a 5,000-sq.-ft. lot with a 3-bedroom, 1-
25 bathroom, 1,670-sq.-ft. split-level house built in 1930. The project scope includes
26 minor additions on the main and basement levels to accommodate modest
27 expansions to the kitchen, bedroom, and office. The second-story addition is
28 proposed to accommodate a new master suite and laundry room. This results in a
29 total of 946 sq. ft. of new area to the home. The existing Story-Book style of the
30 home is proposed to remain. This will result in a 4-bedroom, 2-bathroom, 2,616-
31 sq.-ft. home with a maximum height of 27'-9". A new detached garage and parking
32 pad are proposed on the north end of the property to accommodate two off-street
33 parking spaces in tandem configurations.
34

35 **Recommendation:** Staff recommends that the Planning & Zoning Commission
36 review and approve the project request subject to the findings and Conditions of
37 Approval.
38

39 **CEQA:** The project is Categorically exempt from CEQA pursuant to Section 15303
40 "New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures" of the CEQA Guidelines.
41

42 Planning Manager Anne Hersh announced that the applicant has requested a
43 continuance due to the incorrect installation of story poles on the site.
44



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1 PUBLIC HEARING OPENED
2

3 **Gary Parsons**, project architect, requested Commissioners comment on the project so
4 that he and the homeowners may respond at the next meeting.
5

6 PUBLIC HEARING CLOSED
7

8 Commissioner MacLeod noted that the plans appear to indicate that cars must drive
9 through the garage to reach the second parking space. Relocating the garage to the rear
10 corner of the property and having the parking space in front of the garage is a better
11 alternative. In the west elevation, the addition appears as a big block tacked onto the
12 house and does not relate well to the house.
13

14 Commissioner Donaldson viewed the proposed parking arrangement as unusual tandem
15 parking but not a concern. The design is attractive. Based on the story poles, the addition
16 will be barely visible when viewed from Portland. Correction of the story poles could
17 change his opinion. The south wall of the addition appears to be purely vertical and
18 awkward. The house's roof pitches and design details are replicated well in the addition.
19 The addition could be integrated better into the house.
20

21 Commissioner MacLeod suggested another visit to the site once the story poles
22 accurately represent the height of the addition.
23

24 **4B. PA21-060 Design Review for Second-Story Addition at 915 Taylor Street –**
25 The applicant is seeking Design Review approval for a second-story addition at
26 915 Taylor Street. The subject property is a 5,000-sq.-ft. lot with an existing non-
27 conforming 3-bedroom, 2-bathroom duplex located in the R-1 Zoning District and
28 built in 1925. The project scope includes expanding the duplex by 512 sq. ft. on
29 the south and east sides of the building. The addition area is proposed to
30 accommodate an expanded kitchen, a new bathroom, and interior reprogramming
31 of the main-level unit. The northern exterior staircase is proposed to be eliminated.
32 Entry to the upper-level unit is proposed on the south side of the building through
33 a new interior staircase. A new deck is proposed for the upper-level unit directly
34 above the proposed addition on the main level. The existing architecture of the
35 home is proposed to remain. This will result in a 3-bedroom, 4-bathroom, 2,231-
36 sq.-ft. duplex with a maximum height of 25'-11". Three off-street parking spaces
37 are proposed in the existing garage and a driveway located on the north side of
38 the property.
39

40 **Recommendation:** Staff recommends that the Planning & Zoning Commission
41 review and approve the project request subject to the findings and Conditions of
42 Approval.
43



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1 **CEQA:** The project is Categorically exempt from CEQA pursuant to Section 15303
2 "New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures" of the CEQA Guidelines.

3
4 Commissioner Momin recused himself from Item 4A due to a conflict of interest.

5
6 **Motion to continue PA21-052** for 1467 Portland Avenue to September 22, 2021
7 and **approve PA21-060** for 915 Taylor Street subject to the proposed findings and
8 Conditions of Approval. Donaldson

9 Seconded by MacLeod

10 AYES: Donaldson, MacLeod, Momin (PA21-052), Watty

11 NAYES: None

12 RECUSED: Momin (PA21-060)

13 ABSENT: Pilch

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

15
16 Chair Watty noted the appeal period for PA21-060.

17 18 **5. ANNOUNCEMENTS/COMMUNICATIONS/DISCUSSION**

19
20 Associate Planner Christopher Tan demonstrated the City's new software for online
21 agendas, staff reports, and supporting information.

