



**City of Seattle
Seattle Planning Commission**

Josh Brower, Chair
Barbara Wilson, Executive Director

**SEATTLE PLANNING COMMISSION
JULY 28, 2011
APPROVED MEETING MINUTES**

COMMISSIONERS IN ATTENDANCE

Vice Chair – Leslie Miller, Kadie Bell, Catherine Benotto, David Cutler, Colie Hough-Beck, Mark Johnson, Martin Kaplan, Amalia Leighton, Kevin McDonald, Christopher Persons, Matt Roewe

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT

Chair – Josh Brower, Bradley Khouri, Kay Knapton, Jeanne Krikawa

COMMISSION STAFF

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

IN ATTENDANCE

Sunny Kwoy, Naoka Kuriyama

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

Vice Chair Leslie Miller called the meeting to order at 7:30 am.

COMMISSION BUSINESS

- **Approve: June 23, 2011 Minutes**

ACTION: Commissioner Catherine Benotto moved to approve the June 23, 2011 minutes. Commissioner Mark Johnson seconded the motion. The minutes were approved with Commissioner Martin Kaplan abstaining.

- **Chair's Report** - Commission Vice Chair Leslie Miller

Ms. Miller reviewed the upcoming meetings. She noted that the Nominations Committee should have recommendations for Commission leadership to be considered by the Full Commission soon.

Vice-Chair Miller noted that, in regards to Commissioner Re-appointments, there are three up in front of the Mayor and we expect to hear soon.

▪ **Staff Report** - Executive Director Barbara Wilson

Ms. Wilson noted that she, Chair Brower and Vice Chair Miller have been meeting with the Mayor's office and City Council members to talk about a citywide Transit Communities policy especially as it would apply to places like Roosevelt, SE Station areas, etc.

She added that she and Chair Brower attended the City Council COBE committee meeting regarding the Comp Plan Amendments. Ms. Wilson noted that DPD and the Council Central Staff seemed aligned with the Planning Commission recommendations.

Ms. Wilson thanked the Commission for sending in the 'Planning 101' articles and noted that the staff has some work to do to get these rolling out. She added that the first article '*Bringing Sexy Back to the Comp Plan*' went out to City Tank yesterday and that they have had lots of positive feedback.

Ms. Wilson stated that the Comp Plan update is in the scoping phase and that they are trying to get lots of responses to survey. She encouraged the Commission to take the survey and to mention it to their colleagues.

Ms. Wilson reported on the joint waterfront review panel and noted that several commissioners have raised concerns about the meetings; that the group seems too big, concerns about the tone of the meetings and their effectiveness.

Commissioner Matt Roewe agreed that there are too many people and that it is hard to ask more than one question. He also commented that the Design Commission's style and pace is very different that the Planning Commission's.

Commissioner Kadie Bell wondered if the Planning Commission should weigh in sooner and then let the Design Commission weigh in as it becomes less conceptual and the framework plan is more developed. Commissioner Mark Johnson noted that he felt that the desire was to have a big look at the framework and to keep it at a framework level rather than the design. He added that even though the process is a bit messy, he feels that that hearing what the Design Commission has to say is beneficial and he still sees value in the meetings.

Commissioner David Cutler agreed that the group is too big and that it is tough to get constructive feedback. He suggested that maybe a subset of the Commissions that acts as a resource would be better. Commissioner Catherine Benotto also agreed that the group is too big and she wondered if our comments were repetitive to the consultants or were of any value. She wondered if making the meetings longer or having a different format would help. Commissioner Colie Hough Beck stated that she likes having the two Commissions together but misses the conversational piece. She added that, although the group seems too large, the consultant could be better listener.

Commissioner Martin Kaplan shared his concern that it needs to be clear what the charge is and that the opportunity to engage is too brief. He added that he does feel that there is some value to the group and that it is still at an early stage but suggested reducing the group size to something like a task force. Vice-Chair Miller agreed that the size is not working and expressed her difficulty in moderating the meetings. She stated that it does not feel successful and that the conversations are not substantive.

Ms. Wilson suggested that they work with Marshall to recommend a taskforce be formed from the two Commissions and be focused on what specific questions the Commissioners are being asked.

DISCUSSION

- **Discussion: Affordable Housing Trends Report**
 - Revised report outline
 - Overview and key findings
 - DRAFT recommendations

Vice Chair Miller called for any disclosures or recusals.

Disclosures:

- Commissioner Chris Persons disclosed that he is the executive director of Capitol Hill Housing which develops affordable multifamily projects throughout the City.
- Commissioner Matt Roewe disclosed that his firm, Via Architecture provides design services for multifamily projects in Seattle and that he serves as a board member of Capitol Hill Housing.
- Commissioner Amalia Leighton disclosed that her firm, SvR Design works with SHA and other low income housing developers.
- Commissioner Catherine Benotto disclosed that her firm, Weber Thompson, works on multifamily projects and are members of the Housing Development Consortium.
- Commissioner David Cutler disclosed that his firm, GGLO designs mixed use affordable and market rate multifamily buildings throughout the city.
- Commissioner Colie Hough Beck disclosed that her firm, Hough Beck & Baird, works on public and private housing projects throughout the city of Seattle.
- Commissioner Mark Johnson disclosed that his firm, ESA, works on multi-family development projects.

