

**SEATTLE PLANNING COMMISSION
SEPTEMBER 11, 2003
APPROVED MEETING MINUTES**

Commissioners in Attendance: John Owen, Chair; George Blomberg, Vice Chair; Ray Connell, Jeanne Krikawa, Joe Quintana, Steve Sheehy, Mimi Sheridan, Steve Sheehy, Paul Tomita.

Commissioners Absent: Angela Brooks, Anjali Bhagat, Matthew Kitchen, Lyn Krizanich, Denise Lathrop, Tony To.

Staff: Marty Curry, Executive Director; Barbara Wilson, Commission Analyst.

Guests: Michael Woodland; Chris Lehman; Yvonne Sanchez, Department of Neighborhoods; Rebecca Herzfeld Department of Neighborhoods; Scott Dvorak, DPD; David Graves, DPD; Chuck Kirchner, SDOT; John Taylor, Council Central Staff.

Call to Order

Chair John Owen called the meeting to order at 3:25 p.m.

Approval of Minutes

Commissioner Steve Sheehy made a motion to approve the July 24, 2003 minutes
Commissioner Paul Tomita seconded and the Commission unanimously approved the minutes.

COMMISSION BUSINESS

CHAIR'S REPORT

▪ **Time Logs**

Commission Director Marty Curry reminded Commissioner to fill out timesheets and that it is important for the Commission to reflect its breadth and depth of work on behalf of the City.

▪ **Commission Membership**

Chair John Owen introduced Raymond Connell, our new "Get Engaged" Youth Commissioners. He will serve a one year term as a full Commission member. Chair Owen noted also that Angela Brooks has been approved by the Mayor for appointment to a full Commission member position. Chair Owen announced with regret that Gregory Davis has submitted his formal resignation. He noted that Gregory needs to devote much of his attention to non-profit organization he directs. Currently the Planning Commission has 2 vacancies and will have third at the end of

the year. Staff will be working with the Mayor's office on recruitment for these positions over the next couple of months.

UPDATES

- **Comp Plan Update**

Commission Director Marty Curry reported that Comp Plan staff took our suggestion to get an inspiring speaker for the Comp Plan Update kick-off. Bill Dietrich has agreed to by a keynote speaker at the event, scheduled for October 14. She requested that a couple of Commissioners to meet with Bill Dietrich and staff to help plan the event. The Commission will be cosponsoring the event with DCLU.

- **Department of Planning and Development (DPD)**

Chair John Owen reported that City Council has approved changing DCLU's name to the Department of Planning and Development. This will become formalized by the end of October. He added that the Planning Division is now a reality with the hiring of John Rahaim as the director. He suggested that the Commission meet with John and the other managers in the Planning Division soon.

- **Monorail SAP**

Chair John Owen reported that he and Commissioner Jeanne Krikawa will participate in a City Council briefing on the Monorail station area planning process tomorrow to the Council Neighborhood, Arts, and Civil Rights Committee. They will offer the Commission's advice from the recent discussion with Station Area Planning staff. He noted that staff also sent a memo to SAP staff at the direction of the Executive Committee summarizing key points from our August 5th briefing from them which he will share with Councilmembers.

- **Sound Transit/Light Rail**

Chair Owen reported that Commission Analyst Barbara Wilson prepared a letter from the LRRP, Planning Commission, Design Commission and Arts Commission supporting Congressional approval of funding for the project. This letter is particularly timely given today's news that the House Transportation Appropriations Committee Chair wants to deny the funding.

PROJECT UPDATES

- **Housing Choices Report**

Staff Barbara Wilson informed Commissioners that the Commission's Housing Choices report was mailed to about 250 people and is available on the Planning Commission website. She reported on several activities related to release of the

report including a briefing of the full Council on August 4, release of a news advisory, and follow-up with DJC reporter Sam Bennett for an article.

Ms. Wilson reported that Jory Phillips briefed the SPC Housing, Neighborhoods and Urban Centers Committee at their September 9 meeting on the proposed detached accessory dwelling unit legislation. Phillips reported that a legal challenge to the DNS was filed, and was just heard by the Hearing Examiner. This will delay transmittal of the legislation to the Council so they are not likely to consider the legislation until early next year. At that time the Commission will plan to continue its efforts on this issue including briefing council and the mayor.

▪ **Monorail Review Panel (MRP)**

Commissioner Steve Sheehy updated the Planning Commission on the process and schedule noting that MRP has worked out a schedule for review with SMP. He announced that MRP would review design guidelines at its September 15th meeting and would receive a briefing on the alignment and station locations at the September 22nd meeting. He stated that MRP will follow a segment by segment review. Commissioner Sheehy welcomed other Planning Commissioner to attend MRP meetings

▪ **Monorail DEIS**

Barbara Wilson reported that the Commission had a successful work session on September 10 and will hold the second work session on September 18. Staff will compile all of the comments from work session and the written comments they have received, inserting key points into the draft letter that is being crafted. She noted that the September 22 briefing to MRP on the Monorail alignment and stations is open to Planning Commission and the Design Commission members and will be a good opportunity to get clarity from SMP before finalizing the Commission's DEIS comments. Ms. Wilson reminded Commissioners of the September DEIS Public Hearing and called for a volunteer to deliver the Planning Commissions testimony at that hearing.

