



City of Seattle
Seattle Planning Commission

David Cutler, Chair
Barbara Wilson, Executive Director

SEATTLE PLANNING COMMISSION
MARCH 28, 2013
APPROVED MEETING MINUTES

COMMISSIONERS IN ATTENDANCE

Chair David Cutler, Kadie Bell, Catherine Benotto, Luis Borrero, Josh Brower, Colie Hough-Beck, Mark Johnson, Jeanne Krikawa, Amalia Leighton, Kevin McDonald, Matt Roewe, Morgan Shook, Sarah Snider

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT

Bradley Khouri, Chris Persons

COMMISSION STAFF

Barbara Wilson-Executive Director, Diana Canzoneri-Senior Analyst, Robin Magonegil-Administrative Staff Assistant

GUESTS

Alison Van Gorp, Mayor's Office; Rick Hooper, Office of Housing; Brennon Staley, DPD

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

- **Approve: Approve February 28, 2013 Meeting Minutes**

Commissioner Kevin McDonald moved to approve the February 28, 2013 minutes. Commissioner Jeanne Krikawa seconded the motion. The minutes were approved with Commissioners Amalia Leighton and Kadie Bell abstaining.

▪ **Chair's Report**

- Chair David Cutler

Chair Cutler reviewed the upcoming Commission meetings and events. He stated that the April 11 meeting of the Full Commission is cancelled due to the AIA event.

He noted that this was Commissioner Snider's last meeting and he announced that Commissioner Bell would be departing the Commission as well.

Chair Cutler mentioned the status of the process for the new commissioner applicants noting that the interviews would be taking place next week.

Ms. Wilson reported on meetings that she had attended and others that several of the Commissioners had attended. Several Commissioners also reported on the meetings and events that they had attended.

Chair Cutler announced that Katie Sheehy would be leaving the Commission and taking a position working with DPD.

▪ **Briefing: Incentive for Affordable Housing**

- Alison Van Gorp, Mayor's Office
- Rick Hooper, Office of Housing Director
- Brennon Staley, DPD Senior Planner

Chair Cutler called for any disclosures and/or recusals.

DISCLOSURES & RECUSALS:

- Commissioner Matt Roewe disclosed that his firm, VIA Architecture, works on municipal planning and private development projects that might be impacted by the incentives.
- Commissioner Dave Cutler disclosed that his firm, GGLO, designs projects and advises clients that might be impacted by the incentives.
- Commissioner Amalia Leighton disclosed that her firm, SvR Design, works on affordable housing projects throughout the city that might be affected by the incentives.
- Commissioner Catherine Benotto disclosed that her firm, Weber Thompson, designs projects and advises clients on development projects throughout the city that might be affected by the incentives.
- Commissioner Colie Hough Beck disclosed that her firm, HBB, works on commercial, multifamily, and public projects that might be impacted by the incentives.
- Commissioner Morgan Shook disclosed that his firm, BERK, works in municipal planning and that they have non-profit and private development projects that might be impacted by the incentives. He disclosed that BERK has worked with the City on design of the incentive zoning package for South Lake Union.

Alison Van Gorp introduced herself noting that she previously worked for Forterra as a policy analyst and joined the Mayor's staff last October. She gave a power point presentation that can be found via the link below:

<http://www.seattle.gov/planningcommission/docs/SeattleHousingStrategyV3.pdf>

Rick Hooper talked about the property tax exemption and incentive zoning noting that he would like the Commission to continue to be involved in the review of these policies. Mr. Hooper mentioned the Affordable Housing Incentives Advisory Committee noting that they are a mix of backgrounds and perspectives and they held their first meeting on Friday.

Brennon Staley talked about the non- housing part of the incentive program mentioning its minimum requirements and the two phases of the process. He noted that they want to integrate this into one coherent program throughout the city.

Ms. Wilson asked if there had been any resolution about the Council's proposed committee to look at the incentives for affordable housing. Ms. VanGorp replied that, based on what was said, this committee is good and should go forward. She added that Council would like to potentially hire a technical consulting group. Mr. Hooper shared his optimism that this could be really helpful and that a big part of this is examining what is happening around the country and somehow bringing that in.

Commissioner Roewe asked if there had been any review of the L zones since the multifamily code update. Mr. Staley responded that they have a green building incentive but was not sure if there is additional value for affordable housing. Commissioner Roewe pointed out that of the 17 members of the committee only 3 are market-rate developers and most of them are on the other end of the spectrum. Mr. Hooper responded that it would be helpful to involve other developers as well. There was some discussion regarding the definition of affordability, guidelines and figuring out exactly how to measure.

Commissioner Benotto agreed with Matt about the committee and wondered if it were possible to get national developers involved. Mr. Hooper replied that they are working on that and agreed that it would be helpful to tap into the expertise.

Commissioner Hough Beck stated that, as a landscape architect, she is interested in the other bonuses like urban agriculture and sustainability. She added that affordability is great but that these things should also be essential components to make these projects great places.

Commissioner Johnson warned about pulling the rug out from underneath a pretty healthy market and noted that it takes twice as long to build a project in San Francisco. Mr. Hooper stated that it is critical to focus on supply. He agreed that the city has done a lot to encourage this boom. Mr. Hooper added that it would be great to have the Commission involved. Ms. Canzoneri stated that one of the key drivers of affordability is ensuring enough supply and the committee is well suited to address that.

Chair Cutler stated that transportation and land use are not truly separate things and the demand for housing is linked to job growth. He suggested that we look at how we are encouraging new businesses to locate and existing businesses to stay. Mr. Staley stated that they have looked at this and the stats are not helpful.

Commissioner Leighton wondered how many of the units are located in urban centers and villages.

Ms. Wilson stated that she was trying to get a clearer sense of goals and objectives and desired to see more of affordable housing happen inside the development rather than offsite. She wondered if that was what they were getting at and should we be looking at the differences. Ms. Wilson continued by asking if those were the questions on the table or would there be one policy for the city. She suggested that it might make sense to do both. Mr. Hooper replied that these are some of the key issues and it is good to get this feedback. He added that because of South Lake Union these are issues that will head right into the advisory committee. Mr. Staley added that all of the issues are on the table and are integrated.

Commissioner Brower asked if it should be done geographically and noted that this is a great opportunity to help with transit communities. He suggested taking the incentive program and tying it with transit.

Commissioner Borrero stated that he appreciated the big picture approach. He wondered how many units are there currently and what the goal is. Mr. Hooper responded that there were around 310,000. Commissioner Borrero asked about the subsidized units and what percentage is okay. Mr. Hopper answered that cities

grapple with this all the time and some cities set targets and periodically report on progress. Mr. Hooper explained that with the housing levy there are some upper limits on what can be provided via taxes. He continued that they are always trying to bring in other resources and how best to use those resources. Ms. Canzoneri noted that there is a goal that states that ¼ of the housing units should be affordable for very low income.

Commissioner Roewe stated that geography is a slippery slope and with the same policy you could build two units in one place and only one in another. He added that the worst outcome would be that they would stop building anything.

Chair Cutler thanked Alison, Rick and Brennon for their time.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Cutler adjourned the meeting at 9:02 am.