



City of Seattle Seattle Planning Commission

Jerry Finrow, Chair
Barbara Wilson, Executive Director

SEATTLE PLANNING COMMISSION MARCH 22, 2007 APPROVED MEETING MINUTES

Commissioners in Attendance

Jerry Finrow – Chair, Linda Amato, George Blomberg, Tom Eanes, Chris Fiori, Martin Kaplan, Kay Knapton, Amalia Leighton, Kevin McDonald, Steve Sheehy

Commissioners Absent

Hilda Blanco, Mahlon Clements, M. Michelle Mattox, Kirsten Pennington, Tony To

Commission Staff

Casey Mills – Planning Analyst, Robin Magonegil-Administrative Specialist

Guests

Mark Troxel, Department of Planning & Development, Mark Johnson, Colie Hough-Beck

In Attendance

Rebecca Herzfeld, Council Central Staff;

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

The meeting was called to order at 7:32 am by Chair Jerry Finrow.

COMMISSION BUSINESS

- **Approve March 8, 2007 Minutes**

ACTION: Commissioner Kevin McDonald moved to approve the March 8, 2007 minutes. Commissioner Kay Knapton seconded the motion. The minutes were approved.

- **Chairs Report**

Chair Jerry Finrow noted the upcoming meetings and events, including the upcoming March 29th Industrial Lands Strategy meeting, *The Future of Industrial Lands*. He encouraged all commissioners to attend this meeting.

Chair Finrow announced that the Commission will be holding its annual retreat May 17th, with the location to be determined. He added that the planned University District walking tour had been cancelled until further notice.

▪ **Introduction of New Commissioners**

Chair Finrow noted that the Planning Commission has three new members joining. He stated that Commissioner Hilda Blanco had decided to step down due to time constraints brought about by her job. Chair Finrow thanked Commissioner Blanco for her service. He added that Commissioner George Blomberg would also be leaving the Commission and thanked him for his years of service.

Chair Finrow welcomed Commissioners Marshall Foster, Colie Hough-Beck and Mark Johnson to the Commission. Commissioner Foster was unable to attend the meeting. Chair Finrow asked the two new Commissioners to introduce themselves and to talk about what they bring to the Commission.

Commissioner Hough-Beck stated that she was a landscape architect and principal of a landscape architecture firm that is also involved with land use policy and planning. She added that her firm is particularly involved with land use code writing and design. Commissioner Hough-Beck noted that she has always been a volunteer in some capacity, including volunteer oversight work for the University of Washington, and sees her participation on the Commission as continuing her involvement in her community.

Commissioner Johnson stated that he used to work for the City of Seattle in the Department of Construction and Land Use. He noted that he now does consulting, environmental review and sub area plans. Commissioner Johnson noted that he also has training as a landscape architect. He stated that he considers Seattle his home and wants to give back to the city that has given him so much.

▪ **Project Updates**

• **Adult Cabaret Legislation**

Chair Finrow stated that Councilmember Peter Steinbrueck recently completed his proposal for adult cabaret zoning and has asked the Commission to review his proposal. Chair Finrow stated the proposal takes into account most of the recommendations given by the Commission when they reviewed the Mayor's proposal for adult cabarets.

Casey Mills stated that Councilmember Steinbrueck proposal will keep the same requirements in terms of what zones adult cabarets are permitted in. He noted that it will create buffer zones around certain uses, including open space, schools and community centers. Mr. Mills added that it would create buffer zones around other adult cabarets. Mr. Mills stated the Councilmember Steinbrueck requested the Commission provide a letter documenting their thoughts on his proposal.

Commissioner Steve Sheehy stated that the letter could be short and to the point, namely that the proposal looks very much in line with the Commission's recommendations.

Chair Finrow requested that the issue go before the Land Use and Transportation (LUT) Committee and then come back to the Full Commission.

Commissioner Mark Johnson asked that the definition of ‘open space’ in the proposal be defined for the Commission when they review it. Commissioner Chris Fiori also asked that a map showing the buffer zones be provided as well.

