



City of Seattle

Seattle Planning Commission

Grace Kim, Chair

Valerie Kinast, Interim Executive Director

SEATTLE PLANNING COMMISSION

Thursday, January 12, 2017

Approved Meeting Minutes

Commissioners Present: Michael Austin, Keiko Budech, Eileen Canola, Lauren Craig, Sandra Fried, David Goldberg, Grace Kim, Kara Martin, Jake McKinstry, Tim Parham, Marj Press, Julio Sanchez, David Shelton, Lauren Squires, Jamie Stroble, Patti Wilma

Commission Staff: Katy Haima, Planning Analyst, John Hoey, Senior Policy Analyst; Valerie Kinast, Interim Executive Director

Seattle Planning Commission meeting minutes are not an exact transcript, and represent key points and the basis of discussion.

Referenced Documents discussed at the meeting can be viewed here:

<http://www.seattle.gov/planningcommission/when-we-meet/minutes-and-agendas>

Chair's Report

Chair Grace Kim called the meeting to order at 3:10 pm. She reminded the Commissioners of several upcoming meeting dates.

Minutes Approval

Commissioner Julio Sanchez moved to adopt the December 8, 2016 minutes. Commissioner Sandra Fried seconded the motion. The motion to approve the minutes passed.

Announcements

Valerie Kinast, Seattle Planning Commission Interim Executive Director, made several announcements. The Planning Commission will hold a mini-retreat on February 9th and the regularly scheduled Commission meeting will be canceled. The City Council's Planning, Land Use, and Zoning Committee will be discussing the proposed University District rezone on January 19th. Commissioners are encouraged to attend. A member of the Commission will provide testimony on the Mandatory Housing Affordability provisions of the proposed rezone. Planning Commission staff has completed a draft annual report to document the Commission's accomplishments in 2016. When the report is finalized, Commissioners will be meeting with City Council members and Department Directors to provide them with a copy and to discuss the work of the Commission. A recent meeting with Councilmember Juarez went well. She is very focused on District 5 and appreciated learning more about the Commission's work that affects her district.

New Commissioner Introduction: David Goldberg

The newest member of the Planning Commission, David Goldberg, introduced himself and provided an overview of his background. He started his career as a journalist in Atlanta, covering land use and transportation issues. He then moved to Washington, D.C. where he worked for an organization called Smart Growth America. Mr. Goldberg coined the term "Complete Streets" and worked for an organization called Transportation for America. He then became interested in food issues and worked for an organization called Healthy Food America. Mr. Goldberg moved to Seattle 6 years ago and has served on the Pedestrian Advisory Board. He is excited about the opportunity to serve on the Planning Commission and to learn more about the issues that the Commission is working on.

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Commission Officer Elections

It was announced that the election of Commission officers would be postponed until a future date.

Reports from Community Meetings by Commissioners

Several Commissioners have attended recent community meetings, including the Housing Affordability and Livability Agenda (HALA) Focus Groups, Councilmember Johnson's Community Design Workshops, and the Department of Neighborhoods' Open House Meetings. Commissioners provided their impressions and comments on these meetings.

Commissioner Lauren Craig attended the Aurora/Licton Springs Community Design Workshop. She reported that the attendees were very engaged and while they were ambivalent about increasing capacity of the urban village they wanted to see more investments in community assets and community benefits. They would also like better information about the proposed upzones.

Commissioner Eileen Canola attended the Roosevelt Urban Village meeting. Issues covered at this meeting included where the urban village boundary should be, the lack of family-sized housing, and concern about displacement, especially for artists and musicians. While there was support for densification, they community wanted to see their concerns dealt with. Attendees talked about the neighborhood's major assets, including schools, parks, and the commercial corridor. Attendees expressed interest in supporting the Business Improvement District.

Commissioner Jamie Stroble attended the Aurora/Licton Springs Community Design Workshop. She reported that the meeting had relatively low attendance and most attendees were older. Residents were grateful for the opportunity to discuss important issues in their neighborhood, including the unique nature of the SR 99/Aurora Avenue corridor. Attendees discussed whether the commercial core of the neighborhood should be shifted away from Aurora Avenue due to concerns about health, safety, and public perception of the area. Ms. Stroble also attended the Northeast Neighborhoods Open House, which included representatives from many City departments, and has been participating in the HALA Focus Groups. The most recent meeting was held on a webinar, and attendance was very low. The Focus Groups will be holding a closing event for all participants in February.

Commissioner Jake McKinstry also attended the Aurora/Licton Springs Community Design Workshop. He reported that the meeting felt more like a design charrette than a community meeting. The community talked about re-stitching the neighborhood across Aurora. Residents expressed concern about losing housing with affordable rents in their neighborhood.

Chair Grace Kim attended the Capitol Hill Open House. She expressed gratitude for the presence of multiple City departments and reported that the HALA tables were the most popular. A lot of attendees had comments about density (both opposed and in favor) and others about single-family housing. Chair Kim talked at length with a resident of Madison-Miller which is predominately single family in form. Madison-Miller organized a group to come out – the resident's concern about urban village boundaries was related to limited flexibility in the Single Family Zones – she was supportive of O'Brien's ADU/backyard Cottage ordinance.

Commissioner Patti Wilma attended the Westwood/Highland Park Community Design Workshop. She reported that the meeting was very poorly attended, but attendees were very well informed. When asked about community assets in their neighborhood, most discussed what was missing from their community instead of the positive existing assets. Residents were mostly supportive of density and affordable housing, and expressed desire for better transit and usable open space. They also stated concerns about pedestrian safety and localized drainage/flooding problems. Residents commented that the commercial center in West Seattle is a long distance from their neighborhood. They reported that they saw White Center as a part of their community and didn't see the city limits as a hard boundary within their

neighborhood. Commissioner Wilma also attended the Roosevelt Urban Village meeting. She stated that the HALA table was very popular, with many residents concerned about growth, traffic, and pedestrian safety.

