MINUTES OF MEETING Alameda County Planning Commission June 21, 2004 (Approved August 2, 2004)

The meeting was held at the hour of 1:30 p.m. at 399 Elmhurst Street, Public Works Building Auditorium, Hayward, California.

REGULAR MEETING: 1:30 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Commissioners Compton Gault, Richard Hancocks, Mike Jacob, Glenn Kirby, Lena Tam. Commissioner Imhof arrived midway through the first regular calendar item.

MEMBERS EXCUSED: Commissioner Ario Ysit, Chair.

OTHERS PRESENT: Chris Bazar, Planning Director; Steven Buckley, Assistant Planning Director; Bruce Jensen, Senior Planner; Eric Chambliss, Senior Deputy County Counsel; Karen Borrmann, Public Works Agency Liaison; Nilma Singh, Recording Secretary.

CALL TO ORDER:

Vice-Chair Jacob called the meeting to order at 1:40 p.m.

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE CHAIR: None.

OPEN FORUM: Open forum is provided for any members of the public wishing to speak on an item not listed on the agenda. Each speaker is limited to three (3) minutes. There were no members of the public wishing to speak.

CONSENT CALENDAR:

1. APPROVAL OF PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES – April 5 and June 7, 2004. Approval of Minutes for April 5 was continued to the next hearing. Commissioner Gault moved for approval of the June 7 Minutes. Commissioner Tam seconded. Commissioner Hancocks made a correction on page 4, line 6, in the first full paragraph that begins "Mr. Buckley..." the correct question was why it was <u>not</u> being rezoned to the "A" District. The motion carried 6/0 with the above change.

REGULAR CALENDAR:

1. 2186th ZONING UNIT – MARC CRAWFORD – Petition to reclassify from the R-1-SU-RV (Single Family Residence, Secondary Unit, Recreational Vehicle) District to PD (Planned Development), to allow construction of 20 townhouse-type apartment units with one-car attached garages for each unit, in 7 two-unit buildings and 3 three-unit buildings, with 21 uncovered parking spaces, located at 2854 Grove Way, north side, approximately 250 feet east of Betlen Way, unincorporated Castro Valley area of Alameda County, bearing County Assessor's designation: 0416-0060-030-02. (Continued from June 7, 2004).

Mr. Steven Buckley presented the staff report. The property is currently vacant except for a small house at the front of the lot, which has been evaluated for historic significance and found to have none. The site is currently designated R-1, and could be subdivided for 5,000 square foot lots, but the intent here was to provide a higher density development consistent with the R-S-D-3 District and the surrounding neighborhood. Immediately on the west is an apartment building, and immediately to the east is a duplex development at the same density as the proposed project.

A Mitigated Negative Declaration had been prepared to address various environmental aspects of the project, including historic issues, as well as other issues. There were no environmental effects which could not be addressed with standard conditions of approval. The main issue for staff was making minor refinements to the site plan. The site plan includes 10' rear yards and 10' building separation in a few places, and short front and side yards where the driveway passes near the building walls. Some options, such as looking at re-aligning the road or the parking, or shifting some buildings around, were discussed with the Applicant. Due to a pre-existing easement serving the property to the north, the location of the new driveway appeared to be fairly fixed. Although the driveway would widen the easement pavement to 20 feet, it is not possible to move it to any other portion of the site.

Staff has outlined two options for the Planning Commission to consider and recommends that if neither one was considered favorably, then staff recommends that final site plan details be left to a Planning Director determination prior to issuing a building permit. Another issue was whether these townhouse type apartments could be converted to condominiums, as was the trend in the area. Guest parking was evaluated in conformance with the Condominium Conversion Guidelines, and it appears that visitor parking is fairly well-provided for on driveway aprons, in the designated parking areas, or in side pullouts from the driveway.

Commissioner Kirby asked staff if, as stated in both the agenda and the staff report, the proposal was for *three* 3-unit buildings, or if with a total of 20 units, it was only *two* 3-unit buildings and seven 2-unit buildings. Mr. Buckley replied yes, the total was 20 units and there were only two 3-unit buildings. Commissioner Kirby asked if Option 1 was part of the Applicant's original submittal. Mr. Buckley stated that Options 1 and 2 were prepared later. Exhibit B was prepared as a guideline for the Planning Director's decision on final amendments that provides suggestions for moving fences, locating garbage cans, and adjusting some yard dimensions.