Ms. Wilson gave an overview of the project, report and next steps. She noted that they are working on a report that looks at a host of measurements from the Comprehensive Plan with regards to affordable housing at a variety of different income levels. She added that the report is very dense and that they are reformatting the entire document to make it more concise and to tell a more compelling story about what is happening with housing affordability in Seattle.

Commissioner Kevin McDonald asked how development capacity is defined and noted that it may make a difference in how people perceive it. Commissioner Roewe added that there are 2200 units permitted in the last year but they are not really meeting targets. He added that capacity and build supply are different things and suggested that there be more explanation. Commissioner Johnson noted that it is fairly complicated and that the City has a formula that looks at what kind of development currently exists compared to what typically gets build in that zone and identifies lots that are likely to be redeveloped.

Ms. Wilson agreed that the City is a built environment, noted that there have been long discussions about this, and suggested that stay focused on the recommendations.

Commissioners Leighton and Johnson reviewed the key findings. They are:

- An increasing portion of households in Seattle are 'severely burdened' by their cost of housing.

- There is an inadequate supply of housing affordable to households with very low income level (at or below 50% of AMI). Almost half of the housing affordable for very low income households consists of subsidized rentals.
- The 'market' is not providing larger housing units that are necessary to house larger families, especially for those with children.
- People of Color are much less likely to own their homes than white, non-Hispanic families. In recent years the disparity in homeownership rates between Whites and some groups of color has grown substantially.
- Data suggest that housing located along arterials are providing a lot of affordable housing options in Seattle. Similarly, housing within urban centers and villages is more affordable due to higher concentrations of rental housing.

Ms. Wilson noted that these were the findings that were brought to the work session a couple of weeks ago. She added that they started to work on the preliminary draft recommendations and tried to capture big ideas.

Vice-Chair Miller asked if these are listed in the report, will they influence the comprehensive plan process. Ms. Wilson responded that there are policies in the Comprehensive plan that most people agree are unachievable and this is well time to influence the update to the Comp Plan.

Ms. Wilson walked the Commission through the draft recommendations. They are:

1. Set Aside Housing for Very Low (0-50% AMI) and Low (50-80% AMI) Income Households
2. Adopt Inclusionary Zoning in Seattle Housing Strategies
3. Connect Housing Affordability with Transportation Affordability
4. Recognize Where Housing is Located Matters
5. Address Ways to Stabilize Housing Costs Over Time
6. Stimulate and Incentivize Housing Production that Addresses the Gaps
7. Seattle's Housing Located Along and Near Arterials Needs More Attention
8. Recognize that Different Housing Products Create More Affordable Housing Diversity and Opportunities

Commissioner Hough Beck noted that, having gone through the process of looking for apartments with her daughter, she wondered how the income restrictions work. Commissioner Johnson replied that they could be subsidized or provided through multi-family tax exemptions (MFTE). Commissioner Hough Beck noted that it is part of what we are talking about so it might be nice to include. She added that we talk a lot about families but we also have a lot of young professionals, singles and seniors that need to be included. Commissioner Johnson responded that the market is really focused on small households (studio/one bedrooms) but is not producing larger homes for families. He added that policies that will help balance that need to be developed. Commissioner Hough Beck stated that, in looking at arterials, are those 100% affordable or do they just have a component. Commissioner Leighton replied that they are looking at it more generally and that it is part of the zoning. She added that older market-rate is more affordable and that housing on arterials would be more affordable due to it less desirable location. Commissioner Bell noted that she is uncomfortable with how this recommendation is phrased.

Commissioner Roewe thanked the HNUC Committee for their hard work. He noted that, regarding #2, he feels that it should be run by ULI or some other real estate entity. He added that the devil is in the details and there is a lot of reaction toward that especially when you have already got MFTE and incentive zoning.

Commissioner Benotto stated that when inclusionary zoning is across the board it levels the playing field. She added that regarding #8 they have talked a lot about SF zones, having more flexibility to duplex or subdivide, and that they might not produce a great abundance but they would still allow more options for single family neighborhoods.

Commissioner Kaplan suggested that in recommendation #4 we might need to make a point of mentioning proximity to employment.

Commissioner McDonald suggested that they maybe tie #3 to #4. He shared his concern regarding having a portion of housing in transit communities be affordable. He added that there are some policy directions that may not be achievable and maybe we should focus our investments in those areas instead of setting aside a target, the mechanisms to achieve it might be better.

Commissioner David Cutler stated that in regards to #6 & #7, we should look at urban design elements within the code, specifically running into this in Yesler Terrace. He added that threshold requirements, back of the sidewalk and front yard, which help provide usable open space has not been addressed in NC or other mixed use zones. He suggested adding language that would look at that in other zones.

Commissioner Chris Persons stated that there needs to be tough decisions made about what transit communities actually are. He added that inclusionary zoning might be an issue to focus time on and get a presentation in order to reach some consensus.

Ms. Wilson stated that this will be discussed further at the next Executive Committee meeting and that she would add the comments from today and email it to the Commissioners for further comments and discussion.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

ADJOURNMENT

Vice Chair Miller adjourned the meeting at 9:00 am.