



# City of Seattle Seattle Planning Commission

Leslie Miller, Chair  
Barbara Wilson, Executive Director

## SEATTLE PLANNING COMMISSION APRIL 12, 2012 APPROVED MEETING MINUTES

### **COMMISSIONERS IN ATTENDANCE**

Chair Leslie Miller, Kadie Bell, Catherine Benotto, David Cutler, Colie Hough-Beck, Martin Kaplan, Bradley Khouri, Jeanne Krikawa, Amalia Leighton, Chris Persons, Matt Roewe, Morgan Shook, Sarah Snider

### **COMMISSIONERS ABSENT**

Josh Brower, Mark Johnson, Kay Knaptton, Kevin McDonald

### **COMMISSION STAFF**

Barbara Wilson-Director, Diana Canzoneri-Senior Analyst, Katie Sheehy-Planning Analyst, Robin Magonegil-Administrative Staff Assistant, Erika Harris-Intern

### **IN ATTENDANCE**

Sara Belz, Council Central Staff

*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 Leslie Miller called the meeting to attention at 3:08 pm.

- **Approve: March 22, 2012 Meeting Minutes**

**ACTION:** Commissioner Matt Roewe moved to approve the March 22, 2012 minutes. Commissioner Jeanne Krikawa seconded the motion. The minutes were approved with minor edits and Commissioner Bradley Khouri abstaining.

### ▪ **Chair's Report**

- Chair Leslie Miller

Chair Miller welcomed new Commissioner, Morgan Shook. Commissioner Shook gave a brief introduction noting that before his current career choice, he was a biochemist. He stated that he is interested in healthy policy and the life of cities and that he hopes to bring that perspective to the Commission.

Chair Miller welcomed back, Kadie Bell Sata, who previously served as a Get-Engaged Commissioner.

Chair Miller discussed the other commission vacancies and Executive Director Wilson noted that Commissioner Knapton would continue to serve until her position is filled. She added that the Mayor wants to meet with the applicants for the position that he appoints to the Commission. Ms. Wilson stated that the three candidates all are great and have very different backgrounds and perspectives.

Chair Miller went over the upcoming meetings and events and called attention the upcoming Commission Retreat planned for April 26, 2012. Ms. Wilson added that there were travel directions enclosed for the location of the retreat. She continued that staff is working out the details for the retreat but that it will include a walking tour of the walkshed. Ms. Wilson stated that staff would send out some materials/homework in preparation for the retreat.

Chair Miller noted that she and Commissioner Leighton recently attended a PLUS committee meeting where DPD presented the resolution and Tom Hauger did a powerpoint presentation about the big picture ideas. She added that they did not really have any questions and that Council trusts the Commission to be the voice of the community. Chair Miller asked Commissioner Leighton to explain the resilient food element. Commissioner Leighton stated that generally, when we see communities review food policy - promoting farmers markets, p-patches, and land uses that support those on private property, it is about being realistic regarding the appropriateness of crops for our region, those it serves, and how this might improve health.

- **Discussion & Approval: Regulatory Reform**
  - **Specific topics: SEPA & commercial uses in L2/L3**

Chair Miller called for any disclosures and recusals.

Disclosures:

- Commissioner Chris Persons disclosed that his firm, Capitol Hill Housing, develops and manages housing throughout the city and these regulatory reforms may directly benefit or hinder their work.
- Commissioner Catherine Benotto disclosed that her firm, Weber Thompson, designs projects that may be impacted by the proposed legislation.
- Commissioner Matt Roewe disclosed that his firm, VIA Architecture, provides design and urban planning services for both the private sector and governmental agencies on projects that include the areas affected by the proposed legislation.
- Commissioner Jeanne Krikawa disclosed that her firm, The Underhill Company LLC, works on transportation and planning projects throughout the city.
- Commissioner David Cutler disclosed that his firm, GGLO, designs projects that may be impacted by the proposed legislation.
- Commissioner Mark Johnson disclosed that his firm, ESA, provides environmental consulting services to public and private clients throughout the city who could be affected by changes to the SEPA thresholds.
- Commissioner Hough Beck disclosed that her firm, HBB Landscape Architecture, works on housing, mixed-use, public infrastructure, and parks projects in Seattle.
- Commissioner Leslie Miller disclosed that she is an outreach/membership chair of the Southeast District Council Steering Committee, a member of the Othello Park Alliance, the recipient of a 2012 matching fund award and 2012 Bridging the Gap funding for projects within a transit community.
- Commissioner Sarah Snider disclosed that her firm, LMN Architecture, does urban design and various types of architectural projects in the Seattle metropolitan area.

