



# City of Seattle Seattle Planning Commission

Linda Amato, Chair  
Barbara Wilson, Executive Director

## SEATTLE PLANNING COMMISSION JANUARY 8, 2009 APPROVED MEETING MINUTES

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### **COMMISSIONERS IN ATTENDANCE**

Chair-Linda Amato, Vice-Chair Chris Fiori, Josh Brower, Jerry Finrow, Colie Hough Beck, Mark Johnson, Martin Kaplan, Kay Knapton, Amalia Leighton, M. Michelle Mattox, Kevin McDonald, Leslie Miller, Michelle Zeidman

### **COMMISSION STAFF**

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

### **COMMISSIONERS ABSENT**

Tom Eanes, Tony To

### **GUESTS**

Tracy Krawczyk, SDOT; Dennis Meier, Mike Podowski, Ray Gastil, DPD; Rick Hooper, OH; Ketil Freeman, Council Central Staff

### **IN ATTENDANCE**

Rebecca Herzfeld, Norm Schwab, Council Central Staff; Dan Nolte, Office of Councilmember Sally Clark; Anna Markee, Housing Development Consortium

*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 pm.

### **COMMISSION BUSINESS**

- Minutes approval

Commissioners Kaplan and Miller clarified their comments on page four.

**ACTION: Commissioner Kay Knapton moved to approve the December 11, 2008 minutes. Commissioner Mattox seconded the motion. The motion to approve the minutes passed unanimously.**

- **Chair's Report**

Chair Amato noted the upcoming meetings: next Tuesday, January 13 will be the Executive Committee meeting; next Thursday, January 15 is the Land Use and Transportation Committee meeting; Thursday, January 22 will be the next Full Commission meeting. She reminded the commissioners that all committee meetings this year will be held in Seattle Municipal Tower room 4096.

Chair Amato said that because of the inclement weather in December, the interviews for the new commissioner appointments have been delayed. Commissioners Eanes, Mattox and To have been asked to continue on with the Commission until their replacements are appointed, probably not before March. She thanked them for their continued commitment. She also noted that roughly 40 people applied for the open positions and that an additional 10 applications were received after the deadline. The caliber of the applicants is very high.

## **UPDATES & DISCUSSION**

- **SDOT Policy and Planning Director's Update**

- Tracy Krawczyk, SDOT

Chair Amato welcomed Ms. Krawczyk to provide an overview of her group's activities during 2008 and plans for 2009. Ms. Krawczyk thanked the commission for having her here today. She briefly discussed her professional background before outlining her division's major accomplishments of the past year and goals for the upcoming year. She noted that the division is divided into three sections: revenue and capital development, policy and plan implementation, and transportation planning. The role of the division is to assist with strategic alignment focusing on transportation mobility and access. They are shifting their priorities to focus more on the role of transportation in placemaking and less on simply moving vehicles.

Ms. Krawczyk summarized some of the division's accomplishments during the past year, including completion of the University Area Transportation Action Strategy and the Southeast Transportation Study. The Pedestrian Master Plan is underway, with Commissioner Leighton as the Project Manager. The transit team, led by Bill Bryant, is working on capitol improvements along bus rapid transit corridors that will help prepare for the new service. The division is also working on transit monitoring reports that will help officials decide where to direct new investments. Numerous parking projects are underway, including an electronic guidance parking system downtown. Protocols for project reviews were established in accordance with the Complete Streets policy. The Policy and Planning division also developed recommendations for center city street types that coordinate with the land use.

In 2009, Ms. Krawczyk indicated that the division will begin updating the Transportation Strategic Plan and the Transit Plan for 2010. They will also complete the Pedestrian Master Plan, which will be published on-line. Ms. Krawczyk noted that most of the work will be completed in-house rather than hiring outside consultants due to budget constraints. She also stated that her group is working closely with DPD on station area planning. They are actively working in the southeast

neighborhoods around stations to manage parking and transportation demand before light rail service begins in July. She indicated that the Complete Streets strategy includes the City's Race and Social Justice Initiative as well as sustainability goals. Additionally, they continue to look at parking conditions and are working with a number of neighborhoods to develop and refine parking plans. Ms. Krawczyk also stated that her team is actively working with the Puget Sound Regional Council; Vision 2040 was adopted last year and they are now working on Transportation 2040.

