

**APPROVED MINUTES OF REGULAR PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
FEBRUARY 14, 2001**

1 Time: The meeting was called to order at 7:10 p.m.

2 Location: North Berkeley Senior Center.

3

4 Commissioners present: Bronstein, Wrenn, Wengraf, Morris, Poschman, Howerton,
5 McCamant, Hicks.

6

7 Commissioners Absent: Perry.

8

9 Staff present: Haney-Owens, Thomas.

10

11 **PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD**

12

13 Martha Nicoloff stated that there should be a microphone available for use at Planning
14 Commission meetings.

15

16 **ORDER OF AGENDA**

17

18 No changes.

19

20 **CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT**

21

22 Chair Wrenn announced that that there will be a discussion of a San Francisco-based car
23 sharing program at the February 15, 2001 Transportation Commission meeting. He noted
24 also that there will be a community forum on displacement and gentrification issues on
25 March 3, 2001 from 10am to 1pm at the North Berkeley Senior Center.

26

27 **CITY COUNCIL ACTIONS**

28

29 No items to report.

30

31 **FUTURE AGENDAS**

32

33 The Commission agreed to hold a special meeting on April 4, 2001 in order to consider a
34 number of proposed Zoning Ordinance Amendments. It was agreed that the proposed
35 demolition definition will be discussed at a Commission meeting in June 2001. The
36 Commission will make a decision at its February 28th meeting regarding whether to move
37 the regular April 11, 2001 Commission meeting to April 18th.

38

39 **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

40

41 M/S/C to approve minutes from the January 10, 2001 meeting (Poschman/McCamant).
42 Ayes: Bronstein, Wrenn, Wengraf, Morris, Hicks, Poschman, McCamant. Noes: None.
43 Abstentions: Howerton. Absent: Perry.

44

APPROVED MINUTES OF REGULAR PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
FEBRUARY 14, 2001

45 M/S/C to approve minutes from the January 24, 2001 meeting, with corrections
46 (McCamant/Poschman). Ayes: Wrenn, Bronstein, Howerton, Hicks, Poschman, Morris.,
47 Wengraf, McCamant. Noes: None. Abstentions: None. Absent: Perry.

48

49 **ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR**

50

51 Chair Wrenn requested nominations for Chair. Commissioner McCamant nominated
52 Commissioner Poschman who declined. Commissioner Morris nominated Chair Wrenn.
53 Commissioner Hicks nominated Commissioner McCamant.

54

55 By a vote of five (Bronstein, Morris, Wrenn, Poschman, Howerton) to three (McCamant,
56 Hicks, Wengraf), Chair Wrenn was re-elected Commission Chair for the period from
57 February 2001 until February 2002.

58

59 Chair Wrenn requested nominations for Vice Chair. Commissioner Hicks nominated
60 Commissioner Morris who declined. Commissioner Poschman nominated Commissioner
61 Bronstein. Commissioner Wengraf nominated Commissioner McCamant.

62

63 By a vote of five (Bronstein, Morris, Wrenn, Poschman, Howerton) to three (McCamant,
64 Hicks, Wengraf), Vice Chair Bronstein was re-elected Commission Vice Chair for the
65 period from February 2001 until February 2002.

66

67 **DRAFT GENERAL PLAN AND EIR**

68

69 Staff Thomas provided an overview of the General Plan and EIR schedule for adoption,
70 noting that the schedule calls for Commission transmittal of the Plan and EIR to the City
71 Council in May 2001 for Council action. Staff Thomas noted that the close of public
72 comment on the Draft Plan is March 1, 2001, while the close of public comment on the
73 Draft EIR, released on February 14th, is April 16, 2001. He noted that both the Draft Plan
74 and the DEIR will be made available to the public on the City's web site and on cd.

75

76 Staff Thomas summarized the major findings contained in the General Plan DEIR. He
77 noted that the Draft Plan addresses potential Plan impacts by incorporating
78 implementation measures which also serve as mitigation measures. He stated that the
79 Plan would result in two significant and unavoidable impacts related to air quality and
80 traffic congestion, both of which are attributable to technical issues which cannot be
81 mitigated.

82

83 Commissioner Wengraf asked how the EIR would address proposed Plan amendments
84 which are found to cause adverse environmental impacts. Staff Thomas stated that if it is
85 determined that Plan amendments cause impacts beyond those identified in the published
86 Draft EIR, the DEIR would need to be modified and recirculated.

