



**City of Seattle
Seattle Planning Commission**

Leslie Miller, Chair
Barbara Wilson, Executive Director

**SEATTLE PLANNING COMMISSION
JULY 12, 2012
APPROVED MEETING MINUTES**

COMMISSIONERS IN ATTENDANCE

Chair Leslie Miller, Vice-Chair David Cutler, Kadie Bell, Luis F. Borrero, Josh Brower, Mark Johnson, Amalia Leighton, Kevin McDonald, Chris Persons, Matt Roewe, Morgan Shook

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT

Catherine Benotto, Colie Hough-Beck, Bradley Khouri, Jeanne Krikawa, Sarah Snider

COMMISSION STAFF

Barbara Wilson-Executive Director, Diana Canzoneri-Senior Analyst, Katie Sheehy-Planning Analyst, Robin Magonegil-Administrative

GUESTS

Marshall Foster, Jim Holmes, DPD;

IN ATTENDANCE

Robert Stack, SoDo Land Owner; Adam Rosen, Alaskan Copper;

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

Chair Leslie Miller called the meeting to attention at 3:02 pm.

- **Approve: June 28, 2012 Meeting Minutes**

ACTION: Commissioner Chris Persons moved to approve the June 28, 2012 minutes. Commissioner David Cutler seconded the motion. The minutes were approved. Commissioners Morgan Shook and Leslie Miller abstained.

▪ **Vote: SPC 2012/2103 Leadership**

Chair Miller reported that the nominations committee met to discuss all the nominations and spoke to nominated Commissioners regarding their availability, the time commitment and their desire to take various leadership positions. Chair Miller stated that the terms of leadership are for one year and begin immediately upon approval by the Commission.

- Chair - David Cutler
- Vice-Chair - Amalia Leighton
- Tri-Chairs, Special Task Force on Comp Plan - Josh Brower, Kevin McDonald & Leslie Miller
- Co-Chairs, Land Use & Transportation - Jeanne Krikawa & Colie Hough Beck
- Chair - Housing & Neighborhoods - Catherine Benotto
- At Large - Mark Johnson

ACTION: Commissioner Chris Person moved to approve the slate of leadership. Commissioner Morgan Shook seconded the motion. The slate was approved unanimously.

Chair David Cutler took over as chair for the remainder of the meeting.

▪ **UPDATE: City Planning**

- Marshall Foster, DPD City Planning Director

Mr. Foster gave updates on several projects. He noted that the neighborhood planning updates are finished for Broadview and Rainier Beach and that they are starting preparations for the UDF and land use code changes. Mr. Foster mentioned that the Shoreline Master Program would be going to Council soon. He added that the Urban Design Element would move forward as an early amendment to be considered in March of 2013. Mr. Foster stated that it would be useful to get that in the Comp Plan. He noted, that concerning the University District that they are doing the work now and are thinking about the station as a hub for TOD in that area. He mentioned that they have formed a partnership with the Portland Sustainability Institute and are helping to develop an ecodistrict. Mr. Foster noted that this would take planning to a higher level with sustainability as a core part of how they think about land use, transportation and urban design. Mr. Foster reported on Capitol Hill and stated that the negotiations with Sound Transit are complete. He stated that in Northgate they are taking on a new chapter and are looking at the broader urban center with a complete UDF.

Commissioner McDonald asked for details regarding the Capitol Hill MOU. Mr. Foster stated that it is a development agreement under the state RCW between DPD & ST. He added that it allows them to vary development standards from what is in the zoning and allows them to vest in development rights and hand that to developers. Commissioner McDonald wondered if it specified the type of uses. Mr. Foster replied that in the UDF, it does and that it takes key elements of that.

Commissioner Bell Sata asked about the study of 15th and Interbay. Mr. Foster noted that the corridor study would help them to think comprehensively about what type of planning should occur between Mercer and the ship canal and then north up to Market Street and the rapid ride. He added that they have not done a lot of corridor planning recently and noted that they are just starting now. Mr. Foster stated that the first piece would take about 9 months and that early next year they would start the north portion. He mentioned that there is a lot of interest in looking at the Ballard neighborhood plan.

- **BRIEFING: South Lake Union Zoning Changes**
 - Marshall Foster & Jim Holmes, DPD City Planning

Chair Cutler welcomed Marshall Foster and Jim Holmes from DPD.

Chair Cutler called for any disclosures & recusals.