Public testimony was called for. The Applicant, Marc Crawford, submitted color versions of the original plan. He stated that he had bought the property a few years ago as an investment and his initial plan to build multi-family homes had not been possible due to the access easement. The proposal was to provide a large green area in front of the first four buildings with "grass-crete" in the driveways to establish a kind of greenbelt across the front part of the site, with a single large area as play area. Although staff has recommended bigger rear yards, these will be rental units where rear yards were not generally cared for by tenants, and so he felt that bigger front yards was a better alternative. The development would be gated and provided with security cameras for the common areas. Prior to this submission, he had a historic survey done. He considered the original plan, compared to the other options, the best option. The plan was for quality condo-look townhomes, a better alternative to stacked apartment. Mr. Crawford said he has no intention to split the units into condos later. One of the main issues was parking on the 10-foot long driveway aprons on Buildings E, F, G, H and I. It was addressed with reduced front setbacks and shorter driveway lengths to make it less inviting for parking. The plan now was to make that six feet all the way around. Commissioner Kirby indicated that he liked the shorter driveway aprons and the hip roofs and porches. He asked if the large setbacks and landscaping would be maintained by the Applicant, who affirmed that he would. Although the landscaping plan shows groundcovers in several areas, it will

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actually have grass within the 10-foot setback. If budget allows, the landscaping would be up-graded with a fountain and wrought-iron fencing in front. Commissioner Kirby said he supported the increased front yard setbacks and rear guest parking which provides separation from the driveway. A discussion followed regarding the easement. In response to Commissioner Kirby, Mr. Crawford explained that although the adjacent property fronts Hoffman Way, which dead ends into their property, they continue to use the easement and driveway through Crawford's property to Grove Way.

Commissioner Kirby indicated that he did not particularly care for Option 1 with the orientation of Buildings A through D which would require more paving for parking and driveways with the conflict of backing out between the driveways, and also noted a problem between Buildings F and H. The only difference between Option 2 and the Applicant's original plan was the rear yard setback for the first few buildings. Commissioner Kirby stated that his inclination was to support the original plan.

Commissioner Tam asked if privacy and access easement were the reasons for creating this "gated community". The Applicant replied "no," adding that it was because of crime along Grove Way and Center Street, to provide security for kids and to keep unwanted traffic out. He was building a similar project on Royal Avenue. Commissioner Tam asked about drainage plans noting that the staff report references compliance with the Regional Water Quality Control Board. Mr. Crawford replied that first he would have an engineer make a topographic map. The storm drains on Grove Way are fairly deep hence he did not anticipate any problems.

Commissioner Imhof asked about drainage during construction; the Applicant stated that he would have erosion control plans in place, such as silt fencing. Storm drains and sewer lines would be installed first, to be used during construction to ensure drainage was not a problem.

Commissioner Jacob asked if the Applicant had discussed with the neighbor the building of a gate across the driveway easement. The Applicant stated that they did not have a problem as all residents and that neighbor would have their own remote control. From the legal standpoint, the gate would not be an issue as long as it did not block the easement. Commissioner Jacob asked if Exhibit B would be used. The Applicant replied "yes."

Commissioner Gault moved to adopt staff recommendations per Exhibit B, and the considerations and modifications as presented in the staff report. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Kirby, which carried 6/0. The Chair was excused.

2. MODIFICATION TO 1862ND ZONING UNIT, TENTATIVE TRACT MAP, TR-7155 AND CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT, C-8276 – RABI GHOSH – Request for reconsideration of the Planning Commission's decision finding the proposed modification is not minor, related to petition to modify the 1862nd Zoning Unit by allowing reduced setbacks, modification to the lotting pattern and redesign of the dwelling units, located at 16100 Maubert Avenue, north side, approximately 280 feet west of 162nd Avenue, unincorporated San Leandro area of Alameda County, bearing County Assessor's designation: 0080-0048-043-00 2004.

