



**City of Seattle
Seattle Planning Commission**

Josh Brower, Chair
Barbara Wilson, Executive Director

**SEATTLE PLANNING COMMISSION
JANUARY 13, 2011
APPROVED MEETING MINUTES**

COMMISSIONERS IN ATTENDANCE

Chair – Josh Brower, Vice Chair – Leslie Miller, Kadie Bell, Catherine Benotto, David Cutler, Mark Johnson, Martin Kaplan, Bradley Khouri, Kay Knapton, Jeanne Krikawa, Kevin McDonald, Radhika Nair, Christopher Persons, Matt Roewe

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT

Colie Hough-Beck, Amalia Leighton

COMMISSION STAFF

Barbara Wilson-Director, Katie Sheehy-Planning Analyst, Robin Magonegil-Administrative Staff Assistant, Diana Canzoneri-Demographer

GUESTS

Marshall Foster, Jim Holmes, Dave LaClergue, Nora Liu, Lyle Bicknell DPD

IN ATTENDANCE

Bill Bradburd; Joe Polito, Touchstone; Phil Fujii, Vulcan

Please Note: Seattle Planning Commission meeting minutes are not an exact transcript but instead represent key points and the basis of the discussion.

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Brower called the meeting to order at 3:05 pm.

COMMISSION BUSINESS

▪ **Approve: October 28, 2010 Meeting Minutes**

ACTION: Commissioner Leslie Miller moved to approve the October 28, 2010 minutes; Commissioner Martin Kaplan seconded the motion. Commissioner Catherine Benotto offered an amendment clarifying her comments. The minutes were approved unanimously.

▪ **Approve: December 9, 2010 Meeting Minutes**

ACTION: Commissioner Kay Knapton moved to approve the December 9, 2010 minutes; Commissioner Catherine Benotto seconded the motion. The minutes were approved unanimously.

▪ Chair's Report

Chair Josh Brower noted the upcoming Commission holiday party and called attention to the upcoming Commission meetings. He noted that at the next Executive Committee meeting the Commission will review the draft letter and provide recommendations on the changes to the Multifamily Tax Exemption Program. He added that the Office of Housing will attend to answer questions and that the letter will then go out for full commission review and approval late next week. Chair Brower stated that at the next Land Use and Transportation meeting we will be reviewing the proposed Comp Plan amendments. He added that the meeting will include a briefing from DPD and OSE staff on current work being done by the City on VMT's and GHG's.

BRIEFINGS

▪ **Director's Report: City Planning updates** – **Marshall Foster, DPD**

Planning Director, Marshall Foster, reported on the Planning Division staff designed to reconnect the staff with core values. In particular he thanked Vice Chair Miller who provided very skillful facilitation of the retreat. He shared that the staff articulated a lot of passion and care for their work. Mr. Foster noted that he wanted to help the staff understand how the work that they do connects with the bigger picture.

Mr. Foster gave a brief report on some key things that are moving forward; With regard to Yesler Terrace (Planned Action Community) he noted that they are working to make sure the City gets the best project and helping SHA choose a preferred alternative. With regard to the Sustainable building policy, Mr. Foster stated that they are expanding beyond LEED to sustainable development which includes the development site, looking at high performing sites as well as buildings. He added that their goal is to lead by example and that they expect a package of code amendments for later this year. Mr. Foster also gave an outline of work and efforts moving forward on the 2030 update of the Comp Plan. He stated that in March they will have public engagement around the urban design element of the Comp Plan.

Mr. Foster talked about South Downtown, noting that one key issue is building heights in Pioneer Square and Little Saigon. He added that they are testing the incentive zoning program and doing further economic analysis. Mr. Foster stated that they hope for it to be adopted this quarter and that it is a huge amount of work. He noted that they are trying to balance development opportunity and quality of life at the neighborhood level as well as other various neighborhood aspects. He added that they are talking with the Pioneer Square Preservation Board.