- **Industrial Lands Strategy & Workshops**

Chair Finrow stated that alongside the public outreach component of the Industrial Lands study that the Commission is involved in; DPD has been studying the city’s industrial lands and working with consultants to obtain more information about their uses. He added that DPD had shared some initial results from their study, and asked that Mr. Mills share them with the Commission.

Mr. Mills then went over the timeline for the study. He noted that in March 2007, DPD will finalize their background report, and the consultants will finalize their reports, including reports on brief interviews with approximately 100 industrial business owners, extended follow-up interviews with approximately 50 industrial businesses owners, and a review of industrial lands issues and approaches in 8 other cities. Mr. Mills stated that DPD will release a summary of all of this information in April, and should have recommendations for future industrial lands policy in May.

Mr. Mills reported on some of the concepts addressed in the draft report summarizing the extended interviews with industrial business owners. He noted that they included that transportation issues were most often mentioned as a concern, and that investment in transportation infrastructure was one of the suggested ways to encourage industrial businesses in Seattle. Mr. Mills reported that labor issues were a key concern, including a lack of skilled and unskilled labor and rising labor costs. He added that these concerns were tied to a growing cost of living, housing, and commuting to Seattle. He stated that land constraints were a primary concern, including rising land costs and the loss of industrial businesses. Mr. Mills noted that the regulatory environment was consistently cited as a concern. He also noted that more than half of respondents stated that their current location was ‘ideal.’ He added that they said Seattle provided close proximity to clients, easy access to suppliers and for employers, and had a central location, among other benefits.

COMMISSION DISCUSSION

- **2007 Comprehensive Plan Amendments – Threshold Recommendations**
Mark Troxel – Department of Planning and Development

Chair Finrow stated the Commission would be reviewing DPD’s Comprehensive Plan amendment threshold recommendations. Chair Finrow stated that the Commission would not be debating the merits of each of the amendments. He noted that instead, they would be discussing whether or not the proposed amendments should be studied further by DPD. He added that the time to comment on the merits of the proposals would come later, when DPD submitted its final recommendations for approval or denial to the City Council.

Mark Troxel, DPD briefed the Commission on the proposed amendments, including **A.** changes to allow for elements of the multifamily zoning update; **B.** prioritizing permanently affordable housing among public benefits; **C.** changes to the future land use map to reflect the City’s preferred direction for redevelopment of the Fort Lawton Army Reserve Center; **D.** future land use map change in the Madrona neighborhood; **E.** future land use map change in the Crown Hill neighborhood; **F.** allowing contract rezones in industrially zoned brownfields in transitional areas of the Duwamish Manufacturing

Industrial Center; **G.** future land use map change for the Nordic Heritage Museum; **H.** future land use map change in South Lake Union; **I.** future land use map change in South Downtown; **J.** exemption of an area of the Duwamish MIC from size-of-use limits on office space; and **K.** prohibition of structured parking on or near parks property.

Chair Finrow suggested that they go over each of the proposed amendments. He noted that the LUT Committee had already discussed each of the amendments and made some initial recommendations, which would be used to kick off the discussion about each amendment.

Chair Finrow asked, in regards to amendment **A**, if there were any disclosures or recusals.

Disclosures: Commissioner Tom Eanes disclosed that he works for Hewitt Architects and they might be involved in multifamily projects in the future. Commissioner Chris Fiori stated he works for Heartland and they do work in multifamily zones. Commissioner Martin Kaplan stated he works for Martin Henry Kaplan Architects and they do work in multifamily zones.

Commissioner Fiori stated the LUT Committee felt the proposal should move forward for further study. He added that DPD had been working on the issue for quite some time, and the Committee felt they should continue.

RECOMMENDATION: The Planning Commission agrees with including this proposed amendment for further study. The amendment reads: “Policy amendments consistent with pending recommendations related to amending the multifamily chapter of the Land Use Code.” The Commission agrees that the Comprehensive Plan language should allow for more flexibility to allow for future potential language in the Multifamily Code. The Department of Planning and Development (DPD) should consider transportation in addition to the issues it is proposing to study. The recommendation was approved.

