



**City of Seattle  
Seattle Planning Commission**

Leslie Miller, Chair  
Barbara Wilson, Executive Director

**SEATTLE PLANNING COMMISSION  
FEBRUARY 23, 2012  
APPROVED MEETING MINUTES**

**COMMISSIONERS IN ATTENDANCE**

Acting-Chair Amalia Leighton, Catherine Benotto, , Colie Hough-Beck, Mark Johnson, Kay Knapton, Bradley Khouri, Jeanne Krikawa, Kevin McDonald, Chris Persons, Matt Roewe, Sarah Snider

**COMMISSIONERS ABSENT**

Josh Brower, David Cutler, Martin Kaplan, Leslie Miller,

**COMMISSION STAFF**

Barbara Wilson-Director, Katie Sheehy-Planning Analyst, Robin Magonegil-Administrative Staff Assistant

**GUESTS**

Gordon Clowers, Mike Podowski, 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**

Acting-Chair Amalia Leighton called the meeting to attention at 7:31 am.

- **Approve: February 9, 2012 Meeting Minutes**

**ACTION:** Commissioner Kevin McDonald moved to approve the February 9, 2012 minutes. Commissioner Matt Roewe seconded the motion. The minutes were approved unanimously.

- **Chair's Report**

- Acting-Chair Commissioner Amalia Leighton

Acting-Chair Commissioner Leighton went over the upcoming meetings and events.

Executive Director Barbara Wilson gave a brief explanation regarding what is going on with the Waterfront Review. She noted that the first meeting is March 1, 2012 and that Commissioners Khouri, Johnson and Roewe are the Commission's representatives. Ms. Wilson stated that they would meet quarterly.

Ms. Wilson asked the Commissioners to start thinking about the annual retreat that will happen in April. She also mentioned that they had gotten a heads up from the Mayor's office regarding the possibility of an NBA/NHL team so they need to figure out whether or not they want to weigh in on that. Commissioner Roewe stated that until they secure a team, it was his opinion, that there was no need to get involved. Commissioner Johnson mentioned that the history behind the overlay district originally was to allow some uses and to control other uses adjacent to the stadium. He added that the idea was to create an area around the stadium and that a big chunk going to another stadium might trigger an expanded boundary. Commissioner McDonald mentioned transportation infrastructure and that getting to and from the parking would be an issue for overall traffic congestion and freight mobility.

Ms. Wilson stated that they sent a letter regarding the Transit Master Plan (TMP) last week. She asked Commissioner McDonald to report on the meeting that he attended. Commissioner McDonald reported that the primary focus was the TMP and that the comments were on a high level and they did not get into the details. He added that the problem they articulated was that the document itself was unwieldy and lost the intent of developing good transit friendly communities. Commissioner McDonald stated that their recommendation was to create another, high-level document that the elected officials could refer to, and keep all the details in another document. Commissioner Krikawa reported that there were few areas about where they were going to go back and edit the original document.

Ms. Wilson noted that she, Diana Canzoneri and Commissioners Johnson and Leighton had a meeting with Councilmember Licata about how to implement Housing Seattle. She added that Councilmember Licata stated that very low-income folks should be the focus and that he wants to have several meetings to focus on how to get more affordable housing in transit communities. Commissioner Johnson talked about Councilmember Licata's questions regarding transportation costs in transit communities and how to best consider those. He wondered how the overall affordability of living could be taken into account in housing policy.

Commissioner Leighton stated that she met with a number of people from the Office of Housing and they are interested in the multi family tax exemption. She added that they are concerned with the metrics about the transportation costs and have reservations about putting it into policy as something needing to be measured. Ms. Wilson noted that Maureen Kostyack from OH is driving the work on their side regarding how they are going to think about affordability.

- **Briefing: Regulatory Reform**

- Mike Podowski and Gordon Clowers; DPD

Acting-Chair Amalia Leighton called for any disclosures or recusals.

Disclosures:

- Commissioner Colie Hough Beck disclosed that the firm she works for, HBB, works on public and private projects throughout the City of Seattle.
- Commissioner Sarah Snider disclosed that her firm, LMN Architects, works on public and private projects throughout the City of Seattle.
- Commissioner Brad Khouri disclosed that his firm, b9 Architects, designs multifamily and commercial projects throughout the City of Seattle.
- Commissioner Mark Johnson disclosed that his firm, Environmental Science Associates (ESA), works on public and private projects throughout Seattle that could be affected by the proposed changes in regulations. ESA, works on public and private projects throughout the City of Seattle.
- Commissioner Amalia Leighton disclosed that her firm, SvR Design works on public and private projects throughout the City of Seattle.
- Commissioner Jeanne Krikawa disclosed that her firm, The Underhill Company, works on public transportation projects throughout the City of Seattle.
- Commissioner Catherine Benotto disclosed that her firm, Weber Thompson, works on architecture, planning and landscape architecture projects throughout the City of Seattle.
- Commissioner Matt Roewe disclosed that his firm, Via Architecture, works on public and private projects throughout the City of Seattle.
- Commissioner Chris Persons disclosed that his firm, Capitol Hill Housing, develops affordable housing which is subject to regulation.

Acting-Chair Amalia Leighton welcomed Mike and Gordon.