Mr. Foster then reported that DPD has been asked to do additional work on downtown signs and asked how the Commission would like staff to engage with them.

Mr. Foster stated that the last thing he would like to share is about the Shoreline Master Program Update. He noted that it is finally going forward to City Council and that new standards have been set with no net loss of ecological function and good improvements.

Commissioner Catherine Benotto asked if there was anything new to report regarding the Waterfront. Mr. Foster responded that the team is moving ahead full bore and that the Waterfront Team and the Seawall Team have really gelled around the design and placement of the seawall. He added that the Corner group is doing a really thoughtful analysis on the open space and what the drivers are in terms of the physical

elements. Mr. Foster stated that there will be a large public workshop on February 17th at the Seattle Aquarium.

Commissioner Martin Kaplan stated that the timelines seem really aggressive. Mr. Foster replied that it is a three phased strategy with February through May working on the initial concepts, May forward will be more detailed with planning events to get people to connect with the waterfront, and the fall and winter devoted to design development and a series of major workshops.

- **Briefing: South Lake Union**
 - **Jim Holmes & Dave LaClergue, DPD**

Chair Brower called for any disclosures and recusals.

Disclosures;

- Commissioner David Cutler disclosed that his firm, GGLO, designs projects and advises clients who own properties that may be affected by the South Lake Union Urban Design Framework.
- Commissioner Mark Johnson disclosed that his firm, ESA Adolfson, has been hired by Vulcan to provide advice on SLU land use policy.
- Commissioner Catherine Benotto disclosed that her firm, Weber Thompson, is located in South Lake Union (SLU), has worked on the SLU Urban Design Framework, the SLU LEED ND documentation for the City, the SLU mobility plan and works with private developers in South Lake Union.
- Commissioner Josh Brower disclosed that his firm, Brower Law, represents developers of single family and multi- family projects throughout Seattle.
- Commissioner Jeanne Krikawa disclosed that her firm, Underhill, is a sub consultant on the Transit Master Plan.
- Commissioner Matt Roewe disclosed that his firm, Via Architecture, is engaged with private sector property owners examining the potential impacts and opportunities in the SLU Height and Density EIS.
- Commissioner Chris Persons disclosed that his firm, Capitol Hill Housing Project, develops affordable housing throughout the city.

Jim Holmes and Dave LaClergue presented the attached PowerPoint.

http://www.seattle.gov/planningcommission/docs/FinalUDFpresentation_PC.pdf

Commissioner Kevin McDonald stated that he appreciated the recognition that I-5 is a barrier to connecting with Capitol Hill. Dave LaClergue noted that Thomas Street would be a great connection but did not know of any specific projects. He added that it has been called out as something to be improved but that it will be tricky and costly.

Commissioner Bradley Khouri stated that as Seattle has grown in the last 10 years, certain neighborhoods, like SLU, have seen a lot of development. He added that here it's not so much about if a building has enough character worthy of preservation but some are just preserved because of the scale and we could lose a lot of great character.

Chair Brower noted that he has been hearing a lot about UDF's and wondered why the SLU UDF intentionally avoided discussions about height. Jim Holmes replied that height will be discussed next month and that the view corridors provide guidance. He added that they had to table the discussion of height in order to move other things forward. Mr. LaClergue added that even though height is particularly difficult and contentious, that there is a lot of thinking about how buildings meet the street and midblock connections. He added that the UDF is a more flexible approach for setting an overall urban design vision for the community.

Chair Brower noted that the UDF in this case informs the zoning code discussion. Mr. Holmes responded that some of what is in the UDF will become design guidelines and some will be in the land use code. Mr. LaClergue added that they are not going to make the whole report the code, maybe a resolution but more of a playbook to guide future legislative action.

