



City of Seattle Seattle Planning Commission

Tony To, Chair
Barbara Wilson, Executive Director

SEATTLE PLANNING COMMISSION OCTOBER 11, 2007 APPROVED MEETING MINUTES

Commissioners in Attendance

Linda Amato, Vice Chair; Mahlon Clements, Chris Fiori, Mark Johnson, Martin Kaplan, Chelsea Levy, Kevin McDonald, Leslie Miller, Steve Sheehy

Commission Staff

Barbara Wilson-Director, Casey Mills-Planning Analyst, Robin Magonegil-Administrative Specialist,

Commissioners Absent

Tom Eanes, Jerry Finrow, Colie Hough-Beck, Kay Knapton, M. Michelle Mattox, Kirsten Pennington, Tony To, Chair

Guests

John Rahaim, Department of Planning & Development; Stella Chao, Department of Neighborhoods

In Attendance

Nathan Torgelson, Mayor's Office Staff; Rebecca Herzfeld, Christa Valles, Michael Jenkins, Council Central Staff; John Skelton, Department of Planning & Development; Mimi Sheridan.

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

The meeting was called to order at 3:30 pm by Vice-Chair, Linda Amato.

COMMISSION BUSINESS

The approval of the September 27, 2007 minutes was moved down in the agenda due to not having a quorum of Commissioners present.

▪ **Chairs Report**

Vice-Chair Amato discussed the Commission's upcoming meetings for the rest of October and the beginning of November. She called attention to the Public Open House for the Multifamily Code Update, which is scheduled for Monday, Oct. 15, from 5:30 - 8:00 p.m., City Hall, Bertha Knight Landes Room. Vice-Chair Amato noted that DPD is still looking for Commissioners who would be

willing to sit at the small group break out tables and either facilitate or take notes. Vice-Chair Amato asked if there were any volunteers.

Vice-Chair Amato officially welcomed Chelsea Levy to the Planning Commission. She stated that many of the Commissioners have already met Chelsea and are aware that she is the Commission's new Get Engaged member. Vice-Chair Amato noted that her term officially started on September 1.

Vice-Chair Amato welcomed the newest member to the Commission; Leslie Miller. She noted that Commissioner Miller was recently confirmed and will fill the vacancy left by Commissioner Marshall Foster, and that the Commission is very pleased to have her. Vice-Chair Amato asked Commissioner Miller to share a little about her background.

Commissioner Miller stated that she served as the Chair of the Southeast District Council for the past two and half years and worked on a South Precinct Advisory group. Commissioner Miller added that she has done some transportation work and is working to help start an equitable development group.

Executive Director Barbara Wilson updated the Commission on the Industrial Lands Size of Use. Ms. Wilson stated that the Commission was meeting with various members of the Urban Development and Planning Committee at City Council. She added that City Council had many questions regarding a clarification of the intent of the legislation. Ms. Wilson noted that the legislation has been a source of a lot of controversy and that on October 22 there will be a public hearing at City Council but the Planning Commission will not be testifying.

Vice-Chair Amato noted that the Commission will most likely be reviewing several items in the near future: Incentive zoning and affordable housing action agenda and the Dravus rezone should all be coming back to the Commission for review soon.

Vice-Chair Amato stated that Commissioners Mahlon Clements, Kevin McDonald and Kirsten Pennington have been representing the Planning Commission in the review of the University Link. She noted that they have been asked to give a brief overview of the process thus far and to share the preliminary results of the early review.

Commissioner Kevin McDonald gave a detailed overview of the process. He stated that they had two meetings, both of which were hosted in the Design Commission. Commissioner McDonald noted that the first meeting discussed routing and the station locations, that the second discussed the Capitol Hill station at 30 percent designed. He added that Hewitt Architects is the architect for the project and that the station is designed to fit in with the neighborhood, utilizing glass and steel as a way to make the stations feel open and encourage feelings of safety. Commissioner McDonald drew a detailed drawing of the new station area and explained the layout of the designed station. He stated that the next review meeting would be the University station at Husky Stadium at 30 percent designed in December.

Disclosure: Commissioner Sheehy disclosed that he works for Sound Transit and is intimately involved with the stations. He stated he will be negotiating TOD arrangements and MUPs. Commissioner Mark Johnson disclosed that he works for ESA Adolphson, and is working on the permitting for the project.

Ms. Wilson stated that the Design Commission was hosting these review meetings and that anyone was welcome to attend.

▪ **Approval of September 27, 2007 Minutes**

Vice-Chair Amato noted that a quorum had been achieved and called for a motion to approve the September 27, 2007 minutes.

