



Planning Commission

FINAL MINUTES OF THE REGULAR PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING November 6, 2024

The meeting was called to order at 6:04 p.m.

Location: North Berkeley Senior Center, 1901 Hearst Avenue, Berkeley, CA 94709

- **ROLL CALL:**

Commissioners Present: Blaine Merker, Jeff Vincent, Chip Moore, Janis Ching, Emily Marthinsen (arrived at 6:04 p.m.), Elisa Mikiten, Alfred Twu, Savlan Hauser, and Barnali Ghosh.

Commissioner Absent: Christina Oatfield (excused).

Staff Present: Secretary Justin Horner, Clerk Zoe Covello, Branka Tatarevic, Faye Messner, Ashley James, Claudia Garcia, Alene Pearson.

- **LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT.**

The City of Berkeley recognizes that the community we live in was built on the territory of xučyun (Huchiun (Hooch-yoon)), the ancestral and unceded land of the Chochenyo (Chochen-yo)-speaking Ohlone (Oh-low-nee) people, the ancestors and descendants of the sovereign Verona Band of Alameda County. This land was and continues to be of great importance to all of the Ohlone Tribes and descendants of the Verona Band. As we begin our meeting tonight, we acknowledge and honor the original inhabitants of Berkeley, the documented 5,000-year history of a vibrant community at the West Berkeley Shellmound, and the Ohlone people who continue to reside in the East Bay. We recognize that Berkeley's residents have and continue to benefit from the use and occupation of this unceded stolen land since the City of Berkeley's incorporation in 1878. As stewards of the laws regulating the City of Berkeley, it is not only vital that we recognize the history of this land, but also recognize that the Ohlone people are present members of Berkeley and other East Bay communities today. The City of Berkeley will continue to build relationships with the Lisjan Tribe and to create meaningful actions that uphold the intention of this land acknowledgement.

- **ORDER OF AGENDA:**

- Chair Vincent clarified the process for Item 10. Staff's presentation covers both part A and B, the commissioners ask clarifying questions, a public hearing is held, and then the commissioners discuss.

- **PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD: 0.**

- **PLANNING STAFF REPORT:**

- December Planning Commission Agenda
 - Discussion Item: San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan
 - Action Item: Affordable Housing Requirements
 - Action Item: Tentative Tract Map
- Upcoming Events
 - San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan Walking Tour will be held on Saturday, November 16th from 10:30 am -12 pm
- Upcoming City Council Agenda Items
 - Development Agreement Procedure Revisions – November 19, 2024
 - Keeping Innovation in Berkeley – December 3, 2024

Information Items:

- None.

Communications:

- General.

Late Communications:

- Supplemental 1.
- Supplemental 2.

- **CHAIR REPORT:**

- Chair Vincent commented on the public process, public participation, and our democracy, acknowledging that this was a difficult day. Urges people to participate in the process of democracy but urges residents to be civil, citing recent extreme treatment of City Councilmembers.

- **COMMITTEE REPORT:** Reports by Commission committees or liaisons. In addition to the items below, additional matters may be reported at the meeting.

- None.

8. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Motion/Second/Carried (Mikiten/Twu) to approve the Planning Commission Meeting Minutes from October 9, 2024.

Ayes: Vincent, Moore, Mikiten, Marthinsen, Twu, Hauser, and Ghosh. Noes: None. Abstain: Merker and Ching. Absent: None. (7-0-2-0)

9. OTHER PLANNING RELATED EVENTS:

- None.

AGENDA ITEMS

10. Public Hearing: Gilman Gateway

Senior Planner Ashley James presented on proposed amendments to the Zoning Ordinance, Zoning Map, West Berkeley Plan and General Plan related to the Gilman Gateway Rezone Project. Principal Planner Claudia Garcia presented on the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) for the Gilman Gateway Rezone Project. The Commissioners took public comment, asked questions and made comments including, but not limited to: whether the DEIR studied shorebird migration and glass collision; phasing and the protection of resources during construction as mitigation measures; height exceptions for development greater than 9 acres; existing onsite uses and potential uses for the smaller parcels on the site; continuation of all current M zone uses in the new zone; and the impact this rezoning would have on current residents of the site. There were six public commenters.

Motions/Second/Carried (Vincent/Ghosh) to close the public hearing at 7:31 pm.

Ayes: Merker, Vincent, Moore, Ching, Mikiten, Marthinsen, Twu, Hauser, and Ghosh. Noes: None. Abstain: None. Absent: None. (9-0-0-0)

Motions/Second (Twu/Moore) to recommend that City Council adopt staff's recommendation, and direct staff to:

1. Conduct research on providing more robust TDM and opportunities to reduce parking requirements and parking onsite,
2. Look into landscaping and outdoor space requirements on the site, and
3. Have the staff report clarify incidental uses and the legal nonconforming aspect of that

at 8:30 pm.

Ayes: Merker, Vincent, Moore, Ching, Mikiten, Marthinsen, Twu, Hauser, and Ghosh. Noes: None. Abstain: None. Absent: None. (9-0-0-0)

Public Comments: 6

11. Action: Work Plan and Calendar

Principal Planner Justin Horner presented on the Planning Commission 2024-2025 Work Plan and 2025 Planning Commission Calendar. The Commissioners asked questions and discussed and adopted the 2024 Planning Commission Calendar. There were no public commenters.

Motions/Second (Twu/Moore) to approve the 2025 Planning Commission Calendar as follows at 8:51 pm.

Wednesday, January 15, 2025

Wednesday, February 5, 2025

Wednesday, March 5, 2025

Wednesday, April 16, 2025

Wednesday, May 7, 2025

Wednesday, June 4, 2025

Wednesday, July 16, 2025

August Recess

Wednesday, September 17, 2025

Wednesday, October 8, 2025

Wednesday, November 5, 2025

Wednesday, December 3, 2025

Ayes: Merker, Vincent, Moore, Mikiten, Marthinsen, Twu, Hauser, and Ghosh. Noes: None.
Abstain: Ching. Absent: None. (8-0-1-0)

Motion/Second/Carried (Vincent/Moore) to adjourn the meeting at 8:54 pm.

Ayes: Merker, Vincent, Moore, Ching, Mikiten, Marthinsen, Twu, Hauser, and Ghosh. Noes:
None. Abstain: None. Absent: None. (9-0-0-0)

Members in the public in attendance: 14

Public Speakers: 6

Length of the meeting: 2 hr 50 min



Alisa Shen

Planning Commission Secretary