Commissioner Khouri asked about new open space. Mr. LaClergue answered that there was some discussion regarding green streets and some hypothetical areas where they could do more like Broad Street, under the freeway, the teardrop site and that it may not all be open space but could include some. Mr. Holmes added that a lot of publicly owned land would be sold for Mercer and that having 8th Ave as a woonerf would be some elements of a very robust, open space.

Commissioner Matt Roewe stated that the teardrop site is highly enabled by the bored tunnel and a 2 way Mercer and that it is a huge opportunity.

Commissioner Kay Knapton asked about the view corridors. Mr. LaClergue responded that they have protected view corridors in other locations and that they are protected in different ways. He added that he does not see any direct implementations. Ms. Wilson added that it protects public views but not private. Commissioner Johnson asked about downtown and Terry. Mr. Holmes answered that not all are SEPA protected corridors.

Commissioner Kaplan asked what the height discussion is going to look like. Mr. Holmes answered that they are completing the EIS and that will really inform the discussion. He added that there will be a comment period, that they will do the final EIS later in the spring and will have legislation to Council later in the summer or fall.

Ms. Wilson asked about the EIS review schedule. Mr. Holmes replied that on February 14 the draft will be released and a 45 day comment period will follow. He added that in May/June they will release the final EIS.

Commissioner Kaplan stated that this is a huge opportunity for the City and that the Commission may help bring some reasoning. Ms. Wilson stated that when the Commission gets the draft EIS, they will assign chapters to Commissioners and will provide comments. Chair Brower asked if there would be any public meetings. Mr. Holmes answered that there would be a public hearing.

Commissioner Krikawa asked how this interfaces with the mobility plan. Commissioner Catherine Benotto replied that it would be issued after the EIS came out and that it would inform the EIS work.

Commissioner Bell asked if OED has weighed in. Mr. Holmes replied that they really haven't been a part of the discussion and that they don't usually go to OES as a part of environmental review.

Ms. Wilson asked if there was anything else that they could share. Mr. Holmes responded that the transportation section is pretty exciting and that there were some interesting opportunities to mitigate.

- **Briefing: Neighborhood Plan Urban Design Frameworks**
 - **Nora Liu & Lyle Bicknell, DPD**

Chair Brower called for any disclosures and recusals.

Disclosures:

- Commissioner Kadie Bell disclosed that she manages a grant for Communities Putting Prevention to Work that funds neighborhood planning. She also disclosed that she was also previously Public Health's representative on the Neighborhood Planning IDT.
- Commissioner Jeanne Krikawa disclosed that her firm, Underhill is involved in the Transit Master Plan and the North Corridor transit project.
- Commissioner Josh Brower disclosed that he lives in Beacon Hill and that his firm, Brower Law, represents clients in single family and multi-family areas.
- Commissioner Leslie Miller disclosed that she is a voting member of the Southeast District Council for the Rainier Othello Safety Association, on the steering committees of Othello Station Community Advisory Team and Othello Park Now, on the Neighborhood Advisory Committee for the Othello Playground and Lighting Improvements, a member of the Othello Park Alliance and South Precinct Advisory Council, a proponent for Othello 2011 funded Bridging the Gap Project, and a MLK @ New Holly Neighborhood Advisory Committee Member. Commissioner Miller also disclosed that her firm, Girl Friday Productions, has a current contract with the Office of Sustainability.
- Commissioner Catherine Benotto disclosed that her firm, Weber Thompson, may have, or had projects for clients in these neighborhoods.
- Commissioner David Cutler disclosed that his firm, GGLO, designs projects and advises clients who own properties that may be impacted by the Urban Design Frameworks and Neighborhood Plans for North Rainier, Othello, and Beacon Hill.
- Commissioner Bradley Khouri disclosed that his firm, b9 architects, designs projects for clients in these neighborhoods.

Ms. Liu reported that they completed the neighborhood plan updates last year and created action plans for each neighborhood, all of which included a call for a town center and creating an Urban Design Framework. She added that the UDF will inform the zoning changes, changes to the ROW manual and other documents like that but that it doesn't directly implement any rezones.

