

MINUTES APPROVED AT THE PC MEETING ON JULY 21, 2022

PLANNING COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING COUNCIL CHAMBERS, RICHMOND CITY HALL

Teleconference
May 19, 2022
6:30 p.m.

COMMISSION MEMBERS

David Tucker, Chair	Michael Huang	Jonathan Harrison
Jen Loy, Vice Chair	Masoomah Sharifi Soofiani	
Bruce Brubaker, Secretary	Alpa Agarwal	

The regular meeting was called to order by Vice Chair Loy at 6:30 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Present: Vice Chair Jen Loy; Commissioners Bruce Brubaker, Jonathan Harrison, and Masoomah Sharifi Soofiani

Absent: Chair David Tucker; Commissioners Yu-Hsiang (Michael) Huang and Alpa Agarwal

INTRODUCTIONS

Staff Present: Planning Staff: Roberta Feliciano, Jonelyn Whales, Andrea Villarroel, Community Development Director Lina Velasco, and Attorney James Atencio

MINUTES – None

AGENDA

Vice Chair Loy said items approved by the Commission may be appealed in writing to the City Clerk by Tuesday, May 31, 2022, by 5:00 p.m. and she announced the appeal process after each affected item, as needed.

CONSENT CALENDAR –

- 1. PLN21-466: Rydin Group LLC Cultivation PUBLIC HEARING** to consider a Conditional Use Permit for a cannabis cultivation facility in an industrial building at 2700 Rydin Road, Suite D (APN: 560-390-013). IL, Industrial, Light District. Central Surplus Properties, owner; Rydin Group LLC, applicant Planner: Jonelyn Whales Tentative Recommendation: Conditional Approval
- 2. PLN21-260: Powerplant Park CUP Amendment PUBLIC HEARING** to consider a Conditional Use Permit amendment of a cannabis cultivation facility that includes greenhouses, distribution and processing facility, support facilities and restaurant use at the vacant Parcels on Freethy Boulevard, West of Goodrick Avenue and Richmond Parkway (APN: 408-220-023, -024, -25, -026, -039, -041, -042, - 043, -049, and -050). IA, Industrial

Agriculture District Doommas Enterprise Llc, Richmond Development Co, And Joe & Heidi Shekou, owner; Powerplant Park Inc. (Richard Trieber), applicant Planner: Roberta Feliciano Tentative Recommendation: Conditional Approval

ACTION: It was M/S/C (Harrison, Brubaker) to approve the Consent Calendar; which carried by the following vote: 4-0-3 (Ayes: Brubaker, Loy, Harrison, Soofiani; Noes: None; Absent: Tucker, Agarwal, Huang).

BROWN ACT – Public Forum

CORDELL HINDLER reminded the Commission that several Commissioners terms were ending in June. Also, that applicants must collect input about their project from the associated neighborhood council before it can be heard by any City Commission, Board or Council.

NEW BUSINESS

- 3. PLN22-130: Housing Element Update & Related General Plan Amendments STUDY SESSION** to inform Planning Commission and public about the 6th cycle Housing Element Update, the Housing Equity Roadmap, and related General Plan Amendments (Public Safety & Noise and Environmental Justice). Various, owner; City of Richmond, applicant Planner: Andrea Villarroel Tentative Recommendation: Receive And Provide Comments

Ms. Villarroel remarked the objective of the study session was to provide and receive comments on the 6th cycle Housing Element Update.

Jennifer Murillo, Director/Project Manager, noted that the Housing Element is required by State Law. It covered a 8-year period and the updated Housing Element would cover the period from the year 2023 to 2031. The Housing Element must be certified by the State Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD). State Law required that Housing Elements adequately plan for housing needs for all income levels as well as assess housing needs and local housing stock conditions. The Housing Element also identified housing programs that included goals, policies and programs for the City to implement over the 8-year period. The components included in a Housing Element were a review of current policy and programs, a housing needs assessment, a housing constraints assessment, an analysis of fair housing, a housing resource assessment, an implementation plan and a sites inventory list.

The Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) is the amount of housing that each city in the State of California must plan for in its Housing Element. The RHNA for Richmond was 3,616 total units which was an increase from the current Housing Element of 2,435 total units. Of the RHNA, 46 percent was dedicated to above moderate rate housing, 18 percent was dedicated to moderate rate housing, 13 percent was dedicated to low income, and 23 percent was dedicated to very low income.

Ms. Villarroel reported the City is required to update its Safety Element per Senate Bill (SB) 1241 which required communities located in very high fire hazard severity zone to address fire risks. This triggered SB 1000 which stated updating two or more General Plan elements required cities with a disadvantaged community to add an Environmental Justice Element to reduce health risks and identify policies.

For the Public Safety and Noise Element, an amendment will be made to better address fire risk. The amendment will review Richmond's emergency evacuation capacity, identify emergency scenarios and identify the most vulnerable areas within the city for those types of

emergencies. The City will work in collaboration with the Richmond Police Department, Richmond Fire Department and Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) on the amendment.

For the Environmental Justice Element, multiple census tracts within Richmond identified disadvantaged communities and some of those communities had the highest percentile for most significantly burdened in the State of California. The element would address the unique and compounded health risks in those disadvantaged communities by decreasing pollution exposure, increasing community assets and improving overall health.

Ms. Villarroel noted a study session will be held with the Commission to cover both the Safety Element and the Environmental Justice Element on June 16, 2022.

Ms. Murillo remarked the preliminary housing data indicated that Richmond was a younger community with slightly larger household sizes and a smaller proportion of owner-occupied households. Housing unit growth over the last decade had been slower when compared to Contra Costa County overall. Richmond's median household income and home values were low compared to Contra Costa County overall. Over half of the households were considered low-income with many folks not being about to afford a home in Richmond. In Richmond, both homeowners and renters were experiencing a cost burden where the household was spending more than 30 percent of their income on housing costs. The Housing Element will consider special housing groups as well. Almost 61 percent of low-income senior households were cost-burdened, 1,351 female heads of households with children lived below federal poverty limits and 13 percent of folks in the City had a disability.

Margaretta Lin, Just Cities' Executive Director, mentioned the State of California recently passed a new law requiring that all jurisdictions create Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing (AFFH) and Homelessness priorities. The requirement's objective was to prevent discrimination against folks based on race, gender, age, disabilities and other factors. AFFH was the driver for community engagement efforts and identified priorities defined by resident groups struggling with racial disparities in housing access. Also, the State of California required that all jurisdictions prioritize supportive housing for unhoused residents.

For community engagement, staff will hold stakeholder interviews, deep listening sessions, pop-up events, conduct online surveys, hold community workshops and engage in several study sessions and public hearings. A Resident Advisory Council will be formed and include a diverse set of folks who will work with staff on the Housing Element.

Ms. Lin shared the City will draft a Housing Equity Roadmap (HER) that will provide a more accessible and implementable City housing policy framework and roadmap. It will provide robust housing policies, community and City engagement, best practices as well as a policy feasibility analysis. The public draft HER was scheduled to be completed by late 2022.

Ms. Murillo shared the next steps were to continue public outreach and continue technical analysis. The draft of the Housing Element would begin in June 2022 and go through September 2022. It was scheduled to be released in the fall of 2022. The draft Housing Element will be submitted to HCD in winter of 2022 where they will begin their review process.

Commissioner Harrison asked how the City planned to attract private sector developers to the City. Ms. Lin agreed that with the demise of the State Redevelopment Agency, there was less

funding available for housing. Staff was engaging with three community development financial institutions who had received new funds to build affordable housing.

Commissioner Soofiani wanted to understand how the data was integrated into the analysis. Ms. Murillo explained the data was provided by the Association of Bay Area Governments and the data was approved by HCD. Commissioner Soofiani clarified what tools are being used for the analyses. Ms. Lin stated mapping is a tool used to disaggregate the data as well as other technologies. Ms. Villarroel added that HCD developed a tool that had already mapped all the data for the entire State of California. Commissioner Soofiani recommended overlaying new data over existing data to facilitate a better analysis. She suggested staff use geographic information system (GIS) as an additional mapping tool.

