



# City of Seattle Seattle Planning Commission

Linda Amato, Chair  
Barbara Wilson, Executive Director

## SEATTLE PLANNING COMMISSION APRIL 23, 2009 APPROVED MEETING MINUTES

### COMMISSIONERS IN ATTENDANCE

Chair-Linda Amato, Vice-Chair Chris Fiori, Catherine Benotto, Josh Brower, David Cutler, Jerry Finrow, Marty Kaplan, Kay Knapton, Amalia Leighton, Leslie Miller, Christopher Persons, Matt Roewe, Michelle Zeidman

### COMMISSION STAFF

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

### COMMISSIONERS ABSENT

Colie Hough Beck, Mark Johnson, Kevin McDonald

### GUESTS

Adrienne Quinn, Office of Housing; Bill Bryant, Barbara Gray, Seattle Department of Transportation

### IN ATTENDANCE

*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 Linda Amato called the meeting to order at 7:33 p.m.

### COMMISSION BUSINESS

- Minutes approval

**ACTION: Commissioner Kay Knapton moved to approve the April 9, 2009. Commissioner Josh Brower seconded the motion. The motion to approve the minutes passed unanimously.**

- **Chair's Report** - Commission Chair Linda Amato

Chair Amato announced the upcoming meetings: on Tuesday, April 28 will be a lecture on sustainable development co-hosted by the Planning Commission and Councilmember Clark; the next Executive Committee will meet on Tuesday, May 5; the next full commission meeting will be on Thursday, May 14.

Ms. Wilson reminded Commissioners to send in their comments and disclosures about the Commission's letter regarding neighborhood plan status reports.

Chair Amato asked Commissioners Knapton and Roewe to share their thoughts about the visiting delegation from Montenegro last week.. Commissioner Roewe briefly described the country and the discussion.

Commissioners Knapton and Brower provided a brief update about NPAC.

### **BRIEFINGS & DISCUSSION**

- **Briefing: 2009 Housing Levy**  
- Adrienne Quinn, Office of Housing

**Recusal & Disclosure:**

- Commissioner Josh Brower disclosed that he is the Chair of Elderhealth Northwest, which does a great deal of work with the City's Office of Housing.
- Commissioner Christopher Persons disclosed that his firm, Capitol Hill Housing, does a lot of work with the Office of Housing and receives funding through the housing levy.

Ms. Quinn described the Office of Housing's (OH) work for the 2009 levy renewal that the Mayor will announce next Wednesday. She explained that City Council will review and revise the proposed levy, mostly during May and hopes to vote on the final levy in mid-June. She noted that the levy would be on the November 3 ballot. Ms. Quinn described OH's process for preparing the levy, including evaluation of Seattle's current practices as well as best practices throughout the country. A technical advisory committee was also convened to provide recommendations about the size, direction, proportional size of programs, etc.

Ms. Quinn noted that the current levy has been very successful and the proposed levy will include many of the same programs. She said that this will be the fifth time the City has asked the voters to support affordable housing; the levy provides the city's largest means of rental preservation and production for low-income households including formerly homeless, seniors, and people with disabilities. Ms. Quinn described the levy as the city's local stimulus package that leverages much more money from state and federal programs. OH estimates that more than 4,000 jobs were created in construction and real estate through the previous levy. She noted that these programs help provide affordable homes for local workers who otherwise would have to live outside of the city. She explained that OH has evaluated the external benefits, particularly for homeless individuals. She cited a University of Washington study that found tax payers are saved \$4 million each year through "Housing First" programs that provide additional services to formerly homeless individuals who

were heavily dependent on emergency services. She also noted that the high quality of design for these new buildings contributes positively to neighborhoods and helps stimulate reinvestment.

Ms. Quinn briefly described other programs funded through the levy including operations and maintenance, rental assistance and homebuyer assistance. She noted that there have not been any foreclosures with the homebuyer assistance program funded through the previous levy.

