



**City of Seattle
Seattle Planning Commission**

David Cutler, Chair
Barbara Wilson, Executive Director

**SEATTLE PLANNING COMMISSION
JANUARY 10, 2013
APPROVED MEETING MINUTES**

COMMISSIONERS IN ATTENDANCE

Chair David Cutler, Kadie Bell Sata, Catherine Benotto, Josh Brower, Colie Hough-Beck, Mark Johnson, Jeanne Krikawa, Leslie Miller, Chris Persons, Matt Roewe, Morgan Shook, Sarah Snider

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT

Luis F. Borrero, Bradley Khouri, Amalia Leighton, Kevin McDonald

COMMISSION STAFF

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

IN ATTENDANCE

John Pehrson, SLU Community Coalition; Lloyd Douglas, LUOA

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 David Cutler called the meeting to attention at 3:05 pm.

- **Approve: December 13, 2012 Meeting Minutes**

ACTION: Commissioner Leslie Miller moved to approve the December 13, 2012 minutes. Commissioner Morgan Shook seconded the motion. The minutes were approved. Commissioner Sarah Snider abstained.

- **Chair's Report**
 - Chair David Cutler

Chair Cutler welcomed the Commissioners to the first meeting of 2013 and offered some reflections on the work of the Commission for 2012 including the transit communities, comprehensive planning, and affordable

housing. He added that the Commission provided input on area plans including Yesler Terrace and South Lake Union as well as work on the Arena.

Chair Cutler noted that Get-Engaged Commissioner Grace Cho has had to resign as she took a job in Portland, Oregon and that Commissioner Snider will continue in her role until another Get-Engaged Commissioner is appointed. Executive Director Barbara Wilson reported on other Commissioners who are scheduled to be re-appointed and those whose term has ended. She also gave an overview of the appointment process.

Chair Cutler stated that the Commission has been asked to attend the City Council briefing on Monday to discuss their recommendations on South Lake Union and Commissioners Leighton and Benotto will attend as will he.

Chair Cutler reviewed the other upcoming Commission meetings and events.

▪ **Committee Updates**

- Housing & Neighborhoods Committee - Commissioner Catherine Benotto
- Land Use & Transportation Committee - Commissioners Jeanne Krikawa & Colie Hough-Beck
- Comp Plan Special Task Force - Commissioners Leslie Miller & Josh Brower

Commissioner Benotto reported on the ongoing work of the Housing and Neighborhood Committee. She mentioned that Housing Seattle is pushing for more unit mix. She added that they were not able to get that into the Yesler Terrace legislation but that they will keep working on it. Commissioner Benotto mentioned the AIA event on April 11 regarding families downtown noting that this builds on Commissioner Snider's work. Diana Canzoneri added that she has been working with HUD on the housing and transportation costs index and that the Housing Seattle report was supposed to come out this week but has been pushed back in order to refine the methodology.

Commissioner Benotto stated that they met Rick Hooper from the Office of Housing (OH) and he presented information about potential updates/changes to incentive zoning and the possibility of a task force. Commissioner Benotto noted that Northgate, U District, Uptown and 23rd Avenue Corridor all have plans that are up next year. Ms. Canzoneri added that there will be additional data gathering for the Consolidated Plan from OH and Human Services and they will have updated information about housing affordability that will hopefully dovetail with the Comp Plan update for a data driven housing element.

Commissioner Benotto stated that in relation to the central waterfront they have been talking about the opportunities for more housing and activities for children as well as about the overlap between land use, transit, and housing and providing more variety of housing types in urban centers.

Commissioner Roewe asked if the HUD affordability index folks are the ones who determine median income. Ms. Canzoneri replied that HUD determines the AMI, which determines the amount of assistance. She added that the affordability index does not bring in the data on an AMI basis and that they are not using completely consistent methodologies. Commissioner Roewe wondered if there were any kinds of modifiers for proximity to transit. Ms. Canzoneri replied that is one of the ways that the index could be used. Ms. Wilson added that one of the key utilities of it is to be able to look at it in that way. Commissioner Roewe added that seems very relevant to what we do here. Commissioner Shook stated that a good way to think about affordability more comprehensively and wondered if this will be part of future funding. Ms. Canzoneri replied that it was potentially.

