



City of Seattle

Seattle Planning Commission

Michael Austin, Chair

Vanessa Murdock, Executive Director

SEATTLE PLANNING COMMISSION

Thursday, April 25, 2019

Approved Meeting Minutes

Commissioners Present: Michael Austin, David Goldberg, Veronica Guenther, Grace Kim, Rick Mohler, Tim Parham, Marj Press, Kelly Rider, Julio Sanchez, Amy Shumann, Lauren Squires, Patti Wilma

Commissioners Absent: Sandra Fried, Jamie Stroble

Commission Staff: Vanessa Murdock, Executive Director; John Hoey, Senior Policy Analyst; Robin Magonegil, Commission Coordinator

Guests: Geoff Wentlandt, Office of Planning and Community Development; Cindi Barker; Kelsey Hamlin

Seattle Planning Commission meeting minutes are not an exact transcript and represent key points and the basis of discussion.

Referenced Documents discussed at the meeting can be viewed here:

<http://www.seattle.gov/planningcommission/when-we-meet/minutes-and-agendas>

Chair's Report & Minutes Approval

Chair Michael Austin called the meeting to order at 7:35 am and announced several upcoming Commission meetings.

ACTION: Commissioner David Goldberg moved to approve the April 11, 2019 meeting minutes. Commissioner Rick Mohler seconded the motion. The motion to approve the minutes passed. Commissioners Marj Press, Lauren Squires, and Patti Wilma abstained.

Announcements

Vanessa Murdock, Seattle Planning Commission Executive Director, announced several upcoming community events. Commissioners Grace Kim and Rick Mohler will be presenting the Neighborhoods for All report at the AIA Urban Design Forum on Thursday April 25th at 5:30 pm. Other events include a Seattle Equity Summit panel, several 130th/145th community planning events, a lecture by John Rahaim, Planning Director for the City and County of San Francisco, and an Interbay Project advisory committee meeting. Executive Director Murdock thanked Commissioners Michael Austin and Julio Sanchez for

attending a recent mock Commission meeting held by Puget Sound Sage for the Community Leadership Institute.

Discussion: Neighborhoods for All Open House Community Events

If you would like to view the Neighborhoods for All Open House Events presentation, it is included in the supporting documents found in the minutes section of our website.

Executive Director Murdock discussed the upcoming Neighborhoods for All (NFA) community events on April 27 and May 4. Commissioners had the opportunity to review the Conversation Guide that will be distributed to event attendees and the poster boards that will be used during the events. Attendees will be assigned to small groups and the Commissioners will serve as facilitators.

Commission Discussion

- Commissioners discussed the “data walk” format that will be used at the open house events. A data walk identifies data that is inherently subjective and allows members of the community to share their perspectives. Commissioners were encouraged to lead the small groups through the poster boards and provide the attendees with an opportunity to talk about their observations. Executive Director Murdock stated all the data sources are listed on the boards. Commissioners can provide perspective on why the data is relevant.
- Commissioners expressed concern that they will be asked to interpret the data. Commissioners were encouraged to ask the attendees how they are interpreting and responding to the data. If an attendee feels that there is something missing, that is important to identify.
- Commissioners asked about the desired outcomes of the open house events. Executive Director Murdock stated these events are an opportunity to share the Commission’s observations. Seattle is not the only city facing these challenges. Based on feedback at the events, the Commission will be able to identify which strategies resonate with participants.
- Commissioners discussed how feedback will be captured. Executive Director Murdock encouraged the Commissioners to share comments and observations from their small group discussions. Commissioners suggested taking notes on flip charts during the small group discussions. Commissioners noted the importance of being able to tell attendees what will be done with the information gathered during these events.