Chair Finrow asked, in regards to amendment **B**, if there were any disclosures or recusals.

Recusal: Commissioner Tom Eanes recused himself and left the room.

Commissioner Fiori stated that the LUT Committee recommended it for further study, but had some concerns about whether it might be too prescriptive, and asked that DPD make sure they study this possibility.

RECOMMENDATION: The Planning Commission agrees with including this proposed amendment for further study. The amendment reads: “Amend Land Use policies to establish a priority for affordable housing among public benefits required to mitigate impacts of higher-density developments.” The Commission has concerns that the proposed amendment is too strict, and DPD should make sure to study whether or not it will have unforeseen consequences. The Commission has stated that workforce housing should be prioritized in public benefits programs, but suggested that a threshold be developed so that when a large enough amount of benefits are obtained, funds can be used for other public amenities, including infrastructure improvements. DPD should ensure this sort of threshold system would not be precluded by the proposed amendment. The recommendation was approved.

Chair Finrow asked, in regards to amendment **C**, if there were any disclosures or recusals.

Disclosure: Commissioner Amalia Leighton stated that the firm she works for, SvR Design was doing some work on this project.

Commissioner Fiori stated that the LUT Committee recommended it for further study, and that DPD needed to make sure that the surrounding neighborhoods are engaged around the issue.

RECOMMENDATION: The Planning Commission agrees with including this proposed amendment for further study. The amendment reads: “Possible changes to policies or to the Future Land Use Map to reflect the City’s preferred direction for redevelopment of the Fort Lawton Army Reserve Center and to comply with federal statutory requirements under the Base Closure Community Redevelopment and Homeless Assistance Act of 1994 (amended in 1996).” DPD should investigate the possible consequences of a lack of public transportation to the proposed site, and explore the possibility of tying the proposal to the level of transit service that should be provided for the potential new residents and employees at the site. The recommendation was approved.

Chair Finrow asked, in regards to amendment **D**, if there were any disclosures or recusals.

Disclosure: Commissioner Steve Sheehy stated that he lives in the Madrona neighborhood and is familiar with the property in question.

Commissioner Fiori stated that the LUT Committee recommended it for further study, though they felt it was a relatively small change that might not necessitate a Comp Plan amendment.

RECOMMENDATION: The Planning Commission agrees with including this proposed amendment for further study. The amendment reads: “Amend Future Land Use Map to redesignate six parcels in the Madrona neighborhood as Commercial/Mixed Use.” DPD should ensure that the proposed changes are consistent with the neighborhood plan and have adequately completed a neighborhood review process. The recommendation was approved.

Chair Finrow asked, in regards to amendment **E**, if there were any disclosures or recusals.

There were no disclosures or recusals on Amendment E.

Commissioner Fiori stated that the LUT Committee recommended it for further study, though they felt it was a relatively small change that might not necessitate a Comp Plan amendment.

RECOMMENDATION: The Planning Commission agrees with including this proposed amendment for further study. The amendment reads: “Amend Future Land Use Map to redesignate one parcel in the Crown Hill Urban Village from Single Family Residential to Multi-Family Residential.” DPD should make every effort to ensure that this needs to be a Comprehensive Plan amendment rather than a legislative rezone. Initially, it doesn’t appear to rise to the threshold of necessitating a Comprehensive Plan amendment. The recommendation was approved.

Chair Finrow stated that the Commission would be skipping amendments **F** and **G** for now and go to amendment **H**.

Chair Finrow asked, in regards to amendment **H**, if there were any disclosures or recusals.

Disclosure: Commissioner Colie Hough-Beck stated that she works and lives in South Lake Union.

Commissioner Fiori stated that the LUT Committee recommended it for further study. He noted that the Commission has had concerns about rezoning industrial lands, but that the Commission understands the proposed area is not in a MIC and is in a newly anointed Urban Center.