ACTION: Commissioner Steve Sheehy moved to approve the September 27, 2007 minutes. Commissioner Martin Kaplan seconded the motion. Commissioner Kevin McDonald asked for a friendly amendment rewording some statements he made at the September 27, 2007 meeting.

The motion was approved unanimously.

COMMISSION DISCUSSION

▪ **ACTION: Commission Recommendations on Comprehensive Plan F - Commercial Exemption in Duwamish
- Discussion & Vote**

Vice-Chair Amato called for any recusals or disclosures.

Recusal & Disclosures: Commissioner Mahlon Clements disclosed that he would be abstaining from the discussion and vote due to the fact that his employer, Zimmer Gunsul Frasca Partnership, works with the potential developer of the site. He noted that he is not personally working on the site.

Vice-Chair Amato stated that there were some issues with Amendment F that needed to be highlighted. She noted that the first was the potential unintended consequences of approving the amendment, including allowing big box retail more potential to locate in industrial lands.

Ms. Wilson added that issues to consider included whether or not everyone agreed that not approving the amendment was the right decision; what the rationale is for not approving it; should a paragraph be included that discusses the importance of reaching a way that Starbucks can expand in Seattle; and should the Commission offer potential mitigations should the proposal be approved.

Vice-Chair Amato asked each Commissioner if they agreed that not approving the amendment was a good idea.

- Commissioner Chris Fiori stated that he agreed that the Commission should recommend to not approve Amendment F. He stated that the Comprehensive Plan is supposed to address high-level policy issues, not specific sites.
- Commissioner Leslie Miller agreed with Commissioner Fiori's statement, and agreed that the Commission should recommend not approving the amendment.
- Commissioner Steve Sheehy also agreed with the Commission recommending to not approve Amendment F, stating that in the Mayor's report on industrial lands, it suggests creating a TDR site with defined boundaries, but the proposed amendment does not do that. He stated it is difficult to understand important details of the proposal.

- Commissioner Mark Johnson agreed that the SPC should not approve the amendment.
- Commissioner Chelsea Levy agreed with not approving the amendment.
- Commissioner Martin Kaplan agreed with the Commission's recommendation to not approve Amendment F, but stated that the Commission could consider the politics of the situation, and realize that there is likely a strong appetite to approve the amendment. He added that the Commission could offer suggestions for moving forward with the amendments, and include positive comments about working with Starbucks.
- Commissioner Kevin McDonald agreed with the recommendation to not approve the amendment, stating that there was potential inconsistency with approving it and the Commission's industrial lands report. In addition, he stated he was concerned about the transportation infrastructure in the area if a large amount of office space were added.
- Vice-Chair Amato suggested including a section in the letter to Council on the Comp Plan simply stating that the Commission does not approve of the amendment, and then sending a separate letter regarding Starbucks and potential mitigations. She stated the other option would be to state in the letter to Council that the Commission had not reached a decision on the subject, and would do so at a later date.

Commissioner Sheehy stated that if the Commission was going to tinker with the current recommendation regarding the site, it should be done with the entire Commission. He suggested forwarding the rest of the amendments, and letting the Council know the Commission was still considering the rest of the amendments.

Commissioner Johnson suggested including in the letter, regarding all the Comprehensive Plan amendments, that the Commission recommends not approving Amendment F due to its inconsistency with the Commission's report on industrial lands, then sending a more detailed letter at a later date.

Commissioner Kaplan stated that the issue of the amendment being too specific for the Comprehensive Plan should also be addressed. Commissioner Fiori agreed with this.

Commissioner Johnson suggested including this issue in the letter to Council regarding the Comprehensive Plan, and still sending a second letter with a more detailed analysis.

ACTION: Commissioner Mark Johnson moved to approve the SPC's recommendation to not approve Amendment F, and stated the letter to Council regarding the 2007 Comp Plan amendments should cite that it is too specific an amendment for the Comp Plan and that it is not in line with the recommendations made by the Commission in its Industrial Lands report. Commissioner Steve Sheehy seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

- **Presentation: Neighborhood Plan Updates**
 - **Stella Chao, Director, Department of Neighborhoods**
 - **John Rahaim, Planning Director, Department of Planning & Development**

Chair Amato welcomed John Rahaim, Planning Director at DPD, and Stella Chao, Director of DON.

Ms. Wilson reminded Commissioners that in addition to professional affiliations, they must also disclose civic affiliations, such as being on a board or a community council that might deal with the matter, it should be disclosed for the record.