Chair Cutler thanked Commissioner Benotto for her update.

Commissioner Krikawa reported on the ongoing work of the Land Use and Transportation Committee (LUT). She noted the work on the transit communities including the outreach plan as well as their input on the Comp Plan and the Climate Action Plan. Commissioner Krikawa mentioned the Freight Master Plan and the Port Access Study noting that they advocated for completing the Freight Master Plan. Commissioner Krikawa stated that they have been meeting monthly with Tracy Krawczyk and other staff from SDOT. She added that the Housing and Neighborhood Committee reviewed South Lake Union.

Commissioner Hough Beck reported on the High Capacity Transit (HCT) corridor planning noting that SDOT hired Michael James and he seems very enthusiastic and has a lot of experience. Commissioner Hough Beck talked about the work on the Freight Master Plan and the Port Access Study noting that the freight advisory board is the oversight committee and that the H&N Committee will stay involved. Ms. Wilson stated that the LUT committee would likely take on how to strengthen the Duwamish/MIC and the question of the stadium transition overlay district and how to get the elected to think more broadly about it as a stadium district. Commissioner Hough Beck stated that they are looking at best practices, quality and not just quantity and using a different lens. Commissioner Roewe asked about the streetcar planning and Downtown to Ballard. Ms. Wilson responded that Downtown to Ballard is one of the HCT and that the Commission will be looking at that too.

Chair Cutler thanked Commissioners Krikawa and Hough Beck for their updates.

Commissioner Miller reported on the ongoing work of the Comp Plan Special Task Force. She noted that 2012 was very exciting and that they spent time creating and revising language for the transit communities Comprehensive Plan amendment. Commissioner Miller noted that what is currently before Council is not what the Commission wanted and does not go as far as they would have liked. Commissioner Miller added that because of the process they are not entirely sure where the Executive, Council or DPD are and that they will spend the next month or so crafting a very concise document that lays out the vision for the major update to the Comp Plan that they would like to see and what resources they believe would be necessary to make that happen but until that time the Comp Plan Task Force does not have a clear mission. Commissioner Miller noted that their vision is that they will get the funding and support they need and then they can reconvene the Task Force with the next step being to draft the proposal and outline the resources. Ms. Wilson added that it has become clearer to the Commission that the idea of a major update is completely out of the realm of possibility based on current resources. She noted that there are no resources outside of DPD to look at a major update and this sort of indicates the priority of leadership from the City thus it seems silly to keep this Task Force meeting. Ms. Wilson stated that they have heard from Diane Sugimura and Marshall Foster and they agree but need help to make the case to elected officials. Ms. Wilson noted that the incremental approach will continue to be a challenge.

Ms. Wilson reminded the Commission that some of the proposed amendments mark the first phase of the major update to the Comp Plan and have highlighted why the incremental process is inadequate. For example, DPD staff have acknowledged that some of the goals and policies within the proposed Urban Design element will need to be revisited in subsequent phases of the update process. She noted that it is difficult to create something when you do not know what it will look like in the end. She said that building legos with her son, Jesse provided a great analogy. She also indicated that some elected officials are aware of the challenges in the incremental approach and suggested that more funding might be allocated in next year's budget. She also noted that there will be a new director at DPD next year. She said that the Commission has made a really solid

case to update the plan more proactively and thoughtfully but there hasn't been the necessary support to make that happen.

Commissioner Krikawa asked if there are plans to reconnect with the people who participated in last year's leadership discussions. Ms. Wilson stated that in some ways, we have to divorce transit communities from the major update to the Comp Plan. She noted that Comp Plan Special Task Force did a lot of work to provide a framework and process for the major update, but that it has not been used. She noted that the Commission's work plan for this year is still being developed and that the transit communities work will continue to move forward, including harnessing the support from people who participated in the leadership discussions. She reminded Commissioners that a report about the transit communities strategy would be submitted to Council at the end of January. She noted that the report would likely include a proxy map and narrative that describes what we are talking about. She indicated that the report would highlight and summarize feedback from the leadership discussions, including support for the proposed amendment as submitted by the Commission. She explained that it will be important to work with these thought leaders to help generate the support to get the transit communities amendment passed. Chair Cutler said that Commissioners will be really honest when they meet with Councilmembers – that the preferred option would be to adopt the amendment as proposed by the Commission, but that DPD's alternative is a small step in the right direction. He said that it is hard to divorce the transit communities strategy from the Comp Plan but that it can be an opportunity to advocate for a more significant and well-coordinated update process. He indicated that DPD supports the Commission's goals but simply do not have the resources to implement them. He noted that there is a great amount of work to be proud of.