Disclosures:

- Commissioner Luis Borrero disclosed that his firm, DRiVE LLC, has a strategic partnership with Heartland, LLC, which is working in South Lake Union.
- Commissioner Matt Roewe disclosed that his firm, Via Architecture, is involved with property owners in the South Lake Union area and he is a member of the Uptown Alliance and the Queen Anne Community Council both of whom will probably take a position on this issue.
- Commissioner Kadie Bell disclosed that her firm, Griffin, Hill & Associates, does projects throughout the city of Seattle.
- Commissioner David Cutler disclosed that his firm, GGLO, is involved with projects in the South Lake Union area.
- Commissioner Amalia Leighton disclosed that her firm, SvR Design Company is working on the streetscape in the South Lake Union area.
- Commissioner Morgan Shook disclosed that his firm, Berk Consulting, has worked with the city of Seattle on two projects on the rezone.
- Commissioner Persons disclosed that his firm, Capitol Hill Housing, is a member of the Housing Development Consortium of Seattle and King County (HDC) and that he serves on the board. He added that HDC has adopted a formal position on the SLU Rezone.

Mr. Holmes gave a powerpoint presentation that can be found here:

<http://www.seattle.gov/planningcommission/docs/southlakeunionzoningspc.pptx>

Commissioner Leighton asked if Fred Hutch was considered a major institution. Mr. Holmes replied that it was not and noted that they do not have a major impact on the adjacent neighborhoods. Commissioner Johnson added that other institutions were having big issues with their neighborhoods. Commissioner Roewe asked if Fred Hutch was subject to the same incentive provisions. Mr. Holmes replied that they were.

Ms. Wilson stated that the goal would be to provide Council with comments and recommendations. Mr. Holmes reviewed the timeline noting that the vote would be in September.

Commissioner McDonald wondered about the maximum height south of Denny. Mr. Holmes answered that it is 400-500 feet as the grid shifts.

Commissioner Borrero asked if they have created a massing model of the best-case scenario. Mr. Holmes replied that they have renderings. Commissioner Borrero stated that incentive zoning in exchange for land could be a way to get land and potentially be able to develop a lot of density. He wondered about the view corridors. Mr. Foster asked if he has seen the EIS. Mr. Holmes stated that they did not evaluate private views and that they cannot protect all of the private views. He added that the renderings are based on 2031 growth scenario from the EIS model of likely development.

Commissioner Leighton asked what the recommendations are for the west border along Aurora. Mr. Holmes responded that they do not have those but it would be important for future work.

Commissioner Shook asked about the future tunnel. Mr. Foster noted that they intend to look at the uptown triangle, east of Seattle Center. He added that the Aurora questions could be addressed in terms of SLU connections to Seattle Center. Commissioner Leighton asked about the setbacks/improvements. Mr. Holmes stated that the reconstructed surface on aurora is likely to have better sidewalks. Commissioner Johnson stated that there is huge amount of real estate at Aurora and Denny. Commissioner Roewe stated that there is not as much space as people think.

Ms. Wilson asked how well the sub-areas match up to the other area's zoning and development standards. Mr. Holmes answered that all standards apply in sub-areas unless specifically stated that they do not.

Commissioner Miller wondered where the closest school was. Mr. Foster replied that the closest high school was in the Center House. Ms. Wilson stated John Hale on the top of Queen Anne was the closest elementary school. Mr. Holmes replied that there were provisions if a developer were to include a Seattle Public School the floor area would be exempt. Commissioner Roewe noted that is an entirely different presentation. Commissioner Borrero stated that this is a big issue. Commissioner Miller stated she was talking with someone who works for Amazon, lives in that neighborhood, loves all the good things there but will have to move in two years because there are no schools. Mr. Holmes stated a school is the key linchpin and that it is tricky. Commissioner Johnson asked about the school district. Mr. Holmes replied that there was a placeholder for a downtown school.

Commissioner Roewe asked about TDR/TIF and wondered if it were being leveraged the same way in a 60/40 split. Mr. Holmes replied that it was and gave some clarification.

Ms. Canzoneri asked about the potential for family-sized housing. Mr. Holmes replied that was another tricky thing and that they are looking at potentially creating an incentive of a larger floor plate for larger new units but that it needs to be vetted and could be an affordability issue.

Chair Cutler thanked Mr. Holmes and Mr. Foster.

- **Chair's Report**

Chair Cutler reviewed the upcoming meetings and events with the Commissioners.

- **BRIEFING: North SODO Jobs Strategy to Match Land Use and Transit**
- Chris Mefford, Community Attributes

Ms. Wilson reported on the proposed SoDo arena and the request from Council. She gave a brief background on the Commission's work on issues related to this report.

Chair Cutler welcomed Chris Mefford from Community Attributes.

Chair Cutler called for any disclosures & recusals.

Disclosures:

- Commissioner Mark Johnson disclosed that his firm, Environmental Science Associates (ESA) provides consulting services to public and private clients that may be affected, including the City of Seattle (SDOT, SPU, and DPD), King County, the Port of Seattle, Seattle School District, Sound Transit, and Washington State Ferries.
- Commissioner Morgan Shook disclosed that his firm, Berk Consulting, consults on projects throughout the city and Sound Transit and the City are clients.
- Commissioner Amalia Leighton disclosed that her firm, SvR Design Company does work in the public rights-of-way, on commercial, multi-family and industrial lands in Seattle. SvR has also done work with the Port of Seattle.
- Commissioner Kadie Bell Sata disclosed that her firm, Griffin, Hill & Associates, consults on projects throughout the city and the Port of Seattle, and Sound Transit are clients.
- Commissioner Matt Roewe disclosed that his firm, Via Architecture, works on municipal planning and private development in areas of Seattle and Sound Transit, and Seattle City Light are clients.
- Commissioner Josh Brower disclosed that his firm, Veris Law Group, represents industrial businesses and business associations located in or associated with the BNMIC and N. Seattle Industrial Area.

