



City of Seattle Seattle Planning Commission

Tony To, Chair
Barbara Wilson, Executive Director

SEATTLE PLANNING COMMISSION MAY 22, 2008 APPROVED MEETING MINUTES

Commissioners in Attendance

Tony To-Chair, Linda Amato, Josh Brower, Tom Eanes, Chris Fiori, Colie Hough-Beck, Mark Johnson, Kay Knapton, Michelle Mattox, Kevin McDonald

Commission Staff

Barbara Wilson-Director, Casey Mills-Planning Analyst

Commissioners Absent

Jerry Finrow, Martin Henry Kaplan, Amalia Leighton, Leslie Miller, Kirsten Pennington

Guests

Jim Holmes, DPD

In Attendance

Rebecca Herzfeld, Council Central Staff

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 Tony To called the meeting to order at 7:30 am.

COMMISSION BUSINESS

- Minutes Approval

ACTION: Commissioner Kay Knapton moved to approve the May 8, 2008 minutes. Commissioner Linda Amato seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

▪ **Chairs Report**

Chair To reported that the Commission was getting close to hiring the demographer and that the Director hopes to make a final decision very soon. Chair To stated that the Commission was currently reviewing resumes for the next Get Engaged representative. Interviews will take place in the coming month and Council will appoint them later this year. Chair To stated that the Planning Analyst job posting is still open and that the posting will close on June 3, so if Commissioners know of any good candidates, they should let them know about the opening. He added that the Commission hopes to begin interviews soon after the job closes.

Executive Director Barbara Wilson reported that the process for hiring the new Planning Director is moving forward and that before a final decision is made the final candidates will come before the Commission.

Chair To noted the upcoming meetings. He stated that next Tuesday, June 3 will be the Executive Committee meeting and that the Commission will be receiving a briefing from DPD staff on the Shoreline Master Plan update. Chair To reported that the next Housing, Neighborhoods and Urban Centers Committee Meeting will be Tuesday, June 10 and that the Commission will be getting a briefing from Office of Housing staff on the Housing Levy Renewal planning and the Housing Needs Assessment being performed by OH. Chair To added that the next Full Commission meeting will be June 12th from 3:00 - 5:30 p.m. and that the next Land Use and Transportation Committee, will be Thursday, June 19th, 7:30-9:00 a.m. He continued that at this meeting the Commission will be receiving a briefing on the Viaduct from SDOT and WSDOT staff.

COMMISSION DISCUSSION

▪ **ACTION: 2008 - 2009 Work Plan**

- Tony To, Chair

Chair To stated that the Commission's Work Plan is a very important document. He noted that it directs what the Commission works on over the next year and determines what level of involvement the Commission engages in on each topic. Chair To added that Commissioners spent quite a bit of time at the recent retreat discussing the Work Plan and at the April 29th Executive Committee meeting, Commissioners reviewed the document again, and began reformatting the Work Plan to reflect those changes. Chair To reported that today's goal would be to review those changes and give final approval to the Work Plan for the coming year. He added that after approval, staff will begin presenting it to Council, the Executive, and stakeholders to make sure they're aware of the Commission's future agenda and priorities.

Ms. Wilson discussed the recent changes that had been made to the Work Plan. She stated that some projects were moved from second tier to first tier and vice versa, but that the biggest change was the addition of a new initiative listed under top tier priorities. She noted that this initiative, tentatively titled 'Seattle Connected,' would focus on exploring density around transit hubs and corridors, and ensuring increases in density come along with all the public amenities that make a great neighborhood.

Commissioner Kevin McDonald offered some changes to the 'Seattle Connected' initiative. He proposed stating 'residential densities, retail and employment opportunities' instead of 'density'. He suggested stating 'neighborhoods' instead of 'density' and altering the timeline for the Sound Transit light rail station review to occur to reflect recent developments.

Commissioner To suggested adding a bullet point under ‘Seattle Connected’ for the Commission to work towards defining what a transit corridor was.

Commissioner Kay Knapton noted that the section under neighborhood planning updates did not reflect the current status of neighborhood and suggested changing it to reflect recent developments.

ACTION: Commissioner Josh Brower moved to approve the 2008-2009 Work Plan as amended. Commissioner Tom Eanes seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

- **ACTION: Seattle Center**
- Barbara Wilson, SPC Director

Chair Tony To called for any disclosures or recusals.

Recusal & Disclosures

Commissioner Chris Fiori disclosed that his firm, Heartland, was working with the School District on Memorial Stadium. Commissioner Mark Johnson disclosed that his firm, ESA Adolphson, works with the School District on environmental review issues. There were no recusals.

Chair To stated that at the Full Commission meeting on April 10, the Commission received a briefing on Seattle Center’s redevelopment plan from the Center’s Executive Director, Robert Nellams. He added that since then, the Commission, particularly the LUT Committee, has been working on developing some Commission comments on the topic. Chair To noted that the Commission has tried to take a regional perspective during this review, and focus comments on issues directly related to the Commission’s purview – transportation and zoning. He continued that the goal today is to approve those comments, which will be submitted in a letter to Council.

Ms. Wilson reviewed the letter to Council regarding the Commission policy recommendation regarding Seattle Center. She noted that the general comments referred to the importance of the Seattle Center as a regional and local destination, the need for pedestrian, bike and transit connectivity, and the need to reexamine land use and zoning surrounding Seattle Center. Ms. Wilson added that the remainder of the letter was divided into transportation infrastructure and strategies and zoning/density.

