

CNC Meeting May 24, 2003

In attendance: Brent Crook, DON, John Coney, Magnolia/Queen Anne, Pete Spalding, Delridge, Catherine Stanford, Downtown, Melia Brooks, Mayor's Office, Marco Lowe, Mayor's Office, Jory Phillips, DPD, Diane Sugimura, DPD, Andrew Taylor, East, Stephen Lundgren, Ballard, Irene Wall, Northwest, Dennis Ross, Southwest, Mike Thompson, North, Ref Lindmark, NW Transportation Committee, Steve Cory, NE, Gregory Hill, Wallingford Community Council, Scott Meyer, SE, Chris Leman, Lake Union.

Excused: Vic Barry, Magnolia/QA DC; Ann Donovan, ED

Guests: Diane Sugimura, Director of DPC; Jory Phillips, Planner, DPD; Melia Brooks and Marco Lowe, Mayor's Office; Greg Hill, Wallingford architect

Mike Thompson, North District Council and Vice Chair, gavelled the meeting to order at 6:35 pm and asked for volunteer to take minutes. Irene Wall volunteered.

April minutes were not ready for distribution.

The Chair allowed announcements from the floor. Stephen Lundgren reported that the Pro-Parks Oversight Committee will be working in June on rules for next round of Opportunity Fund (\$4M). Previously Pro-Parks funded projects will be eligible. Stephen Lundgren moved that the CNC pass a resolution commending Deborah Jacobs, City Librarian, and the Library Board for success of the downtown library. Chair Thompson asked the matter to be postponed to end of meeting owing to tight agenda. Stephen agreed.

Diane Sugimura & Jory Phillips: on Detached Accessory Unit (DADU) proposals

DPD is preparing legislation to allow outright in all single family zones detached accessory dwelling units (DADUs) with conditions imposed on their allowable height, roof pitch and maximum gross floor area. Currently Seattle allows attached accessory dwelling units, i.e. separate units within the main house on the lot. The DADU is a separate house. Under a demonstration project in 1998, 10 DADUs were permitted, five of which were constructed. The Planning Commission sponsored 3 focus groups in Feb 2003 ("regular" citizens; citizens with additional knowledge of zoning/housing issues; and a group of design professionals) to evaluate the DADUs and recommend standards. A total of 24 people participated in focus groups.

Demonstration project also evaluated cottage style development and other residential small lot housing however DPD has focused more on DADU implementation than cottage style housing. DPD believes that DADUs support Comp. Plan goals; could provide alternative desired by older persons for smaller homes, or for those who don't want to live in an apartment, and can provide supplemental income.

Jory Phillips reported on results of survey in neighborhoods where demo DADUs were built. A total of 120 responses were received. 21% rated projects "bad"; 23% rated them neutral, and 56% rated projects "good." Phillips provided handout with survey results. Concerns most often raised were loss of privacy, parking impacts, traffic.

DPD prepared development standards to address focus group concerns: min. lot size of 3000 sq feet; min. 25-foot width and min. 70-foot depth. 35% lot coverage (same as currently allowed). Max height varies with lot width allowing up to 23 feet at roof pitch on a lot 40 feet wide and above. Variable heights are meant to limit shadow impacts on adjoining property. Side and rear yard setbacks set at 5-feet. Max. gross sq. footage (GSF) set at 1,000. Some flexibility provided for converting existing structures. If a garage is converted by placing a housing unit above, the garage portion is counted in GSF but roof can be taller.

One off-street parking space is required and owner must occupy either the main or accessory house. Can have up to 8 unrelated persons living in either DADU and/or main house per current code. Enforcement of all condition on complaint basis only. Sugimura said that many architects have expressed interest in DADUs but other people have as well. DPD studied a few other jurisdictions allowing DADU and concluded that ~1% of lots would add DADUs per year. DPD anticipates 100 permits per year but could monitor and Council could impose limits if deemed excessive. Speakers open for questions. Stephen Lundgren commented that there has been little demand for ADUs since city made them legal. Questioned the extent of demand for DADUs. Asked if DPD would notify neighbors when DADU permit was issued since the Demonstration. Housing Project relied on extensive public notice.