87

88 Commissioner Wengraf requested that staff summarize policy changes between the 1977
89 Master Plan and the proposed Draft General Plan. Staff Thomas stated that such a

APPROVED MINUTES OF REGULAR PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
FEBRUARY 14, 2001

90 summary would be provided to the Commission when the list of amendments is
91 considered.
92
93 M/S/C to open the public hearing on the Draft General Plan and Draft EIR
94 (Wengraf/Poschman). Ayes: Wengraf, Poschman, Morris, Hicks, Howerton, McCamant,
95 Bronstein, Wrenn. Noes: None. Abstentions: None. Absent: Perry.
96
97 Gail Todd noted that she is a resident of Hopkins Street. She stated that she would like
98 the Commission to continue to remember the concerns of residents who live on collector
99 streets. She stated that she was pleased with the proposed amendments to the Plan which
100 seek to address those concerns.
101
102 Nancy Holland stated that affordable housing is critical and she questioned whether the
103 low density areas throughout the city (5 or less units per acre) would be adequate to
104 support transit in the future.
105
106 Norine Smith stated that she would like a policy in the Plan which would require
107 measuring building height from the street, not the middle of the lot. She also stated that
108 she thought that solar collectors should be required on downtown buildings and that they
109 may be more important than roof gardens. She also requested that the General Plan call
110 for additional traffic enforcement officers. She also requested a policy calling for the
111 removal of Ashby Avenue from the State Highway System.
112
113 Commissioner Poschman asked if Ms. Smith is asking for more police officers or meter
114 maids.
115
116 Ms. Smith responded that she feels that speeding is the issue, so officers are needed.
117
118 John English stated that he felt that policy S-16 and policy PD-2 should be retained in the
119 Plan. He also stated that he would be submitting corrections to the Land Use Map and
120 that an Open Space Map is needed in the final plan.
121
122 Ted Edlin raised concerns about the loss of affordable housing and subsidized housing
123 over the last 20 years. He stated that he believes that the City's housing policy has been a
124 failure and that the new General Plan should propose new policies and not just continue
125 existing policies which, in his opinion, are proven failures. He questioned why the budget
126 for Housing staffing could not be used more efficiently for the provision of actual
127 housing.
128
129 Commissioner Wengraf asked Mr. Edlin if he has any concrete suggestions for new
130 policies.
131
132 Mr. Edlin suggested that funds which support the Housing Department be used for direct
133 subsidies to low income people.
134

APPROVED MINUTES OF REGULAR PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
FEBRUARY 14, 2001

135 Susan Schwartz stated that she wants the Commission to move forward with the Plan
136 because the Plan is a vast improvement over the 1977 Master Plan. She emphasized the
137 importance of adopting a new Plan for fundraising and grant purposes.
138

139 Becky O'Malley emphasized the need for a policy calling for more staff for the
140 Landmarks Preservation Commission. She also argued for a "fair share" traffic policy
141 that would result in an equitable distribution of traffic across all Berkeley streets instead
142 of the current system which forces traffic on to collectors and major streets.
143

144 Commissioner Wengraf asked if Ms. O'Malley is calling for the removal of existing
145 traffic barriers in Berkeley neighborhoods.
146

147 Ms. O'Malley responded that to do so would be politically infeasible. She stated that she
148 simply wants to reduce traffic flow on Ashby.
149

150 Martha Nicoloff presented a letter from the State Attorney General stating that a General
151 Plan can be amended by initiative. She argued that tall buildings would block access to
152 sunlight and solar collectors that are needed in the current energy crisis. She stated that
153 tall buildings are more likely to fall down in an earthquake. She argued for a four story
154 height limit on all transit corridors.
155

156 Clifford Fred stated that it is time to review the 1996 Waterfront Plan now that the Park
157 District has acquired most of the land which was considered in the Waterfront Plan. He
158 requested that the Planning Commission review the 1990 Downtown Plan and consider
159 eliminating the density bonus system so that no building would be over 5 stories in the
160 downtown. Lastly, he requested that the Plan clearly oppose any further expansion by the
161 University of California.
162

163 There being no further speakers for the public hearing, the Commission elected to hold
164 the public hearing open through the February 28, 2001 Commission meeting.
165

166 **ADJOURNMENT**

167
168 Meeting adjourned at 8:30 pm.