



# City of Seattle Seattle Planning Commission

Josh Brower, Chair  
Barbara Wilson, Executive Director

## SEATTLE PLANNING COMMISSION FEBRUARY 25, 2010 APPROVED MEETING MINUTES

### **COMMISSIONERS IN ATTENDANCE**

Josh Brower, Chair; Leslie Miller, Vice Chair; Catherine Benotto; David Cutler; Chris Fiori; Colie Hough-Beck; Mark Johnson; Marty Kaplan; Kay Knapton; Amalia Leighton; Kevin McDonald; Christopher Persons; Matt Roewe

### **COMMISSION STAFF**

Barbara Wilson-Director, Katie Sheehy-Planning Analyst, Diana Canzoneri-Demographer, Mike Pickford, Intern

### **COMMISSIONERS ABSENT**

Jerry Finrow; Amanda Sparr

### **GUESTS**

Marshall Foster, 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**

Vice Chair Leslie Miller called the meeting to order at 7:30 a.m.

### **COMMISSION BUSINESS**

#### ▪ Minutes approval

Vice Chair Leslie Miller introduced the February 11, 2010 minutes. Commissioner McDonald suggested a few edits to the minutes.

**ACTION: Commissioner Johnson moved to approve the minutes; Commissioner McDonald seconded the motion. The motion passed with Commissioners Knapton and Leighton abstaining.**

- **Chair's Report – LAM**

Vice Chair Leslie Miller reviewed the upcoming meetings: the next Executive Committee meeting is Tuesday, March 2; the next Housing, Neighborhoods and Urban Centers Committee Meeting is Tuesday, March 9 – **please note that the meeting time has been rescheduled to the afternoon from 3:30-5:00**; the next Full Commission meeting will be Thursday, March 11.

Chair Brower and Commissioner Johnson spoke briefly about the Committee on the Built Environment (COBE) meeting<sup>1</sup> they attended to discuss the Commission's recommendations for the annual Comprehensive Plan amendments; much of the discussion focused on the proposed future land use map (FLUM) change in Ballard from Industrial to Commercial. Chair Brower noted that Council Central Staff has been advised by the Law Department that changes to the FLUM do not need to be accompanied by changes to the neighborhood plan goals and policies within the Comprehensive Plan. Ms. Wilson also noted that Council received a lot of feedback opposed to the proposed FLUM change for Greenwood and therefore will not approve those changes at this time. Chair Brower indicated that Councilmember Clark is particularly interested in moving forward toward setting targets for reducing vehicle miles traveled, although they will not be adopted this year. Commissioner Johnson agreed that moving toward carbon neutrality is a good thing, but that accurate methods of measuring how to achieve these goals still need to be developed.

- **Briefing: City Planning Director**

- Marshall Foster, DPD

Chair Brower welcomed Mr. Foster and congratulated him on his new position as the Director of City Planning. After a brief round of introductions, Mr. Foster began by outlining the two key priorities for the new McGinn administration: (1) how to create a strong, more independent, less apologetic approach to planning in Seattle and (2) how to integrate sustainability throughout the work of the City. He noted that the 2011/2012 update to the Comprehensive Plan could provide a unique opportunity to advance both priorities.

Commissioner Hough-Beck asked about the Central Waterfront Committee. Mr. Foster replied that a team that would design the seawall replacement would be selected soon and design of the waterfront will likely start next year. He noted that it will be important to have both teams work together to ensure that the waterfront fulfills its potential to become a great asset for the city that includes restoration of near-shore habitat in addition to rebuilding the seawall and creating public open space.

Commissioner Roewe asked about forging relationships with other cities throughout the region. Mr. Foster replied that the federal government's recently announced sustainable communities initiative would provide grant funding to local jurisdictions through metropolitan planning

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<sup>1</sup> See <http://www.seattlechannel.org/videos/video.asp?ID=2311011> for the full discussion starting approximately 88 minutes into the video.

organizations, the Puget Sound Regional Council locally, and provide opportunities to forge new partnerships throughout the region.

Vice Chair Miller asked about how the Commission could work more closely and collaboratively with the City Planning division while maintaining objectivity. Mr. Foster replied that the Commission's independent recommendations will continue to be very valuable and that it will be important for the Commission to continue to provide advice directly to the Mayor's office and City Council. He expressed optimism that the new administration would allow his division to be more autonomous and work more directly with City Council and the public. He said that he would particularly appreciate the Commission's feedback as the 2011 work plan for City Planning is developed.

