San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission
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TO: Design Review Board Members

FROM: Lawrence J. Goldzband, Executive Director (415/352-3653; larry.goldzband@bcdc.ca.gov)
Brad McCrea, Regulatory Program Director (415/352-3615; brad.mccrea@bcdc.ca.gov)
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SUBJECT: Draft Minutes of July 11, 2016 BCDC Design Review Board Meeting

1. **Call to Order and Attendance.** Design Review Board (DRB or Board) Chair Karen Alschuler called the meeting to order at the Milton Marks Conference Center – San Diego Room, 455 Golden Gate Avenue, San Francisco, California, at 5:34 p.m.

Other DRB members in attendance included Cheryl Barton, Tom Leader, Jacinta McCann, and Stefan Pellegrini. BCDC staff in attendance included Brad McCrea, Jaime Michaels, and Hanna Miller. Also in attendance were Philip Banta, Lance Fung, David Gates, and Laura Thompson.

a. **Housekeeping Items**

(1) Ms. Michaels stated Ellen Miramontes is no longer with the BCDC. A civil service exam and interviews will be scheduled within the next few weeks to fill the vacant position. Questions about the Engineering Criteria Review Board (ECRB) should be directed in the interim to Ms. Alschuler or Mr. McCrea.

(2) Board members will be contacted soon regarding whether one or both the August 8th and September 12th ECRB meetings will be postponed.

(3) The applicants for the proposed hotel at Harbor Bay Island in Alameda have declined to return to the DRB for further review and input and instead are moving forward with their current application to be submitted to the Commission at the August 4th public hearing meeting, with the vote taking place at the August 18th Commission meeting. DRB member input will be reflected in the staff report.

2. **Approval of Draft Minutes for June 7, 2016, Joint Design Review Board and Engineering Criteria Review Board Meeting; and Draft Minutes of June 7, 2016, Design Review Board Meeting.** Ms. McCann requested that the first sentence of the fifth paragraph on page 6 end after "14 months or so" and that the second sentence be changed to "She also commented that 14 months is an unusually long period for a competition."

MOTION: Mr. Leader moved to approve the Draft Minutes for the June 7, 2016, San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission Joint Design Review Board and Engineering Criteria Review Board Meeting; and the Draft Minutes for the June 7, 2016, Design Review Board Meeting as revised. Ms. McCann seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

3. **Alameda Boatworks Green (Third Review, Permit Application No. 2016.004.00).** The Design Review Board will review a proposal by Francis Collins, Boatworks LLC, to develop a 9.48-acre parcel located west of the Park Street Bridge, at 2229, 2235, and 2241 Clement Street, in the City of Alameda, Alameda County. The project includes 182 housing units, an approximately 1.03-acre public access area at the waterfront, and approximately 1.13 acres of additional public access located outside of the Commission's jurisdiction, which will connect to city streets. Proposed public access amenities include an access ramp to an existing pier, an approximately 668-foot-long section of future San Francisco Bay Trail, an open lawn, a grass-terraced amphitheater, a tot lot, picnic tables, public parking, a central passageway from Clement Street to the shoreline, and paths leading to the waterfront along the eastern and western site boundaries. The DRB reviewed different or modified designs for the project site at two previous meetings – January 10, 2011, and January 5, 2015.

During the previous reviews, the Board expressed concerns about how the project would separate the public and private spaces, the usability of the Boatworks Green lawn, and the spacing between the buildings. The Board also expressed interest in in-water access and more activities along the shoreline.

a. **Staff Presentation.** Hanna Miller, the BCDC Coastal Program Analyst, introduced the project and summarized the issues identified in the staff report, including the adequacy of public access, amenities and views, the compatibility of public and private uses, and the management of sea level rise.

Ms. Miller stated the city of Alameda fully supports in-water access being added to this project. She stated staff received an email today from Lee Huo, of the San Francisco Bay Trail, who asked that staff read his comments during the public comment period.

b. **Project Presentation.** Philip Banta, the Founder of BantaDESIGN and architect for the project, provided an overview, accompanied by a slide presentation, of the 2015 proposed site plan; prior conditions; 2012/2013 demolition and Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) clearing; current conditions, including new riprap, retaining walls, and remediated soil; main features of the new plan; shoreline band information; landscape plan, including city-approved trees along streets and at the edges of the property; Americans with Disabilities (ADA) access; projected sea level rise effect; open space bioretention plan; and technical drawings of the Alameda Boatworks Green Project.

