

## **CITY NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL**

### **Minutes for the May 24, 2010 meeting**

District Council representatives in attendance: Jim Del Ciello, (Southwest District Council and CNC Vice-chair); Chas Redmond, (Southwest District Council and CNC Chair); Chris Leman, (Lake Union District Council and CNC Budget Committee Chair); Irene Wall, (Northwest District Council and Neighborhood Planning Committee Chair); Sharon Sobers, Laine Ross, (Downtown District Council and Neighborhood Matching Fund Committee Chair), Philip Shack, (North District Council); Nancy Bolin, (Northeast District Council) Dick Burkhart, (Southeast District Council), Janis Maloney (East District Council)

Guests in attendance: Skip Knox, Gregory Hill, Ron Harris-White, Parks and Recreation

#### **Agenda and April Minutes**

Were approved

#### **Neighborhood Planning Committee – Low Rise Zoning Letter**

Ballard District Council was opposed to sending the letter regarding opposition to the proposed Low-rise Zoning changes. The Coalition of Residential Architects (CORA) made presentations to Ballard and Southwest District Councils. CORA felt there was enough flexibility in the changes for them to work with. Issue of “piece-meal” development of parcels not being subject to design review. Irene has draft review of CORA response to CNC letter; they seem to feel that CNC letter is a bit harsh.

Greg Hill, a guest speaker of Irene Wall, spoke about why architects do not like the new proposed changes to the multifamily zoning code. New code reduces set-backs and increases heights for townhouses. He spoke about how code simplification does not simplify the code, but rather adds a layer of complexity. He said that increasing housing and supply does not make housing more affordable. He believes that we have increased units due to greed – mainly of those in the development business. He mentioned that Sally Clark, who chairs the Council’s Committee on the Built Environment, has many donors who are developers, thereby making the argument that the code is changing because of developers.

Q: Can you compare the changes in the building code in Seattle to other cities in America?

A: Houston has no building code and many strip malls as a result.

Q: Aren’t the proposed changes tracking a national phenomenon?

A: True.

Q: Is it bad to incentivize people that way?

A: Do you care about the value of existing property? The green factor isn’t met by just planting a tree. I believe that this is not what most people want.

Q: Is the code difficult to understand?

A: Yes. It is complicated. It could be made more simple and not by the proposed changes. We could shorten the code by eliminating numerous exceptions and get rid of some of the oddball exceptions.

C: Perhaps CNC Executive Committee should approve letter.

Q: Doesn’t the code provide stability?

A: No. Because of its complexity.

C: The people in the Lake Union District are concerned that townhomes are becoming too big, but do favor townhomes over apartments.

R: Agreed.

C: It's not a bad idea for the CNC Executive Committee to send a letter if the CNC cannot unanimously agree. It's not a radical letter saying that the members of the CNC are opposed to height limits. It's a Socratic letter and asks good questions; Ballard's opposition surprises me.

C: The CNC can still send a letter even without the agreement of everyone.

R (Greg Hill): There are three issues that most impact the surrounding areas with regard to the proposed change in the code: setbacks; height issues; and the green factor (eliminating landscape). The low-rise zones take up a lot of area of the city and about the single-family areas.

Q: What are some of the oddball exceptions you mentioned?

A: Not all buildings have to be 100 by 100 in size. The code makes it easy to build and get rid of setbacks. For example, slope lots get breaks. Also, the code allows for piecemeal/combining lots together and redefining lot lines, which will in turn be redefined for the future.

Q: Where is the hearing on this?

A: There will be a public hearing at the Bertha Knight Landes room at 5:30 p.m. tomorrow.

Q: Our neighborhoods are a hodge podge and odd looking per others. Is this change to the code going to bring uniformity to how things look?

C: There is no visual depiction of the code changes and its adjacent shadowing on neighborhoods.

A: The supporters of the changes to the code (CORA) want to build boxes in three stories.

C: Come to Madison Park. They are building huge boxes there.

### **Further discussion**

Irene then reported that there will be a second hearing on the proposed changes to the code. The body then discussed the issue of sending a letter. The letter would ask questions about the changes and raise questions about the impact on neighborhoods. It was decided that Chas would send out the letter one more time - with a deadline of June 15<sup>th</sup>. This would give the body sufficient opportunity to make objections.

### **Neighborhood Matching Fund Committee – Laine Ross, Chair**

Laine distributed the Neighborhood Matching Fund 2010 Project Fund District Council Review Guidelines. She said this was almost the final draft and they are still waiting for District Council responses. A helpful spreadsheet was attached to the guidelines outlining a brief description of the responding District Councils processes for evaluating large projects. The goal is to somewhat standardize the procedure across districts and ensure everyone follows the legal requirements.

Laine noted that this would be further fleshed out this week. The spreadsheet went out to District Coordinators who are tasked to confer with the Chairs to complete and/or verify the accuracy of the information collected.

Laine thanked all for their involvement and participation. The information collected here will be added to the District Council audit response.

C: Pointed out that years ago the CNC proposed a resolution that if District Councils put in only numerical ratings without a narrative that the CRT could ignore their ratings. It is important for District Councils to provide words to the rating.

C: Rating rationales do still need to be submitted. Laine will send e-mail reminding of need for those.

C: Reminder that scores have to be submitted no later than May 27, 2010 at midnight.

**Budget Committee – Chris Leman, Chair**

We are facing drastic cuts in the upcoming budgets. Neighborhood Service Centers, the Neighborhood Matching Fund and Parks are all in danger of large cuts. Chris shared the letter that the Budget Committee has drafted. The letter states that where cuts are made, the City should not reduce services to the public. It will stress the importance of not cutting Matching Fund or Service Centers. Also asks for additional staff person at DON to assist with Gathering of Neighbors type events in the city. The letter will state that the City should continue the addition of police officers and keeping libraries open.

Q: Any example of what we could forgo?

A: Last year we looked at places where we could make cuts and it became too controversial and almost killed the letter. It might be a better idea to identify the proposed cuts to be made and then comment.

All Districts are encouraged to write their own letters to the City.

Q: Any thoughts on suggesting additional sources of revenue?

A: We have never done that before. We might consider a separate letter on that. We are still making changes to the letter and we will be writing another letter in the fall.

C: One idea for increased revenue could be to increase fines for law violators.

Chris proposed that the body authorize the letter, but still allow time for the representatives to review. Chris explained that there will be two rounds of budget cuts; once this year and another at the beginning of next year. The mid-year budget cuts will be announced before the next meeting. The body could always tailor a subsequent letter to address budget revisions. A second letter will be sent out in October.

The following motion was made, seconded, and approved:

The CNC authorized, subject to future comments, a letter addressing the budget drafted by the Budget Committee. The letter shall be distributed to all members of the CNC no later than June 15, 2010, for comment.

It was further agreed that the letter would be revised to allow for some comments to the mid-year budget review. Also, the letter will be reformatted to emphasize the major points, i.e. to add bullet points to emphasize neighborhoods and public safety.

**Transportation Committee, Ref Lindmark, Dick Burkhart, Co-Chairs:**

The Mayor's Walk, Bike, Ride Initiative will be kicked off on May 26th to promote the same and transit. This is the City's own opportunity to adopt its own transit plan. There will be a citizen's advisory committee. The body nominated Dick Burkhart to serve on that committee. Chas indicated that he would contact SDOT and request information on how the CNC and the District Councils can get representation on the committee.

**Announcements:**

Laine mentioned that she would like to see the CNC have a conversation about branding.

Chas announced that he will be sending out another version of the work plan - separating out action items.

The remainder of the agenda was tabled due to time.

Meeting adjourned.