Mr. Mefford gave a power point presentation that can be found here:

<http://www.seattle.gov/planningcommission/docs/cainorthsodojobsandlanduse20120427.pptx>

Commissioner Borrero asked about job density. Commissioner Shook wondered about FAR. Mr. Mefford replied that the building area might be in the report.

Commissioner Roewe noted that observation on Lander functions well as a bus interchange but wondered what goes along well with that. He added that bigger cities have nodes. Mr. Mefford concurred and offered that it was a good point.

Commissioner Shook wondered what the trade off with the arena would be concerning living wage jobs. Mr. Mefford asked what really the tradeoff is and stated that it is a bit of a false construct to say that it all is at stake. He wondered what a net gain and loss to the region is really re: economic opportunity, climate change, etc. Mr. Mefford stated that it is obviously much more complicated but one of the things to think about, if this goes away, is that it might be a loss but there is also a gain of something else and how do we tradeoff those two things. He noted that he does not have the answer but it is important to think about.

Commissioner Bell Sata asked a question about the scope noting that she used to work a Starbuck's corporate offices and the challenges with taking transit was that there was available (ample) free parking. Mr. Mefford noted that they did not consider work shift timing relative to transit availability and they did not document the free parking availability. He added that these are valid points. Commissioner Bell Sata stated that some of the uses might require people to have a vehicle. Mr. Mefford stated that this goes to his point regarding different types of jobs. Commissioner Bell Sata stated that the pedestrian environment is so unwelcoming. Mr. Mefford noted that they did talk about that but it was not analyzed. He added that they operated on the assumption that, with a high density of jobs, all the pedestrian stuff would be improved.

Commissioner Leighton asked if there were a comparison of transit ridership with the bus. Mr. Mefford replied that they were only asked to look at light rail. Commissioner Leighton stated that the bus was faster to get from downtown to the airport than light rail. Mr. Mefford responded that was not what they were asked to look at. Commissioner Leighton stated that a lot of what happens with those businesses in that area is international and those business owners are embarrassed to bring clients to their front doors as they are operating on a dirt road. She questioned why they would want to invest in those properties. Mr. Mefford stated that did not come up in any of their interviews but it is an interesting consideration.

Commissioner Johnson shared his thought that parking seems to be part of the problem and what if parking spaces were converted to job-generating uses and parking lots were reduced. He noted that might change the dynamic of what is in the area. Mr. Mefford stated that some parking is critical for what people need to do.

Commissioner Miller stated that she used to have an office in the SoDo, it was hard to have client's come there due to the lack of basic pedestrian infrastructure. She added that trying to take the train was difficult due to weather and safety concerns and that biking was just as bad. Commissioner Persons wondered why these questions were not asked before we put a station there. Ms. Sheehy replied that it was a countywide planning policy.

Chair Cutler asked for clarification on the living wage jobs and the land use chart. Mr. Mefford explained the chart and noted that industrial lands have lower job density and they use land more than they use people.

Ms. Wilson inquired about Councilmember Clark's intention now regarding this. Mr. Mefford answered that the only thing that he knew for sure is that they are exploring the station overall area.

Chair Cutler thanked Mr. Mefford.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Chair Cutler welcomed Robert Stack from Pacific Investments.

Mr. Stack noted that they own land adjacent to the light rail station. He stated that generating industrial jobs is not going to happen. Mr. Stack talked about the contamination in the soil and the high tax value assessment. He added that zoning will play a part and that land values are too high to support industrial uses. Mr. Stack stated that they City has been responsible for a lot of loss of industrial jobs and the stadiums have killed a lot of land that was once industrial. Mr. Stack noted that private parties hold 42% of the land. He added that he would welcome the Commissioners to come down for a tour so that they can see that the buildings are being held together in some instances just by their paint.

Chair Cutler welcomed Adam Rosen from Alaskan Copper.

Mr. Rosen stated that Alaskan Copper is a family owned business in this area. He added that in 2007, the overlay districts greatly restricted permitted uses in the DUMIC and that makes it difficult to find a tenant for the existing spaces. Mr. Rosen stated that if they had the ability to release the building then they would move but the development and economics do not allow them to do anything with the land. He added that there is a ceiling for what can lease industrial space for and people knock down the buildings and leave them as parking lots. Mr. Rosen stated that is not a great way to create jobs. He noted that the economics of the area does not make it attractive area for manufacturing businesses.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Cutler adjourned the meeting at 5:36 pm.