



## APPROVED MINUTES OF THE MEETING

**Mike McGinn**  
Mayor

**Diane Sugimura**  
Director, DPD

**Marshall Foster**  
Planning Director, DPD

**Mary Johnston**  
Chair

**Andrew Barash**

**Julie Bassuk**

**Graham Black**

**Brendan Connolly**

**Lauren Hauck**

**Laurel Kunkler**

**Julie Parrett**

**Norie Sato**

**Donald Vehige**

**Guillermo Romano**  
Executive Director

**Valerie Kinast**  
Coordinator

**Tom Iurino**  
Senior Staff

**April 1, 2010**

Convened 10:00am  
Adjourned 4:00pm

### Projects Reviewed

Waterfront Planning  
1200 Stewart  
Thomas Street Concept Design  
Council President Richard Conlin  
Councilmember Sally Clark  
Councilmember Mike O'Brien

### Commissioners Present

Mary Johnston, Chair  
Brendan Connolly  
Julie Bassuk  
Lauren Hauck  
Laurel Kunkler  
Julie Parrett  
Donald Vehige

### Staff Present

Guillermo Romano  
Valerie Kinast  
Tom Iurino  
Jenny Hampton



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**April 1, 2010**                      **Project:**                      **Councilmember Mike O'Brien**

**Phase:**                      Discussion  
**Last Reviewed:**        N/A  
**Presenters:**              Mike O'Brien, City Council

**Attendees:**              Esther Handy, council staff

**Time:** 3pm-4pm

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## SUMMARY

The Design Commission thanks Council member Mike O'Brien for his first visit to the Design Commission and the opportunity to open up the dialog with him early in his time with the Council.

## Presentation

City Council member Mike O'Brien explained to the Design Commissioners his role and responsibilities on the Council. His position involves leadership of the Seattle Public Utilities and Neighborhood Committee. He has an interest in having water and drainage issues considered as part of neighborhood planning and implementation. His focus for the city includes exploring carbon neutrality for Seattle, empowering communities and initiatives in race and social justice.

Commissioners took the change to talk with Councilmember O'Brien about portal and viaduct planning, Neighborhood public planning, and community participation in decisions.

## Commissioners' Questions/Comments

*We have been having meetings with the design teams and consultants for the portal. At the initial presentation, we were less than impressed with what was proposed. We wrote a letter with our suggestions and we are now very involved in working meetings with them. We have been alternating between full commission briefings and working meetings. Our role has been looking at the project from the urban design perspective and giving advice in that nature. This has been a working relationship with the Design Commission involved.*

I would review how the Design Commission can act as a leader in reviewing these proposals and act as a voice for the city in these types of discussions.

*In terms for you wanting to have a city voice, it is critical for the Design Commission to get involved early on in the process.*

Another area where the council needs to really engage are the fiscal goals of the project and making sure that the amenities that are involved are not lost. We want to make sure that this is taken care of so Seattle can be a great place.

*It is so great for us to hear this because it is a concern for us as it is too often that those public amenities get lost due to cost overruns.*

*Any general thoughts or hopes on neighborhood planning under your wing?*

In 2009, we did the review processes for Mt. Baker, Beacon Hill, and Othello communities.. We are now in a review process looking at this work and what the framework might look like going forward, what the long range plans are for the area. It is a challenge, learning from last year's work. The city did a great job connecting with a diverse range of people and surmounting language barriers. Figuring out how to expand this process, but also make it more community driven not so city driven. Looking back, we need to have some specific metrics for this community process in order to define some outcomes.

*We think there should be some focus on areas with high capacity around transit and encourage the city to prioritize planning around these areas creating tools that speak to these areas as a first phase.*

*Is there a degree of inflexibility when it comes to some standards of technical infrastructure?*

This is sometimes a cost issue, but we need to solve this problem and figure out a new path to take when it comes to creating sustainable neighborhoods in Seattle, to think creatively and make efforts to incorporate flexible standards that might work.