- Commissioner Josh Brower disclosed that his firm, Veris Law Group PLLC, works on single and multifamily development projects and other development projects throughout Seattle.
- Commissioner Amalia Leighton disclosed that her firm, SvR Design, designs projects that could be impacted by the proposed legislation.

Executive Director Barbara Wilson walked the Commission through the letter from the draft that was sent out. She noted that parking and SEPA were not on the agenda for the PLUS committee and that we have already sent a letter regarding the entire package last year. She added that the commission has been asked to be more detailed on elements that the Councilmembers have had numerous questions about. Ms. Wilson noted that two big questions are regarding SEPA and allowing small commercial uses in the MF zones. She stated that there is strong support for the proposed changes to SEPA and what remains the most controversial is allowing small commercial uses in MR/LR2/LR3 ones. Ms. Wilson noted that the goal is to articulate strong support for SEPA. She asked the Commission to discuss that before launching into the issues around small commercial uses in MF zones. Ms. Wilson noted where the Commission has been on the topic of SEPA and clarified that a number of commissioners have expressed that these are areas where they would like to see maximum flexibility. She added that the commissioners recognize that these are dense neighborhoods but feel that there might be a benefit to restricting retail uses so that they can have quieter multi-family zones.

Ms. Wilson asked the Commission to look over #2 on the draft letter that concerns small commercial uses in certain multifamily zone. She went over the timeline and then asked for comments on the SEPA portion of the letter.

Chair Miller suggested some minor edits/deletions for brevity.

Commissioner Hough Beck suggested replacing the work 'get' with 'facilitate' and 'increase the thresholds' rather than 'move the thresholds up'. She added that she also would like to see 'Seattle Process' taken out. Chair Miller suggested that it would be stronger to delete that and Commissioner Cutler suggested starting out with something positive.

Commissioner Roewe suggested tying the # of new residents/jobs to the year.

Commissioner Cutler asked if the letter captured Commissioner Johnson's comments about how impacts would be made. Ms. Wilson replied that she would confirm Commissioner Johnson's changes with him.

Commissioner Roewe stated that a 4<sup>th</sup> option should be illustrated and that the size should be tied to the lot size rather than a straight up 2000 sq. ft. Commissioner Cutler clarified that the 2000 sq. ft. figure is per business. Commissioner Roewe asked if that meant you could fill up the entire lot and Commissioner Cutler replied yes.

Commissioner Shook expressed that adding more supply is a good thing that will reduce rents and accommodate a broader range of businesses. He wondered, in regards to mitigation of externalities with residential uses, how big and how much. He added that the overlay is a crude mechanism and wondered how we figure out what the right number is. Commissioner Shook wondered about extending business districts.

Commissioner Cutler stated that if you take a 5000 sq. ft. lot you would get 3000 sq. ft. total on ground floor and about 2500 sq. ft. for retail. He added that if you look at the national average of tenant ready space it is

about 1800 sq. ft. He suggested that we might be looking too far into this issue and that it is most likely going to be in new development rather than existing buildings. Commissioner Cutler continued that it seemed to him that the market would regulate how many there would be and that he doubted that they would be larger.

Commissioner Benotto wondered if it excludes townhouses, as those seem less likely to have retail. She asked about the possibility of having one unit completely converted. Ms. Wilson responded that it is only on the ground floor. Commissioner Benotto mentioned other cities where the whole townhouse building was converted and she shared her concerns about the adjacent neighbors. Chair Miller asked Commissioner Benotto if she was in favor with the exception/exclusion for townhouses. Commissioner Benotto stated that she was.

Commissioner Snider stated that at the Executive Committee meeting they were talking about retrofitting as being more likely as the market would not be there for new construction. Commissioner Cutler stated that, although he was not a market analyst, in his opinion anything larger than 2000 sq. ft. would be new construction.

Commissioner Khouri stated that he was not opposed to any of the options but that looking at 2000 sq. ft. on a 5000 sq. ft. lot, it is already challenging to make that work for a developer; you are giving up a large portion of the building.

Sara Belz, Council Central Staff, stated that it is 2000 sq. ft. per business.

Chair Miller asked if they were only discussing low rise. Commissioner Leighton asked how much land is low rise. Katie Sheehy replied that there were 10 neighborhoods. Commissioner Leighton noted that there could be potential to expand to transit communities and it would be great to start somewhere to set the stage for the STC discussion. She asked if it replaces a station area overlay. Ms. Wilson noted that the STC will be typology based and that there are different policies for each typology.

