



## FINAL MINUTES OF THE REGULAR PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING January 21, 2026

The meeting was called to order at 6:35 p.m.

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

### 1. ROLL CALL:

**Commissioners Present:** Emily Marthinsen, Jeff Vincent, Christina Oatfield, Savlan Hauser, Angela Wang, Alfred Twu (Arrived 6:40 pm)

**Commissioners Absent:**, Darrell Owens, Blaine Merker, Charles Kahn

**Staff Present:** Secretary Justin Horner, Clerk Faye Messner, Liza McNulty

### 2. 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.

### 3. PUBLIC COMMENT ON ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA: 1

### 4. ORDER OF AGENDA: No change

### 5. CHAIRPERSON REPORT:

- Chair Marthinsen reported on:
- Her correspondence with the Chair of the Parks, Recreation and Waterfront Commission. The Chairs are looking for ways to connect on parks, open space and urban planning.
- Participation in the Vision Zero Advisory Committee. This committee engaged Berkeley Commissions on the status of the 2020 Vision Zero plan.

- Proposed future discussion on the role of the Planning Commission and objective design guidelines.
- Continued informal discussion of Planning Commission goals with fellow Commissioners.

## **6. AD HOC SUBCOMMITTEES AND LIASON COMMENTS**

- None

## **7. COMMISSIONER ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- None

## **8. STAFF ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- **Upcoming PC Meeting Items:**
  - February:
    - Corridors Small Business policies and ground floor ODS,
    - Density Bonus and the C-AC,
    - Chair and Vice Chair Elections
  - **March:**
    - Safety-EJ Discussion
    - San Pablo Specific Plan
    - SLTE 2026
    - 5th Street GP and Zoning Amendments
  - **April:**
    - SB 79 and AB 893 implementation
- **Upcoming City Council Items:**
  - **January 20:**
    - ADU Condos
    - Program 32 and Design Review
  - **February 24:**
    - Undergrounding of Transformers
  - **March 10:**
    - SB 684 Implementation

## **9. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

Motion/Second (Vincent/Hauser) to approve the Planning Commission Meeting Minutes from December 3, 2025.

Ayes: Marthinsen, Vincent, Oatfield, Twu, Hauser and Wang. Noes: None. Abstain: None. Absent: Owens, Kahn, Merker (6-0-0-3). Motion passed.

## **10. ACTION AND DISCUSSION ITEMS**

### **A. Action: Pier-Ferry Project Use Permit Application**

Liza McNulty, Capital Improvement Program Manager (Parks, Recreation and Waterfront Department) presented the Use Permit Application for the Berkeley Pier-Ferry project. Commissioners took public comment, asked questions and made comments including but not limited to: the Planning Commission's role in the Use Permit approval, future transportation needs of the area, other uses on the Pier and in the Marina, the importance of the Ferry as an emergency transportation option, connecting to San Francisco to support tourism and Berkeley businesses, impacts to and connections with BART and AC Transit, and the importance of reinvigoration of the Waterfront and Marina.

**Public Comments: 5**

Motion/Second (Vincent/Twu) to approve staff recommendation in Attachment 1 to approve the User Permit for the Berkeley Pier Ferry project.

Ayes: Marthinsen, Vincent, Oatfield, Twu, Hauser and Wang. Noes: None. Abstain: None. Absent: Owens, Kahn, Merker (6-0-0-3). Motion passed.

**B. Public Hearing: Amendments to BMC Title 23 (Zoning) to update the regulation of Nonconforming Lot Coverage, Floor Area Ratio (FAR) and Density for Residential Uses in the Residential Multi-Unit 1 (R-1), Residential Multi-Unit 2 (R-2), Residential Multi-Unit 2A (R-2A), and Mixed Use-Residential (MU-R) Zoning Districts.**

Assistant Planner Faye Mingham presented proposed amendments to BMC Title 23 (Zoning) Section 23.324.050 to update the regulation of nonconforming lot coverage, FAR and density for residential uses in the R1, R-2, R-2A, & MU-R zoning districts. Commissioners took public comment, asked questions and made comments including but not limited to: clarifying the intent of Middle Housing development standards and defining nonconforming structures versus alterations.

**Public Comments: 1**

Motion/Second (Vincent/Wang) to close the public comment.

Ayes: Marthinsen, Vincent, Oatfield, Twu, Hauser and Wang. Noes: None. Abstain: None. Absent: Owens, Kahn, Merker (6-0-0-3). Motion passed.

Motion/Second (Vincent/Oatfield) to approve staff's recommendation with the addition of language from 23.324.050(D)(3)(b) to ensure nonconformities are not increased or exacerbated.

Ayes: Marthinsen, Vincent, Oatfield, Twu, Hauser and Wang. Noes: None. Abstain: None. Absent: Owens, Kahn, Merker (6-0-0-3). Motion passed.

## C. Nominations for February Elections

Commissioners put forward nominations for the Chair and Vice Chair election.

Motions/Seconds for Chair and Vice Chair:

1. (Hauser/Vincent) to nominate Commissioner Marthinsen for Chair and Commissioner Hauser for Vice Chair.

**Public Comments: 0**

### 11. INFORMATION ITEMS

None

### 12. CORRESPONDENCE

**13. NEXT COMMISSION MEETING: Wednesday, February 4, 2026 at 6:30 PM.**

### 14. ADJOURN

Motions/Second/Carried (Twu/Oatfield) to adjourn the meeting at 8:10pm.

Ayes: Marthinsen, Vincent, Oatfield, Twu, Hauser and Wang. Noes: None. Abstain: None.  
Absent: Owens, Kahn, Merker (6-0-0-3). Motion passed.

**Members of the public in attendance: 16**

**Public Speakers: 6**

**Length of the meeting: 1 hour and 40 minutes**



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Justin Horner, Planning Commission Secretary