22 23 **6. PUBLIC COMMENT**

24
25 None

26 27 **7. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION ON MATTERS RELATED TO THE** 28 **FOLLOWING ITEMS:**

29
30 **7A. PA21-056 Design Review & Parking Reduction for a Single-Story Addition at**
31 **1110 Pomona Avenue** – The applicant is seeking Design Review and Parking
32 Reduction approval for a single-story addition at 1110 Pomona Avenue. The
33 subject property is a 5,460-sq.-ft. lot with a 2-bedroom, 2-bathroom, 1,362-sq.-ft.
34 home built in 1946. The project scope includes building a 219-sq.-ft. addition on
35 the south side of the home. The addition is proposed to accommodate a kitchen
36 expansion and remodel along with one new bedroom for the home. A new side
37 entry is proposed off the kitchen area with landing and stairs. The existing
38 architectural style of the home is proposed to remain. This will result in a 3-
39 bedroom, 2-bathroom, 1,581-sq.-ft. home with a maximum height of 17'-5". The
40 property currently provides two, required off-street parking spaces in the detached
41 garage and driveway. A Parking Reduction is required to eliminate one parking
42 space to accommodate the project design.



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1 **Recommendation:** Staff recommends that the Planning & Zoning Commission
2 review and approve the project request subject to the findings and Conditions of
3 Approval.
4

5 **CEQA:** The project is Categorically exempt from CEQA pursuant to Section 15303
6 “New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures” of the CEQA Guidelines.
7

8 Associate Planner Tan presented the staff report dated September 8, 2021.
9

10 **Brooke Malik**, property owner, reported the purpose of the addition is to create a third
11 bedroom and improve the home's livability. If the addition does not extend into the
12 driveway, the second entry would be located at the rear of the house and open into a
13 bedroom. Dozens of houses in the neighborhood have one conforming off-street parking
14 space. If necessary, the addition can be pulled back 1 foot to provide a second
15 conforming parking space.
16

17 PUBLIC HEARING OPENED
18

19 **Nick Peterson** indicated that the fence across the driveway includes a gate that can be
20 opened to allow vehicle access to the garage. Many homes in the neighborhood have
21 one off-street parking space. He supported the request for a parking reduction.
22

23 PUBLIC HEARING CLOSED
24

25 Chair Watty supported the modest addition as a way to update the home yet retain its
26 affordability for first-time homeowners. The project maintains the existing architectural
27 style of the house. Detached garages accessed by a long, narrow driveway tend to be
28 used for storage. The driveway will measure approximately 34 feet from the front property
29 line to the addition, which is sufficient space to park two compact cars. Both adjacent
30 neighbors have one off-street parking space. Granting a parking reduction in this situation
31 is appropriate.
32

33 Commissioner Donaldson advised that the neighborhood has a good supply of on-street
34 parking, and granting a parking reduction for the project is not a concern. On-street
35 parking is likely to be stable for many years. The size of the addition is below the threshold
36 that requires a parking reduction.
37

38 Commissioner Momin noted that a minor adjustment to the addition would result in two
39 conforming off-street parking spaces. The project as proposed leaves sufficient space to
40 park two small vehicles in the driveway.
41

42 Commissioner MacLeod expressed some concern about making the findings for a parking
43 reduction when the project can be designed to maintain two off-street parking spaces.



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1 The interior spaces work better with the proposed width of the addition; although, a large
2 circulation space could be reduced.

3
4 Planning Manager Hersh recalled that a previous Commission granted a parking
5 reduction for an addition at 1122 Garfield to encroach into the driveway.
6

7 **Motion to approve PA21-056** for 1110 Pomona Avenue subject to the findings
8 and Conditions of Approval. Donaldson

9 Seconded by MacLeod

10 AYES: Donaldson, MacLeod, Momin, Watty

11 NAYES: None

12 ABSTAIN: None

13 ABSENT: Pilch

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

15
16 Chair Watty noted the appeal period.

