



# City of Seattle Seattle Planning Commission

Josh Brower, Chair  
Barbara Wilson, Executive Director

## SEATTLE PLANNING COMMISSION SEPTEMBER 8, 2011 APPROVED MEETING MINUTES

### **COMMISSIONERS IN ATTENDANCE**

Chair – Josh Brower, Vice-Chair Leslie Miller, Kadie Bell, Catherine Benotto, David Cutler, Colie Hough-Beck, Martin Kaplan, Bradley Khouri, Kay Knapton, Jeanne Krikawa, Amalia Leighton

### **COMMISSIONERS ABSENT**

Mark Johnson, Kevin McDonald, Christopher Persons, Matt Roewe

### **COMMISSION STAFF**

Barbara Wilson-Director, Katie Sheehy-Planning Analyst, Robin Magonegil-Administrative Staff Assistant, Diana Canzoneri-Demographer

### **GUESTS**

Marshall Foster, Susan McLain, Geoff Wentlandt, DPD

### **IN ATTENDANCE**

Jessie Clawson, Roosevelt Development Group; Doug Hofius, Hewitt; Sierra Hansen, The Fearey Group

*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 Josh Brower called the meeting to attention at 3:06 pm.

#### ▪ **Report & Vote: Nominations Committee Report and Vote on Leadership Slate**

Chair Josh Brower thanked the Commission for the honor of being Chair for the past two years. He expressed his belief that the Commission does a phenomenal job and will continue doing so. Chair Brower reported on the Nominations Committee's suggested slate for leadership positions and called for a motion to approve the slate. The slate is as follows:

Chair: Leslie Miller

Vice-Chair: David Cutler

Special Task Force on the Comp Plan Update Co-Chairs: Amalia Leighton and Josh Brower

Housing & Neighborhoods Committee Co-Chairs: Mark Johnson and Catherine Benotto  
Executive Committee At Large Member: Colie Hough Beck  
Land Use & Transportation Committee Co-Chairs: Jeanne Krikawa and Kevin McDonald

**ACTION:** Commissioner Bradley Khouri moved to accept the nominations for SPC leadership positions. Commissioner Kadie Bell seconded the motion. The slate was approved unanimously.

Chair Leslie Miller assumes leadership as Chair of the Commission and thanks outgoing Chair Josh Brower for his outstanding service. Director Barbara Wilson thanks Commissioner Brower and notes that he has been a fantastic Chair and has raised the level of the Commission with the work that he has done. The Commission takes a minute to recognize Josh Brower.

- **Update: City Planning Director**
  - Marshall Foster, DPD

Marshall Foster gave a brief update on the City Planning Division's projects. He stated that a lot of legislation currently is pending at City Council including [regulatory reform](#). He added that the portion of the proposed legislation related to SEPA was submitted intact and would add clarity and certainty to the permitting process.

Mr. Foster mentioned that the Shoreline Master Program update is in the middle of intense conversations with key stakeholders including the Port, shoreline users, business owners, the environmental community, and others. He added that they are getting close to agreement about important policy tradeoffs that will be necessary.

Mr. Foster reported that DPD staff has been meeting with Commissioners Brower and Leighton regarding the Comprehensive Plan. He added that they are starting a big push this month for public engagement. Mr. Foster noted that the message is starting to be disseminated more broadly and that they are hoping to have an op-ed in mid-October and a public event in late October.

Mr. Foster stated that they will go to Council in late September with the last of their quarterly reports on the work plan and that they would love to sit down with the Commission to talk about what will be in the work plan update which will identify priorities for 2012.

Mr. Foster concluded by noting that the next big waterfront event will be on October 27 at Bell Street Pier with food trucks.

Chair Miller thanked Mr. Foster for his time.

- **Approve: August 11, 2011 Minutes**

**ACTION:** Commissioner Catherine Benotto made a motion to approve the August 11, 2011 minutes. Commissioner Josh Brower seconded the motion. The minutes were approved.

