

March 5, 2020

To: City of Portland Design Commission

From: Tom Liptan

Re: Comments on LU 20-102914, Alamo Manhattan Blocks

Commissioners,

I am aware that this project doesn't have to comply with the new city ecoroof requirement. However, based on my reckoning of Goal 13 on page 26 of the staff report I would suggest that staff take a closer look at the applicability of ecoroofs on the proposed buildings. But, today let's set that issue aside and look at a more important opportunity, unexpectedly right in front of us.

The applicant has changed the original ecoroofs to mostly gravel roofs in this current proposal. These gravel covered roofs are only one step away from being Ecoroofs. Granted not the ecoroof design required by BES, but since they don't have to do ecoroofs they can choose from an assortment of ecoroof options. Based on my review of the limited information in the Alamo proposal, an option I would propose would provide more stormwater management, more biodiversity, and more building insulation at no additional cost than the current proposed gravel roofs.

As a matter of background, I designed and constructed my first ecoroof in 1996. Over the subsequent 24 years, based on research and on-hands experience, I've developed ecoroof designs that are considerably less expensive to install and maintain compared with the traditional BES ecoroof design. More than a dozen of these ecoroofs have been installed in Portland. Additionally, I have 40 years of stormwater experience, 26 years was with BES. I would like to offer my services, pro-bono, to the design team to share information regarding their ecoroof and stormwater options.

**To go from all or nothing to having an option in between.**

This brings me to another issue for Design Commission consideration and that is the code limitation which results in an "all or nothing" response to applicants that want to be exempted from the ecoroof requirement. There are many ways to design an ecoroof and many of them are quite affordable and flexible to accommodate other building elements. Of course, there is a problem, City staff need something consistent to assure the code is being met. During the development of the Ecoroof requirement city staff found themselves in a pickle. There was only one standard design and that was the BES Ecoroof. It was simple, meet the existing BES requirement and you're done. However, this excludes many viable ecoroof options. The number one issue for BES is Stormwater management. This single purpose bureau goal should not encumber other equally good ecoroof options. I have had a brief conversation with BPS staff and I am committed to help develop at least one option that BDS will be adequately qualified to confirm meets the ecoroof requirement. Hopefully if the Alamo Manhattan applicant chooses, their project could be that option.

LU 20-102914  
EX. F-15