



City of Seattle
Seattle Planning Commission

Leslie Miller, Chair
Barbara Wilson, Executive Director

SEATTLE PLANNING COMMISSION
MAY 10, 2012
APPROVED MEETING MINUTES

COMMISSIONERS IN ATTENDANCE

Kadie Bell, Josh Brower, Mark Johnson, Bradley Khouri, Kay Knapton, Amalia Leighton, Kevin McDonald, Chris Persons, Morgan Shook, Sarah Snider

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT

Catherine Benotto, David Cutler, Colie Hough-Beck, Jeanne Krikawa, Leslie Miller, Matt Roewe,

COMMISSION STAFF

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

GUESTS

Marshall Foster, Jim Holmes, Brennon Staley, Kris Beaton, Janet Oslund, DPD

IN ATTENDANCE

Eric Hadden

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

Acting-Chair Commissioner Josh Brower called the meeting to attention at 3:04pm.

- **Approve: April 12, 2012 Meeting Minutes**

ACTION: Commissioner Sarah Snider moved to approve the April 12, 2012 minutes. Commissioner Kevin McDonald seconded the motion. The minutes were approved with minor edits, Commissioners Josh Brower, and Sarah Snider abstaining.

- **Director's Report: City Planning**
- Marshall Foster

Mr. Foster reported on projects that DPD has been working on. He noted that, regarding South Lake Union, they are in the final stretch. He added that there was no appeal to the EIS and the goal is to get it passed before Council recesses in August. Mr. Foster stated that it will be a complete community package and that they will probably want to come back to the Commission in late June to share the full depth of the zoning proposal. Mr. Foster noted that there are about 8-9 pending MUPs in that neighborhood and that most have current/future zoning scenarios.

Mr. Foster noted that they are very close to getting legislation on Yesler Terrace to Council. He added that the Planned Action/Master Planned Community is new for everyone and that OSE has been working with them. Mr. Foster stated that they are close to selecting a team for providing district energy and that they have interviewed three other firms in addition to Seattle Steam. He continued that they are providing strong incentives for SHA to provide hydronic heating.

Mr. Foster talked about the Shoreline Master Plan update. He mentioned that they are working with North Seattle industrial and are trying to reconcile DOE's high bar with the practical needs of the long-standing maritime industries.

Mr. Foster reported that there are concerns over new development and character buildings in Pike/Pine. He stated that Dennis Meier is working on those issues. He added that land is trading at a premium and that the need to maximize the density and the economics make the preservation of buildings more challenging. Mr. Foster noted that they are looking at how they prioritize what they would like to see saved and to see how they can get more expansive preservation beyond just landmark buildings.

Mr. Foster noted that, concerning Roosevelt, they are finalizing the selection of a street design consultant. He added that they have a good partnership with the RDG & the RNA. Ms. Wilson noted that the RDG is looking at trying out a couple of three bedroom units and seeing what the market is for those.

Mr. Foster stated that they are at an important transition point with waterfront planning. He noted that the design team is completing concept design over next two months and that the last joint review discussions have been good. Mr. Foster added that the concept should be complete in July and that they will begin the preliminary design and the first phase of projects. Mr. Foster noted that in all likelihood, Council will put a Seawall bond forward and that it is absolutely the critical foundation for everything that they want to do. He continued that Parsons is the new lead on the seawall and that they will work closely with Field Operations.

Mr. Foster mentioned that Gary Johnson has started a new project, 'parklets', which are small parks in on-street parking spaces, like parking day, but all the time and in other cities, they have been successful. He noted that they would do three pilot projects in partnership with small business owners. Mr. Foster added that they have a challenge from the Parks Foundation that if they find the businesses, the Parks Foundation will fund the parklets. Acting Chair Brower asked if it would occupy just one parking stall. Mr. Foster replied that in the beginning just one and they are designed to be temporary, on pallets. Commissioner Shook wondered if they could roll this in with a liquor permit. Mr. Foster responded that Gary did get WSLCB to approve allowing liquor service not just adjacent to the building, but on the curb.