Chair Brower asked about neighborhood planning. He noted that the Commission is finalizing its recommendations to City Council and the Mayor. Mr. Foster stated that the team did an admirable job of updating the three neighborhood plans last year and noted that more work needs to be done to address how plans get implemented. Mr. Foster indicated that outreach will rely more on neighborhood based steering committees rather than continuing the work of the Neighborhood Plan Advisory Committee. He noted that the Department of Neighborhoods (DON) is working on how the steering committees will work.

Commissioner Kaplan expressed concern about the selection of Broadview/Bitter Lake/Haller Lake as one of the neighborhoods that will have a plan update this year. He said that there is an immediate and urgent need for light rail station area plans. Mr. Foster replied that many factors were taken into consideration and that elected officials made the call. He suggested that the bigger issue relates to the reallocation of the City Planning division's resources. He reiterated that he would like the Commission's input about how to allocate resources for future planning.

Commissioner Persons asked about the possibility of merging the Department of Planning and Development and the Office of Housing. Mr. Foster expressed skepticism and suggested that collaboration through interdepartmental teams (IDTs) would likely be preferable to merging the two departments.

### **SPC Recommendations on Future Neighborhoods Plan Updates**

Ms. Wilson reminded the Commission that the original goal was to send this letter to Council and the Mayor by the end of January. Chair Brower reiterated the need to finalize these recommendations and to encourage the city to take a more holistic approach to planning. Ms. Wilson asked Commissioners to think about the recommendations within the context of Mr. Foster's comments. She suggested that not all neighborhoods need to have the plans themselves updated, for example, West Seattle Junction and Lake City both have large tracts of vacant land that warrant area-wide planning but do not necessarily require full Neighborhood Plan updates.

Commissioner Kaplan suggested that it would be useful to have an index or outline as part of the coversheet.

Vice Chair Miller suggested strengthening the language about outreach in communication and education around planning issues to stress fundamentally changing how the City communicates.

Commissioner Johnson agreed with Vice Chair Miller and suggested clarifying the terms used to describe various types of planning efforts and explaining how they relate to each other. Commissioner Cutler noted the difference between neighborhood planning and other types of planning. Ms. Wilson suggested that a graphic illustration would be useful.

Commissioner Benotto noted that the Broad/Denny triangle is another example of an area that needs critical attention but not necessarily an entire update to the neighborhood plan.

Commissioner Leighton suggested that the letter distinguish between neighborhood plan updates and implementation of the plans by addressing these topics in different sections. She noted that some people care less about planning than they do about seeing specific projects built in their neighborhood. Commissioner Leighton also suggested that the Commission specifically ask City Council why they chose Broadview/Bitter Lake/Haller Lake as one of two neighborhoods to have plan updates this year. Chair Brower agreed noting that it would not be at the top of the Commission's list for updates based on the feedback received during the Status Check.

Commissioner Persons suggested that, as someone relatively new to Seattle, the planning process from the 1990's might not be viewed as an international model for success. He recommended focusing on what needs to be done to ensure success moving forward.

Commissioner Cutler noted that there is a gap between planning and implementation and proposed taking a deeper look at the process after this letter is approved.

Commissioner Kaplan urged the Commission to critique the selection of Broadview/Bitter Lake/Haller Lake as one of the two neighborhoods plans that will be updated this year. He said that it is important for the Commission to question that choice in terms of the City's long-term goals and vision.

Commissioner McDonald expressed appreciation for Commissioner Kaplan's position. He reiterated Commissioner Johnson's suggestion to clarify the different types of planning efforts that could be undertaken to address various circumstances. He indicated that station area planning is more focused effort than an entire neighborhood plan update. Ms. Wilson asked if Commissioners agreed that recommendations related to light rail stations should be revised to call for station area planning rather than complete neighborhood plan updates. Commissioner Roewe disagreed, saying that station area plans and neighborhood plans are linked; that all aspects of the neighborhood plans need to be revisited in areas where there are/or will be light

rail stations. Commissioner Johnson suggested that many of the neighborhood plans goals and policies did anticipate the light rail stations.

Chair Brower indicated that the Executive Committee would continue to work on the letter at Tuesday's meeting.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

There was no public comment.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Chair Brower adjourned at 9:03 a.m.