

Item 4a Commissioner Gardner recommended limiting the statement of her interest in reduced parking approvals to the El Cerrito Plaza apartment project only (page seven). Commissioner Arkin noted item 6d had been continued to a date "not certain." He also indicated that the name "Vutz" was misspelled. Commissioner Arkin moved approval of the minutes as amended. Commissioner Gardner seconded.

Vote to approve item **4a** as amended:

Ayes: Arkin, Gardner, Maass, Moss

Nays: None

Motion passed, 4-0.

Item 4b Planning Manager Bond reported that due to computer problems the letter had not been revised completely. He asked the Commission to continue this item to the next meeting. Commissioner Arkin suggested posting the revised letter on the city Web site as soon as it became available. Commissioner Arkin moved continuation of this item to the October 14, 2008, meeting. Commissioner Moss seconded.

Vote to continue item **4a**:

Ayes: Arkin, Gardner, Maass, Moss

Nays: None

Motion passed, 4-0.

5. Public Comment on Non-Agenda Items

Peggy Thomsen, Albany resident, stated that in May 2008, a group of residents had sent a letter to the City Council regarding height limits. She wanted to remind the Commission that there was desire for a discussion on height limits, and noted it could wait until after the election.

6. Discussions and Possible Action on Matters Related to the Following Items

- a. **904 Santa Fe. Planning Application 07-087.** Design Review. Continuation of a public hearing on a request for Design Review approval of a new mixed-use building, which includes two residential units and one commercial retail space.

Staff recommendation: approve.

Commissioner Moss recused himself due to proximity to his residence. Associate Planner Curl delivered the staff report. Commissioner Arkin asked whether the applicant met the open space requirement in light of the change of balcony design. Ms. Curl stated they exceeded the requirement. Vice Chair Maass asked whether the revised plans had been made available to the neighbors. Planning Manager Bond explained that the revisions were only provided the day before the meeting.

Vice Chair Maass opened the public hearing and invited the applicant to make a presentation. Mahmoud Pourzand, the project designer, made a brief presentation. Keith Weinstein, Carmel

Barbara Wezelman, Carmel Avenue, appreciated the modifications but was concerned about the scale, mass, loss of daylight, bright paint color, and lack of harmonious transition. Joseph Redjen, Santa Fe Avenue, found the proposed project huge, and was concerned that the balcony invaded his privacy, the underground garage and balconies would be noisy, and the value of his home would be decreased. No one else wished to speak. Vice Chair Maass closed the public hearing.

Commissioner Gardner found the project well designed for the transition zone. The project did not max out the height or the lot coverage. Commissioner Arkin found the project was shaped carefully with respect to the residential neighbors, including with respect to the daylight plane, the stepped-down height from the adjacent commercial building, and the voluntary modifications to the design. He recommended the following additional modifications: narrowing the front balcony at the east end; widening the sidewalls of the front entrance under each end of the arch detail; the door details to be in character with the window details; and the gutter hanging over the rear property line to be pulled back. Vice Chair Maass agreed the modifications were sensitive to the neighbors' concerns.

Commissioner Arkin moved approval with the added conditions: narrowing the front balcony at the east end; the eave and trellis to be out of the daylight plane; the gutter hanging over the rear property line to be pulled back; the building permit set of plans to come back to the Commission to review for consistency; color samples and/or elevations to be provided with the building permit set; and widening the sidewalls of the front entrance under each end of the arch detail. Commissioner Gardner seconded.

Vote to approve item 6a as amended:

Ayes: Arkin, Gardner, Maass

Nays: None

Motion passed, 4-0.

Findings. 904 Santa Fe

Findings for Design Review approval (Per section 20.100.050.E of the AMC)

Required Finding	Explanation
5. <i>The project conforms to the General Plan, any applicable specific plan, applicable design guidelines adopted by the City of Albany, and all applicable provisions of this Chapter.</i>	<i>The General Plan designates this area for residential development. The project, however, meets City zoning standards for location, intensity and type of development and complies with stated land use policies in the General Plan.</i>
6. <i>Approval of project design is consistent with the purpose and intent of this section, which states "designs of projects...will result in improvements</i>	The proposal is in scale and harmony with existing development in the vicinity of the site. The architectural style, design and building materials are consistent with the City's Design

<p><i>that are visually and functionally appropriate to their site conditions and harmonious with their surroundings, including natural landforms and vegetation. Additional purposes of design review include (but are not limited to): that retention and maintenance of existing buildings and landscape features are considered; and that site access and vehicular parking are sufficient."</i></p>	<p>Standards. The proposed project will provide safe and convenient access to the property for both vehicles and pedestrians. The project will not remove any significant vegetation. The project will not create a visual detriment at the site or the neighborhood.</p> <p><i>The building is of a contemporary style with some Spanish style accents such as a tile roof and stucco finish. All the elevations, except for the north, are well articulated and attractive. The applicant has made a conscious effort to add architectural details such as wood railings and tile details, which enhance the appearance of the building. A master sign plan and landscape plan will also increase the aesthetic quality of the site.</i></p>
<p>7. <i>Approval of the project is in the interest of public health, safety and general welfare.</i></p>	<p><i>The proposed project will not be detrimental to the health, safety, convenience and welfare of those in the area and would not adversely impact property, improvements or potential future development in the area. The project meets all development requirements.</i></p> <p><i>Four parking spaces have been provided for the two housing units and the commercial space is small in size, which is preferable for it's location and close proximity to residential properties. The second and third stories are stepped away from the properties at the west and south and does not reach the maximum allowable height limit thus will have less impact on neighbors. It will increase housing opportunities in the City and provide a small, lower impact commercial space to transition from Solano Avenue to Santa Fe Avenue.</i></p>
<p>8. <i>The project is in substantial compliance with applicable general and specific Standards for Review stated in Subsection 20.100.050.D.</i></p>	<p><i>The project as designed is in substantial compliance with the standards as stated, including access, architecture, natural features, coordination of design details, and privacy. Additional railings and reduction in size of decks and balconies have increased privacy for adjacent neighbors.</i></p>

