



# City of Seattle Seattle Planning Commission

Jerry Finrow, Chair  
Barbara Wilson, Executive Director

## SEATTLE PLANNING COMMISSION APRIL 26, 2007 APPROVED MEETING MINUTES

### Commissioners in Attendance

Vice-Chair Tony To, Chris Fiori, Marshall Foster, Colie Hough-Beck, Mark Johnson, Martin Kaplan, Kay Knapton, Amalia Leighton, Kevin McDonald, Kirsten Pennington, Steve Sheehy

### Commissioners Absent

Jerry Finrow – Chair, Linda Amato, Mahlon Clements, Tom Eanes, M. Michelle Mattox

### Commission Staff

Barbara Wilson-Director, Casey Mills, Planning Analyst, Robin Magonegil-Administrative Specialist

### Guests

Bob Morgan, Council Central Staff; Neil Powers, Councilmember Peter Steinbrueck's Legislative Aide

### In Attendance

Rebecca Herzfeld, Council Central Staff; Mark Troxel, DPD; Dan Stonington

*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 by Vice-Chair Tony To.

## COMMISSION BUSINESS

### ▪ **Approve April 12, 2007 Minutes**

Vice-Chair Tony To called for the approval of the April 12, 2007 minutes.

Ms. Wilson noted that the draft April 12 minutes were sent out late to Commissioners and suggested that if people had not time to adequately review them then the Commission could postpone the review until the next meeting. Commissioner Martin Kaplan called into question a statement in the minutes made by Jim Holmes that '125' is consistent with the function of the zone' in the Dravus area. Commissioner Clements stated he did not think Mr. Holmes supported that claim. Director Barbara Wilson responded that she would check with Mr. Holmes and if needed amend the minutes.

**ACTION: Commissioner Kay Knapton moved that the approval of the minutes be postponed until the next meeting to allow time for the Commissioners to review the minutes more extensively. Commissioner Mark Johnson seconded the motion. The motion to postpone was approved. Commissioner Martin Kaplan abstained.**

▪ **Chairs Report**

Vice-Chair To reviewed the upcoming meetings and events. He noted that Friday, April 27 the Seattle City Council will hold A Brown Bag Forum, titled Making Development Benefit All. He noted that it will be held at City Hall up on the second floor in Council Chambers, from 12:00 – 1:30 p.m.

Vice-Chair To noted several of the upcoming Commission meetings and reminded the Commissioners that the Annual Retreat is on May 17th at Fisherman’s Terminal. He added that all Commissioners should attend. Vice-Chair To stated that the Land Use and Transportation Committee meeting that is scheduled for that day will be rescheduled.

Vice-Chair To stated that the fourth and final Industrial Lands Strategy Workshop Series, “Alternatives for Moving Forward”, will be Thursday, May 31, 4:30-6:30 p.m. in the Bertha Landes Room. He added that all Commissioners are encouraged to attend. Vice-Chair To noted that the Commission will present its observations and recommendations from the stakeholder involvement process and that DPD will unveil their preliminary recommendations for comment.

Vice-Chair To stated that in June the Commission will elect new officers for the position of Chair, Vice Chair, and Chairs of the HNUC and LUT committees. He added that the Commission will also elect 2 at-large board members to sit on the Executive Committee, and that the Commission needs to appoint a Nominations Committee. Vice-Chair To noted that the role of the nominations committee is to get nominations for the various positions and see who is interested in holding the various positions. He added that they will present a slate of candidates in late June for consideration and that the Commission needs a handful of Commissioners to volunteer for the Nominations Committee. Commissioners Steve Sheehy, Kevin McDonald and Mark Johnson all volunteered for the Nominations Committee.

Vice-Chair To stated that Ms. Wilson has hired a new work study intern, Andrea Clinkscales, who will be working with the Commission staff through the summer and possibly into next year as well. He noted that Andrea is a first year master’s student in the University Of Washington Urban Planning School and that she is currently only working 10 hours a week but will be fulltime this summer. Vice-Chair To stated that she is involved in 2 projects; one is working on putting together the Detached ADU guidebook and she is assisting staff in a research project gathering information about the percentage of land that is zoned for multifamily in comparison to single family. Vice-Chair To mentioned that this summer Andrea will likely get more involved in the neighborhood planning work that John Rahaim mentioned at the last meeting. He noted that the Commission is happy to have her join our staff for at least the next six months.