Commissioner Hancocks requested clarification on the reconsideration process pointing out that an appeal has also been filed with the Board of Supervisors. He felt that it would be more appropriate for the Board of Supervisors to hear this matter. Mr. Buckley explained that the Applicant had raised questions about not being granted an opportunity to be heard at the prior hearing. And based on what had occurred at that

hearing, staff had encouraged the Applicant to request a rehearing and to file an appeal simultaneously in case a rehearing was not granted. Commissioner Tam pointed out that at the last hearing, the Chair had advised the Applicant to submit his comments in writing. Staff replied that the Applicant's written statement was included in the Commission's package. Another element of this rehearing was that there were some technical errors in the staff report, such as square footage and other details which, if presented to the Commission, could have resulted in a different action. The Chair also felt that a rehearing would be improper. But, since the Applicant was available and the matter noticed, testimony could be taken. Commissioner Kirby agreed adding that this Commission could make a recommendation to the Board of Supervisors. Commissioners Tam and Gault concurred. Commissioner Hancocks pointed out that the Applicant could have provided testimony as part of the package of materials submitted to the Board of Supervisors.

Staff presented the revisions to the prior staff report analysis. The main clarification was the comparison made to the previously approved duets, including the building square footage, setbacks and parking, which the applicant was requesting to modify as part of this permit. The Applicant has also requested that comparison be made to the Marcella Renaissance project across the street. Furthermore, guest parking was considered adequate because it was available on the adjacent public street.

Commissioner Hancocks felt that the comparison to other projects in the area was irrelevant. Staff agreed, pointing out that this was part of the Applicant's supportive statement and also to provide clarification to the questions raised during the Commission's field trip. Commissioner Tam said there appeared to be two issues: the prior analysis stated that the revised project would result in twice the square footage which was not considered as minor and the affordable factor. Mr. Buckley clarified that the square footage averages 1,585 for the originally approved duets, new buildings were 2,150, for an increase of about 30%; whereas at the previous Planning Commission hearing it was presented as changing from 1,100 to 2,200, a 100% increase. This was the result of a misreading of the proposed site plan and two versions of the original Tract Map.

Public testimony was called for. Rabi Ghosh, Applicant, stated that the changes described in the staff report are what he had wanted to point out at the last hearing. He had bought the property and redesigned the units from duets to single-family based on discussions with Planning staff and all work was done to respond to staff's recommendations. He only became aware of the staff's final recommendation for denial a day before the hearing and, as such, had no time to revise the plans. The error had been on staff's part as to the comparisons and the conclusions regarding the characterization as a minor versus major change. All other approvals, such as building and grading, have been obtained for the project redesign. Commissioner Tam asked if he had purchased the property with the intention of converting to single family homes. Mr. Ghosh replied "yes." Commissioner Jacob asked the Applicant if he had at any time been led to believe that he did not require additional approval before he could implement what had been discussed with staff. Mr. Ghosh responded that he understood, but that the changes started out so minor that it could even have been approved over the counter. Commissioner Jacob asked whether the applicant understood that vesting, timelines, and expenses would be required to change what had been approved when he bought the project. Mr. Ghosh responded "yes," he understood there were no guarantees. Commissioner Tam asked what had limited the Applicant's ability to simply implement the originally approved plans. Mr. Ghosh replied that the marketplace had changed and the purchase price for the land required more development. Commissioner Kirby felt that the applicant's business decisions were speculative and should not influence the Planning Commission, but that the Applicant had not been afforded the ability to explain his objections to staff's interpretation, and so the Commission's earlier decision may have been based on erroneous information, but he also felt that the Board of Supervisors should hear the matter on appeal.

Indy Ghadha, project engineer, indicated that if an approval was granted today, the appeal would be withdrawn. The cost of the project now has increased. He felt that the comparison to the Marcella Renaissance project was valid because it illustrated the relative scope of the project and that it was consistent. Only three lots would have a 5 foot setback, and adequate compensating space would be provided in front and in patio areas that had been added. He felt that denying that project based on two lots did not make sense. Commissioner Hancocks asked staff if this project had undergone changes since the last hearing. Staff replied "yes," patios have been added to two units.