17
18 **7B. PA21-062 UC Village Master Sign Program** Amendment – The Master Sign
19 Program for the University Village Shopping Center was approved on September
20 9, 2015 and did not include policies for digital advertising. An application has been
21 filed for new electric vehicle charging stations at University Village Shopping
22 Center which include digital advertising. The proposed amendment to the Master
23 Sign Program would allow digital advertising on the electric vehicle chargers only.
24 All previously approved sign regulations under the UC Village Master Sign
25 Program are proposed to remain.
26

27 **Recommendation:** Staff recommends that the Planning & Zoning Commission
28 review and approve the project request subject to the findings and Conditions of
29 Approval.
30

31 **CEQA:** The Environmental Impact Report (EIR) was certified by the City Council
32 via Resolution #2011-51, as well as an addendum to the EIR approved on May 6,
33 2013. An environmental impact report for the project was approved by the City
34 Council in July 2012. The proposed sign design review does not generate new or
35 substantially more severe impacts than what were previously analyzed in the
36 project EIR.
37

38 Associate Planner Tan presented the staff report dated September 8, 2021.

39
40 PUBLIC HEARING OPENED

41
42 **Nick Peterson**, Albany Climate Action Coalition, noted that charging stations and their
43 installation are expensive, and free charging stations are needed. The City could allow



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1 only static art displays. The aesthetics of a charging station located in a parking lot may
2 be different from one located adjacent to a street.

3 4 PUBLIC HEARING CLOSED

5
6 Commissioner Donaldson noted that a disabled parking placard is not required to utilize
7 the charging station spaces. He expressed concerns about the size and brightness of
8 the display and potential content. The application proposes two charging stations, but
9 the amendment would allow the installation of more stations in the parking lot. The
10 shopping center owner should pay for the chargers and installation and eliminate
11 advertising.

12
13 Planning Manager Hersh advised that the shopping center owner is sponsoring the
14 charging stations. Existing conduit supports only two charging stations. Additional
15 charging stations would require extensive construction.

16
17 Chair Watty did not favor pedestrian-level digital advertising. However, digital advertising
18 would provide free charging stations for residents who are not able to install home
19 chargers. Some parameters for the number and size of displays, landscaping, and
20 operational hours are preferable. Perhaps the applicant would be amenable to installing
21 a charging station without digital advertising for every charging station installed with
22 advertising.

23
24 Commissioner Momin anticipated the installation of additional charging stations over time
25 and expressed concern about the size of the power control system (PCS). The
26 Commission may want to consider guidelines for PCS locations and landscaping. He
27 supported the concept of digital advertising subsidizing free charging stations. Signage
28 should clarify that the charging station spaces are not for the sole use of disabled persons.

29
30 Commissioner MacLeod wanted to understand the nature of the display and place limits
31 on it. The parking space is required to be accessible but is not intended for the exclusive
32 use of disabled persons. Visual blight is a concern as is visibility from the street. Perhaps
33 the displays can be turned on and off at specific times.

34
35 Commissioner Momin supported implementing a pilot program while the Commission
36 drafts guidelines.

37
38 Commissioner Donaldson proposed continuing the item so that the Commission could
39 learn more about the advertising content, display, and equipment. Perhaps, the applicant
40 or a representative of Volta could be present at a subsequent meeting. Comments
41 regarding guidelines are well taken. One of the charging stations is located adjacent to
42 public art, and the display may complement or conflict with the public art.

43
44 Chair Watty noted that jurisdictions are not allowed to regulate the content of signage.



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1
2 **Motion to continue PA21-062** for UC Village Master Sign Program to
3 September 22, 2021. Donaldson
4 Seconded by Watty
5 AYES: Donaldson, MacLeod, Momin, Watty
6 NAYES: None
7 ABSTAIN: None
8 ABSENT: Pilch
9 **Motion passed, 4-0-0-1**

10
11 **8. NEW BUSINESS**

12
13 **8A. Parking Policies Discussion** – The Planning Commission will hold a discussion
14 on parking policies.

15
16 **Recommendation:** Receive a presentation and provide feedback.

17
18 **CEQA:** N/A

19
20 Planning Manager Hersch presented the staff report dated September 8, 2021.

21
22 PUBLIC HEARING OPENED

23
24 **Ed Fields** suggested the Commission focus on off-street parking. The parking
25 requirement for multifamily zones, or a lower requirement, should be applied to R-1
26 zones. The Commission has no authority to eliminate an existing required parking space.

27
28 **Nick Peterson**, speaking as an individual, supported permit parking or some type of
29 parking management system. The City does not have data for vehicle ownership within
30 the City.

31
32 **Bryan Marten** supported reducing parking requirements throughout the City. High-
33 density development will impact parking, and the solution needs to be equitable.

