



# City of Seattle Seattle Planning Commission

Tony To, Chair  
Barbara Wilson, Executive Director

## SEATTLE PLANNING COMMISSION JUNE 12, 2008 APPROVED MEETING MINUTES

### **Commissioners in Attendance**

Chair Tony To, Josh Brower, Tom Eanes, Chris Fiori, Martin Kaplan, Kay Knapton, Amalia Leighton, M. Michelle Mattox, Kevin McDonald, Leslie Miller

### **Commission Staff**

Barbara Wilson-Director, Robin Magonegil-Administrative Assistant, Casey Mills-Planning Analyst

### **Commissioners Absent**

Linda Amato, Jerry Finrow, Colie Hough Beck, Mark Johnson, Kirsten Pennington

### **Guests**

Pat Callahan, Bill Kreager, Urban Land Institute; Gary Johnson, Lyle Bicknell, DPD; Marshall Foster, OPM

### **In Attendance**

Rebecca Herzfeld, Bob Morgan, Council Central Staff; Anthony Russo

*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 Tony To called the meeting to order at 3:04 pm.

### **COMMISSION BUSINESS**

- Minutes Approval

**ACTION: Commissioner Kay Knapton moved to approve the May 22, 2008 minutes. Commissioner Kevin McDonald seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.**

## ▪ Chairs Report

Chair To discussed the upcoming meetings. He stated that next Tuesday, June 17 will be the Executive Committee meeting. The Committee will set the June 26th agenda, discuss the staffing plan, review the new neighborhood plan proposal and SDOT staff will brief the Committee on the status of the Transportation Strategic Plan.

The next Land Use and Transportation Committee meeting will be Thursday, June 19. The Committee will do a work session on our assessment of the proposal to update the Neighborhood Plan. The next Housing, Neighborhoods and Urban Centers Committee Meeting, will be Tuesday, July 8th. The Committee will get a briefing from the Office of Housing on Levy Renewal planning and the Housing Needs Assessment.

The next Full Commission meeting will be held on June 26 from 7:30 – 9:00 am. At that meeting the Commission will get a briefing from DPD on the 2008 Comprehensive Plan amendments and possibly take action on the Commission's review of the revised proposal for updating neighborhood plans.

Chair To then stated that it was time to think about the Planning Commission leadership. He stated that in Commissioner's folders there was a nomination form for the various leadership positions including Chair, Vice Chair, Committee Chairs as well as a few at large members of the Executive Committee. He asked that Commissioners take a moment during the meeting to fill these forms out and return them to staff. Every year the Commission appoints a Nominating Committee to contact Commissioners to get input about the appointments and then make a recommendation to the Commission. The hope is to vote on new officers at the last meeting in June or the first meeting in July. Chair To then asked for volunteers to the nominating committee. Commissioner Miller and Chair To both volunteered. Ms. Wilson stated that Commissioner Finrow had also volunteered.

## ▪ Staff Report

Ms. Wilson provided the staff report. She thanked the Commissioners who were able to attend the Planning Director interviews. She stated that staff is preparing comments for Diane Sugimura regarding feedback on the final candidates and she will likely make a decision soon.

Ms. Wilson stated she was delighted to announce that she hired Diana Canzoneri to fill the Demographer position. She will begin on June 30th. She thanked Commissioner Fiori for reviewing all the applications and Mark Johnson for sitting in on the interviews. Diana comes to Seattle from the City of Bellevue. During her ten years with Bellevue, she performed research and analysis to inform a variety of long-range planning efforts, including the City's Critical Areas Update and Bel-Red Corridor Study. She also had lead responsibility for analyzing local demographic and economic trends, and produced reports on these trends to help inform programs and policies.

Ms. Wilson also said she hired a new work study intern. His name is Lee Roberts. He is completing his Masters of Planning at UW and will be with the Commission through December.

Ms. Wilson stated that there will be interviews for the applicants for the analyst soon and, she hopes to have the analyst on board in the beginning of July.

Ms. Wilson stated that the final thing worth noting regarding staffing and personnel is that Cheryl Sizov, who is a senior planner at DPD, will temporarily join the Commission staff half time beginning in September. Although Ms. Wilson stated she will not be taking full time maternity, other than a few weeks when the baby is first born, she will be working ½ time for an extended period so Cheryl will be on board to help backfill.

