

**BALBOA RESERVOIR COMMUNITY ADVISORY  
COMMITTEE CITY & COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO**

# **MEETING MINUTES**

Online Meeting  
**Wednesday, April 8, 2020**  
**6:00 PM**  
Regular Meeting

**Please note:** Meeting minutes are only intended to serve as a summary of the meeting. For a full transcript of the meeting, refer to the video recording of the meeting available online at <https://sfplanning.org/project/balboa-reservoir#cac-and-community-meetings>

Documents received during this meeting are in a document titled CAC Comments on DSG via the following link: <https://sfplanning.org/project/balboa-reservoir#cac-and-community-meetings>

Committee Members Present:

Michael Ahrens; Brigitte Davila; Amy O’Hair; Mark Tang; Peter Tham; Jon Winston

Committee Members Absent: Christine Godinez; Robert Muehlbauer; Maurice Rivers

City Staff/Consultants Present:

Project Team: Nora Collins, Kearstin Dischinger, Joe Kirchofer, Karen Murray, Peter Waller

Office of Economic and Workforce Development: Leigh Lutenski

San Francisco Planning Department: Sue Exline, Seung Yen Hong, Reanna Tong, Leslie Valencia

**1. Call to Order and Roll Call**

**2. Opening of Meeting**

**Approval of February Minutes**

Updates to Minutes:

- Motion: Approve minutes
- Moved: Ahrens; Seconded: O’Hair

- Ayes: Ahrens; Davila; Meuhlbauer, O’Hair; Tang; Tham, Winston; Noes: [none]; Abstain: [none]

### **Announcements**

Leigh Lutenski: In addition to our virtual meetings we have a dedicated email address for the community, [BRCAC@sfgov.org](mailto:BRCAC@sfgov.org). We are continuing to think about other ways to do outreach during this time and encourage folks to send an email if they want to suggest a new way to do outreach. We are considering potential office hours with an open phone line and hard copies. This project is on tomorrow’s (April 9<sup>th</sup>) first virtual Planning Commission meeting to initiate the General Plan Amendment. This is not an action item. This project also has a number of hearings approval throughout the spring and summer. Planning Commission approvals were originally scheduled to start May 7<sup>th</sup>, but this might get moved back by a week or two in response to the transition to virtual.

### **3. Design Standards and Guidelines (DSG) Document**

Jon Winston mentioned that the full Design Standards and Guidelines document and Executive Summary are available for download on the website and the Balboa Reservoir CAC Meetings page.

#### **A. Presentation**

Peter Waller from Pyatok Architects presented on the Balboa Reservoir Design Standards and Guidelines.

#### **B. CAC, Project Team, and City Staff Questions and Discussion**

- Mike Ahrens: Sent a four-page memo with questions and suggested to post the memo along with CAC meeting minutes. Whenever Peter Waller responds to the questions in the memo, provide redlined answers and post on the Balboa Reservoir website also. Have a follow up discussion at the next CAC meeting.
- Brigitte Davila: Clarified that future open space on SFPUC land is intended to join with Unity Plaza for one continuous space. Some courtyard designs with only one access point look like a fire hazard. Pictures of townhomes shown in presentation are examples and not the final design. How is the Balboa Reservoir project coordinating with City College on the recently passed bond measure?
- Amy O’Hair: Also submitted comments in a memo. Would like to know the state of the north street realignment and coordination with City College. Make sure that the cladding material are particular to local weather.
- Mark Tang: Asked for clarification on height limits for rooftop gables or architectural features. Would encourage higher sustainability goals and options in the designs, particular to EV standards. DSG should include bike share.
- Jon Winston: How will first floor be activated on the streets? What’s the plan to make streets pedestrian-friendly? I like the traffic calming efforts. Would like to see more of a porch-like entrance to the houses where people can hang out

and kids can play in some streets. Agree with Amy on the cladding materials; avoid cladding that quickly falls apart.