RECOMMENDATION: The Planning Commission agrees with including this proposed amendment for further study. The amendment reads: “Amend the Future Land Use Map to redesignate land in the South Lake Union Urban Center from Industrial to Commercial/Mixed Use.” The Commission has been very concerned about the City allowing conversion of land from industrial zoning to any other zone before the Industrial Lands Strategy has been completed. The Commission has recommended that part of the strategy should include developing criteria for evaluating future decisions to reclassify industrial land. Such criteria will likely include factors such as whether the industrial area in question is within a Manufacturing and Industrial Center (MIC) or whether there has been a significant redesignation of the area that has included significant analysis, and this criteria would be helpful in making a decision concerning this proposal. The recommendation was approved.

Chair Finrow asked, in regards to amendment **I**, if there were any disclosures or recusals.

Disclosure: Commissioner Mark Johnson stated that his firm, Adolfson, was involved in some of the noise studies done in South Downtown.

Commissioner Fiori stated that the LUT Committee recommended it for further study. He added that the Commission has had concerns about rezoning Industrial Land. Commissioner Fiori noted that this was a transitional area with some opportunity for housing, and that DPD was doing a thorough study of the area. He noted that the Committee felt this study should continue.

RECOMMENDATION: The Planning Commission agrees with including this proposed amendment for further study. The amendment reads: “Amend policies in the Land Use Element and the Future Land Use Map to reflect pending recommendations that will be made as part of the Livable South Downtown plan, possibly including redesignation of some land from Industrial to Commercial/Mixed Use, and adjustment of the southern boundary of the Downtown Urban Center.” The Commission has been very concerned about the City allowing conversion of land from industrial zoning to any other zone before the Industrial Lands Strategy has been completed. The Commission has recommended that part of the strategy should include developing criteria for evaluating future decisions to reclassify industrial land. Such criteria will likely include factors such as whether the industrial area in question is within a Manufacturing and Industrial Center (MIC) or whether there has been a significant re-designation of the area that has included significant analysis, and this criteria would be helpful

in making a decision concerning this proposal. The recommendation was approved.

Chair Finrow then stated that the Commission would be skipping amendment **J** for now and go to amendment **K**.

Chair Finrow asked, in regards to amendment **K**, if there were any disclosures or recusals.

Disclosure: Commissioner Tom Eanes stated that his wife works for the Seattle Zoo and that his firm, Hewitt Architects, designed the garage.

Commissioner Fiori stated that the LUT Committee agreed with DPD’s recommendation that the proposal not be studied further. He added that the Committee felt the proposal does not address any current problem and constrains the city in future negotiations concerning public properties.

RECOMMENDATION: The Planning Commission agrees with not considering this amendment further. The amendment reads: “Amend Land Use Policies to prohibit general fund financing for single-purpose parking structures outside of urban centers, urban villages, or near major transit hubs, and to state that Seattle Parks property shall not be used for structured parking.” This amendment would unnecessarily constrain future development proposals and the negotiation process between various stakeholders for those proposals. The recommendation was approved.

Chair Finrow asked, in regards to amendment **J**, if there were any disclosures or recusals.

Disclosure: Commissioner Colie Hough-Beck stated that she owned Starbucks stock.

Commissioner Fiori stated that the LUT Committee recommended it for further study. He stated that generally the Commission has had concerns about rezoning industrial land. Commissioner Fiori added that much work still needed to be done on the study of the area, and its status as a single location with an existing user who would like to expand makes it a good candidate for such study.

Commissioner Blomberg noted that possible street vacations should be considered, and asked that a line be added to the recommendation to request that DPD study this, in addition to other transportation concerns, such as how the large amount of workers that will be introduced to the area will be accommodated. Mr. Mills agreed to add this language.

