



City of Seattle Seattle Planning Commission

Linda Amato, Chair
Barbara Wilson, Executive Director

SEATTLE PLANNING COMMISSION MAY 14, 2009 APPROVED MEETING MINUTES

COMMISSIONERS IN ATTENDANCE

Chair-Linda Amato, Vice Chair- Chris Fiori, Catherine Benotto, Josh Brower, David Cutler, Jerry Finrow, Colie Hough-Beck, Marty Kaplan, Kay Knapton, Amalia Leighton, Kevin McDonald, Christopher Persons, Matt Roewe

COMMISSION STAFF

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

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT

Mark Johnson, Leslie Miller, Michelle Zeidman

GUESTS

Mary Catherine Snyder, Margo Polly, SDOT; Norm Schwab, Council Central Staff; Jodie Vice, Councilmember Drago's Staff

IN ATTENDANCE

David Marcoe, Dan Nolte, Gordon Clowers

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 3:05 p.m.

COMMISSION BUSINESS

- Minutes approval

ACTION: Commissioner Kevin McDonald moved to approve the April 23, 2009 minutes. Commissioner Kay Knapton seconded the motion. The motion to approve the minutes passed unanimously.

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

Chair Amato announced the upcoming meetings: Tuesday, May 19, Executive Committee; Thursday, May 21, Land Use and Transportation Committee; Thursday, May 28 is the next Full Commission meeting.

Chair Amato provided a brief update about the Commission's review of the proposed Multifamily Code changes. She noted that the HNUC Committee will submit a letter for the Full Commission to approve that will be the first in a series of letters about the proposed changes. Council will most likely be reviewing the code through the end of the year.

Chair Amato reminded the Commissioners that they will host a series of open house meetings with the Neighborhood Plan Advisory Committee in June and July. She said that Commissioners will be informed as soon as the meetings are scheduled.

Ms. Wilson asked the Commissioners to start thinking about new leadership. She noted that a new chair, vice chair, and chairs (or co-chairs) of the committees will be elected early this summer. She asked for three people to volunteer to be on the nomination committee. Commissioners Hough-Beck, Leighton, Kaplan and McDonald volunteered.

BRIEFINGS & DISCUSSION

- **Briefing: Restricted Parking Zones**

- Mary Catherine Snyder, Margo Polly, SDOT

Recusal & Disclosure:

- Commissioner Marty Kaplan disclosed that he is currently a candidate for City Council; a member of the Queen Anne Community Council, Land Use and Planning committees that have studied the proposed RPZ; and a principal of Martin Henry Kaplan Architects, that designs projects in locations that have RPZs.
- Commissioner Josh Brower disclosed that his firm, Tupper Mack Brower, represents clients who own and/or develop properties that might be impacted by the proposed program.
- Commissioner Catherine Benotto disclosed that her firm, Weber Thompson, designs projects in locations that have RPZs.
- Commissioner Colie Hough-Beck disclosed that her firm, HBB, has contracts with SDOT to provide landscape design service.

Chair Amato introduced Mary Catherine Snyder and Margo Polly who presented SDOT's proposed changes to the Restricted Parking Zone (RPZ) program. She explained that the Commission will need to review and provide comments on the proposed legislation quickly because the Transportation Committee plans to vote it out of committee on Tuesday, May 19. Ms. Wilson introduced Norm Schwab with Council Central Staff and Jodie Vice with Councilmember Drago's staff who were both able to attend today's meeting and answer any questions Commissioners might have about the proposed legislation.

Ms. Snyder began by noting that the LUT Committee had a great policy discussion about the RPZ program last year and then provided an overview of the proposed program. [[See attached PowerPoint presentation.](#)]

Mr. Schwab discussed Council's review process of the proposed changes to the Restricted Parking Zone program. He noted that Council has a number of concerns about the proposed legislation related to: (1) the business permit pilot program; (2) the limit on the number of permits per household; (3) guest permits; (4) the ongoing cost of RPZ permits supported by major institutions; (5) increased thresholds for forming a RPZ; and (6) replacing the resident petition with SDOT administrative process.

Ms. Vice clarified that the Transportation Committee will likely vote on the proposed RPZ legislation this coming Tuesday but that Full Council would not vote on it until early June.

Commissioner Kaplan expressed support for lowering the limit on number of permits per household below eight. He asked if there is an option for variable pricing of the permits and noted that RPZs can have unintended consequences. Ms. Snyder replied that SDOT did consider a progressive fee structure but because rates have already been raised by \$10 this year, they decided to wait until at least the next cycle to implement further rate increases for the RPZ permits. Mr. Schwab indicated that Council was also considering having SDOT explore a progressive fee structure further.