- **Chair's Report**

- Chair Leslie Miller

Chair Miller reported on upcoming meetings and events for the Commission. She asked Commissioners to please complete their assignments for the housing affordability trends report and send them to Katie.

- **Briefing: West Seattle Triangle Proposed Rezone**

- Susan McLain, DPD

Chair Miller called for any disclosures or recusals.

Disclosures:

- Commissioner Bradley Khouri disclosed that his firm, b9 Architects, designs projects throughout the City of Seattle.
- Commissioner Catherine Benotto disclosed that her firm, Weber Thompson, has worked on projects in and near the West Seattle Triangle and throughout Seattle. She added that she has served on the Neighborhood Advisory Group for the West Seattle Triangle Study.
- Commissioner David Cutler disclosed that his firm, GGLO, designs projects throughout the City of Seattle.
- Commissioner Josh Brower disclosed that his firm, Brower Law, works on single and multifamily projects and other development projects throughout Seattle and may, in the future, work on one in the area. He is not currently working on any projects in the area.
- Commissioner Amalia Leighton disclosed that her firm, SvR Design works on public and private projects throughout the City of Seattle.
- Commissioner Colie Hough Beck disclosed that her firm, HBB, has contracts with the Parks Department, SDOT, SPU and works on multifamily projects in the area.
- Commissioner Martin Kaplan disclosed that his firm, Martin Henry Kaplan, Architects AIA, may, in the future, have projects in the West Seattle Triangle area.

Susan McLain gave a PowerPoint presentation on the West Seattle Triangle proposed rezone which can be accessed here:

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

Ms. McLain noted that the proposed legislation had very recently been submitted to City Council and that DPD hopes the legislation would be approved before the end of the year.

Chair Miller reminded the Commissioners that they will be providing recommendations to City Council.

Commissioner Brower stated that it was fantastic work and noted that the area is much bigger than around the light rail station on Beacon Hill. He wondered how they do this. Ms. McLain answered that the proposal represents a fairly modest increase in allowable density. Commissioner Brower asked about community feedback. Ms. McLain responded that West Seattle residents feel deluged with transportation problems and are very concerned about the additional 20 foot height proposed at some locations and what that might mean in terms of new residents and transportation impacts; she also

noted that parking has been a concern for many residents. She added that there are also many supporters for the increased density.

Commissioner Kaplan wondered if there are lost opportunities in the L zones. Ms. McLain replied that they evaluated 85 feet for commercially-zoned property west of 38<sup>th</sup> Avenue SW in the SEPA checklist and DNS. She added that they opted to not include the L2 area but that Council might want to review that portion of the proposal.

Commissioner Hough Beck noted that the regulations for setbacks are very strict and wondered if there was any flexibility, she also asked about parks and plazas. Ms. McLain responded that the upper level setback does not apply 100 feet within the main intersection. She added that similar setback standards can be found in the DMC and SM section of the code. Ms. McLain noted that parks and open space are identified in the street concept plan and the urban design framework (UDF). Ms. McLain noted that members of the community voiced concerns about the feasibility of combined standards, including whether ground level setbacks along north-south green streets would preclude employment type uses. She added that development standards provide basic controls on bulk and require a certain amount of open area at ground level. She continued that the UDF shows how the community would like to see open area/open space used. Commissioner Hough Beck stated that it is always hard to create a true plaza or event space on a corridor. Ms. McLain replied that the neighborhood plan speaks about lattice of small open space. She added that they looked at ways to incentivize open space through the incentive program. However, with 200 acres of open space a few blocks away; it was hard to prove the nexus between the impacts of future development and the need for more open space.

Commissioner Khouri agreed with the 45-foot setback and noted that he has always liked varied urban conditions. He wondered whether a 250-foot frontage with a 30-foot mid-block connection would be well designed. Ms. McLain noted that 250 feet is the block size. She indicated that the project team modeled a number of different structures and that they wanted to create a break around the middle of the block. She added that they looked at how to fit FAR with in different buildings.