Briefing: Housing Affordability and Livability Agenda (HALA)

Sara Maxana from the Office of Planning and Community Development (OPCD) provided an overview of her department's work on many different aspects of the HALA process. Her position is responsible for collaborating HALA activities and programs across City departments, including the Office of the Mayor, City Council, Office of Housing, Department of Neighborhoods, Department of Transportation, and others. Of the original 65 HALA recommendations, the City is moving forward on several. Recent successes included passage of the Housing Levy, an expanded Multi-Family Tax Exemption for affordable housing, and expanded tenant protections.

Ms. Maxana provided an overview of ongoing community engagement efforts to receive input and feedback on the HALA proposals. The Department of Neighborhoods has held several Open Houses, Councilmember Johnson has sponsored 7 Community Design Workshops so far, with another 13 planned, and the HALA Focus Groups are wrapping up after almost a year of meetings. The HALA team is still using the online Consider.It platform for online comments, including input on the draft rezone maps. The Commissioners suggested that HALA community outreach efforts should consider the different needs and styles of various communities and cultural organizations.

Ms. Maxana stated that preservation and production of affordable housing is key to the success of HALA. The Mandatory Housing Affordability (MHA) regulations are a significant tool in accomplishing the City's affordable housing goals. The MHA framework legislation has been passed for both residential and commercial projects, and implementation will be accomplished through area-specific and citywide rezones. Ongoing policy conversations are being held to find the balance between incentives and benefits for MHA implementation with the goal of neither impeding development nor incentivizing it. The first area rezone where MHA would apply is the University District, which made sense because the planning process has been underway for the past 4 years. The next proposed rezone is Downtown and South Lake Union, which is anticipated to be introduced at a City Council meeting in the next few weeks. MHA will also be included in rezones in Chinatown/International District and 3 nodes on 23rd Avenue in the Central District. These are traditionally under-represented communities and efforts will be made to ensure the highest level of affordable housing in these neighborhoods. The final area-specific MHA rezone will be Uptown. The Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Uptown rezone is underway, and it is anticipated that the Final EIS will be issued in March. All remaining areas of the city will be subject to citywide MHA rezones. The EIS for these rezones will be published in March, with an anticipated Final EIS in May or June, and legislation introduced in the 3rd quarter of 2017.

Ms. Maxana described the two different alternatives being studied in the MHA EIS, including a standardized approach to rezones in the urban villages and an alternative approach that reflects the equity analysis that was completed for the Seattle 2035 Comprehensive Plan. This alternative will look at increasing housing capacity in high areas of opportunity and low risk of displacement. OPCD is conducting a comprehensive displacement analysis to support the preparation of the EIS. The Commissioners referred Ms. Maxana to the displacement analysis that the City of Portland did recently as a good model. She stated that the Draft EIS analysis is underway, but the Final EIS process will incorporate feedback from citizens and stakeholder groups. This would be a good opportunity for the Planning Commission to provide input.

In response to a question from the Commissioners about the MHA performance and payment options, Ms. Maxana stated that the payment option is a very important tool to achieve geographic distribution of affordable housing. Construction of affordable family-sized housing will only be achieved through the MHA payment option, not through the performance option. She stated that the City is working hard to acknowledge and accommodate different housing market conditions across the city, including areas of high displacement. The Commissioners stated a concern that the payment option will most likely lead to the Office of Housing working with non-profits to build only large affordable housing buildings along arterials. They asked Ms. Maxana whether anyone is considering incentivizing a homeownership

model, like those offered by community land trusts, to encourage affordable housing in smaller buildings in neighborhoods. She encouraged the Commissioners to stay engaged and offer suggestions throughout the process.

Ms. Maxana provided an update on the proposed updates to regulations on accessory dwelling units (ADUs) and detached accessory dwelling units (DADUs). The Hearing Examiner recently ruled that OPCD must write an EIS for these proposed regulation changes. The Hearing Examiner stated that the proposed changes would result in significant changes to the built environment and cited insufficient evidence and modeling on parking impacts and the proposed owner-occupancy requirements. OPCD has very limited staff resources while the MHA process is underway, so an EIS will most likely need to wait until OPCD has more staff capacity in late 2017 or 2018.

The Commissioners requested to learn more about the Livability components of HALA. Ms. Maxana stated that OPCD staff are working on this and would be willing to brief the Commission at the appropriate time. The Commissioners thanked Ms. Maxana for her presentation and encouraged her to come back for additional briefings as the various HALA components move forward.

Discussion: Climate Change Preparedness – Commission Comments

Commissioner Jamie Stroble and Commissioner Michael Austin led the discussion of a draft letter to the Office of Sustainability and Environment (OSE) in response to a presentation on the City's Climate Change Preparedness plan at the November 10, 2016 Commission meeting. Comments from the Commission were included on a variety of topics ranging from public health, water quality and watersheds, impacts of ocean acidification, temperature impacts on vulnerable populations, parks and open space, transportation, and land use. The draft letter also included comments on OSE's website and graphics, encouraging easy to understand information and translation into various languages spoken by Seattle residents. The Commissioners discussed the intended audience of the letter and considered the pros and cons of submitting a formal letter vs. sending an informal e-mail. Chair Kim brought up the issue of future planning efforts in South Park knowing that Sea Level rise is likely to negatively affect that neighborhood. She asked whether the commission should encourage the City to look long term (20-40 years) at how to relocate residents and businesses upland to avoid displacement from an inevitable disaster. The Commissioners agreed to revise the content and determine the best mechanism for delivering these comments.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:30 pm.