Chair Cutler thanked Commissioners Miller and Brower for their update.

- **Work Plan**

Ms. Wilson handed out the 2013 proposed work plan. You can access that work plan here:

<http://seattle.gov/planningcommission/minutes/SPC-abbreviated-workplan-2013.pdf>

Commissioner Krikawa stated that some of the concerns and recommendations were not appropriate for the Capitol Hill Station but they might want to discuss because it is going to happen at other stations. Ms. Wilson noted that maybe they need to think about that and take the Capitol Hill as a case study. She added that, as part of the Transit Communities Policy paper, they did bring up specific things about publically owned land. Ms. Wilson continued that it is hard for the Design Commission to weigh in on these bigger urban planning issues and maybe it would be something the Planning Commission would like to consider. Commissioner Roewe stated that the Commission has not been asked to review the term sheet. Commissioner Krikawa noted that it was adopted before Christmas. Ms. Wilson added that they have a placeholder for January 24 to have Sound Transit come to brief the Commission and if it does not happen then it is on her radar. Chair Cutler noted that in regards to the Light Rail Review Panel (LRRP), the Northgate Station was not approved, as there were issues with the physical design of the structure. He added that there seems to be a vacuum of leadership and maybe there is a role that Commission could play. Ms. Wilson responded that this is the time to really think about these questions and what the Commission wants to dig in on. Chair Cutler wondered about the implementation side of the Seattle Transit Communities policy. Ms. Wilson asked if there were big emerging topics that we should be thinking about and that the Commission obviously has a lot of work to do and needs to prioritize.

Ms. Wilson noted that one thing that always seems to come up is the issue surrounding unit mix. She added that with Yesler Terrace, they had a great conversation and brainstormed but just did not have the tools to influence the market and this may be something the Commission will need have to figure out. Commissioner Benotto stated that these are the same reasons that inclusionary housing might get rejected as it is taking from developers.

Commissioner Persons stated that, in terms of other ideas, eco districts and district energy are really starting to take off and Seattle is a leader nationally. He suggested that the Commission should weigh in on how that affects the landscape of the City. Chair Cutler suggested that the Commission get a briefing on this.

Commissioner Johnson stated that a broader issue is the public investment and wondered if, in areas where we have seen a lot of growth specifically around the station areas, the public did something to remove an obstacle to help move forward. He suggested that maybe the City could do something to help get the ball rolling on district energy. Commissioner Roewe wondered what makes a good economic catalyst. Commissioner Johnson responded that sometimes it is just a perception and that it is different in different neighborhoods. Chair Cutler asked what is being measured. Commissioner Johnson wondered where, as we produce housing and jobs in urban centers and villages, has there been success at attracting and facilitating the kind of development they want to see.

Commissioner Hough Beck talked about integrating healthy living principles and looking at the aspects of “blue zones” communities where people live to be 100+. Commissioner Benotto mentioned the World Health Organization and how well we are meeting the needs of an aging population. Ms. Wilson added that the beginning of the year is always a good time to revisit the Commission’s priorities and explained that the Committees will continue to work on developing the work plan and will send it out to key departments for them to weigh in on it as well.

Commissioner Krikawa noted that she has always been very intrigued with Rainier Beach and even with all these resources trying to help that area she just has not seen even incremental changes. She suggested that a case study might possibly be done to discover why.

▪ **Discuss: SPC Recommendations on Comp Plan Amendments**

Chair Cutler called for any disclosures and/or recusals.

