

City of Albany
Planning and Zoning Commission
Minutes November 27, 2007, Meeting

Note: These minutes are subject to Planning and Zoning Commission approval. The minutes are not verbatim. An audiotape of the meeting is available for public review.

Regular Meeting

1. Call to order

The meeting of the Planning and Zoning Commission was called to order by Chair Arkin, in the City Council Chambers at 7:30 p.m. on Tuesday, November 27, 2007.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

3. Roll Call

Present: Arkin, Hitchcock, Maass, Moss, Panian

Absent: None

Staff present: Community Development Director Ann Chaney, Planning & Building Manager Jeff Bond, Planning Clerk Amanda Bennett

4. Consent Calendar

None.

5. Public Comment on Non-Agenda Items

There was no public comment.

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

a. Overview of Requirements and Process for the 2009 Update of the City of Albany General Plan Housing Element

Staff recommendation: no formal action required. Provide direction to staff on next steps related to preparation of a new housing element.

Planning Manager Bond delivered the California Department of Housing and Community Development's 2007 Housing Element Update PowerPoint presentation. He noted that the Housing Element must be updated; a process including public input must be organized; and a decision about which version to start from must be made.

Planning Manager Bond provided an overview of the laws governing the Housing Element update and described the required contents of a Housing Element. He discussed various ways of working with the community.

There was a general discussion between staff, members of the public, and the Commission about whether the Housing Element covers a five or seven year period, and whether the previous deficit also needs to be "caught up." There was a discussion about secondary residential units and Measure D parking requirements. There was discussion about UC Berkeley and housing in Albany.

Planning Manager Bond suggested he draft a policy memo for Commission review that would identify some of the key issues, and then subsequently a consultant be hired to take on the bulk of the update. The goal would be to start the environmental review by July of 2008.

Clay Larson, Albany resident, noted the City could self-certify. Planning Manager Bond replied that would be more of a legal risk.

Chair Arkin recommended inviting affordable housing builders to a meeting with other interested boards and commissions to look realistically at siting projects in Albany. Mr. Larson recommended upzoning Marin Avenue because it is a wide street. He also recommended Golden Gate Fields as a possible site for new housing. Chair Arkin recommended second stories on Solano Avenue. Commissioner Moss thought the focus should be on encouraging smaller units – the parking rules encourage larger units. He suggested in-lieu fees, parking lots and structures, and 90 degree parking on wider streets.

Allan Maris, Albany resident, wondered whether Albany should challenge the state.

b. Update on status of project at 727 San Pablo (Villa de Albany) including discussion of Summary of Draft Sales Procedures

Staff recommendation: no formal action required. Provide feedback to staff on sales procedures.

Planning Manager Bond delivered the staff report. Ed Fields, Albany resident, asked whether preference could be given to Albany residents, the elderly, and the disabled (4a). He noted a reference to paragraph 3 VI.B which is no longer valid. Commissioner Hitchcock thought 1b should be Community Development Department. She would add “as well as the immediate relatives of such employees or officials” to 2h. Should 3a be “before close?” Commissioner Moss noted the city of San Francisco had this language.

Chair Arkin confirmed the City Attorney would review the document. Commissioner Moss had concerns about perpetual vacancies. He hoped for a mechanism to require marketing of the affordable units.

7. Announcements/Communications:

a. Update on Special Meeting of November 20, 2007 - Design Review Guideline Update Work Session

8. Future Planning And Zoning Commission Meeting Agenda Items

a. Special Meeting of Fire Board of Appeals (change in tentative date to December 11, 2007)

b. Regular meeting of December 25, 2007 to be cancelled.

c. Regular meeting of January 22, 2008 to be rescheduled to January 29, 2008.

9. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 10:39 p.m.

Next regular meeting: Tuesday, December 11, 2007, 7:30 p.m.

Submitted by:

Jeff Bond
Planner Manager