Commissioner Hancocks reiterated his earlier statement that it would not be correct to allow a rehearing once a decision has been made and an appeal had been filed. He was concerned with precedent setting and legal issues. He urged the Commission to reconsider the procedure. Commissioner Kirby stated that he felt the Planning Commission had the ability to reconsider a project if there was an error in the prior proceedings. The Vice-Chair stated that a motion was needed before the point of order could be taken up.

Public testimony was closed.

Commissioner Kirby made a motion that the Commission move to reassert their prior action that the request for a modification to the Planned Development District is not a minor. Commissioner Hancocks seconded the motion. Commissioner Tam disagreed adding that the square footage was previously not correct and now it was only a 30% increase in floor area, which was not major. The Commission should also consider the number of appeals made to the Board of Supervisors and take responsibility for resolving issues based on the delegated authority to decide these matters. Commissioners Imhof and Gault agreed. This Commission needs to take the new numbers into consideration and then make a decision.

Commissioner Kirby withdrew his motion. Commissioner Hancocks felt that the Commission should not be guided by the number of appeals but on their merit.

Commissioner Gault made the motion that the request was a minor modification and the Commission should proceed; Commissioner Tam seconded the motion.

Commissioner Hancocks raised a point of order whether the Planning Commission could rehear the application after an appeal had been filed to the Board of Supervisors. The Vice-Chair's ruling was in favor of Commissioner Hancocks' point of order and a call for division could be made. Commissioner Tam called for a division. She felt that in this case, there was clearly a technical error that this Commission made which could be corrected by the Planning Commission rather than penalize the applicant and forward another appeal to the Board of Supervisors. The Vice-Chair requested a roll indicating that a yes would be holding the Vice-Chair's ruling and a no would be in favor of Commissioner Gault's motion to proceed. Commissioners Gault, Imhof and Tam voted no, Commissioners Hancocks and Kirby voted yes. Motion passed 3/2.

A vote was called for Commissioner Gault's original motion that this was a minor modification. The Vice-Chair requested a second roll call. Motion passed 5/1 with Commissioner Hancocks voting no. The Vice-Chair requested clarification on the action on the Conditional Use Permit. Mr. Buckley explained that the current staff report recommends conditional approval, with the modifications discussed so that the site plan would be adjusted, and that the necessary findings would be supported. Commissioner Gault made the motion to approve staff recommendation; Commissioner Tam seconded the motion. Commissioner Kirby said he supported the motion but was uncomfortable with the term 'modification of

the project'. Instead, it was re-interpretation of the information. The Vice-Chair stated that although he believed the modification was minor, he was opposed to changing the project in ways that made it less affordable to the home buyers, and did not find compelling the arguments made by the Applicant regarding what he had paid for the property. The Vice-Chair requested a roll call for the CUP approving the modification to the Planned Unit Development and Tract Map. Commissioners Gault, Imhof, Kirby and Tam voted yes and Commissioner Hancocks and the Vice-Chair voted no.

3. **TENTATIVE PARCEL MAP, TR-7526** – **WONG** - Petition to subdivide an 18-unit apartment building into 18 condominium units, in the CVCBD (Castro Valley Central Business District Specific Plan) District, located at 21059 Wilbeam Avenue, west side, approximately 243 feet of Kerr Street, unincorporated Castro Valley area of Alameda County, bearing County Assessor's designation: 084A-0046-003-04.

Mr. Buckley presented the staff report. Commissioner Kirby noted that this Commission was seeing many applications for similar conversions. Commissioner Tam asked if these applications would have any impact on the Commission's obligation to the Housing Element. Mr. Buckley replied that given the size and configuration of these units, they may be more affordable than single family homes and other townhouse developments so this may meet some segment of 'for sale affordable' instead of 'rental affordable'. However, there is no ordinance to restrict sale prices. This project also would provide a mixture of housing types compared to surrounding rentals, which was perhaps a benefit.

Commissioner Gault said he had parking concerns and asked for the number of on-site guest parking spaces and the parking difference between single family homes versus residential condos. Staff replied that there were five guest parking spaces on site, in addition to the two parking places per dwelling unit, and two spaces on the public street. A total of 43 parking spaces would be available for the eighteen housing units. Apartments require two parking spaces per unit, townhouses require two spaces per unit, single family tract subdivision requires two per unit plus one guest space per unit. Commissioner Gault thought that permits have to be issued to park in front of the residences. Staff replied that they understood that this was not the case on Wilbeam Street and that was part of why the street parking was problematic – BART overflow parking congested the street. Commissioner Kirby asked if it was likely that some of the condominiums could end up being rented, and whether statistics could be obtained. Staff said that statistics such as this could be obtained through the federal census for larger areas, and agreed that within the building there could ultimately be a mixture of rental and ownership units.

