

DR Reform Meeting, Feb. 10, 2009  
by Rose Hillson

- Lack of compliance to the Planning Code leads to DR filings and the unequal granting and denial of projects
- Problem: Planners do not all know the Codes or care to ignore them in reviewing and accepting projects. The churning of the planners pretty much guarantees that 311/312 notifications go out with plans that are not compliant with the Codes.
- Solution: Postpone all projects 6 months if not found compliant with Codes. Create a step-by-step matrix/checklist of the Planning Code to simplify the review of projects. e.g. in RH-2 zones, one checklist item may be to ask: Is the rearyard open space 45%? And show examples of how that is measured for rectangular and irregular lots. Every line in the code to be translated to this matrix/checklist. All portions of the Planning Code will be explained in detail for various circumstances so that nobody is guessing as to whether something is allowed or not
- Incorporate the 1989 Residential Design Guidelines into your new "Planning Code Requirements Manual" as code rather than as "guidelines"
- The matrix/checklist must include unusual situations from actual cases and decisions from the Zoning Administrator so that in future, vague and arbitrary decisions are not made that benefits one party over another.
- All submitted plans require accurate measurements of new project, of the lot, of the adjacent buildings and lots and a photo of the front and rear of the lot as well as an aerial of the entire block. And if the exact plan dimensions cannot be determined by the information on the reduced drawings of the 311/312 Notifications, they should be kicked back to the project sponsor for clarification and a new 311/312 Notification sent out with an additional fee.
- All project submissions should be logged and time-stamped so that everybody knows when the deadline is. Currently, it is a widespread practice for project sponsors to submit drawings that are not even close to what they are going to build. Sometimes, the drawings of the "real project" do not surface until the "11<sup>th</sup> Hour" IFO the Planning Commission and new rules need to be in place with hefty penalty fees to prevent such occurrences in future.
- All 311/312 Notices should be online and searchable by Application No. or address or Project Sponsor/agent. All revisions need to be posted as well. All façade remodels need to be noticed to the public. Any building over 50 years old should go through Historic Preservation before such things as garage doors and windows are replaced. These are remodels.
- In the case of a revision where a remodel becomes a demolition, a new notification needs to be sent out with additional fees collected by Planning, DBI, etc.
- We need to include a "greening code" requirement in the checklist/matrix. Too often, for streets that have front landscaping, the street trees are never put in after the project is completed. For new builds, every effort must be made to run utility lines to allow for greening. Lots that abut with different green space requirements should take the larger open space requirement or average based on surrounding conditions.
- The Planning Code treats property in different parts of the City unequally as I said in the beginning. That is due to the "Special Use Districts" such as in Sections 235, 238, 241 & 242, Nob Hill, Dolores Hts, Bernal Hts., respectively. That is not fair and open

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government. More of these special use districts and "Residential Character Districts" as described in Section 244, will make their presence known in future. There may be the Seacliff Character District, the Laurel Hts Special Use District, the Jordan Park Historic District, the Richmond Special Character District. People have to be aware that such areas have been well-established and people in these areas tend to keep within the height/ bulk and open space requirements. And when somebody comes into these areas with an eye to maximize the use of the land with no regard for the neighbors, many DRs get filed. In these areas, any jarring buildings will unfortunately end with a DR if the project does not meet the Planning Code and design details in every respect.

- There needs to be an Affidavit signed by the neighbors and the community members that a Community Meeting has been held and the project discussed with all. I have had one planner absolutely refuse to have the project sponsor hold a community outreach meeting even though required by the 311 Notification. This is not playing by the rules and the project should be delayed with additional fees. Basically, any non-compliance to the Planning Code and notification and meeting requirements should be penalized via delays and/or monetary fines of a percentage of the building cost or people will continue to misbehave.
- Demo calcs should not be some secret methodology that only the architects and planners use to determine if a building is or is not a demolition. The definition of "demolition" needs to be revisited.
- Finally, before any project is taken on by the Planning Commission, both sides must attend a mandatory community mediation meeting with all parties involved present including the property owners, the agent/architect, the neighbors and other community stakeholders. An affidavit needs to be signed with proposals from all sides stating how to remedy the logjam.