Commissioner Leighton wondered about walkability and stated that lighted intersections would be necessary to get people to cross the streets. Ms. McLain noted that additional signage is proposed in the UDF and that they have worked with SDOT. Commissioner Leighton stated that they really need to push for that with this density and open space. She added that the way the streets are designed now is not good for the pedestrians. Ms. McLain noted that signalization is a challenge with BRT and multiple lanes.

Geoffrey Wentlandt, DPD, stated that the lattice of green streets and open space in the UDF is really nice. He identified SW Alaska Street as a main street, with lattice of green streets, setbacks, and plazas. Ms. McLain said the UDF also identified a hill climb and mixed use festival streets in the eastern portions of the study area.

Director Wilson noted that the little corner triangles that are there now are not used due to the traffic being so fast. She added that as that street changes and becomes more like a boulevard and businesses redevelop, that area could potentially become very nice.

Commissioner Benotto gave a bit of background on the height studies. She noted that they looked at 125 feet with the intent that if one corner needs an iconic building, it is the intersection of Fauntleroy

Way SW and SW Alaska Street. Commissioner Benotto stated that people wanted to go higher to free up more ground space but 125 feet did not achieve that. She added that others did not want to see higher limits. Commissioner Benotto noted that regarding open space, the UDF calls for large street trees and a boulevard that would really help balance density.

Vice-Chair Cutler stated that the slope has been a big issue at Yesler Terrace that relates directly to height and establishing a lower level of building modification is critical. He added that providing flexibility at sloped sites will affect the building; ground floor retail space gets compromised because of how height is measured and because developers try to maximize floor space for housing. Ms. McLain responded that they want to avoid one long continuous building frontage along the 600-foot blocks in the north-south direction. Vice-Chair Cutler wondered why, at the northwest corner of the intersection at Fautleroy Way SW and SW Alaska Street, proposed height limits are 65 feet and not 85 feet. Ms. McLain answered that just to the west is the Whole Foods site and to the north there is some permit activity. She added that they wanted to target lots that were most likely to develop sooner. Vice-Chair Cutler stated that intersections are what build cities and maybe properties around these intersections should be zoned for 85 feet. He added that the biggest gap in affordability is for the lowest income groups and not the workforce income groups. Ms. McLain stated that the Commission might want to comment on the incentive zoning.

Commissioner Knapton stated that it seems like there is a drop east of 35<sup>th</sup> Avenue SW and wondered whether higher height limits might be appropriate along that street and slightly west. Ms. McLain replied that a big issue was the future of the small businesses in the area bounded by 35<sup>th</sup>/38<sup>th</sup>/Fautleroy/Alaska. She added that a lot of the land is in very small parcels that have not been assembled and there was reluctance to even look at NC zones. Ms. McLain stated that retaining height was a compromise to not create too much redevelopment pressure. Commissioner Knapton wondered if they had any feedback from the Junction Association. Ms. McLain answered that the association likes the idea of the commercial corridor along Alaska but they do not want this area to compete with the Junction.

Commissioner Kaplan wondered if we should create some type of overlay zone that says “this is what we want here” and that they engage the community on creating a real town center or gateway and define what it means. Ms. McLain responded that the community is anxious to update the design guidelines to address areas east of the California junction.

Chair Miller thanked Susan McLain.

- **Briefing:** Roosevelt Rezone
  - Geoff Wentlandt, DPD

Chair Miller called for any disclosures or recusals.

**Disclosures:**

- Commissioner Martin Kaplan disclosed that his firm, Martin Henry Kaplan, Architects AIA, works on projects throughout the city.
- Commissioner Amalia Leighton disclosed that her firm, SvR Design works on public and private projects throughout the City of Seattle.

