



City of Seattle Seattle Planning Commission

Jerry Finrow, Chair
Barbara Wilson, Executive Director

SEATTLE PLANNING COMMISSION FEBRUARY 22, 2007 APPROVED MEETING MINUTES

Commissioners in Attendance

Jerry Finrow – Chair, Linda Amato, George Blomberg, Mahlon Clements, Chris Fiori, Kay Knapton, Amalia Leighton, M. Michelle Mattox, Kevin McDonald, Steve Sheehy, Tony To

Commissioners Absent

Hilda Blanco, Tom Eanes, Martin Kaplan, Kirsten Pennington

Commission Staff

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

Guests

John Rahaim, Mark Troxel, Gordon Clowers, DPD

In Attendance

Bob Morgan, Council Central Staff; Trevor Airey, Phil Fuji

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 7:31 am by Chair Jerry Finrow.

COMMISSION BUSINESS

- Approve February 8, 2007 Minutes

ACTION: Commissioner Steve Sheehy moved to approve the February 8, 2007 minutes. Commissioner Kevin McDonald seconded the motion. The minutes passed unanimously.

- Chairs Report

Commissioner Finrow reviewed the upcoming meetings. He noted that the February 27 Executive Committee meeting has been cancelled in order to prepare for the Incentive Zoning white paper release event happening the same day. Chair Finrow mentioned the upcoming confirmation hearing for DPD's

director Diane Sugimura on March 7. He noted that Mahlon Clements will represent the Commission to speak on behalf of Ms. Sugimura's reconfirmation. He also noted that the University District Walking Tour will be held March 30th at 2:30 p.m.

COMMISSION DISCUSSION

▪ Affordable Housing Action Agenda - Discussion

Chair Finrow stated that the first item of business would be the affordable housing action agenda. Planning Analyst Casey Mills briefed the Commission on the Affordable Housing Roundtable Report. He noted that the report is an effort to summarize the recent roundtable, and includes some key themes and concepts from the event.

Mr. Mills reviewed the draft affordable housing action agenda. He noted that the action agenda is meant as an internal document to guide the work of the Commission on the issue of affordable housing. Mr. Mills noted that, while the current action agenda is a long list of proposals, including the list of proposals presented by Henry Cisneros at the recent Workforce Housing speaker series event, it should be whittled down by Commissioners to a more succinct document.

Commissioner Tony To noted that the Cisneros event revealed that only 4 percent of units are available to those making 80 percent of median income in Snohomish County. Commissioner To stated that some major questions for the Commission are: what is the affordability range that they should be working on, and should it be workforce housing? In addition, Commissioner To noted that increasing density and providing more, smaller units is equally important. He added that the Commission should try to increase the number of tools available to solve the problem, not try to solve the problem completely. Commissioner To added that providing more opportunities for people to live closer to their work is one example of those tools.

Commissioner George Blomberg urged the Commission to focus on issues directly relating to its purview when working on affordable housing. Commissioner Blomberg urged working on fundamental Comprehensive Plan issues, transit and land use policy, and rezones.

Commissioner Kevin McDonald suggested introducing language to the Comp Plan that encourages the support of Transit Oriented Development. He added that such development should not just be around transit stations, but also on transit corridors.

Chair Finrow stated that affordable housing is a major issue and should continue to be worked on. He asked that the Housing, Neighborhoods and Urban Centers Committee work on the action agenda and bring it back to the full Commission.

▪ 2007 Comprehensive Plan Amendments - Update & Discussion

Disclosures: Commissioner Steve Sheehy disclosed that he walks his dog on 33rd Avenue in the Madrona neighborhood, where one of the Comp Plan amendments is being proposed. Commissioner Amalia Leighton, SvR Design Company, disclosed that she is the design engineer on the Burke Gilman Trail, and is also working on the Fort Lawton redevelopment. Commissioner Mahlon Clements, Zimmer Gunsul Frasca Partnership, stated he has had clients and might have clients that could be impacted by some of the amendments.

Commission Chris Fiori, Heartland LLC, stated that he might work for someone who could be affected by the amendments. Commissioner Tony To, Homesight, stated that he works in the Madrona neighborhood and that he works on affordable housing. Commissioner George Blomberg, Port of Seattle, stated that he works for the agency that owns Port 48, which could be affected by the Colman Dock redevelopment.