Mr. Banta stated this project will be an important anchor to the circuit that is formed by Oak and Park Streets, which are main civic and commercial streets in the city of Alameda. Mr. Banta stated BantaDESIGN has tried to engage the site and the city by including a network of paseos in the design.

c. **Board Questions.** Following the presentation, the Board asked a series of questions:

Ms. Barton asked for further details on the stormwater collection system, how useable the lawn will be during and after an event, and if the base of the terraced area and amphitheater also include storm water infiltration. David Gates, of Gates and Associates, stated the whole T-shaped corridor complies with Provision C.3 of the San Francisco Bay Municipal Regional Stormwater Permit (MRP).

Ms. Barton asked if fountain features are a responsible use of water. Mr. Banta stated the fountains run with recycled water and Mr. Gates is working to make them flexible in the case of extreme drought conditions.

Ms. Barton suggested blending the naturalized landscape of the estuary edge as it transitions into the Boatworks Green plant palette. Mr. Gates agreed that the art elements should express the nature, history, and natural systems of the area.

Ms. McCann asked about the east and west water access points along Elm and Oak Streets and the treatments to Elm and Oak Streets, as these will be important public access points. Mr. Banta stated Elm Street turns into Elm Drive and Waterfront West Drive, which includes perpendicular public parking spaces. Parking spaces are also available along Blanding Drive.

Mr. Leader asked if there is an allowance for small boat access. Mr. Banta stated at one point there was a proposal for a series of docks that was problematic. He spoke in support of a kayak launch pad for this project. A possible location has been identified, but the long permit timeline is prohibitive to begin building at this time and is not part of this proposal. Also, the additional restrictions for a kayak launch, such as the clean-water requirement, is prohibitive.

Ms. Alschuler asked about the unusual width of Waterfront East Drive and why it needs to be that wide since the houses are only on one side. Mr. Banta stated the extra width is not necessary. It is left over from past iterations of this plan.

Ms. McCann asked how many stories the 30-unit multi-family structure will be and how it will impact the view. Mr. Banta stated the structure will be five stories but will not impact the view in general because the estuary is not seen from the residential area.

d. **Public Comment.** There was one public comment sent to staff by email from Lee Chien Huo, the Bay Trail Planner with the San Francisco Bay Trail Project. Mr. Huo's comments were read aloud by Ms. Miller, as follows:

"Hanna, I won't be able to attend the BCDC DRB meeting tonight but have prepared the following comments on the proposed Alameda Boatworks Project. Please provide copies of these comments to the DRB members at the meeting this evening.

"We appreciate that the project sponsors have included the development of future Bay Trail with this project. The long term vision for the Bay Trail in the City of Alameda is to develop a shoreline Bay Trail along the Alameda-Oakland Estuary as properties are being redeveloped. This project is one of the first steps in this effort. After reviewing the plans provided with the DRB packet, we have the following comments.

"(1) The future Bay Trail proposed with the project varies in width from 12 feet to 16.5 feet. It is critical for the trail to be constructed at a width that will accommodate the anticipated level of use once the entire Bay Trail system is completed. Once the Bay Trail along the Alameda-Oakland Estuary is completed in its entirety, we expect the user levels to be very high, much like the Bay Trail at Shoreline Drive and the Richmond Marina Bay segments of the Bay Trail, which have resulted in user conflicts since the trails are not wide enough to accommodate all of the users at high volume times. As a result, we request that the DRB and project sponsors consider a wider overall trail width in anticipation of the future use levels of the trail in this location.

"(2) The public access plans for the project also appear to show several tables with seating along the middle of the proposed Bay Trail. While we believe that public access amenities such as seating and tables will enhance the public access and trail experience, the location of the proposed tables and seats will effectively reduce the functional width of the Bay Trail and create a bottle neck and conflict zone. The location of these tables and seats need to be redesigned to create a separate space that does not conflict with the functionality of the trail.

"(3) The Bay Trail as currently designed next to the proposed earth mound/art location creates a very hard turn to bicyclists. The curvature of the trail in this location needs to be redesigned to soften the edge and turn of the trail to allow for better flow for bicyclists.

"The Bay Trail Project appreciates the opportunity to provide comments on the proposed development, and looks forward to working with BCDC and the project sponsors to improve the Bay Trail in Alameda.

"Please let me know if you have any questions regarding our comments or the Bay Trail."

e. **Board Discussion.** Ms. Alschuler suggested that the Board discuss the questions posed by Ms. Miller in the staff presentation of this agenda item.

Regarding the adequacy of the public access, is what is currently designed enough access in relation to the scale of the project?