- Peter Waller: Rooftop parapets are allowed to extend above height limits to allow some flexibility, but not allowed to create additional units. The bike share piece will be incorporated in the Transportation Demand Management Plan. Do not anticipate much retail on ground floor because of strong nearby retail, but ground floors will likely consist of common, open spaces that connect to adjacent outdoor/open spaces. Raised crosswalks with special paving and planting along sidewalks will help with pedestrian-friendly streets.
- Leigh Lutenski: We have been talking with the Vice Chancellor of City College about building site planning, pedestrian circulation, and access up Frida Kahlo. We expect to continue talks with City college.

### C. DSG Public Comment

1. This is Jennifer from Sunnyside. So just a few questions. The gray water treatment will be in some of the buildings and there's one downwind of Riordan High School and Sunnyside and we wanted to know: how did the developers plan to ensure this doesn't release bad smell and what mitigation measures are there to fix a stench? I don't know if this is appropriate for this meeting but it's only one of several questions I have, but I do think that's going to be important. Another comment I have is that in various meetings, we've brought up that we're concerned about the ocean wind that is going to be redirected possibly funneled directly into Sunnyside. This part of Sunnyside's already been hit by ocean winds that have toppled trees and destroyed new saplings. Is there a way to construct the buildings or grow trees on the northern sides to mitigate this issue? One of those documents that shows Sunnyside is just north of Riordan it's actually North East of the Balboa Reservoir. So the sides of the building to Riordan become private on the east at Lee Ave and on the west Street, at least this is what I wrote down, doesn't that limit the entrance and exit from garage? And if the garage street is only on North Street because the other two are private it's most likely to cause a congestion backup. Also, who's going to maintain that and then last, the project goals don't mention anything about construction in an environmentally friendly manner. I understand. That the actual operational is going to be environmentally friendly but I'm very concerned about the construction and we would like to make sure that all those issues that have come up in the EIR are addressed and we actually don't run into any problems with excessive noise and excessive air quality problems, and so on. This is my question
2. Hello, I'm Theodore Randolph and I'm concerned that this idea of sustainability doesn't have anything about practical and economic sustainability of the buildings. So it says things like, "Do new and innovative combinations of materials" and I'm concerned if I'm

doing maintenance in the building, I don't want to stock up on 100 different types of windows or whatever. So is there any evidence that this pervasive sense of diversity of materials in single building and lots of articulations, is there any evidence that all this articulation is more pleasant for residents and surrounding neighbors than say A Classical Vitruvian ideal of strength functionality and beauty. And from what I've been hearing it seems that all these new and innovative combinations are neither necessary nor pleasing. And especially as we enter another recession ensuring the financial viability of the project seems very important to me so yeah, that's my comments.

3. Hi this is Jean Barish. Thank you for this presentation I have two questions. One is process related and that is after this presentation either this meeting or the subsequent meaning, will the Balboa Reservoir CAC be providing comments on this DSG to planning commission and to the Supervisors? I hope you will be and I'm just requesting that you do. My other question/comment is that I'm delighted that you have a sustainability plan. And I just took a quick look at the slide when it was on my computer screen and it wasn't easy to read all of it but I didn't see any mention of solar power or solar panels on the buildings. I'm hoping that the project will maximize the use of solar power in this project and would you be able to tell us if that's the case. Thank you.
4. My name is Hedda Thieme. I understand you prefer Stoops and porches. Have you considered wheelchair entrances also? And Peter could your presentation of the West St., the western part should be 25 feet in height and the eastern part facing the Plymouth Avenue fence you said was four stories. It did I understand you there? [...] On the eastern side of west Street, how high is that please? [...] Yes, that's what I thought I heard. Do you think that is a little too high, can we make it 3? [...] I said we do could we have wheelchair access units also because stoops means going upstairs. [...] If you would consider it. I understand that it would be more beautiful but for the old people it is needed to have wheelchair access. Thank you.
5. Hi there this is Corey Smith from the San Francisco Housing Action Coalition. Want to first just express appreciation to city staff, the CAC, as well as the project team for in chaotic times just getting this meeting together and continuing to move the process forward. Not easy and certainly not how we wanted to be having this meeting, but you know just very, very appreciative across the board. Two comments, number one: you know we certainly do want to see the maximum amount of housing on this site. More homes and more subsidized affordable homes are desperately needed in the city, but we do think that the project team has done a good job of trying to make sure that this are balancing the need for more homes at the site while at the same time making sure that the adjacent neighborhoods are integrated and that community can be a result of all of this. And we do think that the team has done a really good job. And then just on the overall process, it's very unfortunate, but the homelessness crisis this in the city is

top of mind for a lot of people and just really emphasizes the need to continue to move forward through a community process building more housing as fast as we possibly can because it is crucial at this point in time. And so again, just wanted thank everybody for continuing to move this forward.