Commissioner Colie Hough-Beck stated that, rather than focusing on one area that needed more transit stops, the letter should focus on transit stops surrounding the Center.

Commissioner Fiori stated that the routes to the Center were not all severely uncomfortable or unsafe, and suggested stating that from the South and East the routes represented the most difficulty for pedestrians.

Commissioner Johnson questioned what the phrase ‘difficult to penetrate its borders’ referred to, whether it was a suggestion to remove buildings or to simply emphasize the openings that already existed. Commissioner Linda Amato stated that it was the latter, and suggested adding language encouraging the Center to add to its overall identity around the perimeter, and employ techniques to give it a sense of place.

Commissioner Brower suggested adding the Theatre District to the general comments as an area that should be taken considered an amenity for new residents should density be increased surrounding the Center.

ACTION: Commissioner Mark Johnson moved to approve the letter. Commissioner Kevin McDonald seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with the suggested changes.

- **Report and Discussion: Dravus Rezone**
- Jim Holmes, DPD

Chair To stated that the Commission received a couple of briefings on the issue of the Dravus Rezone last year during the scoping and the development phase of the ordinance. He noted that today, the Commission will be hearing from DPD staffer Jim Holmes on the Executive's draft proposal for rezoning this area and introducing new transportation infrastructure there.

Chair To called for any disclosures or recusals.

Recusal & Disclosures: Commissioner Tom Eanes disclosed that his firm, Hewitt, did the master plan for this project and that the Interbay Neighborhood Association is a client of Hewitt. Commissioner Josh Brower disclosed that his firm, Tupper Mack Brower, works with industrial businesses in the BINMIC. There were no recusals.

Jim Holmes provided some background on the project. He stated that in 2005, there was a Comprehensive Plan amendment proposed that would have turned the area around Dravus Street into an Urban Village. Mr. Holmes added that the Commission and City Council recommended this amendment not be approved. He noted that an amendment was adopted allowing for height increases in the area.

Mr. Holmes reviewed the major elements of the proposal. He noted that the first was transportation improvements to the area. He added that any zoning changes would not be approved until the land owners adopted a Local Improvement District for the area, which would fund a variety of important transportation infrastructure improvements.

Mr. Holmes stated that second element regarded public benefits that attempt to mimic the citywide ordinance that Council will soon be considering, since the citywide ordinance would supersede whatever program that was adopted as part of the Dravus rezone. He added that this element stated that 11% of housing built above the base height would have to be affordable.

Mr. Holmes noted that the third element was zoning and land use and that the goal was to retain the industrial use of BINMIC properties while promoting mixed use development in the study area. He added that the proposal is to implement Seattle Mixed zoning there, which would still allow some industrial uses, but would allow residential uses by right.

Mr. Holmes stated that the City was unable to successfully develop a proposal that addressed the general policy to try and separate industrial uses and residential uses to avoid the complaints that often arise from residents near industrial areas about light, noise, truck traffic, and more. He noted that the

City will ask Council to consider this rezone represents an implicit policy shift away from this general policy.

Mr. Holmes explained that the heights proposed range from 65' to 85', with some areas at 40' due to a requirement that buildings along Dravus must be set back 50 feet. He added that the base height for the incentive program is 40'.

Commissioner Hough-Beck asked if the Port of Seattle was a property owner in the study area. Mr. Holmes replied no.

Commissioner Amato asked if any land was being rezoned from IG to another use. Mr. Holmes responded that there was not.

Commissioner Johnson asked what the current uses were adjacent to the study area in the BINMIC. Mr. Holmes answered that there was some recent office and retail development there, along with some manufacturing and packaging uses.

Ms. Wilson asked if there was language in the Land Use Code discouraging placing residential uses adjacent to industrial uses. Mr. Holmes stated that there was.

Chair To asked whether or not the transportation improvements were considered 'public benefits.' Mr. Holmes stated they were not, as they would be required as mitigation for developments any way. He added that the LID helps by having the improvements happen as a comprehensive whole rather than piecemeal.

Commissioner Fiori asked why the incentive program was based on height, not Floor Area Ratio (FAR). Mr. Holmes responded that it was because the Seattle Mixed zone does not use FAR as a measurement.

Commissioner Johnson expressed that he felt height was a non-issue when it came to maintaining consistency with bulk and scale between industrial and other zones. Mr. Holmes stated there were many issues related to noise and emissions from industrial zones that made higher heights problematic.

Commissioner Johnson questioned if there was space in the Right of Way (ROW) for adequate sidewalks, and whether the possibility of opening up sites to create mid-block connections had been explored. Mr. Holmes replied that SDOT was working with INA to develop a street manual for the area, and mid-block connections had been considered.

Commissioner Amato asked if the railroad had weighed in on the proposal, as there exists a strong potential for conflict between the railroad and new residents nearby. Mr. Holmes stated that the railroad had not weighed in.

Commissioner Knapton said there had been a previous discussion among Commissioners about height. Ms. Wilson stated that the Commission had asked, why not higher heights? She added that some Commissioners had concerns about diverging from the city's Urban Village strategy by directing growth to an area not designated for growth. Ms. Wilson noted that the Commission approved of the LID to create more transportation infrastructure and the incentive zoning program to create more public benefit.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

There was no public comment.

ADJOURNMENT:

Chair Tony To adjourned the meeting at 9:00 am.