Chair Amato asked for questions. Commissioner Finrow asked how the Commission might be helpful. Ms. Krawczyk stated that she would like to stay closely connected on the Seattle's Transit Communities initiative, the Pedestrian Master Plan and Transit Plan. Commissioner Finrow agreed that the Commission was initially critical of the Transit Plan being separated from the Comprehensive Plan and it would be great to stay in the loop on that work.

Vice Chair Fiori asked if SDOT was considering using the income from parking meters to go back into the community. Ms. Krawczyk indicated that it is up to City Council to make that decision and that while Donald Shoup has strongly promoted that idea, she is not sure it would be the best thing for Seattle's neighborhoods to rely on paid parking. She indicated that Council may be interested in reviewing the topic.

Commissioner Hough-Beck asked about the intersections downtown that have green areas for bicyclists. Ms. Krawczyk replied that she's not sure if that project has an official name, but that the green intersections highlight potential conflict areas for bikes and cars. In particular, they indicate areas where cars would be turning right across a bike lane. She is not sure how well they are working and recognizes that more public education and outreach needs to be done.

Commissioner Kaplan asked about lane stripes, Aurora Bridge in particular, that were damaged during the recent snow storm and plowing. Ms. Krawczyk acknowledged that Aurora is on the top of a long list of roads that need street sweeping and restriping.

Ms. Wilson thanked Ms. Krawczyk for her time and asked her to come back at regular intervals to keep the Commission abreast of her work.

▪ **Pike Pine Conservation Overlay District**

- Dennis Meier, DPD; Rebecca Herzfeld, Council Central Staff

**Recusal & Disclosure:**

- Commissioner Leighton disclosed that she is the manager of the Pedestrian Master Plan for her firm, SvR, and that they have contracts within the area.
- Commissioner Hough Beck disclosed that her firm works on multi-family projects and might have work within the corridor in the future.
- Vice Chair Fiori disclosed that his firm works with organizations that might develop property within the corridor.
- Commissioner Brower disclosed that his firm represents owners of multi-family and mixed-use property within the corridor.
- Commissioner Knapton disclosed that she has worked with the Capitol Hill Chamber of Commerce.

Ms. Herzfeld began by stating that City Council directed DPD to conduct this work because of concerns that the character of the area was changing dramatically and losing a lot of the historic character. Mr. Meier described the boundaries of the neighborhood – I-5 on the west, 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue to the east, Union Street on the south and Seattle Central Community College on the north. He noted that multiple overlays converge at this area and one of the goals of this project would be to minimize these complexities. While a TDR program was initially considered, it has since been determined that it would not help preserve the historic character of the neighborhood. The City worked with LUND Associates for stakeholder outreach. They determined that residents want to protect buildings, specific uses, concentrations of uses, existing patterns of development and the scale of development. (view the reports at: <http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/Planning/PikePineConservationOverlayDistrict/RelatedDocuments/default.asp>).

A lot of new development has gone into this area recently. The existing overlay performed its intended function. The intention now is to update the zoning with a conservation district and provide a unified zoning base with additional development standards. There was a public meeting in October where people indicated that they did not support establishing a maximum size lot limit but they did support a limit on the size of floors above 35 feet. DPD expects to get the proposed legislation to Council soon. Ms. Herzfeld stated that the basic idea of the overlay is to provide incentives to keep character structures while still allowing for new development.

*This is a link to the boards Dennis presented.*

[http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/static/FINAL\\_LatestReleased\\_DPDP015656.pdf](http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/static/FINAL_LatestReleased_DPDP015656.pdf)

Commissioner Brower asked if there would be a conflict between the proposed pedestrian designation and the existing automobile businesses. Mr. Meier replied that this conflict would be addressed by adding them to the list of allowable uses within pedestrian designations within this area. Uses would not be limited in existing buildings, including those that have been renovated.

Commissioner McDonald asked if urban design guidelines have been established for the corridor. Mr. Meier indicated that there are design guidelines for the area that will be looked at in more detail during the next phase of the project.

Commissioner Kaplan expressed concern that the northern boundary of the conservation would conflict with existing single family areas. Mr. Meier stated that the proposal would not change any heights.

Commissioner Finrow commended the idea of sorting out the competing overlays and asked if there are other areas that have a similar problem? Mr. Meier indicated that this is a relatively unique area within the city. The First Hill station area overlay will be eliminated and the Capitol Hill station area overlay will be adjusted to exclude the commercial areas of the Pike Pine Corridor. Ms. Herzfeld noted that the proposal will probably go to Council sometime in February.