Commissioner Brubaker asked if the drafting of the site map was underway, what was the Commission's role in the process and what was the timing for the Safety and Environmental Justice Elements. Ms. Murillo confirmed the site map was underway. The Planning Commission will be involved in the public hearing segment of the timeline but she encouraged Commissioners to attend the public workshops. Ms. Villarroel noted the other two elements will be updated concurrently as the Housing Element and predicted they would be completed by the end of 2022. Commissioner Brubaker understood there needed to be an environmental review of all three elements and asked if it would be done together or separately. Ms. Velasco answered staff was prepared to do the environmental reviews separately if HCD had to do an additional review of the Housing Element. Commissioner Brubaker inquired how the AFFH and Housing Equity Roadmap interacted together. Ms. Lin stated Just Cities' was leading the AFFH, Housing Equity Roadmap and community engagement together. The Housing Equity Roadmap is the next step after AFFH and it would consolidate the information from AFFH into actionable steps.

Commissioner Harrison appreciated Commissioner Brubaker's process questions. He mentioned one community had a program for unhoused veterans and it included on-site social services. He inquired if the City was exploring those types of programs. Ms. Murillo concurred the Housing Element will allow and encourage those types of supportive services.

Vice Chair Loy inquired if Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) would update their data to include the year 2020. Ms. Murillo believed ABAG would not be updating the data soon. Vice Chair Loy encouraged staff to integrate updated data as it becomes available. She recommended that a list of stakeholders be made public so that Commissioners and the public can make suggestions. She supported the City's effort of forming a Resident Advisory Council and asked when the application process would be closed. Ms. Lin answered the deadline had been extended to enable more residents to apply. Vice Chair Loy inquired if the Planning Commission would see the Housing Element before the June 16, 2022 meeting. Ms. Villarroel clarified the Commission will discuss the Environmental Justice and Safety Element at the June 16, 2022 meeting.

Vice Chair Loy invited comments from the public; seeing none she invited Commissioners to provide additional comments.

Commissioner Brubaker mentioned recently two housing projects reduced their unit yield from what was originally proposed due to financing. He wanted to understand if a minimum unit yield could be set for sites to encourage densification.

Vice Chair Loy echoed Commissioner Brubaker's comment.

Commissioner Soofiani agreed with Commissioner Brubaker. She wanted to understand the mechanics, milestones, and constraints of the roadmap. Ms. Lin restated the roadmap was an implementation guide and first had to be adopted by the Council. The roadmap would identify short-term, medium-term and long-term goals for housing. Ms. Velasco noted the City was required to complete a Housing Element Annual Report that included all Building Permits that had been issued based on income levels. Also, it included residential projects that had been submitted for planning review, approved projects, and projects that reduced their unit counts due to constraints. Commissioner Soofiani asked what the City's strategy was if it falls behind in accomplishing its RHNA. Ms. Velasco shared the City accomplished meeting its 5th Cycle RHNA in the very low income category and almost achieved the low-income category. The City could not control market conditions and supply chain conditions.

Commissioner Brubaker mentioned Campus Bay and Richmond Hilltop were the largest housing sites in the City, but Point Molate was recently removed at a potential housing site.

Vice Chair Loy expressed disappointment that there were no public comment provided. She appreciated the consultant's knowledge and passion.

COMMISSION BUSINESS

4. Reports of Officers, Commissioners and Staff – Ms. Velasco announced the June 2, 2022 Planning Commission meeting was canceled. The City will be closed for Memorial Day, May 30, 2022. Also, the City will be renaming a City baseball field at Nichol Park in honor of Lilly Mayes.

Vice Chair Loy announced at the Clark Kerr Campus there will be a yard sale of free items from students moving off-campus.

8. Adjournment - The meeting was adjourned at 7:55 p.m. to the next regular meeting on June 16, 2022.