



Planning Commission

**FINAL MINUTES OF THE REGULAR PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING  
February 7, 2024**

The meeting was called to order at 6:02 p.m.

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

• **ROLL CALL:**

**Commissioners Present:** Blaine Merker, Debra Sanderson (alternate for Jeff Vincent), John E. Moore, Christina Oatfield, Elisa Mikiten, Emily Marthinsen, Alfred Twu, Savlan Hauser, and Barnali Ghosh.

**Commissioner Absent:** Jeff Vincent (excused).

**Staff Present:** Secretary Anne Hersch, Clerk Zoe Covello, Justin Horner, and Brian Garvey.

• **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:** No changes.

• **PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD:** 1.

• **PLANNING STAFF REPORT:**

- Next commission meeting is planned for March 6, 2024.

**Information Items:** None.

**Communications:**

- None.

**Late Communications:**

- Supplemental 1.
- Supplemental 2

- **CHAIR REPORT:**

- None.

- **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/Sanderson) to approve the Planning Commission Meeting Minutes from January 17, 2024.

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

**9. OTHER PLANNING RELATED EVENTS:**

- None.

**AGENDA ITEMS**

**10. Action: 2024 Elections for Chair and Vice Chair**

The Commission held elections for Chair and Vice Chair of the Planning Commission.

Motions/Second/Carried (Sanderson/Hauser) to reelect Chair Vincent as Chair of the Planning Commission at 6:09 pm.

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

Motions/Second/Carried (Merker/Marthinsen) to reelect Vice Chair Ghosh as Vice Chair of the Planning Commission at 6:10 pm.

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

**Public Comments: 0**

**11. Public Hearing: Middle Housing**

Associate Planner Justin Horner presented proposed amendments to Title 23 of the Berkeley Municipal Code, the Zoning Map, and the General Plan, which would encourage the development of “middle housing” in areas currently zoned R-1, R-1A, R-2, R-2A and MU-R. The Commissioners asked clarifying questions, held a public hearing, took public comment, discussed the proposed ordinance language, and recommended the ordinance to City Council with a series of recommended changes.

Motion/Second/Carried (Mikiten/Merker) to close the public hearing at 7:15 pm.

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

**Public Comments: 12**

Motion/Second/Carried (Merker/Sanderson) to recommend that City Council adopt staff’s recommended ordinance with the following changes:

1. Remove the floor area ratio (FAR) standard for all zones being discussed,
2. Remove the maximum residential density standard for all zones being discussed,
3. Increase the lot coverage to 60% for all zones being discussed,
4. Remove language specific to additional permit requirements for bedrooms in BMC Section 23.202.030(B)(1), and
5. Remove development standards specific to additions and instead rely solely on main building standards,

at 8:33 pm.

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

Motion/Second/Passed (Ghosh/Merker) to permit the construction of all housing types that increase density, including single-family homes, with a Zoning Certificate, at 8:37 pm.

Ayes: Merker, Sanderson, Marthinsen, Twu, Hauser, and Ghosh. Noes: Moore and Mikiten. Abstain: Oatfield. Absent: None. (6-2-1-0)

Motion/Second/Failed (Mikiten/Moore) to further recommend that the ordinance is revised to leave the core section in West Berkeley (10<sup>th</sup> Street through 7<sup>th</sup> Street) as R-1 at 8:55 pm.

Ayes: Moore and Mikiten. Noes: Merker, Sanderson, Marthinsen, Twu, Hauser, and Ghosh.  
Abstain: Oatfield. Absent: None. (2-6-1-0)

Motion/Second/Carried (Moore/Mikiten) to adjourn the meeting at 8:57 pm.

Ayes: Merker, Sanderson, Moore, Oatfield, 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: 13**

**Length of the meeting: 2 hr 55 minutes**



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Alisa Shen

Planning Commission Secretary