Ms. Barton stated the proposed plan has changed for the better.

Ms. McCann agreed that the proposed plan provides clear access and is much better than the previous plan.

Mr. Pellegrini agreed that the proposed plan is improved, but stated Blanding Avenue should be established as a clear main public access point – the front door into the project and shoreline. It is important to clearly delineate the public and private areas and to keep the landscaping space consistent.

Mr. Pellegrini stated the multi-family housing is in a cul-de-sac and seems to be an afterthought and not connected into the public system.

Ms. Alschuler agreed the proposed plan has greatly improved. Elm and Oak Streets will be important for access to the project and it is important that pedestrians feel comfortable walking along them.

Ms. McCann stated it is important to enhance the treatment to the sides of houses oriented toward the streets with plantings to make them as attractive as possible, as opposed to just fencing along the sides of homes.

Regarding the adequacy of the public access, does the project provide adequate access to and along the waterfront?

Mr. Leader stated the access to the waterfront on the proposed plan is very well done.

Ms. Barton stated, in reference to the public comment, bicycle movement is important but it is not necessary to design to the worst case scenario.

Mr. Leader agreed that bicycles should slow down through the project.

Mr. McCrea stated the Bay Trail Project Guidelines state typical paths are 12 feet with 2-foot shoulders on both sides for a total of 16 feet, but the Alameda Boatworks Green Project is different because it is a destination. He stated the need to think about not only present but future needs when considering the proposed design. The question is if the narrowing and curves of the proposed trail design would still work in future years if the land use changed next to the project.

Regarding public amenities, does the project provide an adequate amount and number of types of public access amenities, and how might the proposed activities be enhanced?

Ms. McCann stated the plan is interesting: public seating is great but it is hard to tell if they are positioned in the right area, the tot lot is terrific, the central lawn provides a fantastic space and is a huge improvement on the earlier plan, and the rebuilt water edge is an interesting feature. She stressed the importance of providing a sufficient number of seating areas for visitors.

Mr. Leader suggested, although the clubhouse is not a public amenity, that it include a plaza for events with a patio and a place to barbecue between the drop-off parking and the pier instead of just pathways.

Regarding the compatibility of the public and private uses, are the public and private spaces clearly differentiated and appropriately spaced, and how could the amenities located within the public areas be used for private events in a way that does not diminish the public nature of the spaces?

Ms. McCann stated where the units abut the public open space next to the estuary is always a point of sensitivity that requires management. The question is if that can be accomplished with landscape treatment. The positioning and circulation of the pathways reinforces the transition to the private space.

Mr. Pellegrini reiterated his earlier comment about Blanding Drive being the important front door to the project with Elm Drive providing much of the public parking on the north side, and his concern that the back of the units face Elm Drive and the back bedrooms will be facing the public parking area.

Mr. Pellegrini stated the need for vertical separation as well as horizontal so the eye level of the occupants will be above the public paths between the fronts of the units for added privacy.

Regarding public views, is the development laid out in a manner that maximizes public visual access?

Ms. Alschuler stated the views were more beautiful than she imagined.

Ms. McCann agreed and stated the creation of the Boatworks Green area is a strong improvement.

Ms. Alschuler stated the need to ensure that Elm and Oak Streets are welcoming with a sense they are moving towards the water. She suggested designing something interpretive that would invite the public to move along.

Regarding sea level rise, is the public access designed, sited, and set up to be managed in a manner that adequately avoids significant adverse impacts from sea level rise and flooding, and would the project provide adequate public access to and along the shoreline at a time when the pier is no longer accessible?

Ms. Alschuler suggested considering a floating dock as opposed to a concrete pier. The site and housing seems to be okay. She noted that the drawings show the pier is expected to be flooded by the year 2050.

Mr. Leader stated maintaining the value and amenity of the units would be a motivation to keep the pier functional.

Ms. Alschuler stated the BCDC had discussed the possibility of a floating dock as an adaptation measure to keep access in the future.

Ms. McCann stated there are steps that go down to the dock.

Ms. Alschuler made a general statement of the Board's desire to keep the access to water in the long-term.

Plant palette compatibility

Mr. Leader stated the plant palette and treatment has a uniform and generic quality; it does not feel like a shoreline palette yet, but undoubtedly will as it is put in.

Mr. Leader suggested, instead of the Boatworks Green being put entirely to lawn, creating focused sections of lawn for recreational activities and transitioning to drier native grasses.

Mr. Leader suggested alternative decking and boardwalks along the pathways.