Vice-Chair To asked the Commissioners who attended the APA conference in Philadelphia to share what they learned or to talk about any interesting sessions or mobile workshops.

Ms. Wilson stated that the most interesting workshop she went to involved the demise of industrial lands, which she felt should have been called the myth of the demise of industrial lands. She added that there were speakers from Minneapolis, Los Angeles, and Chicago, all of which are facing similar problems to Seattle and that there are a lot of pressures to convert and they are all trying to come up with some strategies to maintain it.

Commissioner Amalia Leighton stated that she learned Seattle is at the forefront on a lot of planning issues and was consistently used as an example by other cities. She added that the fact that Seattle even has neighborhood plans is a major achievement compared to many other cities.

Commissioner Kevin McDonald stated that the application of LEED neighborhood development standards have already been achieved in neighborhoods like South Lake Union and others, so it's a relatively low bar for Seattle. He added that to make it more cutting edge to places like Seattle, the standards could be raised much higher.

## **COMMISSION DISCUSSION**

### **▪ Industrial Lands Strategy Stakeholder Involvement - Discussion: What have we learned?**

Vice-Chair To stated that the Commission should take this time as an opportunity to debrief and discuss what they had learned so far from the Industrial Lands Strategy, and to have the Commissioners share their preliminary observations. He added that the Commission will be presenting its preliminary observations at workshop #4 on May 31st and then finalizing a document that highlights the key themes and observations from the stakeholder involvement series and includes the Commission's recommendations.

Vice-Chair To called for any disclosures or recusals.

**Recusal & Disclosures: Commissioner Mark Johnson disclosed that his firm, ESA Adolfsen, had done some of the analysis of users in industrial lands. Commissioner Colie Hough-Beck disclosed that the Port was one of her clients.**

Commissioner Hough-Beck summarized what she heard from stakeholders at the first 3 workshops. Many stakeholders stated there is a strong need for infrastructure in industrial lands for the mobility of freight and a desire to improve this mobility. She added that there were incompatibilities with the transportation needs and aesthetics, for example often street trees don't work and roads must be very wide for freight mobility. She also stated that there needs to be a clearer definition and understanding of what industrial uses are and what the different types of uses are, especially concerning light industrial. Commissioner Hough-Beck continued that for example, there's questions concerning whether life sciences uses are light industrial and that these types of uses, in addition, bring with them needs that could be incompatible with industrial uses, such as gyms and restaurants. She noted that, in terms of economics, it's getting more and more expensive for businesses to locate there and that there are questions about whether more use could be gotten out of land by increasing the density and creating multistory buildings for industrial uses. Commissioner Hough-Beck added that there is a lot of talk about compatibility and adjacency issues.

Commissioner Kay Knapton stated that she agreed with Commissioner Hough-Beck's summary, and added that there are really divisive issues between those who want to see non industrial development and changes to the land and those that want to protect and preserve the land for industrial uses that can not go into other areas in the City. Commissioner Knapton noted that there might be a need for more discreet types of zoning so people could take advantage of opportunities. She added that there is a need in the industrial areas for wider streets.

Commissioner Kaplan stated that there appeared to be some tension between property owners that aren't very close to the Port and the Port. He noted that the property owners believe that the Port wants to protect the whole area for growth of the Port. Commissioner Kaplan noted that we have to ask, what does the Port need now and in the future?

Commissioner Johnson stated there seem to be three main players – the operating businesses, the land owners, and the Port players, and that they all are jockeying for position. He added that the decisions about the zoning in industrial lands will be based largely on their input. Commissioner Johnson stated that the owners stand to benefit tremendously economically if land is rezoned but it means the end of the businesses there. He noted that the Port wants to maintain land around them that doesn't necessarily need to be owned by the Port but should at least utilize the Port's operation. Commissioner Johnson feels that we should examine what the Port will look like in the future. He added that there has been a very large paradigm shift in the industrial areas and that they used to be created to separate uses, such as big, nasty industry from residential uses but now Seattle doesn't have much of those industrial uses that are considered traditional dirty industrial, so the conflicts come down to noise, pollution and traffic. Commissioner Johnson stated that he believes we need to think about whether certain new uses would push out current uses and that the question is, have we solved the older problems of conflict of uses to allow new types of uses move in?