Vice-Chair Fiori asked how the pilot program would prioritize one type of commuter over another. Ms. Snyder replied that the pilot program would protect existing businesses and residents from hide-and-ride commuters. She noted that there is not currently a parking problem around the light rail stations in southeast neighborhoods and that the intent of the pilot program is to ensure that employees and residents still have access. Ms. Polly noted that the intent is to keep existing businesses in these neighborhoods where their employees typically cannot rely on transit. She also indicated that the pilot program will allow SDOT to evaluate parking demand and then make changes based on that information. Mr. Schwab noted that Council has some reservations about the pilot program and that they are looking at amendments to ensure that the program does not extend to other neighborhoods. Ms. Snyder commented that the station areas in industrial areas present a unique situation and that SDOT has been working with business owners in the areas to develop an appropriate program. She noted that SDOT does not want to create more problems than they are solving.

Commissioner Brower thanked Ms. Snyder and Ms. Polly for their presentation. He noted that it is important for the City to keep its policies consistent with the Comprehensive Plan. He said that because eight unrelated adults can legally live together, he would caution Council not to lower the number of RPZ permits below eight. He suggested that a fee structure based on the number of permits issued per *person* rather than per *household* might be more appropriate. Ms. Vice replied that Council is considering an amendment that would exempt households that have financial hardships. Ms. Snyder noted that the proposed legislation would require an individual to have their vehicle registered in their name at their residence in an RPZ in order to obtain a permit.

Commissioner Leighton said that it will be really helpful to have a new permit monitoring system and that it will be interesting to see the results. She noted that the application process is not particularly easy and that applicants need to gather a lot of information. Commissioner Leighton suggested that SDOT clarify the process for applicants. She asked if perhaps the pilot program could

establish areas similar to the downtown carpool zones that restrict parking at specific times in certain areas then allow anyone to park in those areas at other times. Ms. Snyder replied that it could be an interesting way to address the problem but that it would not be easy to identify the most appropriate hours to restrict parking. Commissioner McDonald suggested that perhaps early afternoon, so that commuters would have to move their cars by three in the afternoon to allow residents to have places to park in the evening.

Commissioner Roewe asked why the RPZ permits are so inexpensive. Ms. Snyder replied that the fees are set to cover administrative costs, not to further any other policy goals. She suggested that a progressive fee structure could be considered in the future. Commissioner Roewe noted that even if a permit cost \$100, that would still be much less than off-street parking in an apartment building.

Commissioner Knapton commented that she has a number of concerns about the RPZ program – that it seems to conflict with eliminating parking requirements in urban centers and station areas and that tends to favor protecting parking in front of single family houses. She noted that our transit service is inadequate and that it focuses much more on 9 to 5 commuters rather than 24 hour service. Commissioner Knapton suggested that the City should look at parking citywide rather than piece-by-piece. She added that there are too many overlapping issues that prevent reaching a good solution. She noted that in neighborhood business districts, business owners need places for their customers and employees to park, particularly late at night. She asked why the City wants to penalize hide-and-ride parkers rather than create ways to accommodate them. Commissioner Knapton added that she felt that the permit fee should be \$500.

Commissioner McDonald asked about the boundaries for the pilot program around light rail stations. Ms. Snyder replied that they are ¼ mile from the light rail stations. Commissioner McDonald suggested that would not be large enough to deter hide-and-ride parkers. Ms. Snyder replied that SDOT will be monitoring the program.

Commissioner Cutler seconded Commissioner Knapton's concerns and suggested that there should be a parking master plan.

Commissioner Persons said that he is also concerned about the program because it leads to many unintended consequences as described by Commissioner Knapton. He asked how low-income households would be impacted by higher permit fees. Ms. Snyder replied that there is a lower fee for low-income households.

Commissioner Finrow suggested that without citywide strategic planning, there will not be a policy that works for the whole city. He recommended that City Council establish a blue ribbon task force.

Vice-Chair Fiori suggested that perhaps the Commission could offer recommendations about how to strengthen the current proposal and also push for a citywide review in the near future.

Commissioner Leighton proposed that the proposed changes will allow data to be collected that will help inform a citywide parking review. She noted that until the City has more information, it will be difficult to devise useful policies. She also said that increased enforcement could do a lot to address these issues.

Ms. Polly said that SDOT is seeing an increased demand for parking in RPZs around vibrant business districts. She noted that SDOT wants to look at other regulations that will provide better parking management. She indicated that SDOT does not want to discourage people from going to business districts in the evening.

▪ **ACTION: 2009-2010 Work Plan**

Chair Amato noted that there was a spirited discussion about this year's work plan at the retreat and Ms. Wilson outlined the draft work plan.

The Commissioners discussed a few changes to the proposed plan including adding a Planning 101 item to the Commission's Administrative work and a few other edits.

