



City of Seattle Seattle Planning Commission

David Cutler, Chair
Barbara Wilson, Executive Director

SEATTLE PLANNING COMMISSION APRIL 25, 2013 APPROVED MEETING MINUTES

COMMISSIONERS IN ATTENDANCE

Vice-Chair Amalia Leighton, Catherine Benotto, Luis Borrero, Mark Johnson, Bradley Khouri, Jeanne Krikawa, Kevin McDonald, Chris Persons,

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT

David Cutler, Kadie Bell, Josh Brower, Colie Hough-Beck, Matt Roewe, Morgan Shook

COMMISSION STAFF

Barbara Wilson-Executive Director, Diana Canzoneri-Senior Analyst, Robin Magonegil-Administrative Staff Assistant

GUESTS

Patrice Carroll, Geoff Wentlandt, DPD

IN ATTENDANCE

Michael James, SDOT; Sara Belz, 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

- **Approve: March 14 & March 28, 2013 Meeting Minutes**

Commissioner Kevin McDonald moved to approve the March 14, 2013 minutes. Commissioner Mark Johnson seconded the motion. The minutes were approved with Commissioner Amalia Leighton abstaining.

Commissioner Mark Johnson moved to approve the March 28, 2013 minutes. Commissioner Catherine Benotto seconded the motion. The minutes were approved with Commissioner Bradley Khouri abstaining.

▪ **Chair's Report & Updates**

- Vice-Chair Amalia Leighton

Vice-Chair Leighton went over the upcoming meetings and events noting that at the next Executive Committee meeting they would be joined by Marshall Foster and other staff working on the Comp Plan Update.

Vice-Chair Leighton reported on the new commissioners that have been selected and stated that they will be confirmed on May 22. The new commissioners are Grace Kim, Maggie Wykowski, Keely Brown, Tim Parham, and Marj Press.

Vice-Chair Leighton mentioned the planning analyst position and that the job closes next Tuesday. She added that there has already been over 100 applicants and that they hoped to get the hiring process wrapped up quickly and have the new staff member on by June.

Vice-Chair Leighton stated that the Transit Communities cleared a major hurdle when it passed out of the PLUS committee and that it is headed to Full Council for a vote soon. She added that the SLU rezone has also passed out of committee and will move to the Full Council.

▪ **Approve: Multifamily Tax Exemption Letter (MFTE)**

Commissioner Mark Johnson moved to approve the MFTE letter. Commissioner Catherine Benotto seconded the motion. The letter was approved.

- **Briefing: Ballard to Interbay Land Use Corridor Study**
– Patrice Carroll, Geoffrey Wentlandt, DPD staff

Vice-Chair Leighton called for any disclosures and/or recusals.

DISCLOSURES & RECUSALS:

- Commissioner Amalia Leighton disclosed that her firm, SvR Design, works on affordable housing projects throughout the city that might be affected.
- Commissioner Catherine Benotto disclosed that her firm, Weber Thompson, designs projects and advises clients on development projects throughout the city that might be affected.
- Commissioner Bradley Khouri disclosed that his firm, b9 Architects, works on projects throughout the city and might be affected.

Vice-Chair Leighton welcomed Patrice Carroll and Geoffrey Wentlandt from DPD.

The presentation that Ms. Carroll and Mr. Wentlandt presented can be found via the link below.

http://www.seattle.gov/planningcommission/docs/interbay_20130429.pdf

Commissioner Krikawa asked how many acres were in the study area. Mr. Wentlandt answered that it was 188 acres. Ms. Carroll added that it was roughly 1/3 of the Ballard Interbay Northend Manufacturing & Industrial Center (BINMIC) area.

Commissioner Khouri asked whether the increase in property values in the study area was representative of what was occurring more generally in industrial lands located in Seattle. Ms. Carroll agreed that this would be interesting to know and a brief discussion followed about how the King County Department of Assessments determines valuations. There was a question raised about whether King County is fully considering use limits on industrial lands.

Commissioner Johnson noted that they are required to base valuations on market value assuming the “highest” and “best use,” as legally defined. He added that industrial land used to be undervalued but starting in the 1990s, there has been a great deal of speculative buying of industrial lands. Commissioner Johnson stated that King County has responded by increasing the assessed value of the land.

Ms. Carroll mentioned that some “micro-permitting” is starting to occur. She explained that this refers to someone obtaining multiple permits for smaller adjacent development projects in order to avoid the limits on sizes of uses even though the project appears to be part of the same overall development project. Commissioner Khouri wondered if there was a required waiting period between the time a parcel is subdivided and when the developer could start the project on the subdivided land. He suggested that this waiting period might be one way to make it less attractive to use this loophole.

Ms. Wilson provided some background on the Commission’s past work regarding industrial lands issues. She noted that the Commission had previously raised the same kind of concern regarding the limited range of zoning options the City applies to industrial lands. Ms. Wilson added that the Commission has been concerned about the increasing pressures non-industrial markets are placing on industrial issues and has found that changing General Industrial (IG) to Industrial Commercial (IC) often leads to office being the main type of new development. Ms. Wilson continued that a few years ago, SPC suggested retooling Industrial Buffer (IB) zoning to allow for better pedestrian connections and less parking. She added that a new zoning tool that better encourages production-distribution-repair (PDR) uses might be an idea that the Commission could support. Commissioner Johnson agreed, stating that a change to IC would make it much harder for small production businesses, which have been doing well by adapting and using affordable space in old buildings.

Commissioner Johnson noted that in the past the Port of Seattle has been interested in improving access to their property. He asked if this issue has come up in the current study. Ms. Carroll replied that she has not heard this from the Port.

Commissioners McDonald and Khouri commented on DPD’s preliminary recommendations for the Armory Area. Commissioner McDonald voiced concern about rezoning the strip along 15th in advance of planning for the Armory site. He suggested that the City wait to rezone the strip along 15th so as not to preclude options for a potential master plan, which he suggested might ideally include some of the land adjacent to the Armory. Ms. Carroll indicated that there is little land along that corridor that has yet to be redeveloped. Commissioner Khouri expressed a similar concern, noting that it may still be best to defer rezoning the land along 15th Ave. until the planning gets underway for the Armory site. He added that the Armory is a large site that represents a significant opportunity worthy of a big picture planning perspective.

Chair Cutler thanked Patrice and Geoff for their time.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Cutler adjourned the meeting at 9:02 am.