6. Good evening this is Jonathan Randolph. I wanted to say thank you for the presentation on. I liked it a lot. Generally speaking and my comment was generally regarding the height limits. I noticed that the height limit that they specified on the west side was 25 feet and I'm wondering. Why it's so low given that we're trying to step up from Westwood Park and the Westwood Parks height limit on the Bulk and heightmap is 28-X. And shouldn't it sort of step up from the beginning? And more generally in, in my opinion, when I looked at the design standards and guidelines it specifies the height limit. But it doesn't say why that height should be that height and generally in my opinion the height limit should be a function of what capacity of housing you're trying to reach and whatever is economically feasible And then also reach specific goals, such as privacy into people's yards and sight lines. But I don't see how it's trying to achieve any specific goals or is it just trying to achieve aesthetic goals, which can be extremely subjective. So yeah, basically in my opinion, height limits shouldn't really be a part of the design standards. It should be more about what capacity we are trying to meet and what other specific goals are we trying to hit there. Although I know I'm probably in the minority here given that we have whole bulk and height map in San Francisco. Thank you. Bye.
7. Adrian Go. Thank you I have two major concerns around the Plymouth Avenue side of the project. One is, continue to be concerned about the height, even at 25 feet, that large massing in the proximity to the property line is quite jarring for the neighborhood communities, especially the massing of it as well as the height. And I also have a concern about the pedestrian walkway down at San Ramon and I'm interested to continue to hear about how you're looking to assure that the residents will not be parking in the Westwood park neighborhood and using that as a thoroughfare to get to their cars given the limited areas of parking here as well. Thank you.
8. This is Laura From Westwood Park neighborhood. Had two general comments. I'm trying to get little detailed things everybody's talking about but. Two general comments. One, the open space in the middle. I remember from the very beginning when we were having community meetings and stuff, so many people wanted space, real space. And I feel like it's so chopped up that I'm concerned that it won't have a feeling of rest, like a park. You know where you go in and it's not a stimulating thing, It's a restful peaceful thing. And I feel like Unity Plaza they sort of went the other way, they made it like a party type environment rather than, the city is Stressful, everything's busy, everything's moving and you want some place just to sit and it to be quiet. And I feel like that was

sort of what people were wanting in that middle space and it's so chopped up I don't know if it would be a unified feeling of just park or rest or whatever. Then my other comment was, on page 175 that's the silhouette. And I wish I knew how to email on from the computer and I don't but if you just take a line--It's math It's not an opinion--if you take a line from the 28 feet or 30 feet on the west and go to the east 65 feet, which was the parameter was supposed to be 65 feet rather than 78 feet, you'll see that there's a lot of building above that line, so that this plan really adds a lot of mass that was not included in the parameters. Thank you all for all your work.

9. This is Madeline Mueller. I just I want to make a comment that clarity that's been mentioned about our vice chancellor and they've been in contact with him to continue the college input to all these plans but he has just resigned on the facilities committee and we're trying very hard to keep on top of things but it's very difficult in the pandemic. And all these other folks who are so crucial to hearing the colleges side and input, also given the problem with the pandemic and what we're hearing the needs of education coming out of this is going to be vast, I expect a college will be asked to augment its programs. We'll have even more students coming to the main campus. This is going to be a different world and I hope that as we go forward with anything our side of the reservoir and the housing side of the reservoir that we've got to take a breath and see what's going to happen in the next few weeks to months, year and a half, two years. It may be a completely different environment and I hope that at we all remain very flexible.