Mr. Foster reported on Neighborhood Planning and noted that it looks like the next phase after Rainier Beach and Broad View/Bitter Lake/Haller Lake will be to begin work on the Central District. He added that there is opportunity to bring value to that corridor.

Commissioner Leighton stated that, regarding preservation of “character structures”, it is a bit concerning because of preserving historical auto on Capitol Hill. Mr. Foster replied that they would talk about it more as the project moves forward. He shared his concern that there would end up being “character buildings” all over the city. Commissioner Shook asked how they define character. Commissioner Persons responded that he believed it was a building that was at least 75 years old.

Mr. Foster noted that he would like to come back to the Commission at some point to talk more about transit communities and suggested maybe an Executive Committee meeting or the Land Use & Transportation Committee meeting.

Commissioner Brower asked about fuel sources for district energy. Mr. Foster answered that it is up to the provider but there is lots of room for flexibility.

Ms. Wilson wondered about the work on the 15th Ave Corridor and Columbia City. Mr. Foster replied that Columbia City was put on hold because folks were not sure if it was timely. He added that 15th Ave is continuing slowly. Mr. Foster stated that SDOT got funding from ST to study high capacity transit from Ballard to downtown and they are working with them to study the alignment options.

Ms. Wilson asked what the timeline is for the street concept work at Roosevelt. Mr. Foster answered that it is about 3-6 months.

Commissioner Kadie Bell stated that she would like to give a little plug for Delridge for a neighborhood update. Mr. Foster responded that they are trying to shift away from traditional updates to neighborhood plans, to identifying right tools to respond to problems and other good things and trying to turn these around faster. He added that Delridge is probably on the next round.

▪ **Chair’s Report**

- Acting-Chair Commissioner Josh Brower

Commissioner Brower reviewed the upcoming meetings for the Commission.

Commissioner Brower stated that the newly mayoral appointed commissioner, Luis Borrero, would be a phenomenal addition to the Commission and would offer a welcome perspective. Ms. Wilson added that, in his work with iSustain, he has organized tours all over the world and has helped elected officials understand sustainable action. She noted that he is the creator of a new tool called DRiVE -Data rich Interactive Virtual Environment – that addresses both, the big picture and specifics via a new way of evaluating development ideas and planning based on a three-dimensional computer model.

Commissioner Brower gave an update on Regulatory Reform and stated that the PLUS committee still does not have consensus regarding allowing commercial uses at ground level in L2/L3 zones but they did approve of the using the Commission’s recommendation about reducing minimum parking requirements. He added that Commission staff is working with DPD, SDOT, and Council Central Staff to determine how best to make this work in the Land Use Code.

Commissioner Brower noted that the Commission is working on recommendations to DPD on the Yesler Terrace Proposal and the draft should be out for review early next week.

- **Briefing: South Lake Union**

- Jim Holmes & Brennon Staley, DPD Planning

Commissioner Brower welcomed Jim and Brennon.

Mr. Holmes gave an overview on South Lake Union noting that the final EIS was released and there were no appeals so they are now working to put forward an ordinance. He added that there would be a public open house on June 14. Mr. Holmes noted that they would still like to make some significant policy decisions. He continued that in addition to housing, they would like to see a community recreational type center, and Thomas Street Green Street. He noted that the Lake Union seaport flight path has been a big issue. Mr. Holmes mentioned that they are trying to encourage variations of podium height – maybe get some plazas and different looking design on the street.

Mr. Holmes went over the plans for pedestrian oriented uses, development standards and floor plates noting that a few blocks could support slightly larger floor plates and that they are looking at how to make it work. Commissioner Shook asked how they get to floor plate size. Mr. Holmes stated that they talked to a number of people and started with what the smallest feasible floor plate size was. He added that they settled on 24K but that it initially was 35K. Mr. Holmes reported on the setbacks, tower spacing and flight path issues. He noted that Vulcan hired a consultant to work on the flight path and that the flight path will trump whatever the zoning map will show. He continued that individual projects would also have to study their potential impacts to the flight path.