Commissioner Sheehy asked whether the Planning Commission needs to give testimony at the hearing in addition to submitting formal written comments. Commissioners Sheridan and Owen stated that they have found giving both formal and written comments to be useful and worthwhile.

Commissioner Krikawa asked that Planning Commissioners be provided with the Commission's 2002 Programmatic DEIS Comments for comparison.

COMMISSION WORK PLAN DISCUSSION

Chair John Owen reported that staff has put the 3rd/4th Quarter Work Plan together along with a timeline that shows more specific events and activities that will engage Commissioners' and staff time and energy. Marty Curry briefly walked the Commissioners through both documents stating that it is important that Commissioners are comfortable with their assignments and the Commission's expected tasks and products over the next four months.

Chair Owen noted that Commission involvement has been requested from the mayor, council and/or city departments for all of the projects on the Commission's work plan.

Commissioner Paul Tomita remarked that the Planning Commission is involved in a variety of efforts to enhance public process. He stated his opinion that the Commission has played an important and valuable role through these types of activities, but noted that the Commission should seek resources when asked to take on public process roles.

Commissioner Jeanne Krikawa said she appreciated the level of detail for the timeline and would recommend adding anticipated products to the timeline. Others agreed and staff indicated their intent to do this.

Action: Commissioner Krikawa moved, Commissioner Sheridan seconded motion to approve the work plan and timeline as a working document and updated periodically and with the addition of Commission products. The motion was unanimously approved.

PRESENTATION/DISCUSSION:

Neighborhood Plan Implementation Briefing and Update

Chair John Owen welcome Yvonne Sanchez, Director, DON and Rebecca Herzfeld, Director of the Neighborhood Preservation and Development Division to brief the Commission on neighborhood plan implementation. He noted the Commission's long-standing commitment to neighborhood planning as advocates, stewards and participants and its ongoing interest in making sure that these plans are implemented over time.

Ms. Herzfeld presented the Commission with an example fact sheet on NPI status that DON has prepared for all neighborhood plans. These have been sent to each stewardship group for comment. Commissioner Paul Tomita suggested DON outline the elements of the Neighborhoods Plan that cannot be implemented with an explanation of why they cannot be implemented.

Ms. Herzfeld reported that this fall DON will work with every Neighborhood Plan Stewardship group to update the Neighborhood Plan Priorities and Recommendations and to incorporate these into sector implementation plans to help the City and neighborhoods do a better job prioritizing projects with limited resources. The goal is to create a more realistic set of high priorities. Ms. Herzfeld shared with the Commission the data results showing that a vast majority of priorities were listed as “high”.

DON is also updating the Neighborhood Plan database to track the current status of all neighborhood plan projects listed in their adopted matrices. They have added tracking items such as “in progress”, “completed” and “closed” to provide more detailed and accurate tracking. DON staff will begin this process by meeting with stewardship groups to help prioritize remaining plan projects/recommendations and to look for opportunities.

Commissioner Jeanne Krikawa asked if DON is planning to do this every year. Ms. Herzfeld stated they would hope to at least do a matrix/project update every year. Commissioner Paul Tomita noted that some neighborhoods have a lot more items than others. Ms. Herzfeld stated that there are a wide range of type and scope of projects so the numbers alone don’t tell the whole story. Commissioner Joe Quintana asked which neighborhoods have plans. Ms. Herzfeld pointed out the 38 neighborhood plan areas on a map she had available for viewing.

Ms. Herzfeld reported that when DON staff takes this out in October they will be trying not to raise expectations but also recognize the long-term nature of implementing twenty year plans. They know that some of neighborhood plan recommendations are on-going efforts that don’t have an easily identified completion date. Commissioner John Owen asked about the level of energy in the communities. Ms Herzfeld stated that the level of energy varies among neighborhoods. Some communities are focused on implementing pieces of the plan but may not be focused on the broader plan where as other neighborhoods are focused on implementing the whole plan. Monorail has brought new energy into those neighborhoods and DON is coordinating with the City’s Station area planning team.

Commissioner Joe Quintana asked how they are guarding against the squeaky wheel syndrome. Ms. Herzfeld stated that they have made a lot of progress and will require additional outreach to minimize this. DON has also found the CNC to be a useful tool for looking at issues city wide so hope to use this forum for broader issues. Commissioner George Blomberg brought up the issue of equity and asked how that has been dealt with in the process. Commissioner John Owen added that he wondered how social justice plays into the equation. DON Director Yvonne Sanchez stated that race relations and social justice issues certainly have a deep impact on DON’s work, noting that Rebecca Herzfeld has helped incorporate this into neighborhood planning. For example NDM’s have noted neighborhoods that not growing as fast as others may require special attention because they are poorer neighborhoods or have with limited capacity. The City has been able to focus

business district revitalization activities, funding for pedestrian lighting, and other improvements to some of these areas. They have been targeting special areas rather than special populations.