They presented a powerpoint, which can be accessed here:

<http://www.seattle.gov/planningcommission/docs/Phase1presenttoCouncilv4B.pptx>

Mr. Podowski discussed the outline of the legislation and stated that the underlying theme is making sustainability legal and that it is not so much about regulation as about targeting what resources the City can bring to the area and how they can encourage public/private partnership. Commissioner Roewe asked, regarding the proposed changes for station areas that would allow more commercial uses in residential zones, specifically using the Columbia Station as an example, where the Rainier Avenue business district was and wondered why there was not more continuity to fill in the gap between the LRT and the business district. Mr. Clowers responded that the "gap" it is outside of the station area and therefore not affected by the proposed legislation. Mr. Podowski added that they would look at that in Phase 2 as part of the transit communities.

Commissioner McDonald inquired about the businesses that would have to shut down at night and the impact that could have. Mr. Podowski clarified that operations inside the structure would not be restricted, but outdoor operations would have to shut down at 10pm.

Commissioner Hough Beck wondered about the regulations regarding home businesses as some seem like they might be difficult to enforce. She also wondered about the elevated entries in regards to ADA requirements. Mr. Clowers replied that there would be an option of either a 10' setback or an elevated entry of 4' above or below the grade of the sidewalk, so not all units would be separated by the grade change.

Commissioner Knapton asked, in reference to the provision allowing internet advertising for home entrepreneurs, about the remaining restrictions on non-internet advertising, signage and how it would be enforced. She also wondered about the limitation of two non-resident employees, could there be four part-time. Mr. Clowers responded that they had pondered the signage quite a bit and those rules would not be loosened. Mr. Podowski added that they initially proposed to remove all restrictions but Councilmembers had asked them to rethink that and in regards to the non-resident employee question, it would be two non-resident employees on site at any one time, up from one allowed at present. Mr. Clowers replied that enforcement is still challenging.

Commissioner Roewe stated that he liked the idea of raising the SEPA thresholds and asked if they could go over what components of the master use permit (MUP) that might not be necessary with these changes. Mr. Podowski replied that the design review would remain the same but not the environmental review. He added that Phase II of the regulatory reform would also look at design review and might result in different thresholds. Commissioner Roewe asked if changing the SEPA thresholds would save time in MUP. Mr. Podowski stated that developers think it would.

Commissioner Persons stated that he thought these are moving in the right direction. He added that the low-income housing providers are very supportive of active streets but also appreciate the added flexibility these proposed changes would bring because having commercial on the first floor is not always feasible, often resulting in expensive, un-rentable spaces. He continued that Office of Housing has been supportive of these changes as well.

Commissioner McDonald stated that he supports the concept of those connections between light rails station and business districts and wondered about home business and the existing/proposed parking requirements. Mr. Clowers noted that he believes the existing parking rules would remain. Commissioner McDonald stated that providing off-street parking can be more intrusive to the character of the neighborhood than signage, and he hoped that they would not expand the requirements for off-street parking with the expansions. Mr. Podowski thought that was a good point and that they would look. Commissioner McDonald pointed out that deliveries are more restricted for the home based businesses than those for residents are. Mr. Podowski stated that Council was more comfortable with maintaining current restrictions but it could be something to discuss with them.

Commissioner Khouri agreed that this was great and noted that he has been seeing things happening in low-rise zones, developers can do projects without parking and this allows them to find more creative ways to place parking. He added that, in regards to the residential stoop/setback, it should match whatever is in the multi-family code, which allows as little as five feet of setback in some cases. Commissioner Khouri stated that allowing residential in commercial zones would result in zones where the right-of-way would have to step up. Mr. Podowski noted that it is part of the neighborhood focused planning to look at streetscapes.

Commissioner Khouri stated that in reference to detached accessory dwelling units (DADUs), that almost all have been for extra space on someone's property and not for rent, thus not adding density. He wondered if there were any thoughts on how to allow larger units that could be rented. Mr. Podowski replied that the report looking at the first year of DADUs showed that the fears that people had raised concerning DADUs had not been realized but Council is still not quite ready to revisit the regulations too much.

Ms. Wilson offered some suggestions regarding several of the slides in the presentation including adding a column of suggested outcomes/rational.

Commissioner Johnson noted that this was remarkable work. He added that he had a conversation with John Rahaim, the former Director of City Planning, who told him that San Francisco makes Seattle's process look streamlined. Mr. Rahaim stated that San Francisco produces housing at half the rate that Seattle does, not for lack of demand, but because the regulations are so difficult and the review process so long.

Commissioner Benotto asked if home based child care/daycare businesses are currently allowed in single family and multi-family zones. Mr. Clowers stated that they are allowed and that there are state regulations regarding these businesses. Commissioner Benotto encouraged them to make sure these regulatory changes do not make it harder for those businesses to locate in residential zones.

Commissioner Leighton stated that it would be interesting to know how many complaints about home businesses that currently exist. She suggested that they think about coordinating the capacity for the utilities in urban centers.

Acting-Chair Commissioner Leighton thanked Mike and Gordon for their time.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

There was no public comment.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

Acting-Chair Commissioner Leighton adjourned the meeting at 9:02 am.