Mr. Holmes stated that there will be very little change to Cascade. He added that they are trying to simplify the code and limit commercial uses to the ground floor at the corners. He continued that, in regards to the Lakefront, they are still talking about what to do, as it is a sensitive location.

Mr. Holmes noted that they are continuing to work on the specifics of the height recommendations and he would like two weeks to develop the details.

Commissioner Snider wondered why they would not just align the flight path requirements with zoning. Mr. Holmes noted that there is a cumulative effect that would impact the turbulence and it is possible, as projects are built, that they will need ongoing analysis as the wind impacts will change.

Mr. Staley went over the incentive zoning noting that for residential, 60% goes to affordable housing and for commercial it is 75%. He noted that they are planning on taking the existing program and applying it to SLU. Mr. Staley noted that for the non-housing portion two different approaches are being considered. He stated that with the TIF with rural development the city creates a rural TDR program that the state allows with a limited form of TIF. Mr. Staley noted that, over a period of 25 years, they would get about .75 cents for every dollar. The specific program would be joint program for SLU and downtown and all non-housing benefits would go toward purchasing rural development credits. He added that they would set aside a portion of the general fund to be reinvested. Mr. Staley noted that this would require on-going discussions with the mayor and city council and that they are looking for ways to reduce the cost of the program. He added that this is a complicated program with big benefits for the region. Mr. Staley stated that the alternative would be to take this directly to local projects e.g. on-site open space, implementation of green streets, maybe mid-block connections or purchasing TDR from open space or landmark properties. He added that there is also an option that the city could sell off open space TDR to fund a community center. Mr. Staley noted that they have drafted the legislation so Council has options and that the discussion between these two approaches will play out over the next couple of months.

Commissioner Persons wondered, with the direct investment, if they have estimated the amount of revenue, it would generate. Mr. Staley stated that incentive zoning in general is projected to bring in \$42 million over 25 years on the housing portion and the non-housing is expected to bring in \$22 million. He added that the TDR model would bring in less.

Commissioner Leighton wondered how the money would be used. Mr. Staley replied that, with the TDR/TIF model, 1/3 for green streets, 1/3 for bike/pedestrian/transit and 1/3 for a portion of the community center. Commissioner Leighton asked how the Thomas Green Street would be different. Mr. Holmes replied that it would have wider, more landscaping, and two lanes of traffic with a center turn lane in some places. Mr. Staley added that it is still to be determined where the bike lanes would be.

Commissioner Snider asked if there had been any talk about schools and financing options with the school district. Mr. Staley replied that this money would not but would instead go to fund a community center/recreation center that could co-locate with the school.

Commissioner Johnson wondered if there were any precedent for selling off development rights of Denny Park and Cascade. Mr. Staley responded that it is a tricky subject and noted that the Olympic Sculpture Park is probably the best example of using TDR. Mr. Holmes replied that it expands the supply of community amenities. Commissioner Johnson stated that it is not done in other neighborhood and it seems like it could be a slippery slope.

Commissioner Shook asked about incentive throughout the district. Mr. Staley answered that it is only where there are upzones.

Commissioner Snider wondered if there had been any talk of increasing allowable FAR for family sized housing units. Mr. Holmes stated that there are no FAR limits but they have not specifically talked about other incentives for larger housing units. Commissioner Snider stated that, given the market right now, 90% of what would get built would be studio or one-bedroom units.

Commissioner McDonald asked for clarification on the legal standing of the landing area on Lake Union and wondered why they could not move the landing area. Mr. Holmes replied that they have moved it further north and it is essential public facility. WSDOT advises the City on zoning issues near airports and they have been involved in the SLU planning process. Commissioner McDonald asked how much economic development potential is sacrificed due to height restrictions in the flight path relative to the economic activity generated by the seaport. Mr. Holmes replied that cities consistently lose and that it serves some view protections to the Space Needle. Mr. Staley added that conceptually the development capacity is more than is needed and lower heights will not preclude development in SLU.