Yvonne Sanchez then addressed the budget impacts and related DON budget cuts that had been released earlier in the day. She reported that DON will have a \$1.4 million cutback in 2004. In addition to cutting back on consulting budgets, travel and educational costs, deferring new equipment, etc., the department will abrogate the Neighborhood Plan Implementation staff – the three Neighborhood Development Managers and Division Director positions along with four support staff positions. Ms. Sanchez made it clear that the Mayor is still very supportive of neighborhood plan implementation and has committed an additional \$900,000 (in REIT funds) the neighborhood matching fund, focusing on fast-growing neighborhoods. She also stated that she is working to creatively ensure there are adequate resources for supporting neighborhood plan implementation.

Ms. Sanchez reported that Brent Crook will take on the overall responsibility for neighborhood plan implementation and will work with Neighborhood District Coordinators who will take on more responsibility for working with stewardship groups to implement plans. The Neighborhood District Coordinators will also take over the interdepartmental coordination. She noted that OPM was willing to look at taking the lead in places such as Northgate, the University Area and South Lake Union. OED is taking an active role in neighborhoods where the Mayor has identified an economic development focus. DCLU will also take a role in the broader coordination of neighborhood plan implementation as it related to implementing the comprehensive plan. She expressed her appreciation that the other departments have expressed a strong desire to work collaboratively in finding a good solution to resource challenges.

Commissioner Mimi Sheridan stated that it seemed Ms. Sanchez was taking the right approach under the circumstances. She noted that the Planning Commission has had very little working relationship with Brent Crook. She also expressed concern about focusing some neighborhood plan efforts only on economic development, feeling that is too narrow a lens. She also expressed concern about putting additional money in the Neighborhood Matching Fund program without the staff support to help with the management of the money.

Ms. Sanchez responded that Neighborhood District Supervisors (there are two) will play a larger role to support the neighborhoods. She also stated that the \$900,000 is not a matching grant. Commissioner Sheridan asked where the \$900,000 is going and suggested that growth areas would be a good focus. Ms. Herzfeld stated that these funds are slated for the four fastest growing areas.

Commissioner Joe Quintana stated that he supported the idea of focusing on economic development areas especially in distressed communities where increased employment

opportunities can leverage jobs and a better economy. He also recommended that DON contact and build a relationship with the UW Urban Business Assistance Project that has a wonderful Economic Opportunity Initiative for minority communities, noting they have done some very fine work with minority communities.

Commissioner Owen stated he thinks the City is losing a critical and important resource in the loss of these staff, noting that the Department of Neighborhoods has a skill set that allows the City to communicate with the community. He fears that without the NDM's there it will appear to communities that no one is in charge.

Ms. Sanchez stated that she understands that this is a response to a revenue shortfall and that she is sorry to losing such great staff. She knows it will be challenging but believes that the Neighborhood District Coordinators have a lot of skill and will need to work to fill that gap.

Commissioner Paul Tomita asked if it would be helpful to draft a letter advocating for the importance of neighborhood plan implementation. Commissioner Sheridan asked if it made sense for the Commission to weigh in with Council. Commissioner Owen stated that stewardship is about more than projects. Ms. Sanchez stated that the City is in no way dismantling stewardship. Ms. Herzfeld stated that what is important is taking a long term approach to ensure the plans translate into something doable.

Commissioner Quintana stated he was uncomfortable with the Commission weighing in to a budget battle and weighing it against other decisions. Ms. Sanchez noted that indeed many neighborhoods expressed concerns about issues such as public safety, youth and drugs and that these issues will also need important resources. She stated that the Mayor will give his budget speech to Council on September 29th.

ACTION: Commission Chair Owen recommended that the Planning Commission consider whether action should be taken on this matter and suggested that the matter be sent to Executive Committee for further consideration and then brought back to the Full Commission at one of their next meetings. There was consensus to continue discussion.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Chris Lehman made a request for the Planning Commission to advocate for neighborhood plan stewardship resources, stating the neighborhood plan stewardship effort cannot afford to lose its staff resources. He pointed out the stewardship groups receive no direct administrative support for mailings, updates or outreach making it a challenge to fulfill the mandate. He also stated that with a loss of resources, other departments need to take responsibility for implementing the approved neighborhood plans.

He made another request to have the Planning Commission join with other Commissions to advocate for the equipment that was supposed to go in the Boards and Commission meeting room to allow Seattle Channel to tape and have a live feed for meetings with public significance. Additionally the room was to be equipped with phone in capabilities. He requested that the Planning Commission ask for the same public access that has been afforded elsewhere in the City.

Commissioners thanked Chris for his comments and suggestions and agreed to look into them.

ADJOURN

Chair Owen adjourned the meeting at 5:40 p.m.