34
35 **Dan Johnson** wanted to encourage reduced usage of vehicles and suggested the City
36 eliminate off-street parking requirements, charge for on-street parking, and use parking
37 revenue to improve public services on metered streets.

38
39 **Amy Smolens** requested the Commission include bicycle parking in any discussion of
40 parking.

41
42 **Nico Nagle**, Housing Action Coalition, supported the discussion of parking as it
43 complements housing discussions.

44



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1 PUBLIC HEARING CLOSED

2
3 Commissioner Momin indicated that there are opportunities to reduce car dependency
4 and construction costs and increase housing affordability through parking requirements.
5 However, residents and businesses may have conflicting desires with respect to parking.
6 Keeping environmental goals in mind, the Commission should consider the optimum level
7 of parking availability that can be achieved for residential and commercial uses and
8 attempt to reduce the conflict between different land uses. Balancing the demand for
9 parking during peak hours and off-peak hours is challenging. The City needs to conduct
10 additional parking studies to learn about current conditions, particularly for the San Pablo
11 Avenue Specific Plan. The Commission should focus on multimodal transportation and
12 prioritize modes other than vehicles. A free shuttle would be useful for reducing car usage
13 and parking demand. The Commission should explore parking permit programs for
14 neighborhoods and the San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan and compact parking spaces.

15
16 Commissioner Donaldson found the existing conditions report from the 2017 parking
17 study useful. The forecast of future scenarios failed to address changing demographics
18 and transportation modes and could not predict the significant increase in the City's
19 Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA). The stakeholder surveys revealed emphatic
20 opposition to paying for on-street parking, and that remains true. The 1958 ordinance
21 states the purpose of residential parking permit programs is to keep nonresidents from
22 overfilling parking spaces on residential streets. A residential parking permit program is
23 not intended for residential development, such as the project proposed for the Albany
24 Bowl site, and has to be enforced overnight to be effective. The challenge is minimizing
25 overflow parking from residential development in hotspot areas, which are identified in
26 the parking study. Future projects need to be fully parked onsite.

27
28 Commissioner MacLeod related that Commissioner Donaldson makes a good point about
29 overflow parking. Parking availability creates more vehicle usage, traffic congestion, and
30 greenhouse gas emissions. Great alternatives to car usage and storage, such as transit
31 and bike rooms, and incentives to use alternatives are needed. Requirements should
32 include parking/storage for one regular bike and one cargo bike per unit and electrical
33 charging outlets. The San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan should require no parking
34 minimum and a 0.5 parking maximum. Neighborhoods would decide whether reduced
35 time periods for on-street parking, at least during the day, are preferable. Reducing the
36 parking requirement for single-family zones is worth exploring because most lots in the
37 City provide only one space.

38
39 Commissioner Donaldson commented that good data regarding car ownership and usage
40 in multifamily developments is needed to predict realistic parking demands and overflow
41 parking. Federal and State governments are focusing on increasing electric vehicle
42 usage rather than decreasing vehicle usage. Traffic studies from Plan Bay Area project
43 increases in car ownership in Alameda County and the region, and that seems to be a
44 national and international trend as well. Lower-income households are dependent on



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1 either transit or vehicles for their work commutes. Data and a discussion about bundled
2 and unbundled parking are needed. Unbundled parking may be a driver of overflow
3 parking.
4

5 Chair Watty supported a 1:1 parking requirement for single-family homes, allowing 8-foot
6 by 15-foot compact parking spaces, allowing parking in the front setback, and exploration
7 of a lower parking ratio for larger buildings with a pre-established and prescriptive
8 transportation demand management (TDM) plan. A residential parking permit program
9 will not address parking problems on residential streets. If on-street parking becomes too
10 congested, residents may use or provide onsite parking.
11

12 Commissioner MacLeod requested staff share articles and studies about parking to
13 inform future discussions. Parking should be unbundled. Planning for the future should
14 incorporate transportation mode shifts.
15

16 **9. NEXT MEETING – September 22, 2021**, City Hall Council Chambers, 1000 San Pablo
17 Avenue or virtual meeting pursuant to state and county guidance
18

19 **10. ADJOURNMENT**

20 The meeting was adjourned at 9:41 p.m.
21
22
23
24

25 _____
Submitted by: Anne Hersch, Planning Manager
26
27

28 _____
Jeff Bond, Community Development Director
29