DPD: There will be no public notice for DADU permits. This would not be a discretionary decision therefore DPD would not impose other conditions based on particular neighbor concerns. So no reason to invite public comment. DADUs would not be subject to SEPA or design review.

Andrew Taylor asked how to ensure owner occupancy when properties are sold. DPD says there is notice on title and seller will be obliged to inform the buyer of the provision

John Coney expressed strong reservations and that QA neighborhood plan disallowed DADUs based on observed public safety problems with existing "alley houses" and illegal ADUs. Said most will not be designed by architect and will be future substandard housing.

Michael Thompson also asked how DPD will amend neighborhood plans to allow DADUs where otherwise rejected.

Diane Sugimura responded that DADUs should not be regulated based on the behavior of some individuals. Said that DPD will make effort to remove illegal ADUs if they get complaints. Explained that neighborhood plans don't supercede overarching land use code. Diane reiterated that the goal is to meet changing demographic needs and provide housing options. Suggested that since average household size is shrinking, even having DADUs in many areas might not increase overall population.

Chris Leman asked why not impose a limit of 100 permits/year.

Dennis Ross felt that 5 pilot projects was too small a sample on which to base citywide changes. Diane explained that the demonstration projects were to test development standards, not to take a popular vote on the concept of DADUs which she believes are justified based on other city goals for housing diversity and density.

Greg Hill, an architect and Wallingford resident brought illustrations showing shadow and lot coverage studies he had done to demonstrate detrimental effects of DADUs. Greg asserted that DPD has misinterpreted its own code to allow DADUs since the intent of original legislation (under Sue Donaldson) was to only allow attached accessory units. His other criticism were that owner occupancy rule will be easily overturned in Court; that based on experience in Berkeley, CA, some areas will become saturated with DADUs and they will become rooming houses in the Univ. District. DADUs threaten loss of large trees in backyards and will cast shadows over neighbor's yards and alleys. Greg said that 35% lot coverage will be a significant increase over current typical 16% coverage in many neighborhoods.

Steve Cory also expressed NE District's concerns about adding congestion to streets with more parking where emergency vehicles can barely get through now. Says that conversion of SF homes to duplexes is better alternative than DADUs. Said that the Univ. District accepted growth on expectation of traffic concurrency which has not happened. Also city does not enforce noise complaints now because of lack of police.

Stephen Lundgren offered example where DPD abated an illegal garage as evidence that enforcement does happen. Also said the areas outside urban villages are slated for more development under the Comp Plan.

Marco Lowe introduced Melia Brooks (Mayor's Office staffer) who offered her personal testimony about why she wants to build a DADU for her grandmother since Melia (her husband and 4 children) have purchased the "family homestead." This would allow her family to occupy the main house and still have a place for her elderly relative to live nearby.

There is a draft ordinance however Marco Lowe explained that there is no schedule yet to introduce the legislation to Council.

Committee Reports

Budget Committee

Pete Spalding outlined the committee 3-phase strategy to communicate priorities on budget to Council culminating in a unified group presentation at Council budget hearings in the fall. Committee will present draft budget proposals in June to full CNC. This will become basis of next communication to the Mayor.

John Coney moved for approval of the May 19th budget letter. Unanimous approval.

Pete urged that each District Council can still lobby for their individual interests in budget process, but CNC needs to encourage citizen participation because there's less incentive in time of lean budgets for people to attend workshops. He urged all members to review their District budget priorities and send that information to him in June.

Committee and city staff debriefed the CNC sponsored spring budget workshop which has disappointing citizen attendance. Conclusion that more people participated in years when there is funding and opportunity to lobby for projects. Not much incentive in times of cuts.

Utilities Brownbag

Chris Lehman urges each District Council to send representative to June 30th "Brown bag" meeting on coordinating SPU capital projects with neighborhood needs. Pete explained the format for 90 minute meeting as presentations from 2 utility reps, a CNC opening statement, Council members and central staff presentations. This leaves little time for questions so they must be prepared in advance. Chris Leman expressed concern that the format does not allow for dialogue and consultation, which is closer to CNC's mission than listening to staff briefings.