Commissioner Persons noted that the impact on Capitol Hill might be greater and that a number of people feel that it has not been vetted enough. Chair Miller stated that Councilmember Conlin stated that he had met with the leadership on Capitol Hill and felt that they were supportive. Commissioner Persons asked which group of leaders.

Commissioner Shook asked what the specific problems are that we are trying to solve. He wondered what the best regulatory tools to mitigate are and what the main concerns are. Chair Miller stated that the concerns are related to noise, odors, outdoor eating and Commissioner Roewe added traffic and parking. Ms. Wilson noted that late night activity remains a concern as well. Chair Miller stated that there is concern about the type of business and that she would not want to see predatory lending businesses.

Commissioner Persons stated that he had a meeting with a prominent ice cream business who stated that, at one of their shops, they get complaints from people who live in the building about the music. He felt he understood people's concerns.

Commissioner Benotto stated that there does not seem to be a shortage of neighborhood commercial. She added that she is worried about the dispersal and that it should be concentrated around transit stops.

Chair Miller summarized what she has heard and asked if the Commissioners if they supported it. Commissioner Persons stated that he does not necessarily. Commissioner Benotto responded that she was

leaning towards not supporting it in low rise. Commissioner Bell said she would support the 2<sup>nd</sup> option but does not think it is going to have much of an impact and is not passionate either way. Commissioner Roewe stated that this could be disastrous for the elected officials. He added that he is uncomfortable with nighttime use in L zones as noise and traffic after hours are a concern. Commissioner Krikawa stated that she is remaining somewhat silent but added that she dislikes over-regulation and likes option 3. Commissioner Cutler stated that they are looking at 1% of the City. He added that this could be one tool to improve flexible development in these areas. Commissioner Cutler noted that he does not feel that there would be a plethora of new uses and would be surprised if that happened. He stated that he would be in support of the 2000 sq. ft. limit and would want to know more specifics regarding nighttime restrictions. Commissioner Cutler stated that if those were not restrictive enough he would go for option 2 but he also might support the Mayor's option. Commissioner Leighton stated that she supports the Mayor's option but would go with any of them. Commissioner Shook stated that more flexibility is a good thing but wondered why do this as an overlay rather than just a rezone. He added that he is in support of creating more supply. Commissioner Snider stated that she could support any of the three options and felt that it was a good way to bring about change. She noted that a business is only going to go into a place where they feel they can succeed so there will be some measure of self-regulation. Commissioner Khouri wondered if developers have been asked and that it should be expanded. Commissioner Hough Beck stated that she supports option 2. Chair Miller stated that she would support it as proposed. Commissioner Khouri suggested having developers in lowrise weigh in on this. Ms. Wilson stated that they have been involved in Regulatory reform and added that if people are not going to do it in the LR zones then make it available and see what happens. Commissioner Persons stated that he would vote for any of them.

Chair Miller suggested that we vote and then relate in the letter how the Commissioners were divided on this. Ms. Wilson stated that she thought there were 7 Commissioners who would support the Executive's option or any of them.

Commissioner Cutler asked if this has similar provision to street level uses. Commissioner Snider replied that she did not think so but would have to check. Ms. Sheehy responded that it is the same as midrise zones. Commissioner Cutler noted that it might be under the threshold of design review.

Chair Miller asked Ms. Wilson if she would be able to capture all of this in the letter. Ms. Wilson stated that she would and clarified that Commissioners Roewe and Khouri seemed to agree that it should be in urban villages or not at all. Commissioner Roewe agreed with that statement. He added that he is very concerned about lot size.

- **Briefing: Bicycle Master Plan Update**
  - Kevin O'Neill, Sara Zora, SDOT

Chair Miller called for any disclosures and recusals.

**Disclosures:**

- Commissioner Colie Hough Beck disclosed that her firm, HBB Landscape Architecture, works on projects that may include infrastructure that might include bikes.
- Commissioner Sarah Snider disclosed that her firm, LMN Architecture, does urban design and various types of architectural projects in the Seattle metropolitan area that might include bikes.
- Commissioner Amalia Leighton disclosed that her firm, SvR Design, is a sub-consultant to Alta Planning + Design for the Bike Master Plan Update.

- Commissioner David Cutler disclosed that his firm, GGLO, works on projects that might be impacted by the Bike Master Plan update.
- Commissioner Leslie Miller disclosed that she is a proponent of 2011 funded Bridging the Gap enhancements to an arterial that include bike infrastructure.
- Commissioner Jeanne Krikawa disclosed that her firm, The Underhill Company LLC, works on transportation and planning projects throughout the city.
- Commissioner Matt Roewe disclosed that his firm, VIA Architecture, provides design and urban planning services for both the private sector and governmental agencies on projects that might be impacted.

