



**City of Seattle
Seattle Planning Commission**

Leslie Miller, Chair
Barbara Wilson, Executive Director

**SEATTLE PLANNING COMMISSION
MARCH 22, 2012
APPROVED MEETING MINUTES**

COMMISSIONERS IN ATTENDANCE

Chair Leslie Miller, Catherine Benotto, Josh Brower, Colie Hough-Beck, Mark Johnson, Martin Kaplan, Kay Knapton, Jeanne Krikawa, Amalia Leighton Kevin McDonald, Chris Persons, Matt Roewe, Sarah Snider

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT

David Cutler, Bradley Khouri

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, Rebecca Herzfeld, 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 7:30 am.

- **Approve: March 8, 2012 Meeting Minutes**

ACTION: Commissioner Kay Knapton moved to approve the March 8, 2012 minutes. Commissioner Mark Johnson seconded the motion. The minutes were approved unanimously.

- **Chair's Report**

– Chair Leslie Miller

Chair Miller reviewed the upcoming meetings and events. She noted that today's meeting would be Commissioner Martin Kaplan's last and thanked him for his seven years of dedication and service to the Commission. Executive Director Barbara Wilson stated that Commissioner Knapton's term ends in April and

we look to be on schedule to have someone confirmed to replace her by May. She added that Kadie Bell Sata and Morgan Shook should be confirmed soon and that Commissioners Roewe, Benotto, Cutler and Khouri are being reconfirmed.

▪ **Updates**

- Downtown Families 2012 AIA Seattle Emerging Professional Travel Scholarship
 - Commissioner Sarah Snider
- Transit Community Research
 - Erika Harris, SPC Intern

Commissioner Sarah Snider reported on the scholarship she just received from the AIA to study families dwelling in cities. She asked the Commissioners to state what they felt made a city family friendly. Commissioner Snider noted that within the year she is hoping to have the ultimate family-friendly downtown prototype which she will bring back to Seattle and to identify what we are missing. She asked the Commissioners to help her with any contacts that they might have in different cities and any other data collection systems they might recommend. Chair Miller suggested that she send out a list of requests to the Commission and noted that it would be great to get dispatches from her while she is traveling.

Planning Commission Intern, Erika Harris reported on her work regarding social equity within transit communities, particularly housing/commercial space displacement. She noted that displacement is a big concern and that a professor at the University of Washington found that there was a lot of displacement in Seattle as the city has become whiter and wealthier. Ms. Harris noted that further south it is a bit more affordable. She added that she is also looking at the demographics of Seattle's transit communities. Ms. Harris reported that there are things that can be done to help prevent displacement, affordable housing, and the preservation of existing affordable commercial are two of the general practices. Ms. Harris passed a list around of other more specific tools and asked the Commissioners to add their names next to those they were familiar with. She added that Seattle is actually a leader in best practices, so we are already using most of the tools. Ms. Harris stated that she will look closely at the ones we are not using. She continued that she will send out a draft of the report and asked for the Commissioner's feedback.

▪ **Discussion: SPC Recommendations on Regulatory Reform Proposal**

- Discuss and Possible Vote

Chair Miller called for any disclosures and recusals.

Disclosures:

- 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 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 Martin Kaplan disclosed that his firm, MHK Architects, works on projects throughout the city that might be impacted by the proposed regulations.
- Commissioner Hough Beck disclosed that her firm, HBB Landscape Architecture, works on housing, mixed-use, public infrastructure, and parks projects in Seattle.
- Commissioner Catherine Benotto disclosed that her firm, Weber Thompson, designs projects that may be impacted by the proposed legislation.

- 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.
- Commissioner Chris Persons disclosed that his firm, Capitol Hill Housing, develops and manages housing throughout the city.
- Commissioner Jeanne Krikawa disclosed that her firm, The Underhill Company LLC, works on transportation and planning projects throughout the city.

Planning Analyst, Katie Sheehy, walked the Commission through the memo. Commissioner Brower explained that it is the same traffic analysis that would have been required in SEPA. Commissioner Roewe asked if it would save time. Commissioner Brower answered that you still have to evaluate those impacts but without the appeal, it will save considerable time. Commissioner Johnson noted that it is not a state law but it makes sure that the City is getting data about the number of cars and it helps with planning. He added that it is rate that there is additional mitigation for that size of projects. Commissioner Leighton asked if it were only in urban areas or citywide. Ms. Sheehy responded that she would check. Commissioner Leighton stated that required SEPA traffic analysis could also evaluate non-motorized mitigation for development, which could assist with the implementation of the pedestrian, and bike plans.

The regulation reform code worksheet can be accessed via:

<http://www.seattle.gov/planningcommission/docs/regreformcodeworksheet.pdf>

Chair Miller stated that the main goal for today would be to get to a vote on this. Ms. Wilson added that the Commission should take action on where they stand on each one of the points. She continued that they would then clarify these points and put them in a memo to Council. Ms. Wilson asked Sara Belz when Council would be taking action on this. Ms. Belz replied that it would probably be sometime in May and she noted that increasing time limits on temporary uses is not on the worksheet.

Commissioner Persons wondered about the demolition of housing. Ms. Sheehy replied that it is really just a legislative clarification.