Transportation Committee

John Coney announced that he will be on vacation next meeting and Ann Donovan will be chairing next transportation committee meeting. Has invited Linda Amato (CNC appointee to the CTACII committee to the June 18th committee meeting to discuss the CTAC funding recommendations. At last meeting, Tom Madden (WDOT) made presentation on Alaska Way Viaduct. June 1 is deadline for comments on AWV EIS.

AWV Statement of Principles

John provided copies of final language on one page statement of principles to be submitted to WDSOT before EIS comment deadlines. This was subject to heavy debate and editing over two transportation committee meetings to arrive at consensus language. Earlier drafts were submitted to Districts for discussion. Ref Lindmark and Catherine Stanford, both members of the transportation committee, expressed support for the letter even though different neighborhoods had different views on the proposed options, the committee pared down items to arrive at broadly accepted statements.

_____ moved and _____ seconded to place the letter before the CNC for approval.

Dennis Ross made amendment (accepted as friendly) to modify item 1 to read:

1/TRAFFIC/CAPACITY – Retain or improve present capacity for passenger and freight vehicles in both directions of SR99 in the AWVR segments. Regain Northwest Portal capacity via Western Avenue and Elliott Avenue and improve access at northbound ramps at Spokane Street and eastbound West Seattle Bridge.”

Stephan Lundgren expressed concerns that some all of the items in letter are not high level principles but instead are statements of support for the tunnel option and against other options. His District includes BINMIC which has stated its principles that the corridor retains freight capacity which will not happen with the Bypass option. Stephen argued that the letter favors waterfront interests more than citywide interests. Discussion ensued on whether or not the letter should be changed to state preference for one option for AWV replacement. Consensus was not to do this since there is no consensus on that topic.

Steve Covey moved to accept the letter with friendly amendment. Seconded by John Coney. Discussion opened and Stephen offered amendments to items 2 and a major rewrite of item 4. Amendment to item 2 was to include sentence “Do not adversely impact other areas of the city.”

Rewrite number 4 was written on the white board. #4 amendment focused on goals of public view protection, meeting needs of traditional industrial and maritime traffic and need to recognize the huge impact of Aurora/SR99 on all N-S access in the city, not just on the central waterfront downtown. After lively debate, Covey declined to accept Amendment #4 as friendly. Members of transportation committee concurred. Stephen withdrew Amendment #4, partly on basis that the statement of principle was considered a Draft EIS comment only.

Motion to accept statement of principles as amended passed unanimously.

Neighborhood Planning Committee

Irene Wall reports that she is compiling NPC committee members review comments on Comprehensive Plan Amendments proposed by staff. She made available a summary of general comments to date and some specific responses to amendment language in Land Use section of Plan and requested that individuals submit their own comments to Tom Hauger, the DPD project manager for the Comp Plan update. Since the official deadline for public comments on Comp Plan amendments is May 28th, the NPC will submit comments but make clear that they are not the official CNC response. She made some observations about major issues which are not clearly addressed in 10 year update such as overall capacity for growth in housing and jobs and what is desirable versus possible; should growth should pay for growth, i.e. impact fees or other concurrency charges; what are the likely public costs of changing South Lake Union to an Urban Center versus Hub Urban Village.

Stephen noted that the Plan now uses the phrase growth “estimates” versus “targets” which reduces some pressure to made zoning changes and development concessions if “targets” are not met. Staff analysis states that new (2024) growth estimates can be met without zoning changes. Stephen suggested that neighborhood plans should be made more regional in nature. Greg Hill remarked that Comp Plan policies on single family zoning would have to be changed before DADUs legislation or they would be out of compliance.

Mike Thompson announced that resolution on the library will be put on June agenda. Tabled report by Brent Crook on demographics will be heard at next meeting. Announced that Council members Richard Conlin, and Richard McIver are confirmed for June meeting. District reports for East, SW, and SE are also postponed until June meeting. As point of information, Mike Thompson announced he has filed to run for City Council but has not selected a seat.

Meeting adjourned at 9:15 pm

Submitted by Irene Wall