Public testimony was called for. Mr. Wong, Project Architect, said he has worked with Planning staff to meet all requirements. Commissioner Tam asked if there were restrictions under the CC&Rs as to whether or not the units can be owner-occupied or rentals. Mr. Wong said that the CC&Rs had not been written yet. Commissioner Kirby questioned whether it would be legal to restrict the ability of a purchaser to later decide to rent the unit to someone else, and that a mixture of occupancy might be desirable. Commissioner Gault agreed. The Vice-Chair asked if there was anything specific that was driving him to convert his project from apartments to condominiums. Mr. Wong replied that he would like an approval today and that his finances were based on the conversion to condos.

Public testimony was closed. Commissioner Tam made the motion to approve the application per staff recommendation. Commissioner Kirby seconded the motion, which carried unanimously. The Chair was excused.

4. **TENTATIVE PARCEL MAP, TR-7528** – **KAO** – Petition to convert a nineunit apartment building to condominiums, in a R-S-D-25 (Suburban Residence, 2,500 square foot Minimum Building Site Area/Dwelling Unit) District, located at 16715 to 16787 Tiger Lane, west side corner of East Lewelling Boulevard, unincorporated San Lorenzo area of Alameda County, bearing County Assessor's designation: 0413-0063-001-00.

Mr. Buckley summarized the staff report adding that although the County's Condominium Guidelines are currently under review, they are helpful when considering these types of projects. Commissioner Kirby noted that parking was separated from the units and asked if spaces will be dedicated to each ownership. Mr. Buckley explained that since Tiger Lane was a private street and there was no garage parking provided at the site, it provides common parking and landscaping and thought that CC&Rs would delineate each unit with two spaces. Commissioner Kirby felt that it was important to assure that two spaces were designated to each unit.

Public testimony was called for. Mr. Kao, applicant, said he started this project three years ago for financial support after his retirement. His plan was to sell the condos on an 'as needed' basis. There were two buildings, one with six units and the other with three units. Mr. Kao, in reference to parking, said there were three spaces at the end of the buildings, six street parking and four guest parking spaces. Commissioner Kirby requested that Mr. Kao be willing to designate two spaces, by assigning numbers, to each unit. Mr. Kao agreed.

Public testimony was closed. Mr. Buckley suggested modifying Condition 10 (d) to reflect 'assigned parking spaces'. Commissioner Kirby made the motion to approve the application per staff recommendation with the above modification. Commissioner Gault seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously. The Chair was excused.

5. **TENTATIVE PARCEL MAP, TR-7535** – LANGON – Petition to convert an eight-unit apartment building to condominiums, in a R-S-D-3 (Suburban Residence, 2,500 square feet Minimum Building Site Area/Dwelling Unit) District, located at 16267 Ashland Avenue, west side, approximately 51 feet south of Bertero Avenue, unincorporated San Lorenzo area of Alameda County, bearing County Assessor's designation: 080C-0473-034-02.

Mr. Buckley presented the staff report. The main issue with this conversion was guest parking although additional parking was available along Ashland Avenue. Another issue was variations from the required open space, although the rear yards do provide some. Commissioner Tam requested clarification on the Condominium Guidelines #2. Staff explained adding that for this project, guest parking would be provided on street, which would not be assigned but publicly owned and accessible. Commissioner Kirby said he had two concerns: parking in driveways with bumpers in the fire lane and turnaround. Mr. Buckley pointed out that the parcel was 280 feet deep which would allow adequate depth for providing a turnaround area at the rear of the driveway.