ACTION: Commissioner Kay Knapton moved to approve the 2009-2010 work plan as amended. Commissioner Josh Brower seconded the motion. The motion to approve the work plan passed unanimously.

▪ **ACTION: Affordable Housing Action Agenda Comprehensive Plan Amendments**

Recusal & Disclosure:

- Chair Linda Amato disclosed that her firm, ICF Jones & Stokes, works on affordable housing policy and currently has a contract with PSRC.
- Commissioner David Cutler disclosed that his firm, GGLO, designs affordable housing.
- Commissioner Colie Hough-Beck disclosed that her firm, HBB, provides landscape architectural services for low income housing developments.
- Commissioner Amalia Leighton disclosed that her firm, SvR, provides services for affordable housing providers.
- Commissioner Josh Brower disclosed he is currently President of Elderhealth Northwest.
- Commissioner Marty Kaplan disclosed that he is currently a candidate for City Council.
- Commissioner Christopher Persons disclosed that his firm, Capitol Hill Housing, manages and develops affordable housing and that he serves on the Housing Development Consortium's board.

Ms. Wilson summarized the Commission's work on the Affordable Housing Action Agenda and outlined the four amendments proposed by the Commission last year, which was the first time the Commission proposed amendments to the Comprehensive Plan. She indicated that the amendments proposed for this year will help forward the Action Agenda. Ms. Wilson noted that the proposed amendments are a timely bridge connecting the Action Agenda and the upcoming Seattle's Transit Communities report. She reminded everyone that the language does not have to be finalized for the application because it will likely be changed during the review process.

Ms. Wilson then explained the proposed amendments for this year:

- Revise Housing Policy 9 to reference the Transit Master Plan's Urban Village Transit Network standards for high quality transit service rather than just light rail station areas and transit hubs as areas where housing preservation, development and affordability should be coordinated.

- Create a new Housing Policy that encourages estimated household transportation costs at a specific site to be considered when federal, state, local or private money is being spent on affordable housing.
- Revise Housing Policies 18 and 20 to strengthen language or clarify that accessory dwelling units include backyard cottages.

Ms. Wilson reminded the Commission that the proposed amendments could be withdrawn later in the process if necessary.

Commissioner Brower stated that he agrees that Housing Policies 18 and 20 should be revised to explicitly reference detached accessory dwelling units. Commissioner Finrow concurred.

Commissioner Brower asked if detached accessory dwelling units could exacerbate parking problems in RPZs. Ms. Wilson replied that off street parking has to be provided for the new housing. She noted that the Commission previously advocated for more flexibility about the parking requirement in areas that have good access to transit.

Commissioner Kaplan agreed with Commissioner Brower that accessory dwelling units are typically thought of as attached rather than detached. The Commissioners weighed the pros and cons of considering these proposed amendments and agreed that they are appropriate to submit in the 2009 amendment cycle.

Commissioner Hough-Beck asked for clarification about the proposed new housing policy. Ms. Sheehy explained that while there are a number of housing policies that encourage the dispersion of affordable housing, none specifically address the additional cost of household transportation when determining which locations are appropriate for affordable housing. Commissioner McDonald suggested that the proposed amendment could be revised to clarify the intent.

The Commissioners discussed the whether or not to submit a proposal for this new amendment and agreed to move it forward.

ACTION: Commissioner Jerry Finrow moved to approve the Affordable Housing Action Agenda proposed Comprehensive Plan amendments for 2009 as amended. Commissioner Josh Brower seconded the motion. The motion to approve the proposed Comprehensive Plan amendments passed unanimously.

- **Briefing: Planning Director's Report**
- Ray Gastil, DPD

Mr. Gastil thanked the Commission for their letter about the neighborhood plan status report process. He noted that DPD staff is working very hard to meet all of their deadlines for the neighborhood plan updates.

Mr. Gastil described the urban design frameworks that are being developed for South Lake Union and Northgate. He noted that that the planning processes in these neighborhoods are somewhat different, but that overall, the goals are similar in terms of establishing a strong urban design vision for these areas that would help shape new development.

Ms. Wilson noted that Paul Fishberg and Gordon Clowers will be at the next Full Commission meeting to provide an update about their work on Northgate.

Commissioner Hough-Beck asked about alley vacations in South Lake Union and noted that they are very important for loading and unloading at many buildings in the neighborhood.

Chair Amato thanked Mr. Gastil for his time.

Ms. Wilson made one additional announcement about the proposed Multifamily Code changes. She noted that Council plans to review the lowrise zoning first and hopes to conclude that portion by the end of August. She also asked the Commissioners to reserve time on June 5th to attend a Zoning 101 brownbag session related to the Multifamily Code review that will likely be held in Council Chambers from noon until 1:00 p.m.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Amato adjourned the meeting at 5:33.