Rhoda Bennett, Cornell Avenue, opposed parking meters saying they would hurt local businesses and that a parking permit program would hurt homeowners near Solano. She recommended making Solano Avenue more pedestrian and bicycle friendly. Gene Helwig, Brighton Avenue, asked why the city was trying to fix something that was not broken. No one else wished to speak. Chair Panian closed the public hearing.

Commissioner Arkin asked staff to include the public comment from this meeting citing the meeting date. He was in favor of the City Council exploring paid parking (not implementing it, necessarily). He requested addition of a bullet point regarding a financial study. He favored zero-emission parking rather than low-emission. He wanted the city to encourage walking and bicycling.

Commissioner Moss wanted a study of how paid parking on Solano would impact the neighborhood streets. There would need to be stepped up enforcement on the neighboring streets. He suggested funding permits for residents with the proceeds from the parking meters. Commissioner Moss recommended there be a fee collected for commercial parking waivers and that income and paid parking income fund future additional parking spaces on or near Solano.

Commissioner Gardner wanted parking for car share vehicles, whether no- or low-emission. Commissioner Maass only favored meters if it would reduce motor vehicle trips and fund more parking. He recommended if there were residential permit parking every household should be issued one or two permits at no cost, with large fees for additional permits. Commissioner Panian wanted to see a financial analysis that would address whether this would generate direct revenue or not, and whether it would impact sales tax revenue or not.

It was agreed that staff would bring the recommendation back on the September 23, 2008, consent calendar.

- b. 904 Santa Fe. Planning Application 07-087.** Design Review. Request for Design Review approval of a new mixed-use building, which includes two residential units and one commercial retail space.

Staff recommendation: provide direction to the applicant on any appropriate design changes and approve the project.

Commissioner Moss recused himself due to proximity to his residence. Planning Manager Bond delivered the staff report. Chair Panian opened the public hearing and invited the applicant to make a presentation. Mahmoud Pourzand, the project designer, was available to answer questions. The following people had concerns about the proposed project: Keith Weinstein, Carmel Avenue; Barbara Wezelman, Carmel Avenue; Joseph Redjen, Santa Fe Avenue; Clay Larson, Albany resident; Jane Cavali, Santa Fe Avenue; Guy Cavali, Santa Fe Avenue; and Ed Fields, Kains Avenue. Concerns included:

- Height
- Mass
- Out of scale, out of character
- Inconsistency between the General Plan and Zoning map
- Daylight plane
- Large terraces should be counted in FAR

- Lack of three-dimensional presentation including neighbors
- When the garage was demolished there would be a gap in the fence
- Lack of tree preservation
- Change in grade magnifies height
- Loss of privacy
- Loss of daylight
- Replacement of current view with a view of the proposed project
- Noise
- Increased traffic
- Pedestrian safety during large-scale construction
- Taller than buildings on Solano
- Lack of commercial parking
- Parking impacts
- Difficult to make the design review finding that it is consistent with and functionally harmonious with surroundings

No one else wished to speak. Chair Panian closed the public hearing.

Commissioner Gardner asked whether the General Plan or the Zoning map was older. Planning Manager Bond indicated it was believed by staff that there was a typographical error in the General Plan. Commissioner Gardner would prefer the daylight plane be applied to the entire property line, rather than the five feet. She cautioned the Commissioners to consider what would be harmonious, because this would be precedent setting.

Commissioner Maass liked the underground parking and the overall design and felt the project was huge. Commissioner Arkin agreed maximum FAR never fits well but this site was zoned Solano Commercial. The project should provide a transition between commercial and residential. He supported adding employee parking. He wanted to be sure there would be sills on every window, and preferred a hip roof to the rear.

Chair Panian stated the individual units could be smaller to allow at least a ten-foot rear yard where children could play and to back away from the concerned residential neighbors. He recommended pulling the upper story in at the rear and side and exposing the walkway, in addition to adding more articulation. He found the current proposal boxy with an awkward cantilevered upper mass.

The Commissioners agreed they would want to review the building permit set of plans for consistency. After a discussion about whether there could be a successful up or down vote at this meeting, Commissioner Arkin moved continuation to the September 23, 2008, meeting in order to have time to review the plans in more detail. Commissioner Gardner seconded.

Vote to continue item **6b**:

Ayes: Arkin, Gardner, Maass, Panian

Nays: None

Motion passed, 4-0.