Vice-Chair To stated that he was glad to see in the first event that it's an issue for other cities as well and that the opportunity for linking jobs and housing, He stated that industrial jobs can feed workforce housing even in an area where housing is at a very high cost.

Commissioner Kaplan stated he had a compelling map that showed all the government owned land north of Spokane Street, which weren't taken into account when DPD developed the percentage of land zoned industrial. He noted that in terms of economics, we should consider that the WOSCA site sold for \$175 a square foot and that industry can't come in unless land costs between \$20 and \$50 a square foot. Commissioner Kaplan noted that Robb Stack of Stack Steel stated that they don't produce steel anymore and that they employ about 60 people but if they could put several stories of biotech on their property, they could employ 500 to 1,000 people. Commissioner Kaplan noted that this would have beneficial effects on Seattle's tax base, job numbers, and other indicators.

Ms. Wilson asked the Commission what questions they felt have been left unanswered. She asked what were some of the public policy rationales for rezoning the industrial land?

Commissioner Chris Fiori asked if Seattle is missing an opportunity that couldn't happen anywhere else besides the industrial areas, such as an Amgen that needs 30 to 40 acres to work, or are we cannibalizing what we already have.

Commissioner Marshall Foster stated that the Commission could push harder for more analysis on the value of areas within individual zones and their value in terms of the family wage jobs they provide. He

noted that Portland has a sanctuary strategy for certain areas, where no retail over 3,000 square feet can be built, so there are certain ways we can get more restrictive.

Commissioner Hough-Beck stated that she believes that there is a strong need for a definition of industrial, especially with regard to new technologies.

Commissioner Kaplan asked what the new industry would be for Seattle, since businesses in the City are obviously not going to be steel manufacturers or similar uses.

Commissioner Johnson stated that the City could go from separating uses to building a place where family jobs can be protected and that this could be achieved through other uses than the current definition of industrial uses. He added that you could convert the land to well paying jobs and not service jobs. Commissioner Johnson noted that, if we bring more new people in, they might complain. He stated he took exception to people stating that heavy industries were no longer feasible in Seattle. Commissioner Johnson added that, for example, there is a business in Seattle that builds cranes that are used across the world and the city should consider that a treasure and cherish those types of businesses.

Commissioner Fiori agreed. He stated that he was always reading about other cities and they can sometimes move around certain assets they have. He noted that Seattle can't move around it's assets near the port and rail lines and that people don't often factor in the value of these assets. Commissioner Fiori noted that while people talk about the value of a new light rail station, they sometimes don't mention that the port and rail lines are multibillion dollar assets in and of themselves.

Ms. Wilson stated that Commission and DPD staff will write up notes from the public events and pull out major themes and observations from the stakeholder process and with the Commission develop some recommendations for moving forward.

Vice-Chair To noted that the events have really shown the value of the Commission as facilitators of meetings, and thanked Commissioners Fiori, Amato, Clements and Finrow for hosting these events.

- **2007 Comprehensive Plan Urban Sustainability Goals and other Amendments**
  - **Neil Powers, Legislative Aide to Councilmember Peter Steinbrueck**
  - **Bob Morgan, City Council Central Staff**

Vice-Chair To called for any disclosures or recusals. There were none.

Neil Powers stated that Councilmember Steinbrueck had been talking to the community about indicators for sustainability for quite some time. He added that, a couple years ago, the City agreed to start monitoring their progress towards sustainability as part of the 2004 Comp Plan amendment process but that had yet to happen. Mr. Powers noted that Councilmember Steinbrueck's recently proposed amendments seek to revisit the indicator concept and push it a little harder and that they hope to identify measures and incorporate them into the goals of the Comp Plan.

Bob Morgan stated that the current language is all essentially place holding information and that City Council will work on the language in the next few months concerning how to actually measure the suggested indicators.