Ms. Alschuler stated there is variation in the paving of the streets and suggested using that more effectively.

f. **Applicant Response.** Mr. Banta stated the city of Alameda requested that the house elevations along Blanding Avenue be treated as front elevations and that the multi-family building be at the location indicated on the Proposed Site Plan to keep it as close to mass transit as possible. He also clarified that the front yards of the units facing the estuary are approximately three feet higher than the public common open space.

Mr. Banta stated he will present the project to the Alameda Planning Board. He asked for a one-sentence summary to take to them that characterizes the DRB's feeling about the project.

Ms. Alschuler stated the DRB members are pleased with the changes and, with additional refinements focused on increasing access to the water, feel the project is moving in a positive direction.

Mr. Pellegrini reminded Mr. Banta about his comment that Elm and Oak Streets are the primary access points that connect back to the city and his suggestion to make Blanding Drive more of a public front door with more entrances and a more consistent public sidewalk framework than is currently on the plan.

Mr. Pellegrini also clarified his previous comment about the Waterfront/Elm Drive loop that provides the drop-off to the clubhouse and the rest of the visitor parking, which is tucked behind the backsides of many units in the alleyway that accesses the garage doors for those units. He suggested reconfiguring the houses in that area or designing a more direct connection to the public waterfront.

Ms. Miller stated there is a railing around the pier, which would preclude launching from it. Mr. Banta stated the need for caution about doing anything that allows people to get down there without the appropriate health and safety permits.

Ms. Alschuler stated it would be a great advantage to allow public water access at this location. She asked Mr. Banta to bring the DRB's suggestion for the water access point to the meeting with the city of Alameda. She suggested getting approval for a kayak access point in Phase II of the project.

4. **Briefing on Migrations Public Art Project (Informational Only).** The Design Review Board will receive an informational briefing on the Migrations Public Art Project. The project representatives, Fung Collaboratives and the Association of Bay Area Governments, will provide an overview of current efforts to create destination art experiences along the San Francisco Bay Trail, which are intended to encourage the public to gather, connect, and experience the shoreline. The project has the potential to involve the nine Bay Area counties. To date, the Commission has not received any permit applications or specific plans regarding the project.

a. **Staff Presentation.** Ms. Michaels stated Fung Collaboratives will be working closely with the San Francisco Bay Trail Project and property owners on the Migrations Public Art Project. She introduced Laura Thompson, the Project Manager of the San Francisco Bay Trail Project.

Ms. Thompson provided an overview, on the background, benefits, challenges, goals, and process of the Migrations Public Art Project. She stated one of the challenges is conveying the ambitious vision of 500 miles of the Bay. The project can help convey the vision in a compelling and elegant way by creating destination art pieces along the trail from artists worldwide. She welcomed ideas from the DRB members.

Ms. Thompson introduced Lance Fung, of Fung Collaboratives.

b. **Project Presentation.** Mr. Fung provided an overview, accompanied by a slide presentation, of the mechanism behind the project, the value of the Bay Trail, how Fung Collaboratives is involved, the goals of including art on hiking trails, and how to find artists to commission for this project. He stated bringing public art to hiking trails has never been attempted in the United States. The high-quality artwork will be site-inspired and will focus on the environment.

Mr. Fung gave several examples of community engagement through art, such as the Harambee Interactive Art in Parks Project in Redwood City, which engaged the community to create functional, decorative park benches using sand, soil, water, and straw.

c. **Board Questions.** Mr. Leader spoke in support of the project. The shoreline along the Bay Trail gives the opportunity for interaction with art, nature, and culture. He suggested not only looking for good artists but different classifications of types of situations that occur as a way of engaging individuals with the shoreline.

Mr. Fung stated two advisory groups will be consulted: one made up of individuals who are experts in public art and one made up of individuals who are experts in environmental issues. Artists will be brought to the site to create their works.

Ms. Alschuler suggested not only looking at the area from historical and current perspectives, but also looking at the future of what the Bay will be like.

Mr. Pellegrini asked if there have been discussions about marrying this effort with the Resilient by Design Challenge. Mr. Fung stated he did not know about that effort but would be interested in learning about it.

Ms. McCann spoke in support of the project and stated including public art is a maturing point in the Bay Trail. It adds a dimension to the Bay Trail and raises its importance to multiple communities around the Bay.

Mr. Fung stated this project is about the sense of discovery, which is what the Bay Trail is all about.

5. **Adjournment.** There being no further business, Ms. Alschuler adjourned the meeting at 7:53 p.m.