

City of Albany
Planning and Zoning Commission
Minutes January 8, 2008, 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, January 8, 2008.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

3. Roll Call

Present: Arkin, Maass, Moss, Panian

Absent: None

Staff present: Planning & Building Manager Jeff Bond, Associate Planner Amber Curl,
Planning Clerk Amanda Bennett

4. Consent Calendar

- a. **Minutes from the October 16, 2007, October 23, 2007, November 13, 2007, and November 27, 2007 meetings.**

Staff recommendation: approve.

Chair Arkin had corrections for the October 16 minutes as follows: page two item three—plans by, plans by; and page three second paragraph—still. He had the following corrections to the October 23 minutes: classrooms contain teachers' personal belongings; and paragraph six—remove neighbor side (they're from St. Mary's).

The consent agenda items as amended were approved by unanimous consent.

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. **1161-1175 Solano. Planning Application 07-017. Parking Exception. Design Review. Recommendation to the City Council Regarding an Entertainment Permit.**
A request for Design Review approval to allow a remodel and a small addition to 3 commercial units to create a 2,153sq.ft. commercial building at the corner of Solano Avenue and Stannage Avenue. An entertainment permit is also requested, which triggers the need for a parking exception for 18 parking spaces.

Staff recommendation: approve.

Commissioner Panian recused himself due to proximity to his residence. Planning Manager Bond and Associate Planner Curl delivered the staff report. Chair Arkin opened the public hearing and invited the applicant to make a presentation. Patricia Alarcon summarized revisions to the proposed project. Papa Gianni and Hal Brandes were also available to answer questions.

Michelle Barger was glad a weekend parking study had been done. She hoped parking could be revisited if it became a problem. She also recommended lighting for the parking lot and the alleyways. Rose Levinson was concerned about parking, noise, and wanted to be sure the business would be oriented toward Solano Avenue, including the signage. No one else wished to speak. Chair Arkin closed the public hearing.

Commissioner Maass recommended signage for the customers regarding vehicle and bicycle parking. Commissioner Moss recommended valet parking during live entertainment, because it would increase the number of vehicles that could fit in the lot. He also recommended triple pane windows on Stannage if the stage was on that side. He would prefer that the performances be acoustic, rather than amplified. Chair Arkin concurred.

Commissioner Moss moved approval of the parking and design review, including the staff recommendation regarding noise and triple pane or laminated windows per the noise consultant. Commissioner Maass seconded.

Vote to approve item **6a** as amended:

Ayes: Arkin, Maass, Moss

Nays: None

Motion passed, 3-0.

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

Required Finding	<i>Explanation</i>
<p>1. <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></p>	<p><i>The General Plan designates this area for commercial development. Additionally, the project meets City zoning standards for location, intensity and type of development. The current buildings have commercial uses and will be on slightly increased in size.</i></p>
<p>2. <i>Approval of project design is consistent with the purpose and intent of this section, which states "designs of projects...will result in improvements 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><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 existing dwelling and with the City's Design Guidelines. 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 and will not require significant grading. The project will not create a visual detriment at the site or the neighborhood. The current building is old with a nondescript architectural style. The remodeled building will be more aesthetically attractive with a contemporary style. The applicant has made a conscious effort to add contemporary style details that emphasize the street</i></p>

	<i>corner and provide large windows to create a more open, airy feeling in relation to the street.</i>
<i>3. Approval of the project is in the interest of public health, safety and general welfare.</i>	<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 remodeled building will be an aesthetic improvement to the site and will provide a café and live music that will be a positive addition to the services currently offered along Solano Avenue. A condition of approval has also been added requiring that all recommendations provided by the noise consultant be complied with at all times.</i>
<i>4. The project is in substantial compliance with applicable general and specific Standards for Review stated in Subsection 20.100.050.D.</i>	<i>The project as designed is in substantial compliance with the standards as stated, including Access, Architecture, Natural features, Coordination of design details, Retention and maintenance of buildings, and Privacy.</i>

Findings for Parking Exception approval (Per section 20.28.040.5 of the AMC)

