



## City of Seattle

Seattle Planning Commission

Grace Kim, Chair

Valerie Kinast, Interim Executive Director

### SEATTLE PLANNING COMMISSION

Thursday, April 13, 2017

Approved Meeting Minutes

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Commissioners Present: Michael Austin, Keiko Budech, Sandra Fried, Kara Martin, Jake McKinstry, Tim Parham, Marj Press, Julio Sanchez, Jamie Stroble, Lauren Squires, Patti Wilma

Commissioners Absent: Eileen Canola, David Goldberg, David Shelton

Commission Staff: Valerie Kinast, Interim Executive Director; Katy Haima, Planning Analyst; John Hoey, Senior Policy Analyst

Guests: Sam Assefa and Sara Maxana, Office of Planning and Community Development; Andres Arjona; Cindi Barker; Carson Bowlin; Spencer Williams;

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

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Referenced Documents discussed at the meeting can be viewed here:

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

#### Chair's Report

Chair Grace Kim called the meeting to order at 3:02 pm. She provided an overview of the meeting agenda and upcoming Commission meetings.

#### Minutes Approval

Chair Kim asked for a motion to approve the draft minutes from the March 23rd meeting.

**ACTION: Commissioner Patti Wilma moved to approve the March 23rd meeting minutes. Commissioner Sandra Fried seconded the motion. The motion to approve the minutes passed.**

#### Announcements

Chair Kim made several announcements and reminded the Commissioners of several upcoming community events.

- Lauren Craig has resigned from the Planning Commission. The opening will be advertised and applications will be accepted to fill her position.
- Executive Director Vanessa Murdock will be returning on April 19<sup>th</sup> after a 10-month sabbatical.
- The City Council unanimously passed the Downtown and South Lake Union rezone legislation, including new Mandatory Housing Affordability (MHA) regulations.
- The Uptown Rezone Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) has been appealed. More information will be provided on next steps and schedule for that as soon as it is available.
- Meetings with City Council members are being scheduled to discuss the 2016 Annual Report and the Commission's preliminary MHA recommendations. Chair Kim and Commission staff met with Councilmember Burgess last week.

## **Briefing: Office of Planning and Community Development and HALA Update**

Sam Assefa, Director of the Office of Planning and Community Development (OPCD) and Sara Maxana, HALA Program Manager, briefed the Commission on ongoing OPCD work and HALA updates.

If you would like to view the Office of Planning and Community Development presentation, it is included in the supporting documents found in the minutes' section of our website.

Mr. Assefa provided an overview of OPCD's completed 2016-2017 projects and major projects in 2017-2018. He also discussed a new approach for determining community planning priorities that prioritizes historically disadvantaged communities and those at risk for residential, economic and cultural displacement. This approach coordinates planning and capital investments in support of a more equitable city. Mr. Assefa highlighted other ongoing planning efforts, including regional and comprehensive planning, population and demographics analysis, and GIS analysis, as well as community engagement.

Ms. Maxana discussed OPCD's ongoing HALA work, focusing most of her comments on the MHA rezones. The recently passed University District, Downtown, and South Lake Union MHA rezones will provide for approximately 3000 affordable units. The Chinatown/International District rezone will go to the City Council's Planning, Land Use, and Zoning Committee soon. The 23<sup>rd</sup> Avenue "nodes" rezone will likely be introduced sometime this summer. As mentioned during announcements, the Uptown rezone FEIS has been appealed and will likely have a decision on its next steps in July. The citywide MHA rezones will likely be introduced this fall.

### *Commission Discussion*

- The Commissioners asked about the status of the proposed displacement analysis. Mr. Assefa stated that displacement is one of the key criteria for OPCD's new approach to planning and capital investment coordination. Ms. Maxana commented that physical displacement is easier to model than economic displacement. Any proposed mitigation strategies will be related to economic displacement.
- The Commissioners noted that the Downtown/South Lake Union MHA rezone included an amendment to require family-sized housing and asked if OPCD expected that requirement to be replicated in other MHA rezones. Ms. Maxana replied by acknowledging that there is a need to promote family-sized housing, but this is a difficult requirement to regulate.
- The Commissioners shared their concern that future MHA rezones might reduce height and/or capacity increases or urban village boundary expansions in response to community feedback. Ms. Maxana replied by saying that OPCD is considering two approaches – 1) universal application of the MHA principles, or 2) concentrating growth in areas of high access to opportunity and low risk of displacement.
- The Commissioners asked about the status of the "L" (livability) in HALA. Ms. Maxana stated that OPCD is working on a growth and livability report that will address many different aspects of livability. Other ongoing planning work that contributes to livability include tenant protection laws, tree canopy regulations, and traffic and parking studies.
- The Commissioners expressed their interest in leveraging in-lieu payment money generated by MHA to build a variety of housing choices, including townhouses, row houses, etc. They also expressed interest in pursuing additional opportunities for homeownership by low-income families. The Commissioners commented that MHA should also reduce permitting obstacles for developers.
- The Commissioners asked about the results of community outreach efforts in single-family neighborhoods. Ms. Maxana stated that the Department of Neighborhoods (DON) coordinated outreach activities that included knocking on 11,000 doors in urban villages and proposed expansion areas. These activities resulted in 1,400 individual contacts and discussions. OPCD and DON will continue their community engagement efforts with a series of different approaches. The results of these efforts will be summarized in the MHA rezone Draft EIS.

## **Discussion: Mandatory Housing Affordability Recommendations Letter**

Katy Haima, Planning Commission staff, led a discussion on the contents of an upcoming letter from the Commission with recommendations on the MHA rezones.

If you would like to view the presentation on the Mandatory Housing Affordability Recommendations Letter, it is included in the supporting documents found in the minutes' section of our website.

### *Commission Discussion*

- MHA should minimize displacement and allow residents to stay in their homes. Combine or pair recommendation #1 and #5 to recognize their complementary goals to reduce displacement.
- Ensure affordable family-sized housing can be achieved through the MHA rezones.
- Recognize the importance of grocery stores and commercial centers in recommendation #2.
- Explicitly state the need for increased density, rather than "housing opportunities" in recommendation #3. Recognize the importance of nodes when recommending increasing density around various public investments such as schools, parks, community centers, transit hubs, etc.
- Include specific examples of housing opportunities in medium-density residential areas in recommendation #4.
- Appreciate seeing air quality mentioned in #4. Air quality is typically worse for residents living along arterials. This could be expanded to include other health concerns.
- Recommendation #6 needs further discussion and refinement to express the Commission's concerns.

### **Public Comment**

Andres Arjona commented on the importance of essential services within urban villages and encouraged increasing housing capacity around grocery stores.

Spencer Williams recognized the Planning Commission's previous report on family-sized housing and stated that there are ongoing challenges with housing choices at different income levels. He reminded the Commissioners that it is appropriate to ask questions to the City Council. The Commission does not always need to know all of the answers.

Cindi Barker encouraged the Commissioners to identify the specific topic or problem that they are trying to address, and then work to analyze and provide recommendations. She also encouraged the Commission to identify policy areas where one solution does not always address all the associated problems.

**The meeting was adjourned at 5:37 pm.**