Recusal & Disclosures: Commissioner Leslie Miller disclosed that she as the chair of the Southeast District Council. Commissioner Martin Kaplan disclosed that he was on the Queen Anne Community Council Land Use Committee and the Denny-Broad South Lake Union Advisory Committee. Commissioner Mark Johnson disclosed that he is a member of the Central District Neighborhood group. Commissioner Mahlon Clements disclosed that he is on the board of Futurewise.

Vice-Chair Amato stated that the Commission had worked with neighborhoods a great deal during the creation of the neighborhood plans, and that there was an expectation that the Commission would play a significant role during the update process. She added that the updates were a top-tier item on the Commission's work plan.

Ms. Chao stated that it was important to recognize that the effort was updating the neighborhood plans and not creating neighborhood plans. She noted that the city wants to respect all the previous work that has happened and use it as a foundation. Ms. Chao stated that the Department of Neighborhoods (DON) and the Department of Planning and Development (DPD) would be leading the effort, with DON leading the outreach portion and DPD working on the more technical work. She added that DON hopes to engage communities that have not been participants in the previous efforts.

Mr. Rahaim stated that he wanted to discuss draft two of the proposed process for updating neighborhood plans. He noted that since releasing the original draft, DON and DPD had discussed it with more than 25 groups. Mr. Rahaim added that they made edits based on this outreach and developed a more refined draft. He added that they are taking it out again, and will revise it a second time after this next round of input. Mr. Rahaim reviewed the document, highlighting sections on key principles for the planning process, the proposed process, neighborhood and city staff roles, adoption of the plan updates, and resources assessment and staffing strategy.

Mr. Rahaim stated that he had decided that for each plan, if consensus could not be reached between city staff and neighborhoods, the City Council would be presented with both of their opinions, and could decide how to resolve that difference.

Ms. Chao stated that neighborhoods would be responsible for penning the words in the update, and that there would then be a collaborative editing process.

Mr. Rahaim stated that the final adoption process was still to be determined.

Ms. Wilson asked where the proposal was in the budget process and if anyone had questioned whether there had been enough staff devoted to the effort. Mr. Rahaim replied that the budget was now at Council for approval, and that others had mentioned there might be insufficient staff for the effort.

Commissioner Sheehy stated that the proposal was a good start. He added that a map of the sectors and a timeline of when different elements would occur would be helpful. Commissioner Sheehy noted that he liked the idea of letting City Council decide the differences between city staff and neighborhoods.

Ms. Chao stated that some had been concerned with being lumped in with downtown and that their issues might be dwarfed by downtown issues.

Commissioner Kaplan questioned if the areas between areas with neighborhood plans would be included, and how different neighborhoods in the same sector would be included. He wondered if DON would release something showing the order that the neighborhoods would be updated. Ms. Chao answered that there would be sector-wide meetings as well as meetings within the individual neighborhoods. She added that DON does not want to say that neighborhoods can't vision until it's their turn. Ms. Chao noted that there were other ways to work with these communities, as there would be lots of learning involved, and many tools other than writing up their plan update. She continued that the neighborhood plans were not the end-all be-all for neighborhoods.

Commissioner McDonald stated he was pleased to see that inclusiveness was stated as a priority for the process. He added that a large amount of resources are needed to truly accomplish that.

Commissioner Fiori stated that he was still somewhat confused about the strategic goals of the plan. Ms. Chao stated that the growth is what it is due to market conditions, and while we don't have complete control over growth, we can plan and manage it well.

Vice-Chair Amato stated that the education component would be very important, and that engaging people that weren't engaged last time would be challenging but essential. Ms. Chao stated they hope to change much of the jargon they use to make their discussion of planning more accessible to everyday citizens.

Vice-Chair Amato asked how the Planning Commission could play a role in the process. Ms. Chao replied that a review of the current process proposal would be very helpful as well as doing outreach to communities and the people they know, informing them about the process and how they can get involved. Ms. Rahaim added that the Commission's previous practice of assigning one Commissioner to monitor each plan as it was underway would be very helpful.

Ms. Wilson asked about the timeline for the budget. Mr. Rahaim answered that it is before City Council now, and that they will likely vote on the budget by Thanksgiving.

Commissioner Johnson said it was important to define what growth targets would be used for the process, whether it would be the 2020 targets, the 2040 targets, or some other targets.

Mimi Sheridan stated it was important to notify people of the advantages to having a neighborhood plan, and what happens to a neighborhood if they don't develop a plan. She added that during the educational outreach, the learning curve would be steep, and that completing the plan updates in a year did not seem possible.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

ADJOURNMENT

Vice-Chair Amato adjourned the meeting at 5:15 pm.