Commissioner Person inquired about the incentive zoning and housing portion noting that the HDC favors a performance by developers. Mr. Staley stated that it has been a citywide issue and that the timeline they are dealing with, they cannot deal with it just in SLU. He added that when the program was conceptualized, ratios, fee-in-lieu (pressure outlet – a portion of new development potential) actual costs to the developer were unknown and to look at that properly they need to do the economic analysis. Commissioner Persons stated that in San Francisco, they have a tiered system - you get more if you provide on-site, less if you pay in. He added that it seems that since all the developers are paying that they are probably not charging enough. Mr. Staley agreed but added that they need to look at both those numbers. Commissioner Persons stated that it really pushes developers toward performance. Mr. Staley responded that they are inclusionary and

they do not have the time or the resources to look at it only in SLU but that they are planning to take it on. Commissioner Shook noted that WSDOT is starting a study/economic analysis and he wondered how they should they think about incentive zoning relative to other performance based, fee in lieu. He wondered how the market place could be structured in order to achieve these goals.

Commissioner Johnson asked about use limits and the size of specific uses. Mr. Holmes responded that they are trying to restrict commercial use along 8th Ave and that they want a strong residential character there. He added that Seattle Mixed is a broad zone and that they are trying to limit commercial uses to what would serve residents on that street. Mr. Holmes noted that on Class I Streets there are use requirements.

Diana Canzoneri asked about the timing for incentive zoning. Mr. Staley answered that they are doing the scoping now.

Commissioner Khouri stated that, given the number of projects in the pipeline, it seems like they are missing an important opportunity to develop affordable housing in a neighborhood that really does not have much now. Mr. Staley replied that it does have a larger proportion of affordable housing. Commissioner Khouri stated that it he would like to see things happen incrementally but that is not happening that way in this neighborhood and the loss potential would be unfortunate down the road. Mr. Staley replied that the other, larger issue is that doing it on site results in more moderate-income housing and the fee in lieu goes more toward homeless housing.

Ms. Wilson asked if they could outline what is coming and what the Commission should expect to hear. Mr. Holmes stated that there should be more height and there should be less height. He added that the Commission will probably be lobbied on floor plates and that incentive zoning and housing issues will be the larger ones.

Commissioner Brower asked how the Commission could help them navigate. Mr. Holmes replied that there is an open house on June 14th and that they will hopefully submit legislation to Council the Tuesday after that event.

Commissioner Brower thanked Jim and Brennon for their time.

▪ **Training: Race & Social Justice Initiative**

- Kris Beaton, Janet Oslund & Katie Sheehy, DPD RSJI

Commissioner Brower welcomed Kris, Janet and Katie.

A powerpoint presentation and video was given and can be accessed via the below link.

<http://www.seattle.gov/planningcommission/docs/051012RSJIPresentation.pdf>

Commissioner Leighton stated the she felt the City's get-engaged program did a good job of getting youth involved. She added that there is not much about multi-generational housing reflected in the comprehensive plan and she would like there to be some focus on cultural areas and not just economic. Ms. Sheehy responded that conversation is at the forefront for DPD's Neighborhood Planning team.

Ms. Sheehy stated that City is starting to implement a citywide human resources policy and plan regarding the hiring of interns, including high school students.

Commissioner Bell stated that, in relation to community outreach, there are “squeaky wheels” that always manage to be heard and she wondered if there was anything in long range planning to reach others. Ms. Sheehy stated that there is DPD is working on a department-wide model on how to make community outreach more inclusive. She noted that the Commission has been a strong advocate in support of more inclusive public engagement.

Commissioner Johnson noted that, when he worked for DCLU, there was a complete lack of mentorship of people of color. Ms. Oslund replied that they are looking at different job classifications and mentorship and in the way that they train people. She added that just having a degree does not necessarily mean that you will be a good planner.

Ms. Beaton stated that DPD has amazing managers but that in a several places, positions are still dominated by white males. She added that it is complicated and that DPD is predominantly white.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Miller adjourned the meeting at 5:30 pm.