Ms. Wilson also announced that Commissioner Kirsten Pennington will be resigning soon. She and her husband and daughter will be moving to Portland this summer to be closer to family. She will be resigning in July. The Mayor is reviewing the candidates who interviewed earlier this year to select a replacement.

## **COMMISSION DISCUSSION**

### **▪ Presentation & Discussion: Reality Check**

- Briefing from Urban Land Institute's Pat Callahan and Bill Kreager

Chair To stated that the Commission invited Pat Callahan and Bill Kreager of the Urban Land Institute to share the results of their recently held forum titled Reality Check - Envisioning Our Region's Growth. Reality Check was a one-day participatory GIS-based exercise where people came together to analyze and develop alternative growth scenarios for the Puget Sound region, and to make tough decisions about transportation investment to serve this growth. Pat and Bill are here today to share with us the results of this event.

### **Mr. Kreager then gave a Power Point presentation. The presentation is attached.**

Commissioner Knapton stated that the Commission recently convened a regional Planning Commission panel to discuss regional issues. She suggested that ULI could help facilitate bringing Planning Commissions together from throughout the region to address some of the issues discussed at the Reality Check event.

Commissioner Eanes noted that 'transportation' was used as a term during the event, and that different people consider this to mean different things. Some take it to mean public transit, while others take it to mean infrastructure for cars. He asked what meaning ULI was using. Mr. Callahan stated that ULI simply tried to create recognition of an issue rather than get into details. They hope the process can take these types of discussions to a higher level than where they're currently at.

Chair To asked how much ULI had looked at taking their efforts to the state level, as many of the issues they discussed are affected by the Growth Management Act. Mr. Callahan stated that they were still working on this issue, in part by trying to heal the dynamic of the Mayors blaming the states and the states blaming the Mayors for lack of legislative movement on land use issues.

Commissioner Fiori asked how ULI was involving neighborhoods. Mr. Kreager stated they were working on doing this by developing a speaker's bureau, going out to the media, going out to neighborhoods, and working with a variety of agencies. However, the effort will have a more populist element as time goes on, but for now they want to make sure they have all the major stakeholders on the same page before they broaden the effort.

▪ **Presentation & Discussion: Open Space and the Public Realm in the Center City**

- Briefing from Gary Johnson and Lyle Bicknell, DPD and Marshall Foster, OPM

Chair To then welcomed Gary Johnson and Lyle Bicknell from DPD along with former Planning Commissioner, Marshall Foster, who works in the Mayor's Office of Management and Policy. Chair To stated the guests are here to update the Commission on open space planning efforts in Center City.

Mr. Johnson introduced the project by stating that it focused on the five downtown neighborhoods and began with the feeling that these areas should be celebrations of the green vegetation and water than Seattle is known for. He stated Seattle is a leader in terms of land use and zoning policies, but often its streetscapes and public realm has not followed, and this planning initiative is an attempt to resolve that.

**Mr. Foster then gave a PowerPoint presentation to Commissioners. The presentation is attached.**

Mr. Johnson then discussed the process for the initiative. It began with the creation of a new interdepartmental team to work on this issue. They have defined short term, mid term, and long term projects for the initiative. They would like to focus on getting some immediate accomplishments, then move forward with bigger goals. There are a variety of ideas for improving the public realm downtown, e.g. allowing more street vendors and legalizing the fruit vendors already in existence in the International District. He stated the Downtown Seattle Association is willing to assist in the effort. Mr. Johnson extended an invitation for the Commission to be involved in some of the initiative's long term planning efforts.

Mr. Bicknell then discussed some of the efforts towards improving the Right of Way downtown. He stated the city has already made some great improvements to the Pike and Pine area, including pulling out some of the bus shelters and extended shelters from the buildings there instead. He stated the next biggest priorities are Denny Street, which has almost half the traffic of the Alaskan Way Viaduct and is difficult for pedestrians to cross. He stated in Belltown they hope to create more urban boulevards that could connect the area's parks and water. He said the Madison crossing from First Hill to downtown is also being examined to make it less noisy and have more visual interest. Finally, the Livable South Downtown proposal would create a lot of Green Streets that will improve the Right of Way there.

Commissioner Leighton asked if there were many opportunities to make some small touches, e.g. having uniform manhole covers with a good design on them. Mr. Johnson stated they were not to that level of detail yet. Mr. Foster stated that some cities have a universal design book for streets that all departments work from, and that could be a goal for Seattle.

