

B N C
Berkeley Neighborhoods Council
P.O. Box 1217
Berkeley, CA 94701

**Dedicated to improving the quality of life for all by creating
a unified neighborhood voice for promoting livability and resolving problems**

November 12, 2014

Ref; City Council meeting November 17, 2015
Item 21: ZAB Appeal: 2631 Durant Avenue

Mayor Tom Bates and City Councilmembers,

In light of the fact that the City has not addressed the issue of affordable housing during the present construction boom, it would seem Item 21 is one project that must be preserved for affordable housing.

Staff's recommendations that you dismiss issues 2, 5, 7 through 9, 12 and 14 has little merit because all of the issues are part of the whole. BNC agrees with staff that issues 1, 3 4, 6, 10, 11 and 13 be remanded back to ZAB.

A big problem with what is happening with projects that become before ZAB is the fact that they are being approved before the actual project plans are completed. ZAB approves the projects and then they are changed without further review.

In this particular case the City has had a hand in assisting the owner of the property in making it seem that demolition is the only thing that can be done. It seems that it is a step to allow the owner to remove 18 rent controlled units from the city and build market rate units. This sets a very dangerous precedent.

Will this council not stand up for affordable housing?

If you are really interested helping the lower and middle class in Berkeley find affordable housing you can take this small step and make sure this property retains the 18 rent controlled units regardless of whether the building is demolished and build as a new structure.

BNC urges you to require the owner to retain the 18 rent controlled units on this property by sending this project back to ZAB with that requirement. It will make ZAB's job easier and give the owners a clear path to develop the property.

Dean Metzger
For BNC