

Albany Planning and Zoning Commission September 10, 2014 Meeting Summary

Housing Element Sites Discussion

Consultant Barry Miller delivered a PowerPoint presentation on changes to the Housing Sites inventory that would be included in the 2015-2023 Housing Element. The presentation reviewed the inventory in the existing (2007-2014) Element and identified three new sites that were proposed to be added.

David Arkin asked why the City was not seeing housing being developed, despite identifying sites. He suggested that staff do outreach to the development community to find out why. Jeff Bond noted that the City was holding a development symposium on September 30 to bring developers and economists together to answer that very question.

An opportunity for public comment was provided.

- Katherine Sutton noted that the RHNA identifies a need for low and very low income housing, but does not focus enough on extremely low income. “Low” income is a misnomer. City needs to identify all sources of funding and incentives at the city, county, and state levels. It also needs to commit staff time and resources and work proactively work to achieve its goals. There needs to be a particular emphasis on the lowest income residents.
- Allan Riffer noted that the Housing Element focuses on where things “could” happen, but these sites are not under City control. Our big site in 1992 was Hill Lumber, but that was developed by the school district. The sites being identified now are similar—the City does not control them. We have an opportunity at the southwest corner of the Pierce/Cleveland that is being overlooked, which the City does control. The City can do extremely low income on this site, since it is in the City’s control.
- Caryl O’Keefe concurred with Allan and indicated the Cleveland site could be marketed to affordable developers and should be added to the list.
- Lisa Kleinbub agreed with the prior speakers, and urged the City to publicize the symposium. She asked if the City could legitimately count newly legalized second units as “new” housing units when they already exist. It seems disingenuous.
- Alexa Hauser indicated she was happy to see new site added, but thought the Cleveland site should be added as well. Also, why not add Safeway. Also, the text should note that the density assumptions on each site represent mid-points, and the actual number of units that can legally be developed is higher. Also, provide a correct list of businesses in the Albany Town Center.

The Commissioners had no additional comments. Barry Miller noted that the site inventory would be modified to note Alexa’s point that midpoint densities were assumed, but higher densities were allowed. David Arkin indicated he favored the addition of the Cleveland Avenue site. He reiterated his interest in knowing why there was not more interest in the development community in Albany. Jeff Bond noted that the City was holding an Affordable Housing Symposium on September 30, 2014.