Update: Mandatory Housing Affordability Next Steps and Companion Resolution

Geoff Wentlandt, Office of Planning and Community Development

Mr. Wentlandt provided a copy of the Mandatory Housing Affordability (MHA) Companion Resolution (#31870) to all Commissioners and reviewed several key sections. He highlighted a section that states the MHA legislation cannot solve all problems related to displacement. He reviewed another section of the resolution that summarizes new planning initiatives and monitoring efforts to review the effectiveness of the MHA legislation. He stated that the Office of Planning and Community Development (OPCD) would be involved in those efforts. Mr. Wentlandt reviewed another section of the companion resolution about new historic districts in the Ravenna/Cowen and Mt. Baker neighborhoods where MHA will not apply. He discussed the challenges associated with infill development in areas with a historic context. The resolution prioritizes identifying historic and cultural

resources that are determined to be worth preserving. The Department of Neighborhoods (DON) will lead this effort. Historic and cultural resources inventories could lead to nominations for new historic districts. OPCD will look at opportunities for integrating compatible infill with development standards and design guidelines.

Commission Discussion

- Commissioners stated the historic preservation section of the companion resolution is reminiscent of the Conservation District concept from several years ago. There is general interest in preserving historic structures. Commissioners suggested allowing for greater Floor Area Ratios in historic structures to incentivize greater density.
- Commissioners expressed concern with historic preservation being used as a stalling tactic in well-resourced communities that do not want change. Mr. Wentlandt stated the City will take a proactive approach to equity. DON will hire culturally competent consultants with knowledge of communities that have not been represented by traditional historic preservation efforts. Commissioners expressed interest in inviting DON to brief them on this effort.
- Commissioners expressed support for neighborhoods being able to celebrate/establish cultural communities. Commissioners asked if the historic preservation section of the companion resolution could be used as a way to retroactively remove MHA from certain neighborhoods. Mr. Wentlandt stated that would be difficult to do. Some historic district establishment processes are under state and federal jurisdictions. Commissioners stated the City can work to inform those external agencies of the City's goals as a community. Commissioners encouraged the City to look at historic preservation criteria and determine if there are opportunities to strengthen the criteria. Commissioners suggested the expanded use of tools such as transfer of development rights, especially for unreinforced masonry structures.
- Commissioners stated the City should take a more proactive, stronger stance to make sure this section of the companion resolution is not undermining the goals of MHA. Mr. Wentlandt stated this resolution is not written in stone. It is a City Council resolution. The Mayor will prepare an Executive Order directing City staff what parts of the resolution to implement and how to do so.
- Commissioners asked how the companion resolution will determine priorities for community planning and designation of any new urban villages. Mr. Wentlandt stated OPCD put out a data driven report in 2018 that established where future community planning efforts will be prioritized.
- Commissioners expressed concern with the tenant relocation section of the companion resolution. The current ordinance makes it difficult for groups of renters (unrelated adults) to divide the lump sum they would receive as part of a tenant relocation package.
- Commissioners noted that Section 6 of the companion resolution is focused on re-naming single-family zoning and asked for more information on the process. Mr. Wentlandt stated that a clear way to get that process started would be through a Comprehensive Plan Amendment. The Planning Commission is in support of re-naming single-family zoning.
- Commissioners noted that historic and cultural preservation considerations were not considered when Black businesses in the Central District were threatened. Race and social equity should be a factor in considering historic and cultural preservation.
- Commissioners commented on a section of the companion resolution focused on ensuring MHA in-lieu funds are invested in those neighborhoods where the fees are generated. Mr. Wentlandt stated

the Office of Housing balances where affordable housing resources are invested using five criteria. One of the criteria is where the fees were generated.

- Commissioners asked for more information about how OPCD is implementing the MHA legislation. Mr. Wentlandt stated the first step is cleaning up a large piece of legislation. Several issues were identified but not studied in the EIS, mostly related to specific parcels. These will be addressed in the next year. Commissioners asked for clarification on where these issues originated. Mr. Wentlandt stated they are a mix of ideas from both property owners and City Council members.

Commissioners thanked Mr. Wentlandt for his briefing.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:58 am.