DISCLOSURES & RECUSALS:

- Commissioner Colie Hough Beck disclosed that her firm, HBB, works on commercial, multifamily, and public infrastructure projects throughout the city that might could be affected by proposed Comp Plan changes. The Port of Seattle is also one of their clients.
- Commissioner Catherine Benotto disclosed that her firm, Weber Thompson, designs projects and advises clients on development projects throughout the city that might could be affected by proposed Comp Plan changes.
- Commissioner Josh Brower disclosed that his firm, Veris Law Group PLLC, represents single and multifamily developers throughout the city and industrial businesses in the Ballard-Interbay-Northend Manufacturing &

Industrial Center. Commissioner Brower recused himself from the discussion of proposed amendment H, regarding the recreational boating industry.

- Commissioner David Cutler disclosed that his firm, GGLO, designs projects and advises clients that may be impacted by amendments to the Comp Plan.
- Commissioner Leslie Miller disclosed that she is the capital improvements chair of the Othello Park Alliance, recipient of a Large Matching Fund grant for work on Othello Park located in a potential transit community. OPA continues to apply for grant funding for work in this area.
- Commissioner Matt Roewe disclosed that his firm, Via Architecture, works on municipal planning and private development projects that could be affected by the proposed changes to the Comp Plan. He abstained from the discussion of proposed amendment F regarding the Rainier Beach neighborhood plan.
- Commissioner Mark Johnson disclosed that his firm, ESA, has the Port of Seattle and Sound Transit as clients that may be affected by some of the proposed amendments.
- Commissioner Chris Persons disclosed that his firm, Capitol Hill Housing, develops affordable housing throughout the City and could be affected by the proposed changes in the Comp Plan.

Chair Cutler noted that they would be going over the draft letter. Ms. Sheehy explained the letter noting the formatting and suggesting that the Commission be as specific as possible regarding the proposed changes.

Ms. Wilson stated that Commissioner Leighton thought she could rewrite the whole thing but that is not really the Commission's job. She added that the Commission does not need to worry about rewriting the urban design element pieces and noted that at the meeting yesterday they started the discussion regarding the challenges of translating the background report into the Comp Plan. Ms. Wilson mentioned that the Comp Plan Task Force would like to take the opportunity to point out the challenge of this approach and this could be the chance to address that with the urban design element being the case in point. Commissioner Brower stated that could be said about the transit communities too and noted that this is the problem with the incremental approach. He added that the Commission has advocated to do things right the first time.

Chair Cutler stated that there is some language up front but it could be stronger and it is worth making this point a bit deeper. He added that in the past the Commission has said no to many of the proposed amendments but this year we are saying yes to many even though they are in the early phases of an unclear process. He expressed his hesitancy to move forward.

Commissioner Shook stated that all of these things are well intentioned but add to the level of complexity and makes it harder to navigate. He added that the incremental tool does not speak with the clarity that the Commission wants.

Ms. Wilson noted that the amendment regarding the Port came from the Port. Ms. Wilson went over the Comp Plan amendment process.

Commissioners discussed some of the specific goals and policies within the proposed neighborhood plan amendments and indicated that some of them are ridiculous statements rather than goals. Commissioner Miller indicated that she wants to provide constructive feedback, but is really frustrated by the proposed amendments. She said that if this is all that comes of the neighborhood plan updates, then she would like to see that staff time directed to the major update of the Comp Plan. Ms. Wilson suggested that the Commission can advocate for changes as part of the planscape.

Commissioner Miller asked if the recommendation would be to not adopt the proposed neighborhood plan amendments and noted that he was not involved in the local planning effort.

Commissioner Brower indicated that some of the proposed policies do not belong in the Comp Plan. He suggested that all of the goals and policies for the neighborhood plan updates should be included in the Commission's letter with detailed edits to the language. He noted that RB-P4 directly contradicts the proposed transit communities amendment. He suggested that the Commission would not be doing its job if they allow the neighborhood plan amendments to proceed as proposed.

Commissioner Johnson stated that if the Commission wants to suggest stronger language that is fine but it is headed toward considering rezones in single family and not many other changes. Chair Cutler asked if the FLUM had to change. Ms. Wilson replied that the policy in place will allow for a FLUM change.