Kevin and Sara walked the Commission through their presentation. That presentation is linked here:

<http://www.seattle.gov/planningcommission/docs/bicyclemasterplanupdateplanningcommission12april2012.pptx>

Commissioner Snider asked if they have planned to work with the public schools. Mr. O'Neill replied that they had had an internal discussion about that a couple of weeks ago and that they definitely want to incorporate that.

Chair Miller stated that, if they wanted to create a generation of bike riders, the schools are where they would want to start. She added that, as a parent, every place she tries to ride are treacherous, even the parks that are within one mile of her home. She suggested including parks as well. Chair Miller asked about what data they had related to improved safety outcomes. Mr. O'Neill responded that they track collision very closely but was not sure that they have tracked it based on adjacent facility types. He noted that it is a timely question and they are just getting started on that research now.

Commissioner Hough Beck asked if they are looking beyond our borders and are examining all the regional connections and commuters who move in and out of the city. Mr. O'Neill answered that they having regional bike discussions and that point is coming up.

Commissioner Krikawa noted that it was good information regarding sharrows but felt that it would not be useful without knowing the increase in ridership because of the sharrows. She asked if the survey is geared towards riders or non-riders and if this would help to inform the work. Ms. Zora replied yes to all. Mr. O'Neill responded that it is still a draft but it is for everyone. He noted that it is sort of like a transit plan in that you want to engage people who do not ride now but they want to interest people in hopes of increasing ridership. Mr. O'Neill continued that greenway organizers are having those conversations in dozens of neighborhoods and they could incorporate their GIS data into their system. He mentioned that they are trying to get the survey/mapping tool out to non-riders as well as potential riders.

Commissioner Bell expressed her excitement to see this work. She asked for more about transportation and land use interface. Mr. O'Neill replied that they are developing a prioritizing system and land use is one of the first big criterion that they will look at as well as what are the big generators of bike trips. He noted that this would start to create that logical connection and the design of facilities and how that works within the broader built environment. Mr. O'Neill stated that in Portland they have areas that they consider bike oriented retail and we are starting to that here as well. He added that they are working with King County on a parallel track with bike sharing to have better integration than do it independently.

Commissioner Shook stated that their work plan makes a lot of sense and the First Bike plan was a great step forward. He added that this sounds like a good update. Commissioner Shook stated that a data-driven process

helps establish evaluation criteria but he wondered, in regards to the strategy, what they are trying to achieve. Mr. O'Neill stated that it really gets back to the policy update and vision. He added that they want to have a good policy framework. He noted that in Bellevue, they got right into working on the network, updating the system map and a Councilmember asked 'what are you trying to do?' He noted that they had to circle back to a big policy discussion. Mr. O'Neill noted that it is important to have that discussion first. Commissioner Shook asked if there were good guiding principles from other areas. Mr. O'Neill responded that there were and that is where we can look at other Bike Master Plans.

Ms. Wilson stated that in Copenhagen, one of the things that occurred to her was the length of the trip that bicycle commuters were commuting from was 2-5 miles and here most people bike more than 5 miles. She added that it seems in the past that our bike investments have focused on getting people to work instead of recreational biking. Mr. O'Neill stated that the survey would have frequencies of trips by mode/type of trips. He added that there would be tools to get a trip purpose and length as well as distance. Mr. O'Neill noted that a year or so ago, they did an interesting project with GPS systems on a few hundred cyclists and the vast majority of trips were five miles or less. Commissioner Snider stated that the PSRC has cycle tracks and maybe we could get their data to learn more and to incorporate it.

Commissioner Roewe suggested adding a tool to show how many calories people burn.

Commissioner Khouri mentioned safety concerns and suggested really looking at design standards regarding safety.

Ms. Zora stated that she is excited to get the Commissioners to fill out the survey and to use the mapping tool.

Commissioner Bell asked if HSD is included in their internal team. Mr. O'Neill stated that they are not currently but they could include them.

Commissioner Benotto wondered about the conflict between bikes and pedestrians. Mr. O'Neill stated that he had just read an article that in NYC regarding bike/pedestrian conflicts.

Commissioner Shook asked how much money is in the budget for bike related projects. Mr. O'Neill replied that it is 3 million a year.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

There was no public comment.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

Chair Miller adjourned the meeting at 5:30 pm.