



**ACCESS APPEALS COMMISSION
MINUTES
Regular Meeting Wednesday, February 23, 2011**

1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order by President Ellsworth at 1:05 P.M.

COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT:

Mr. William Ellsworth, President
Mr. Ronald Vernali, Vice President
Mr. Walter Park
Ms. Alyce G. Brown
Mr. Arnie Lerner

CITY REPRESENTATIVES:

Mr. Tom Fessler, Secretary
Ms. Evelyn Karcs, Recording Secretary
Ms. Elaine Warren, Deputy City Attorney

2. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

The minutes for the December 22, 2010 meeting were approved unanimously, with amendments requested by Commissioner Brown.

3. REVIEW OF COMMUNICATIONS ITEMS:

Secretary Fessler reported the status of pervious appeals at 555 California and 300 Jefferson. 555 California Street permit application has been approved by the Planning Department and presently under Building Department plan review. The Port of San Francisco has resolved the accessibility issues related to 300 Jefferson Street application. Copies of the 2011 code books were available to the commissioners.

4. NEW APPEAL #11-01

50 CALIFORNIA STREET

The appeal was moved off the consent calendar by Commissioner Park. The appellants' representative, George Soskin, agreed to have the appeal heard at this time. Mr. Soskin testified that the present parking configuration has not changed from the past appeals. He requested the commission grant a continuation of the unreasonable hardship as stipulated in past appeals.

The buildings' representatives described the parking level had 75 total parking spaces, of which 3 were accessible. The parking was valet in nature with the accessible spaces closest to the basement elevator lobby, allowing persons with disabilities to park themselves or use the valet.

The commission considered the cost of building renovations over the past three years has put the building over the threshold amount for full compliance. The secretary provided cost of renovations for the previous two years instead of three. The total cost of building renovations from 2009 to the present was 5.4 million dollars. The cost to provide the required 98 inch clear height is estimated to be 1.7 million dollars.

The commissioners were concerned that the sign at the garage entrance was not readily visible from the street, and prior to reading the sign, drivers may enter the ramp and get trapped. The commissioners questioned if the present signs were adequate.

Commissioner Park motioned to continue the appeal to March 9, 2011, with the stipulation that four items be addressed. 1) The appellant research the availability of leasing fully complying van parking within 300 feet of the building entrance. 2) Possible improvements to signs which direct drivers to the location of accessible spaces. 3) Cost of building permits for the previous three years. 4) Provide the Commissioners the opportunity to visit the site. The motion passed.

President Ellsworth-Yes

Vice-President Vernali- Yes

Commissioner Park-Yes

Commissioner Brown-No

Commissioner Lerner-Yes

5. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION ON ADMINISTRATIVE MATTER

There was a discussion regarding future appeals involving the issue of accessible high top van parking. The secretary pointed out the lack of high top van parking is somewhat common and future appeals will be made. The commission decided to ask for public comment regarding the availability of accessible high top van parking within downtown San Francisco. An agenda item for the discussion of accessible high top van parking will be added to the March 9, 2011 meeting agenda.

6. COMMISSIONER'S AND STAFF'S QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS:

7. PUBLIC COMMENT:

There was no public comment.

8. ADJOURNMENT:

Thomas Fessler, Building Inspector
Department of Building Inspection
Secretary to the Access Appeals Commission