Mr. Morgan walked through the various proposed indicators, these indicators include: Climate Change goals, which will adopt a more aggressive standard than the Kyoto Protocol goals and the adoption of the American Institute of Architects and U.S. Conference of Mayors '203 Challenge'; a green canopy and impervious surfaces metric, a zero waste metric, which is already on the Council's work plan; a reduced automobile dependency metric, including commute trip reduction numbers; a affordability metric, including wages and how they relate to cost of living; a healthy Seattle metric, including the number of healthy years people are living; heritage policies metric, including historic preservation numbers; pedestrian safety metric; public safety metric; and complete streets metric.

Mr. Morgan added that Councilmember Conlin has also added some metrics, no net increase in water and energy consumption metrics and natural drainage/preservation of the City's watershed metrics. Mr. Morgan stated that Councilmember Steinbrueck has also introduced amendments regarding the Colman Dock (which is essentially a place holder until decisions are made about the site at the state level) and the Highline Annexation. He added that Councilmember McIver has also introduced an amendment that would rezone the Dearborn site back to Industrial.

Ms. Wilson stated that the Council will make their final decision regarding the thresholds for this year's Comp Plan amendments on May 14<sup>th</sup> City Council meeting.

Mr. Morgan said that, during the next few months, Council staff would be working with City staff on how to identify the appropriate measures for each metric. He added that the Office of Sustainability and Environment has done a lot on these issues and while they were requested to provide metrics, they had not done so. Mr. Morgan noted that City Council plans on using existing resources to accomplish the measurements.

Commissioner Leighton stated that she was excited to see these metrics put out there and to have policy support for what the City is doing already.

Commissioner Fiori noted that he was confused about the metric on affordability. He added that it is often a regional issue and hard to effect on the city level and as wages go up so do housing costs.

Mr. Powers stated that the City knows it is behind the curve in terms of housing affordability but there are many other factors that it should look at when discerning if the city is an affordable place.

Commissioner McDonald stated that pedestrian safety and public safety were interesting to him. He questioned whether there would be examination of a gap in the policies the city had, or a gap in the implementation of those policies.

Commissioner Kaplan questioned whether the pedestrian safety Comp Plan amendment passed last year would be measured under Councilmember Steinbrueck's new amendment, concerning how successful it had been. Commissioner Kaplan also wondered how these amendments would ultimately filter down to people like architects, who must then implement these policies.

Commissioner Pennington suggested that there be a link between infrastructure and the number of healthy years lived – for example, the level of pedestrian safety in the city could contribute to the number of healthy years lived. She added that many of the proposed metrics relate to public infrastructure and that it seems the measurements could be used to prioritize where city funds go towards which would be an good implementation piece to add to the effort.

Commissioner Fiori noted that there seemed to be a conflict between the City and Washington Ferries about the City's goal of prioritizing pedestrians over car travel. He added that, if the City provided some funding to help offset the capital costs, then maybe Washington Ferries wouldn't need to rely so much on cross subsidies provided by building a mixed use project there and focus instead on getting more walk-on passengers for the ferries.

Commissioner McDonald noted that, when considering pedestrian safety, mobility and access should be a vital part of that measurement.

Commissioner Johnson noted that ferry travel is a romanticized form of commuting and that it causes more pollution than driving, even for walk-on commuters.

Commissioner Foster noted that, concerning the metric for auto dependency, the City Council should consider framing it more in terms of improving transit capacity, reliability, and coverage, rather than framing it in terms of reducing auto use. He added that in terms of the Healthy Seattle metric, there is a lot of literature recently published about public health, and it should be consulting when developing this metric. Commissioner Foster noted that New York Mayor Bloomberg's recent proposal for his city is exciting and touches on a lot of the goals in Councilmember Steinbrueck's proposal. He continued that an important aspect of Bloomberg's effort was his linking of policy goals with implementation and that the City should be realistic about what it can invest in and learn from New York.

Commissioner Kaplan stated that many on the Commission have had concerns about the state pursuing a large structure on Colman Dock. He noted that Councilmember Steinbrueck has been the lead on raising concerns about this issue. Commissioner Kaplan asked if the City Council will continue to raise concerns about this issue after Councilmember Steinbrueck's departure? Mr. Powers answered that he believed that they would.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

There was no public comment.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

Vice-Chair To adjourned the meeting at 9:03 am.