Commissioner Eanes stated that he was glad to see this effort is happening. He asked about the possibility of coordination with the Pedestrian Safety Committee. He also stated that rerouting traffic when the Viaduct goes down could go against some of the goals of this effort, as it will flood downtown streets with new traffic. Mr. Johnson stated that there could be an effort to look for every inch of vehicle space downtown and that will produce a conflict that will be difficult to resolve.

Commissioner McDonald stated that he appreciates the idea of getting early projects done quickly to establish some credibility. He stated more priority should be given to East-West connectivity in the study area.

Commissioner Brower stated that maybe waiting for a decision on the Viaduct is an opportunity to create great plans for the area. Mr. Bicknell stated this would be difficult as the city is in some ways paralyzed as long as it doesn't know exactly what will be happening to the Viaduct.

Commissioner Kaplan stated that all projects need to have buy-in from City Hall in order to happen. In addition, there is a need for maintenance of the good things that do happen downtown. Mr. Johnson stated that it did seem that there was a lot of buy-in from the City.

Commissioner Knapton stated that she believes that 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave is not a good comparison with Michigan Ave. in Chicago, as 3<sup>rd</sup> is sterile and does not have any stores or retail. It's not so much the lack of trees and plants that make 3<sup>rd</sup> a bad street – it's the lack of business. Mr. Bicknell stated the city is working to enliven the buildings and facades on 3<sup>rd</sup>. He also stated that Michigan Ave. businesses were failing until more care was placed on the streetscape.

▪ **ACTION: Residential Parking Permit Policy Review**

- Review and potential vote on Commission memo to SDOT

Chair To stated that the Commission will start out with a short report from the Land Use and Transportation Committee about their work and a draft memo they have crafted for consideration. The hope is to take action on the memo and send it to SDOT Director Grace Crunican. SDOT staff has briefed the LUT committee on this topic and has asked for the Commission's comments and input. Chair To stated that SDOT will take comments until the end of the month and then will prepare their final recommendations to be presented to the Mayor and then Council.

Chair Tony To called for any disclosures or recusals.

**Recusal & Disclosure**

**Chair Tony To disclosed that he was on the community affairs committee at the Rainer Beach Chamber of Commerce. Commissioner Leslie Miller disclosed she was on the steering committee of an Othello station planning committee. Commissioner Marin Kaplan disclosed he was a member of the Queen Anne Community Council. There were no recusals.**

Commissioner McDonald then provided the LUT report. He stated that the Commission felt the residential parking zone review should be considered as part of a larger, citywide parking strategy. The Committee supported raising base fees for the permits. They supported exploring a tiered fee system, charging more for each additional permit provided per household and possibly varying cost neighborhood by neighborhood. He stated the Committee advocated for the cost of the program to be covered by the fees charged for the permits. He stated the permits should be tied to density and transit. He also stated the Committee advocated for more enforcement of the permits to prevent illegal practices like car ranching. He stated the Committee advocated for a sunset to the programs so they can

be reexamined, and also recommended permits being provided to workers who want to park near their place of work at night, particularly if their place of work is in an area not well served by transit.

Commissioner Miller stated that certain populations, e.g. those with multigenerational households, or that must drive to get groceries, don't have a lot of money. A large increase in permit fees could disproportionately harm them.

Commissioner Brower stated that the RPZ program was created to encourage people to leave their cars for the day and take transit to work. Raising the price to a high cost could run counter to this goal. In addition, raising the price too high will hit very low-income people the hardest.

Commissioner Fiori stated that the street front is a city resource that is worth more in some places than in others. The City should not continue to keep giving away a good, and can achieve this by either restricting the number of permits issued per household or providing them on a first come, first serve basis.

Commissioner Kaplan stated that RPZs could put burdens on single family property owners if rental houses with multiple residents were allowed permits for all residents. There simply is not enough curb space for everyone to have a parking space in every neighborhood.

Commissioner Knapton stated that RPZs don't have the benign purpose of being created to encourage transit use. Instead, they are created by neighborhoods that object to institutionalized uses and business uses that cause too many people to park in their neighborhood.

Chair To stated the discussion would continue at the upcoming Land Use and Transportation meeting.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

There was no public comment.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

Chair Tony To adjourned the meeting at 5:32 pm.