Required Finding	Explanation
<i>1. On the basis of a survey or comparable situations, parking demand for the proposed use or uses will be less than the required parking spaces.</i>	<i>Entertainment permits, along with parking exceptions, have been granted for similar uses with similar hours of operation, along Solano Avenue. Staff has not received any complaints from surrounding neighbors regarding parking or found a difference in the demand for parking as a result of the approving a parking exception.</i>
<i>2. The probable long-term occupancy of the property or structure, based on the project design, will not generate substantial additional parking demand.</i>	<i>The long-term occupancy of the property will generate an increase in parking demand during the evening and weekend hours. The hours when live entertainment would occur are during the evenings and on weekends, which is when the other tenants on the block, and most in the area, are not open for business. The parking lot, serving the block, would therefore be available for the café's patrons alone. If the project were new construction 21 parking spaces would be required for live entertainment at a restaurant. The project would therefore have the required parking for the use, with access to the entire parking lot without patrons present for the other businesses.</i>
<i>3. Based on a current survey of parking space availability and usage within a five hundred</i>	<i>Staff conducted 5 parking counts and found that the average number of occupied parking spaces in the Solano Commercial districts throughout the</i>

<p><i>(500)-foot walking distance of the boundary of the site of the subject building, a reduction of the parking requirement will not have a substantial effect on the parking available for neighborhood uses.</i></p>	<p><i>weekdays is 69%. It appears that there are fewer parking spaces available in the surrounding residential areas but there is approximately a 30% vacancy in the Solano Commercial District. The highest number of occupied spaces occurred during the lunchtime hour where it also appeared that there was a large turnover of spaces with people coming and going more frequently.</i></p> <p><i>Staff has recently conducted parking counts on the weekends, during the proposed hours of live entertainment. As might be expected the occupancy rates are slightly higher on the weekends than during the weekdays. On Saturday evening the residential areas had an occupancy rate of approximately 80%; however, the commercial spaces along Solano Avenue had a much lower rate of 66%. Sunday afternoon was similar with the residential streets having a higher occupancy rate than the commercial spaces.</i></p> <p><i>The weekend parking survey has shown that there is a minimum of 27 parking spaces available in the Solano Commercial district and 77 parking spaces available in the surrounding 500' radius area; therefore, there appears to be more than adequate parking to provide the additional 14 required parking spaces. Also, the hours proposed for live entertainment are between 2-3 hours long, which means that parking availability will potentially be effected for short periods of time.</i></p> <p><i>The hours when live entertainment would occur are during the evenings and on weekends, which is when the other tenants on the block, and most in the area, are not open for business. The parking lot, serving the block, would therefore be available for the café's patrons alone. If the project were new construction 21 parking spaces would be required for live entertainment at a restaurant. The project would therefore have the required parking for the use, with access to the entire parking lot without patrons present for the other businesses.</i></p>
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- b. 1552 Marin. Planning Application 07-078. Design Review.** A request for Design Review approval to allow a 2,275sq.ft., two-story addition to the rear of an existing single-family home.

Staff recommendation: receive testimony from the applicant and members of the public. Provide direction to staff on issues of interest during the review process. No action is taken.

Associate Planner Curl delivered the staff report. Chair Arkin opened the public hearing and invited the applicant to make a presentation. Zhitong and the son of the owner were available to answer questions. No one else wished to speak. Chair Arkin closed the public hearing. Planning Manager Bond noted that the neighbor to the rear had some concerns and had made landscaping and architectural detail suggestions.

Commissioner Panian was concerned about the FAR and the massing pushed back so far, limiting open space. He felt the transition piece did not work to make the two distinct units appear one. He wanted to see landscaping and changes to the windows. Commissioner Maass opined the rear addition appeared high and huge, too far back, and out of place. He wanted to see elevations.

Commissioner Moss stated this was overbuilding for the site, with no consideration of open space for children to play. He recommended improving the front with craftsman details. Removing one bedroom, stepping the bulk, and changing the roof slopes could create more visual interest. Regarding the future plans for the second house, he recommended placing them further apart, with an entrance in the center. Commissioner Moss recommended the works of William Wurster and Schindler as examples to emulate.