▪ **Incentive Zoning Legislation**

- Rick Hooper, OH; Mike Podowski, DPD; Ketil Freeman, Council Central Staff

*[Please see the Incentive Zoning Summary for more information.](#)*

Mr. Freeman outlined the details of the legislation as illustrated in the PDF. He also noted that the legislation did not pass unanimously and that there was political tension surrounding the issue. Mr. Hooper thanked the Commission for their work on this topic and asked if there were any questions about the nature of the program. He noted that it is complicated, which added to the controversy.

Commissioner Miller asked who voted against the legislation and why. Mr. Freeman stated that Councilmembers Drago, Harrell and Licata opposed it. He also indicated that Councilmember Licata wanted the upper limit of housing affordability to be 65-70% of median income rather than 80%.

Commissioner Finrow asked whether or not the provisions would apply to contract rezones. Mr. Podowski clarified that they could apply any time there is rezone, including contract rezones. Mr. Freeman indicated that the legislation reflects Comprehensive Plan goals and that it would likely be enacted similar to the provisions for downtown that were passed in 2006. Commissioner Finrow asked how this legislation will be implemented. Mr. Podowski stated that the multifamily code, which will go to Council soon, would include incentive zoning programs within urban villages and station areas. He also said upcoming legislation related to South Downtown, Northgate, South Lake Union, and light rail station areas would all probably incorporate these incentives. Mr. Hooper added that Dravus and the University District rezones would too. Mr. Podowski stated that this ordinance is a step in the right direction and that additional provisions for preservation of landmarks and open space will likely be added in the future.

Commissioner Kaplan asked if the incentive would apply to situations like the Pike Pine Corridor, where an additional 10 feet would be allowed to preserve existing buildings. Mr. Podowski agreed that a threshold would need to be established to clarify when the program would be warranted. Mr. Hooper provided an example that not all of the multifamily zones would be appropriate. Vice Chair Fiori said that applying the incentive to townhouses might do more harm than good and that no amount of zoning would make a project feasible. Mr. Hooper agreed that the legislation was not intended to stimulate development but to create new tools that address housing affordability.

Commissioner Brower asked for clarification about how the legislation would actually be implemented, given that the ordinance does not currently apply anywhere. Mr. Freeman replied that it is a political and analytic step that paves the way for incentive zoning to be used in conjunction with future rezones. He added that it will likely first be implemented in the anticipated legislative rezones for the South Downtown project. Mr. Hooper also noted that the recent rezone at Dravus implemented some of these provisions.

Commissioner Zeidman asked if the goal is to have all the zones be uniform with the standards of this ordinance. Mr. Podowski confirmed that that is the goal. Mr. Freeman added that the Executive is expected to report back in 2010 and that there would be flexibility in terms of the amount of bonusable area.

Commissioner Kaplan noted that he was critical of having one set of standards for the entire city but agreed that perhaps the thresholds should be consistent. Mr. Hooper indicated that City staff would continue to work with the Commission about provisions within future legislation around this issue. He reiterated his appreciation for the Commission's work. He also noted that within the next month or so, the City will begin the process to increase flexibility for how the money generated by this program downtown is used.

Mr. Freeman stated that the incentive zoning process did initially focus around affordable housing and that it would be useful for the Commission to not let Council lose sight of those other potential benefits.

- **Planning Director's Update**  
- Ray Gastil, DPD

Chair Amato welcomed Mr. Gastil who presented the Planning division's work plan for 2009. He noted that the Planning division has about 40 staff currently and that a couple of positions were cut in the current budget.

Commissioner Finrow asked what would be the two most important areas where the Commission could provide advice. Mr. Gastil responded that finding equitable ways to get more resources related to sustainable development and how transit oriented communities are created would be the two most important topics for the Commission to address.

Vice Chair Fiori indicated that it might be useful to provide the Governor, the County Executive and the Mayor with images of what the central waterfront could look like without the Viaduct. Those who are going to make this decision need to get engaged with the possibilities and consider their legacy. Mr. Gastil responded that it was a very interesting point and that he would take it under advisement.

- **Staff Report**

Ms. Wilson asked the Commissioners to be sure and fill out their time sheets for December so that we can complete the annual report back to the City. She also noted that everyone should have their 2009 parking permit. She then distributed TOD workbooks that were given to the Commissioners by PSRC and Sound Transit. She then stated that at the Executive Committee next week, we will discuss the April retreat so please let staff know if there are any dates that would not work for you. She also asked Commissioners to share their ideas for the retreat.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

There was no public comment.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Chair Amato adjourned the meeting at 5:24 pm.