Commissioner Brower suggested, if there really are four nodes, taking a more data driven approach in thinking about where there should be rezones allowed. Ms. Wilson stated that if they used the Commission's methodology they would consider the other three important centers and make sure that they are included. Commissioner Persons stated that within the walkshed of the light rail station there are not many people living there. Commissioner Miller expressed her appreciation that it is going in the right direction but did not see how it helps. Chair Cutler suggested having some state that they defer to the major comp plan update. Ms. Wilson said she would check with Nora to make sure there would not be any FLUM changes that would be held up and suggested that they call out the over-protective lingo and consider whether or not these other goals and policies are appropriate for Comp Plan growth and land use.

Commissioner Shook wondered about how to frame the letter that would have share our concerns that the existing organization of the Comp Plan has increased the amount of tension and that by taking an incremental approach it has added a level of confusion. He added that it is becoming a big sprawling mess and is becoming a sort of parking lot for good intentions. Ms. Canzoneri suggested that they ask the Neighborhood Planning group to do a do-over. Ms. Wilson suggested that the Planning Commission raise these questions, list some good examples, and let the City know that while these are good policies they should find another place where they would be more appropriate. Commissioner Miller stated that an economic development strategy would support businesses within the business communities but wealth creation is a joke.

Commissioner Persons stated that the FLUM changes are important and wondered how we move forward. Chair Cutler suggested adding paragraphs about why it does or does not make sense and noted that there are some structural issues with the Comp Plan and there is not any central place for the hierarchy to start building from to eliminate redundancy. Commissioner Brower asked if it were possible to advise Council to adopt the FLUM changes but defer the goals and polices or state how they should be rewritten. Ms. Wilson suggested that one these two, the Commission should give some conclusion to it and point to examples. She suggested that they try to put forward the proposed changes and eliminate the policies. She added that with the urban design element the Commission defer. Commissioner Roewe agreed and stated that there is not a direct correlation with the policies. Commissioner Johnson noted that we are not going to do a urban design framework for the entire city but should do a good job when it gets down to that scale as it is a way to accommodate good design and that is a good policy to have. He continued that you just should not generalize about the whole city. Ms. Wilson stated that the background report looked at nuance and history. She added that these policies lose so much in translation. Commissioner Benotto stated that it is almost in conflict with the existing code.

Commissioner Roewe wondered if there was a template used in South Lake Union. Ms. Wilson answered that it was San Francisco. Commissioner Roewe stated that the urban design element is very subjective and complex.

Ms. Wilson stated that they will talk about this again at the next Executive Committee meeting and offered her perspective on the Transit Communities noting that she thought the Commission should support what is on the table. She added that if you look at the line-in/line-out changes in C6, it is very similar. She continued that the Commission is going to keep running into conflicts and suggested taking a comprehensive look at all the other elements and noted that C6 is a first step and that it might need to be added to in the future. Ms. Wilson advocated for moving forward and being very clear that this is very different than what the Planning Commission proposed and is not as comprehensive. Commissioner Miller stated that they will do what they want anyway and that the Commission gets to say all of this and be objective but they don't get to call the shots. She wondered if the letter could say that it is the Commission's preference that it be adopted with the other things but that we do not really want to keep polluting the Comp Plan.

Ms. Wilson noted that the Commission was not looking at every single element of the Comp Plan. Commissioner Brower stated that the Commission worked very hard on this sitting through countless meetings and trying to live up to an ideal that you do not put half-baked ideas into the Comp Plan. He suggested including in the letter what the Commission wanted it to look like. He expressed his concern that the Commission is going to get hit from both sides and he wants to be really clear that if we do take a hit it is for the right thing and not just something that is half-baked.

Commissioner Johnson asked for some clarification on C6 and if the Commission is okay with DPD's version of it. Chair Cutler suggested that they say that the Commission is pleased to move forward with C6 but our stakeholders would like to see the fuller approach and suggested providing some additional language. Commissioner Brower stated that he would like it to say that if they adopt DPD's then more needs to be done. He added that he wants to be very clear about the difference between the Commission's version and DPD's. He added that while the Commission did not do everything they did do the big ones. Ms. Wilson noted that when the Commission went out to the leadership discussions they did have the alternative language. Commissioner Miller stated that DPD is doing what they always do which is to not talk about everything that needs to be discussed. She added that these conversations need to happen.

Ms. Wilson stated that she is convinced that Irene Wall and others will come in and say not to adopt this without a map.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Cutler adjourned the meeting at 5:37 pm.