Mark Troxel of DPD went over the thirteen proposed Comprehensive Plan amendments for 2007. He noted that they include:

- Colman Dock Redevelopment, which is the same language that was submitted last year. He stated that DPD is still waiting for Washington State Ferries to address a joint resolution issued by Council and the Mayor with some guidelines for the redevelopment. Mr. Troxel mentioned that DPD is currently not considering suggesting this amendment for further study.
- The Multifamily Zoning Update, which is still being worked on, and will include some amendments to the Comp Plan addressing issues such as density, bulk, and open space.
- The Housing Development Consortium proposed an amendment that makes affordable housing the primary recipient of incentive zoning funds.
- Mr. Troxel noted that there is an amendment that would rezone certain properties on or near the boundary of the Duwamish MIC to allow for the redevelopment of contaminated sites there with commercial or mixed-use development.
- There is an amendment to prohibit structured parking near Parks property, which DPD is currently not considering for future study.
- Nitze-Stagen is proposing an exemption of an area of the Duwamish MIC from size-of-use limits on office space. Mr. Troxel noted that this proposal covers a smaller area than last year's proposal, and is basically an amendment that would allow for the expansion of Starbucks headquarters.
- DPD and OPM submitted an amendment related to a legislative rezone in Northgate north of Northgate Way to aid upcoming development around the recently acquired park and ride on 112th, which will eventually become a park.
- DPD submitted an amendment to rezone an area in South Lake Union from Industrial to mixed use. Mr. Troxel mentioned that it was pulled back last year due to the fact that the Industrial Lands Strategy study hadn't begun.
- DPD submitted an amendment that would potentially move the southern boundary of the Urban Center further south. Mr. Troxel added that it would also change the zoning of several industrial parcels there to commercial/mixed use.
- The Nordic Heritage Museum is proposing to redesignate an area in Ballard from industrial to commercial/mixed use that is not in the MIC, but borders it.

- Six parcels in the Madrona neighborhood are being proposed to be rezoned from single family to multifamily.
- A lot in Crown Hill is being proposed to be rezoned from single family to multifamily.
- DPD and OH are proposing an amendment related to the redevelopment of Fort Lawton that would increase the zoning capacity there.

Chair Finrow noted that the current batch of amendments represent a large grab of Industrial Land, and that the Commission needs the results from the Industrial Lands Strategy before it can move from its position of discouraging such efforts.

Director Barbara Wilson noted there are two places to weigh in on the Comp Plan amendments. She noted that the first is in March when DPD proposes which amendments should be considered for further study and the other is when DPD submits their final recommendations to Council in August or September.

▪ **SEPA Thresholds - Discussion**

Disclosures: Commissioner Mahlon Clements, Zimmer Gunsul Frasca Partnership, disclosed that he might at some point have a client that could be affected by a change in SEPA thresholds.

John Rahaim and Gordon Clowers of DPD presented the SEPA Thresholds.

Mr. Rahaim stated that they started the effort to change SEPA thresholds because for a long time the city's thresholds were lower than what the state allowed; that they had been set before a variety of other oversight processes had been created, including design review; that the city wanted to encourage growth management and get more development in urban centers; and that they wanted to eliminate some of the delay and cost of some projects.

Mr. Clowers stated that some goals of the project were to set SEPA to true thresholds, i.e. where environmental impacts would actually occur, to better align review thresholds with Growth Management Act objectives, to add more efficiencies to the project review process; and to strike a better balance between the economy, housing and the environment.

Mr. Rahaim stated some pushback has come from neighborhoods, because they are concerned about their losing the ability to legally challenge certain projects, and because they don't think Design Review can capture some of the oversight issues that SEPA does. Mr Rahaim stated that projects would have to notify the neighborhood of their intentions, but it would be a smaller yellow sign that went up rather than a large white one.

Mr. Clowers noted that the threshold changes could save \$5,000 - \$6,000 per unit of development costs. Mr. Rahaim added that it would also save a great deal in oversight costs, including staff time for essentially duplicating environmental controls already in place.

Chair Finrow stated that DPD needs to work on how it is messaging the issue. He added that it is currently not clear what the benefits of the project are, exactly how traffic mitigations could be

addressed, exactly how the process would change, that projects in certain areas (such as environmentally critical areas) would still go through the SEPA process, and how the cumulative effect of many projects would be mitigated.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Finrow adjourned the meeting at 8:58 am.