Public testimony was called for. John Langon, Applicant, explained that turnaround was possible from the driveway. The required front setback was 20 feet. Mr. Buckley clarified that per the Zoning Ordinance, 25 feet was typically required for backing distance, and no garage door shall face an adjacent residential property line closer than 20 feet. Mr. Langon pointed out that this project would provide relatively affordable housing. Commissioner Kirby stated that cars parked in the 12 ½ foot driveway would be sticking out. He asked if it was required by the CC&R to keep the fire lane clear. Mr. Langon

replied "yes." Commissioner Imhof, in reference to the site, noted the location of six parking stalls along Ashland Avenue. Mr. Langon said guest parking would be on the street, in the front and across the street where a public park fronted the street, undesignated.

Public testimony was closed. Commissioner Gault made the motion to approve the application per staff recommendation and the conditions to reference the part of CC&Rs that reflect the requirement that the fire lane be kept clear. Commissioner Tam seconded the motion, which carried 6/0. The Chair was excused.

STAFF COMMENTS & CORRESPONDENCE: Mr. Buckley pointed out that the election of officers will be the first item on the next agenda. The Chair asked that another item, the Transportation and Circulation Element, be discussed with the Planning Director as a future work item.

CHAIR'S REPORT: Commissioner Jacob announced that Commissioner Ysit had been unavailable because his truck had broken down.

COMMISSION ANNOUNCEMENTS, COMMENTS AND REPORTS: In reference to the Transportation and Circulation Element, Commissioner Jacob stated that he had a discussion with the Planning Director who thought that it might not be appropriate to agendize this matter. Instead, he suggested that the Commissioners have broader discussions on regional impacts in general, including interaction with the surrounding cities of the incorporated areas regarding the best way to interact with sanitary and water districts, and air quality. He was not sure of the timeframe.

Commissioner Gault agreed and suggested a workshop with appropriate agencies and perhaps requesting information from adjoining counties on certain projects that have been completed, but were affecting our roadways. Commissioner Imhof noted that some examples were Crow Canyon Road, Mountain House project affect on I-580 and traffic issues related to I-680. Commissioner Gault also thought that public transit, infrastructure, circulation patterns, and projections needed to be included, and indicated that transportation impacts have been discussed at various conferences that he has attended in the past. Commissioner Kirby agreed, stating that coordination was difficult even for those agencies that were charged with doing it, such as MTC and ABAG. Commissioner Tam also agreed on a comprehensive discussion/workshop on such issues on a County-wide level and adjoining counties. She suggested the following issues: 238 By-pass, settlement between San Joaquin County and Mountain House, use of Measure 2 funding and the Housing Element related to density and transportation.

Commissioner Hancocks requested permission from the Vice-Chair to be excused from the remainder of the meeting.

Commissioner Imhof asked if a motion was needed to cancel the July 6th meeting. Commissioner Kirby said he agreed only if the cancellation did not affect any of the Applicants and suggested maintaining the same meeting time. Commissioner Gault made the motion to cancel the July 6th meeting but maintaining the time of the July 19th meeting. Motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Imhof requested written information on setback requirements in reference to creeks, driveways, property lines, septic tanks and roadways for the East County. Commissioner Jacob suggested a presentation at the next meeting.

Commissioner Gault discussed the issue of recreational vehicles. He had asked for a study to be done on the location of the current facilities and future sites but had not received any to date. This was becoming

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more of an issue with many cases of illegal RV parking. He also complained that no Zoning Enforcement action has been taken on a site where illegal activities were occurring, such as illegal dumping and parking. He further requested immediate action adding that the Planning Director and Zoning Enforcement needed to act on known situations to set an example rather than sanction illegal activity. Another concern was in enforcement of conditions of approval, and adequate penalties to sufficiently deter activities and fund staff work to monitor compliance. Commissioner Imhof agreed, adding that perhaps a revised fine structure was needed to collect adequate funds. One possibility was to write a letter to the Board of Supervisors reflecting the Commission's concern regarding zoning violations. The Chair recommended that the Commissioners email staff with suggested language. Staff announced that the RV storage application was appealed and was the Board agenda.

Commissioner Jacob stated that it was proper to bring up the topic of Commission elections at this meeting. Commissioner Kirby recommended that the election of officers be the first item on the next agenda. The Commission agreed.

ADJOURNMENT: There being no further business, Commissioner Imhof moved to adjourn the meeting at 4:05 p.m. Commissioner Kirby seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

CHRIS BAZAR, SECRETARY COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION OF ALAMEDA COUNTY