RECOMMENDATION: The Planning Commission agrees with including this proposed amendment for further study. The amendment reads: “Exempt a portion of the Duwamish Manufacturing/Industrial Center bounded by Utah Avenue S., S. Walker Street, First Avenue S., and S. Forest Street from limits on commercial space.” The Commission has been very concerned about the City allowing conversion of land from industrial zoning to any other zone before the Industrial Lands Strategy has been completed. The Commission has recommended that part of the strategy should include developing criteria for evaluating future decisions to reclassify industrial land. Such criteria will likely include factors such as whether the industrial area in question is within a Manufacturing and Industrial Center (MIC) or whether there has been a significant re-designation of the area that has included significant analysis, and this criteria would be helpful in making a decision concerning this proposal. The Commission

recommends that DPD include in their study exploration of the effect any possible street vacations that could be part of the project could have on transportation in the area. In addition, DPD should study the effect of the addition of a large number of workers to the area on the transportation system, including whether current transit can handle the new occupants and the comparative effects of adding workers to the proposed development site instead of to an Urban Center, such as Downtown. The recommendation was approved.

Chair Finrow asked, in regards to amendment **F**, if there were any disclosures or recusals.

Disclosure: No disclosure or recusals.

Commissioner Fiori stated that the LUT Committee recommended this amendment for further discussion. He noted that the Committee had concerns about the possibility that any 10 acres on or near the border of the Duwamish could be converted to commercial uses. Commissioner Fiori noted that this did not seem to be in co-ordinance with the goals of the Comp Plan. He added that in addition, individuals or groups could potentially assemble parcels until they reached 10 acres and they can convert it.

Commissioner Kaplan stated that the particular site, the CEM site, is the site the amendment is geared towards. He added that the CEM site could be a good site for potential conversion and that the amendment is very open ending. Commissioner Kaplan asked Mr. Troxel if the amendment proponent had been asked to narrow its focus. Mr. Troxel responded that the proponent had been asked to do just that, but it remained unclear if the proponent was going to make the suggested changes.

Chair Finrow stated that he believed the amendment should not be considered further without being tailored to the specific site in question.

Commissioner Eanes stated that he agreed, due to the unforeseen consequences potentially loaded into the amendment.

Mr. Mills noted that he would draft language that stated the Commission did not recommend the proposal and would encompass the comments made at today's meeting.

Commissioners Sheehy and Blomberg had to leave the meeting. Quorum was lost when this occurred, so no vote was called for.

Chair Finrow asked, in regards to amendment **G**, if there were any disclosures or recusals.

Disclosure: Commissioner Amalia Leighton stated that the firm she works for, SvR Design is involved in planning the Burke-Gilman trail and that it could pass through the site in question.

Commissioner Fiori stated that the LUT Committee recommended the amendment for further discussion. He added that the Commission had a lot of questions about the site, particularly if there needed to be a Comprehensive Plan amendment, or if the museum could expand simply through a legislative change to restrictions on certain uses.

Commissioner McDonald stated he had concerns about a Comprehensive Plan amendment being used to help out someone's pro forma, and that a legislative change might be more appropriate for allowing the museum to expand.

Commissioner Kaplan agreed, and asked that the fact that there didn't seem to be much input from the Ballard neighborhood be added to the Commission's comments on the amendment.

Chair Finrow stated that the Commission is very concerned with affordable housing, and DPD should explore whether or not the possibility exists to include affordable housing as part of any rezoning of the area. Chair Finrow asked Commissioners if they believed the amendment should move forward for further study, and noted that all Commissioners present did, but only with an extensive list of concerns DPD should address when studying the area.

In particular, Commissioner Kevin McDonald noted that the study area should extend beyond the borders noted in the amendment, so that the potential rezones effect on the surrounding area could be explored in detail, especially the Market Street corridor.

Mr. Mills stated he would draft language stating that the Commission thought the amendment should move forward for further study, but with a list of concerns that DPD address in the study.

Chair Finrow stated the Commissions comments on amendments **F** and **G** would come before the Commission again for a final vote.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Finrow adjourned the meeting at 9:06 am.