Commissioner Roewe asked about the concept of eliminating parking requirements in areas with frequent transit service and noted that it is often in places outside of urban centers/villages. His concern was that this would be a big problem for some neighborhoods.

Commissioner Johnson agreed that it might be tough but that parking is NOT an entitlement that you get living in the city and that it is a good direction to go in.

Commissioner Kaplan stated that they have worked hard to get to where it makes sense to eliminate parking requirements in urban centers. He added that residential parking zones (RPZ) impact churches and other places where their customers can only park for 2 hours and that it does not make any sense. Commissioner

Kaplan stated that SDOT just hands these out and that it benefits a few people but harms many and that we really need to look at the other side. Commissioner Roewe noted that some RPZs are daytime only. Commissioner Benotto stated that in regards to allowing commercial uses in LR zones, one size does not fit all when it comes to Townhouse LR developments that have undergone unit lot subdivision. It would become complicated and messy to oversee when uses change on adjacent attached homes, particularly when there is no homeowners association. She added that 1500 square foot is the typical size of one of those townhouse units and wondered if the size restriction would be per unit lot or the overall development, regardless of its overall size. She wondered if it should be allowed, only for newly constructed townhouses so residents do not have uses change on adjacent attached homes and if there should be different size limits for townhouses instead or not allow commercial uses altogether for townhouses on unit lots.

Commissioner Brower suggested adding a point of clarification regarding parking, regarding major institutions, the last time they updated the master plan the focus was on parking and now the goal is to disincentivize parking. He added that in regards to non-institutional, it is about proximity to frequent transit. Commissioner Roewe stated that he believed that all L zones already give a 20% reduction.

Commissioner Hough Beck noted that she has observed a MU project in Eastlake and the people that are working there are driving and taking all the parking. She added that it is an ongoing issue. Commissioner Hough Beck wondered, in reference to home based businesses, how the regulations would be enforced and this is an opportunity to look at that. Ms. Sheehy pointed out that it is a complaint-based system. Chair Miller agreed that it was a good point.

Commissioner Chris Persons shared that the Capitol Hill Chamber has concerns about allowing small commercial in L2/L3 zones and will probably testify in opposition and not so much because they truly oppose it but because they feel ill-informed. He added that this deserves more study and thought. He added that his concern is that the definition of frequent transit is over broad.

Commissioner Brower stated that, in reference to DADUs, he had the opportunity to drive around with Councilmembers Rasmussen and Clark; he noted that they were the ones who had the concerns about the height limits. He added that Commissioner Cutler did a great job of trying to help them understand the height. Commissioner Brower suggested the idea of actually lowering the minimum on the lot size. He noted that it is currently 4000 square feet and it does not correspond to any zoning so he wonders where this figure came from. Commissioner Johnson replied that it is the 75/80 rule and it not completely arbitrary. Ms. Wilson noted that the Commission has stated its support for smaller lot sizes for DADUs and having them in alleys.

Ms. Wilson stated that, in reference to Commissioner Persons' point about frequent transit service, in the citywide policy we are defining the boundaries of transit communities and are working with SDOT to refine the methodology. She added that maybe they should advocate, that rather than just using the term frequent transit service, use designated transit communities instead.

Commissioner Brower suggested that we wait to vote on this until the Commission has had a chance to have Mike Podowski and Gordon Clowers from DPD come back. He felt that it would be best to see where the real issues are. Commissioner Brower added that a lot of what is in the regulatory reform is what we are already working on in the Seattle Transit Communities policy. Ms. Wilson stated that we don't have to do this now but that it would be important that any changes to the legislation need to be timely and suggested that we have strong recommendations within the next couple of weeks. Chair Miller suggested that this be discussed again at the next Executive Committee meeting.

Commissioner Kaplan stated that, regarding DADUs, there should be some thought about how size limits are calculated and that some credit should be given to existing garages. Commissioner Roewe agreed and stated that without enough height to accomplish a second floor over a garage then you cannot utilize the space in a cost effective manner.

Commissioner McDonald echoed Commissioner Hough Beck's comments about home based business and enforcement of the regulations. He added that the regulation regarding deliveries is an odd thing and wondered how they would determine whether the delivery was for the business or a resident. He thought it might be good to have Council think about how that could really be implemented and enforced.

Commissioner McDonald noted that the map is useful in determining where there are non-residential uses in MR zones. He added that there is not a plethora of uses happening where they are permitted. He continued that the legislation seems too broad. He wondered if it should be applied only to new buildings as opposed to the range of the entire building stock.

Commissioner Knapton agreed that enforcement of the regulations with home based businesses is an issue and she wondered if the issue regarding the number of employees was about the actual number of employees or them taking up parking. Commissioner Knapton asked what we are doing to encourage people with home based business and why there are so many limitations. She suggested raising the fees in RPZs or doing away with them altogether. Commissioner Persons agreed.

Commissioner Johnson stated that he believes the Commission ought to take a hard look at anything being a blanket change to the L2/L3. He noted that there are business district impacts, residential character impacts and that we should hold off. Commissioner Roewe suggested that maybe it should be about use.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no further public comment.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Miller adjourned the meeting at 8:57 am.