Chair Arkin recommended thinking about the view from the street, and reducing height by dropping the ceiling over the laundry hallway and office and dropping the family room floor so it connects to the rear yard and garden. He recommended attractive garage doors and suggested bringing the horizontal bands up to the windowsills (Prairie school style). He recommended looking at 1325 Marin, with soffits under the hop roof and more wood elements. He wanted to see the first house with the eastern end cut off. He recommended rethinking the entry, and wanted to see story poles before the application came forward again.

- c. **724 Santa Fe. Planning Application 07-080. Design Review. Parking Exception.** A request for Design Review approval to allow a 812sq.ft., two-story addition to an existing single-family. A parking exception is requested to allow one off-street parking space where two are required.

Staff recommendation: approve.

Associate Planner Curl delivered the staff report. Chair Arkin asked why there were no story poles. Chair Arkin opened the public hearing and invited the applicant to make a presentation. The applicant was available to answer questions. Rut Gubkin, neighbor, was concerned about the proposed height, loss of sunlight, loss of view (addition of view of a wall), the houses being so close together, and speeding and parking on the block. Claudia Falconer, was concerned about the increased height and density.

Cecilia Lee, neighbor, was concerned about the massing, and the loss of view and privacy (banks of windows). Anne Lee, neighbor, was concerned about the height, and loss of sunlight and privacy. She also opined the noise and dust from construction would have a huge impact

on her family. Ute Krukenkamp, the project designer, was amenable to the hip roofs idea, which would help the neighbors to get sunlight. No one else wished to speak. Chair Arkin closed the public hearing.

Commissioner Moss noted the ceiling over the bathroom was too low. He recommended looking at bulk, mass, large number of windows on the north side, rooflines, and the bulky side elevations. He did not have issues regarding the parking as proposed by staff. He asked the applicant to mark the location of neighbors' windows on the site plan.

Commissioner Panian wanted two conforming parking spaces on the site. He suggested enlarging the driveway, screening the trash with landscaping or some other option, adding articulation to the two-story portion of the addition (e.g., setback with beam studs, bay window), and though there could be a blend of hip and gable roofs. He also suggested a more prominent porch.

Commissioner Maass did not have issues with the parking as proposed by staff. He felt the roofs did not work, the sides were massive, and the entry roof should be revisited. Chair Arkin recommended reducing bulk without reducing utility, through methods such as hip roofs. He recommended pairing the upper story front windows and an attractive garage door. He thought there could be a second parking space in the garage if set at a slight angle. He noted the north side plate heights could be 7'6" because of the cathedral ceiling. There could also be bays on the north wall.

Commissioner Panian moved continuation. Commissioner Maass seconded.

Vote to continue item **6c**:

Ayes: Arkin, Maass, Moss, Panian

Nays: None

Motion passed, 4-0.

d. Vinyl Siding Policy

Staff Recommendation: Receive testimony from the applicant and members of the public. Provide direction to staff on any appropriate revisions and adopt the new policy.

6d Planning Manager Bond delivered the staff report. Chair Arkin opened the public hearing. No one wished to speak. Chair Arkin closed the public hearing. Chair Arkin wanted to reduce the exceptions. He suggested changing the text to "except for windows."

Chair Arkin moved adoption as amended. Commissioner Moss seconded. 4-0

Vote to approve item **6d** as amended:

Ayes: Arkin, Maass, Moss, Panian

Nays: None

Motion passed, 4-0.

7. Announcements/Communications:

- a. Potential for rescheduling Commission meeting dates to accommodate School Board use of City Council Chambers (in order that School Board meetings may be televised).
- b. Email re Terrace Park

8. Future Planning and Zoning Commission Meeting Agenda Items:

- a. Special Meeting on January 15, 2008 to discuss residential design guidelines.
- b. Regular meeting of January 22, 2008 to be rescheduled to January 29, 2008.

Note: Election of Chair and Vice Chair of the Commission rescheduled to January 29, 2008 pursuant to the requirements of the Municipal Code, which states that selection of chair and vice chair shall occur no less than 30 days and no more than 45 days after City Council reorganization (which occurred December 17, 2007).

9. Adjournment

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

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

Submitted by:

Amber Curl
Associate Planner