Commissioner Brower asked if Yesler Terrace would be part of the levy. Ms. Quinn replied that while there is not any specific funding for Yesler Terrace in the levy, the Seattle Housing Authority may apply for funds.

Commissioner Finrow expressed his support for the levy and asked how the current market might affect funding of tax credits. Ms. Quinn replied that, as part of the federal stimulus package, the state finance commission received \$40 million to substitute for lack of tax credits, but that financing will continue to be difficult. She noted that there is some optimism that sometime next year the market for tax credits will strengthen.

Ms. Wilson asked if there are any specific issues where elected officials might want feedback from the Planning Commission. Ms. Quinn indicated that she is not sure but that tax sensitivity and the economics of the levy will be an important part of the discussion.

- **Briefing: Pedestrian Master Plan and Transit Master Plan**  
- Bill Bryant and Barbara Gray, Seattle Department of Transportation

**Recusal & Disclosure:**

- Commissioner Matt Roewe disclosed that his firm, Via Architecture, conducts transit plans in and around Seattle.
- Commissioner Michelle Zeidman disclosed that she is working with Sound Transit to design bicycle parking around light rail stations.
- Commissioner Josh Brower disclosed that his firm, Tupper Mack Brower, has an on-call contract with Sound Transit.
- Commissioner Amalia Leighton disclosed that her firm, SvR, is working on the Pedestrian Master Plan and that she has been directly involved in the project.
- Commissioner David Cutler disclosed that his firm, GGLO, is working with Futurewise on a transit communities report.

Mr. Bryant provided information about the Transit Master Plan that there was not time to present at the April 9 meeting. He outlined the partnership between the City and Metro to fund transit service. He noted that in September 2008, additional service was provided for about ten routes; more service will also start in September of this year and hopefully in 2010.

Vice Chair Fiori asked about the contractual obligations of the service. Mr. Bryant replied that the outcome will not be determined until budget cuts are finalized in the fall; there are a range of potential outcomes.

Commissioner Finrow asked when this funding would sunset. Mr. Bryant replied that the City's funding will end in 2016 with the "Bridging the Gap" levy, but that Metro's piece does not.

Ms. Gray outlined SDOT's work on the Pedestrian Master Plan, which began in June 2007. She noted that a Council resolution directed the scope and established an advisory group.

[NOTE: The Pedestrian Master Plan can be found on-line here:

[http://www.seattle.gov/transportation/pedestrian\\_masterplan/default.htm](http://www.seattle.gov/transportation/pedestrian_masterplan/default.htm)]

Commissioner Benotto asked about traffic calming. Ms. Gray replied that there are a variety of methods SDOT uses. She noted one of the goals of the Pedestrian Master Plan is to be more proactive about these types of street improvements.

Commissioner Roewe thanked Ms. Gray for her presentation and asked about how zoning is factored into the prioritization of areas. Ms. Gray replied that areas with more residents are more highly prioritized. She noted that system connectivity is also important.

Commissioner Miller asked if the street fund process would be changed based on this plan. Ms. Gray replied that there are a variety of funding sources that are important for different types of projects. She also indicated that the maps will be published on-line and could help inform communities that are trying to get funding for local projects. Commissioner Miller asked if there is a strategy to reduce parking on the sidewalk. Ms. Gray replied that in addition to enforcing existing laws, people also need to be educated about them and that the Pedestrian Master Plan is also an educational tool.

Commissioner Knapton asked about crosswalks at intersections where the walk signals are not coordinated and the curb cuts are not well aligned. Ms. Gray agreed that some signals could be improved. She also noted that the City is working on making improvements and educating people; she acknowledged that things like unaligned curb cuts have a disproportionate impact on some people.

Commissioner Kaplan asked about funding to help promote sidewalk education. Ms. Gray replied that the Neighborhood Matching Fund provides between \$15,000-100,000 annually and the neighborhood street fund has three year cycles for larger projects. She also noted that maintenance is on-going and funded separately.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

There was no public comment.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Chair Amato adjourned the meeting at 9:04.