



# City of Seattle Seattle Planning Commission

Josh Brower, Chair  
Barbara Wilson, Executive Director

## SEATTLE PLANNING COMMISSION SEPTEMBER 24, 2009 APPROVED MEETING MINUTES

### **COMMISSIONERS IN ATTENDANCE**

Chair - Josh Brower, , Linda Amato, Catherine Benotto, David Cutler, Chris Fiori, Colie Hough-Beck, Mark Johnson, Marty Kaplan, Kay Knapton, Amalia Leighton, Kevin McDonald, Christopher Persons, Matt Roewe, Amanda Sparr

### **COMMISSION STAFF**

Barbara Wilson-Director, Katie Sheehy-Planning Analyst, Robin Magonegil-Administrative Specialist, Diana Canzoneri-Demographer, Michael Pickford-intern

### **COMMISSIONERS ABSENT**

Vice-Chair Leslie Miller, Jerry Finrow

*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 Josh Brower called the meeting to order at 7:31 am.

### **COMMISSION BUSINESS**

#### ▪ **Chair's Report - Commission Chair Brower**

Chair Brower noted the upcoming meetings: the Executive Committee will meet on Tuesday, September 29; the Housing, Neighborhoods and Urban Centers Committee will meet on Tuesday, October 6; the Full Commission will meet again on Thursday, October 8; and the Land Use and Transportation Committee will meet on Thursday, October 15. He also said that the 2011 Comprehensive Plan update will kick off on either November 17 or November 19 and asked Commissioners to please save those dates. Chair Brower thanked Commissioners Hough-Beck and Benotto for their work writing 'discussion papers' for the Green Factor and green building. He also thanked Commissioners Miller, Persons and Johnson for their testimony to City Council in support of the proposed backyard cottage legislation. He also thanked Commissioner Leighton for taking over as co-chair of NPAC. Ms. Wilson noted that City Council has scheduled a tour of townhouses for October 14 and that there is space for four Commissioners. She asked those Commissioners who would like to join the tour to send her an email.

Ms. Wilson also stated that Commissioner Cutler attended the recent PLUNC meeting to discuss the impact of changing regulations related to backyard cottages such as reducing the allowable size or height, and restricting where windows could be placed. Commissioners expressed an interest in continuing to work with

Council to minimize these potential changes to the legislation and agreed to have the Executive Committee determine how best to proceed.

- **Minutes approval**

**ACTION: Commissioner Kay Knapton moved to approve the minutes; Commissioner Amalia Leighton seconded the motion. The minutes approved by 13 affirmative votes and one abstention from Commissioner Martin Kaplan.**

## **DISCUSSION & REPORT**

- **Neighborhood Status Reports**

- Barbara Wilson & Katie Sheehy, SPC Staff

Ms. Wilson provided a brief overview of the Neighborhood Plan Status Report process. She stated that the City's Department of Planning and Development specifically asked the Planning Commission to provide a summary report for the open house meetings that occurred this past summer. She then outlined the draft agenda for the next round of public meetings, which will likely be scheduled in early November. She also reminded Commissioners that a 'State of the Neighborhoods' report will be provided to the Mayor and City Council by the end of the year as the final product of this planning effort.

Ms. Sheehy explained the series of documents staff put together from the Commissioners' work.. She noted that three documents have been created: (1) an executive summary with the Commissioners' synopsis of comments from the neighborhood breakout sessions and online questionnaire responses; (2) the Commissioners' summary report from the neighborhood breakout sessions; and (3) the verbatim responses to the online questionnaire. She outlined how these documents could be accessed from the Commission's website or a CD. Ms. Sheehy also described the draft format for the Executive Summary, which would be produced in limited quantity. Commissioners thanked staff for their work in producing these documents and discussed the draft format for the Executive Summary. Commissioners agreed that the neighborhood summary should be in the following format:

- Who we heard from
- What we heard
- The key similarities between the public meeting discussion and the online questionnaire responses
- Key differences between the two
- Selected quotes from both the electronic and hard copies of responses to the questionnaire

Commissioner Persons suggested that a small graphic or picture from the neighborhood would help liven up the neighborhood summaries. Commissioners Kaplan and Knapton agreed that additional graphics would be useful. Chair Brower reiterated his appreciation for all the work Commissioners and staff put into the documents.

- **Affordability Trends Report**

- Diana Canzoneri & Mike Pickford, SPC Staff

Ms. Canzoneri began by outlining the purpose and format of the 'trends reports' that she will prepare on the topics of livability, affordability, sustainability and mobility. She noted that mobility will be included in each of the reports rather than being the focus of a separate report. Ms. Canzoneri indicated that the 'trends reports' will help to measure the stated goals of the Comprehensive Plan. She provided an overview of the

various goals and policies in the Comprehensive Plan related to affordable housing, described the types of data that is available and explained some of the variables that need to be considered when identifying trends.

Mr. Pickford described the geographic considerations related to how affordable housing is distributed throughout the city – e.g. within urban centers and villages, along transit corridors, and neighborhood planning boundaries. He also noted that access to transportation could be another consideration when trying to describe housing affordability but that it is difficult to measure. Commissioner Johnson suggested that if mobility is to be included in all of the trends reports, then it would be helpful to have a map of transit access throughout the city. There was a brief discussion about how transit access could be measured, including mention of Seattle’s Urban Village Transit Network. Commissioners also discussed the value of focusing on urban centers and villages compared to other areas of the city.

Commissioner Fiori suggested that because the available tools for providing affordable housing are limited, it will be important to focus on policy areas that could actually contribute to making housing more affordable. Commissioner Benotto agreed and remarked that even being able to measure the potential impact of incentive zoning programs is a challenge. Ms. Canzoneri noted that staff still needs to understand what data is readily available.

Mr. Pickford and Ms. Canzoneri further explained the level of geographic data that is available and how it could potentially be use to measure housing affordability in Seattle. Commissioner Knapton asked if this information would lay the groundwork for a discussion about how preserving large amounts of single family zoning limits affordability in the city. Commissioners discussed how the urban village strategy and development patterns outside of downtown also impact housing affordability.

Ms. Canzoneri said that she would like to set up an ad hoc group to further clarify the policy goals for the affordability trends report and asked Commissioners to send her an email if they would like to participate.

Chair Brower thanked Commissioner Cutler for spending an hour and a half at PLUNC and asked if he had any feedback that he would like to share with the Commission. Commissioner Cutler indicated that Council is really concerned about the height of backyard cottages and considered requiring additional review as part of the permitting process. He also thanked Commissioners Kaplan and Roewe for their suggestions, which helped him create a matrix illustrating what the proposed legislation would allow. Commissioners agreed that the difference between 21 and 22 feet was more significant in terms of the functionality of a cottage than in terms of how tall the structure appears.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

There were no public comments.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

Chair Josh Brower adjourned at 9:10 am.