



City of Seattle Seattle Planning Commission

David Cutler, Chair
Barbara Wilson, Executive Director

SEATTLE PLANNING COMMISSION FEBRUARY 28, 2013 APPROVED MEETING MINUTES

COMMISSIONERS IN ATTENDANCE

Chair David Cutler, Catherine Benotto, Colie Hough-Beck, Mark Johnson, Bradley Khouri, Jeanne Krikawa, Kevin McDonald, Leslie Miller, Chris Persons, Matt Roewe, Morgan Shook

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT

Kadie Bell, Luis Borrero, Josh Brower, Amalia Leighton, Sarah Snider

COMMISSION STAFF

Barbara Wilson-Executive Director, Diana Canzoneri-Senior Analyst, Katie Sheehy-Planning Analyst

IN ATTENDANCE

Susan McLain, Dave LaClergue, DPD

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's Report**

- Chair David Cutler

Chair David Cutler called the meeting to attention at 7:37 am. He noted that there are no minutes to approve and went through the upcoming Commission meetings that are on the back of the agenda. Chair Cutler stated that Nora Liu from DPD would be joining the Commission meetings more often to provide updates about what is happening with neighborhood planning.

The Commission briefly discussed South Lake Union and the possibility of a letter or some other way to nudge City Council to decouple affordable housing from this specific rezone. Ms. Wilson asked Commissioner Shook to prepare a statement and she would figure out when to get this on the Commission's agenda. She added that they would try to discuss this at the Housing & Neighborhoods Committee meeting.

▪ **Review & Approve: Seattle Transit Communities Strategy report to City Council**

Katie Sheehy gave a brief update on the report noting that there is help needed on the leadership discussions. The Commissioners had some questions regarding whether or not this document will be able to answer some of the questions that have come from the community. Ms. Wilson replied that she believed so and that they were seeking to provide clarity.

▪ **Briefing: University District Urban Center Plan update**

- Susan McLain & Dave LaClergue, DPD

Chair Cutler called for any disclosures and/or recusals.

DISCLOSURES & RECUSALS:

- Commissioner Matt Roewe disclosed that his firm, Via Architecture, works on municipal/agency planning and private development projects throughout Seattle that could be affected.
- Commissioner David Cutler disclosed that his firm, GGLO, designs projects and advises clients throughout the city of Seattle that could be affected.
 - Commissioner Josh Brower disclosed that his firm, Veris Law Group PLLC, represents single and multifamily developers throughout the city that might be affected.
 - Commissioner Morgan Shook disclosed that his firm, BERK, has been asked by the City to assist on task related to this project; however, BERK is not currently under contract.
 - Commissioner Bradley Khouri disclosed that his firm, b9 Architects, works on projects throughout the city of Seattle that could be affected.
 - Commissioner Colie Hough Beck disclosed that her firm, HBB, works on commercial, multifamily, and public infrastructure projects throughout the city that might be affected and the Port of Seattle is a client.
 - Commissioner Catherine Benotto disclosed that her firm, Weber Thompson, designs projects and advises clients on development projects throughout the city that might be affected.
 - Commissioner Mark Johnson disclosed that his firm, ESA, has Sound Transit as clients and could be affected, and has provided environmental impact assessment services on similar projects to DPD in the past, and may provide such services on the U-District plan.
 - Commissioner Chris Persons disclosed that his firm, Capitol Hill Housing, develops affordable housing throughout the City and could be affected.

Susan McLain noted that since the last time she had talked to the Commission the project in the University District has been progressing. She mentioned the background report that was done early last year. Ms. McLain stated that they are not doing so much of an update to the neighborhood plan as a strategic approach to the urban design framework. She added that is what they would be reviewing with the Commission.

The link to the University Project page is below.

http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/Planning/University_District/default.asp

Ms. McLain noted that there would be an open house in March; probably a comp plan amendment and they will be updating some policies. She added that they are publishing mid-March and will have a full open house in April. She suggested the Commission might want to have their formal comments in by mid-April.

Commissioner McDonald asked about the principle to connect west. Commissioner Roewe suggested that they play ahead of the station and that a sense of permanence is missing in the neighborhood.

Commissioner Krikawa asked what the 0 - 25% referred to. Mr. LaClergue stated that it was improvement value to land value. Ms. McLain agreed that they should clarify the key. Ms. McLain mentioned the assembly, the number of parking owners, and surface parking lots.

Commissioner McDonald stated that, on page 21, there is a lot of bus transfer activity there but no at grade crossing and suggested maybe improving the intersections for pedestrian travel. Commissioner Roewe stated that Metro was not able to commit to any integration with the station. Ms. McLain added that there planning is several years out.

Commissioner Hough Beck referred to the page on parks and stated that, assuming that it reflects participants, there does not feel like there is enough open space. She wondered if it would be addressed through the design guidelines. Ms. McLain replied that, looking at TDR/TIF, it is based on property taxes and the University of Washington is exempt. Mr. LaClergue noted that the parks issue is the most controversial with several groups wanting very different things.

Mr. LaClergue explained the conceptual height recommendations on the map. Commissioner Roewe suggested that they might add information about institutional overlay. Ms. McLain added that there were not height limits until the 1970s. Mr. LaClergue noted that it implies that everything is going to go up to the height limits and that 240' makes high rises feasible but 300' does not offer that much more and you wind up losing floor area. Commissioner Roewe agreed and suggested 340' feet like Belltown as four more floors helps to justify it a little. Ms. McLain stated that they are looking at both commercial and residential. She added that Heartland will inform them on the residential size. Commissioner Khouri wondered how much of it will be light rail connectivity as that seems to be a big draw. Ms. McLain stated that it links the U District to other urban centers. Ms. McLain stated that, if the Commission had any strong opinions regarding maximum height then they would need to get the working group onboard. Commissioner Johnson thought that asking for something a little bit beyond would be good. He added that the difference between 300' and 400' could mean 100 more families.

Commissioner Johnson shared his perception that there is a self-fulfilling prophecy of building student houses and that getting a grocery store south of 45th would be a challenge. Commissioner Khouri asked how large the market was. Mr. LaClergue answered that it is a big corner store.

Commissioner Khouri asked about district heat and how realistic the conversations have been. Mr. LaClergue replied that they have been introductory. He added that OSE has done a study and the University District was mentioned because of a clustered development potential.

Commissioner Roewe stated that is was a very collaborative group and that it was a positive thing to see the station be the catalyst. He added that they see the height issue as an investment and are not frightened by it.

Chair Cutler thanked Susan McLain and Dave LaClergue for their time.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Cutler adjourned the meeting at 9:02 am.