Mr. Bicknell stated that implementation is always the hardest part of the process and hopefully the UDF will help.

Nora Liu and Lyle Bicknell presented the attached PowerPoint.

http://www.seattle.gov/planningcommission/docs/2011DCUDFpresentation_PC.pdf

Commissioner Johnson stated that, in regards to the Mt. Baker area and Rainier Ave, he seemed to recall that 45th street in Wallingford was carrying about 25,000 cars per day and that it was one lane in each direction. Lyle Bicknell replied that SDOT has really tried but the transit delays were what killed them. He added that it is mobility versus livability and that in addition to being a high volume commute street, it is also a freight corridor. Nora Liu added that it also connects to I-5 and that the freight factor is very important.

Commissioner Krikawa asked how the decision will be made for a north bound transit lane. Mr. Bicknell stated that they consultants are crunching numbers. Commissioner Krikawa asked about the transit delays and if we do not think livability and other factors couldn't an opportunity be missed. Mr. Bicknell responded that this is where the Commission's recommendations are helpful. He added that they are weighing a lot of voices and opinions and that the challenge is 'what is an acceptable delay' and do we need a contra-flow lane?

Commissioner Miller asked if there is a better link between light rail and the bus transit station in the bow tie area. Mr. Bicknell responded that he felt that this is a real weakness and that the transit facility is very difficult to get to. He added that the notion is that by going with one way streets they would be able to introduce mid-block crossings and wider sidewalks. Mr. Bicknell noted that one-way streets allow more 'progression' and that they hope to eventually move the transit facility.

Commissioner Miller asked how they are working with OED at these locations to stem gentrification and in particular, commercial gentrification. Mr. Bicknell replied that they have a great solution that he cannot share at this time. Ms. Liu added that, at Othello, there is a private project in motion who has really grabbed onto the idea of a lasting international marketplace.

Ms. Wilson clarified that they recognize that these are not implementing rezones and asked what the process will be in terms of giving us a better idea of whom to give feedback to, them, City Council or the Mayor. Ms. Liu responded that the UDF will be formally acknowledged as part of a rezone package and that they are trying to work out the best tool for these rezones and to provide tools to gain urban design fabric. Mr. Bicknell added that it will be to Council for review in June.

Chair Brower asked, in reference to Beacon Hill, why not more? Mr. Bicknell answered that what they got took some heavy sledding and met with a fair amount of resistance. He added that the communities are constantly changing and that they want to get it right at the core. Mr. Bicknell continued that in North Beacon, they don't really want continuous retail.

Commissioner Knapton stated that limiting scope to only retail centers misses opportunities. She stated that finding ways to bring more jobs in would strengthen those retail businesses. Mr. Bicknell replied that it especially true in Mt. Baker. He added that there is some employment there and that would be a great way to add vitality to the center. Mr. Bicknell continued that residential density can enliven the street as well.

Commissioner Kaplan noted that it is really fun to see the vision and the 'art of the possible'. He added that he was concerned about using Queen Anne as a model as it is not necessarily a freight or commuter corridor. Mr. Bicknell replied that they also looked at a 'main street' option but that was heavy sledding. Ms. Liu added that folks in Mt. Baker are very good stewards of their neighborhood. Commissioner Kaplan noted that it seems to be a conflict to have more pedestrians and bikes on the street while being a freight corridor. Ms. Liu noted that they might need to think more about where they locate stations in the future. She added that Seattle was mostly built with automobiles in mind so there is commercial districts are designed for cars and our urban villages are built around that. She noted that this creates very distinct conflicts.

Chair Brower thanks Ms. Liu and Mr. Bicknell and stated that they are doing a great job. He asked them to let the Commission know what they could do in order to help push this through Council.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Brower adjourned the meeting at 5:25 pm.