#### **D. CAC, Project Team, and City Staff Questions and Discussion**

- Mike Ahrens: It is crucial that the CAC and project sponsors respond to the public's questions. Like Laura's question about parameters and why they're not being followed, and Jean Barish's question about follow up presentations. The DSG are crucial and people should get responses to questions/comments between now and April 20<sup>th</sup>, and continue discussion on next meeting agenda.
- Brigitte Davila: Hope that comments will be responded to at next meeting. Would like to suggest a different platform for meeting.
- Amy O'Hair: Appreciate Laura's comment about the open space, there is value in that kind of open space. Also appreciate Hedda's comment about house accessibility for wheelchair users or elderly who would like not to have any steps in their house.
- Jon Winston: Think that ADA requires all buildings to be accessible, or there will be a way to make it accessible. Agree with Laura's comment about the open space, if it's possible to have some small meadows separated by trees
- Peter Waller:
  - Gray water treatment: that's certainly something we will need to address, making sure there are not smells with it that would impact or resonance. Those

treatment won't be at every building.

- Wind: We need to address that the wind issue is an important one we have looked at. We've thought about sheltering reservoir park and the orientation of our buildings, so it's an issue question of whether we could step back and look in. The wind studies are not super precise but whether we could do a little modeling of what the larger context is in terms of wind. I think question really is going to be, what's the impact of city college buildings as well overtime, but I acknowledge it's a good question. We understand the climate out there, so will give a little thought to what response we can give on that or what further thinking we can do addressing the construction impacts from an environmental point of view. It is addressed in the EIR but it's also addressed in our sustainability plan, so we'll give you a little more of response on that
- Parking: I believe that parking access had to do with the potential for a public garage on site. The extensions on private streets could also be used for access to that garage, so we do intend to have options for that so that we can get a reasonable flow in and out of that.
- Material diversity and sustainability: one of the principles of sustainability is that your materials have to last. If you're replacing them after 10 years, that's not sustainable, so you're absolutely right there's a balance between going with the latest trends of multiple materials and doing something that is timeless in the sense that it looks good after 20 years.
- Solar/PV panels: We are designing for PV panels on the roof. We mentioned that we have a goal of generating 25 of the total energies on site in the electrical use on site through renewable energy and that is PV panels. That would be when you're in two multi story buildings generating 25 of your energy is covering a lot of the roof with PV panels so we are designing to meet that goal.
- Accessibility and stoops: If you had a front stoop, you would have to have another entry to the building on an accessible route often from an interior hallway but will also allow for some of those units to be accessible directly from the street to not have to be raised
- Height limits: The height is limited to 25 feet adjacent to the property line in that first 30 feet adjacent to that western property line, then it steps up to 35 feet, so you get a transition. 25 feet is enough to do 2 stories, so we felt like we didn't need to go higher than that it was. The height does relate to economic feasibility and intended capacity. The maximum height of 78 feet is tied to what is feasible in wood frame construction and similar construction typologies. Going higher than that is not particularly economic. We did go as high as economically sensible and as high as we thought we could manage within the context of the neighborhood and transitioning from the neighborhood to City College and future City College. The other side of that is a concern that 25 feet is too high adjacent to Plymouth. With the buffer that we're providing and controls on overlooking windows and roof decks in proximity to the property line, we can maintain privacy between those conditions. In the standards, we

have also added a set back where the townhomes have a rear yard facing that lot.

- Pedestrian walkway connection: We think that in the long run, residents in Westwood Park will benefit from having a connection to the park and open space.
- Reservoir park and open space: There is a real attempt to let the park stay “soft,” and not a lot of paving. The SFPUC will have a good amount of paving because there is a pipe running underneath. There is desire for programming: community gardens, places to be around park, allow circulation around park so that it’s activated. The design is not finished and hope everyone stays involved.
- 65-foot parameters: Feel like there can be a transition to the higher 78-feet only along the Avenue without having a huge visual impact on the neighborhood and it won’t be noticeable. It also helps us build more housing on the site.

#### **4. General Comment & Close of Meeting**

- Mike Ahrens: Email any additional public comments to myself or Jon Winston, any other CAC members, or City staff. Put on the upcoming CAC meeting an item to follow-up on questions from the public and CAC members.
- Leigh Lutenski: Agenda for upcoming CAC meeting will focus on Transportation and coordination with City College. We can also canvas CAC members for agenda items.
- Jon Winston: Remind everyone that there is a Planning Commission hearing tomorrow, April 9<sup>th</sup>.