- Commissioner Josh Brower disclosed that his firm, Brower Law, represents developers of commercial and multifamily property throughout the city, and represents Sound Transit though not within this specific location.
- Commissioner David Cutler disclosed that his firm, GGLO, is working with the Roosevelt Development Group on a potential development project that may be affected by the proposed rezone.
- Commissioner Jeanne Krikawa disclosed that her firm, The Underhill Company LLC, works on transportation and planning projects throughout the city.
- Catherine Benotto disclosed that her firm, Weber Thompson, works on commercial and multifamily projects throughout the city and that she served on the Light Rail Review Panel, which reviews the design of light rail stations in Seattle, including the one within the Roosevelt Residential Urban Village.
- Commissioner Bradley Khouri disclosed that his firm, b9 architects inc., works on commercial and multifamily projects throughout the city.
- Commissioner Colie Hough-Beck disclosed that her firm, HBB, works on commercial, multifamily, and infrastructure projects throughout the city and that Sound Transit has been a client in the past.

Geoff Wentlandt gave a power point presentation on the Roosevelt rezone which can be accessed here: <http://www.seattle.gov/planningcommission/docs/rooseveltrezzoneoverview.pdf>

Ms. Wilson stated the Commission's citywide transit community's policy letter refers to the rezone quite a bit but that several Councilmember's would like the Commission's advice on some of the more specific aspects of the Roosevelt Rezone. She added that Councilmember's and central staff outlined some of the key issues they are grappling with including the 85-foot height limit and the proposal to have 65 foot heights to the east of the light rail station entrances. She noted that there are community members who would like to keep heights in front of the school at 40 feet compared to the proposed 65 feet. Mr. Wentlandt replied that the blocks to the south of the high school are owned by Hugh Sisley and include some vacant buildings. He added that some community members have expressed that they value the views to and from the high school but he recognizes that this is within blocks of the regional transit station.

Commissioner Khouri noted that there is a lot of single family zoning within a 5-minute walkshed of the station. He asked about the area that is not being addressed within the rezone. Mr. Wentlandt stated that the Future Land Use Map (FLUM) and corresponding locational criteria places some limits on what can be rezoned which would require another step. He added that they are hearing from the community that they are supportive of areas southwest of the circle, closer to the freeway and that maybe a mid-rise could go there as a tradeoff for keeping the high school blocks at 40 feet.

Commissioner Brower asked if there had been any discussion about the fact that the blocks in front of the high school will not be redeveloped without a height increase. He had heard that there was a stipulation in the lease agreement. Mr. Wentlandt was unsure of those details but he did indicate that many community members are concerned about views of the high school. Commissioner Brower noted that he supported increasing the density to create an active, energetic neighborhood and this area would be a great place for affordable family housing. He added that it would be more equitable to bring them into the core of this area because of the access to great transit service as well as close proximity to open space. Commissioner Brower wondered if they have had any discussions with the community that compare the number of affordable housing units that would be created with the

incentive. Mr. Wentlandt answered that those high school blocks would add more and he will find out the exact numbers.

Commissioner Cutler stated that City should be encouraged to look at the FLUM. He added that the intersection along 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE is going to have great access to the station entrances and suggested that making changes to the FLUM might help to refine adjacency issues. Commissioner Cutler noted that a housing unit can support 75 square feet of retail space and that there seems to be a mismatch in the development capacity model. Mr. Wentlandt agreed that the model might weight the commercial side a little too heavily. He added that they will probably see more residential but that the model is consistent across the city.

Commissioner Bell had a concern about environmental justice and instead of just pushing density towards the freeway, she encouraged DPD and the community to consider the interest of people who do not currently live in the neighborhood because they cannot afford to. She added that this is a growing region and it is important to think about the future. Ms. Wilson reminded Commissioners that at this point the proposal has been passed from DPD and the Executive to Council and that the Commission can address their point to the letter to Council.

Chair Miller stated that it is discouraging that every time rezones are proposed around a light rail station, everyone has to balance politics with what is the right to do for our city. She added that we need to balance current and future neighborhood interests. Chair Miller also noted that neighborhood parks and schools have been located in single family neighborhoods thus everyone does not have equal access and that more housing at close proximity to schools and parks would be a great asset.

Commissioner Kaplan stated that many businesses on the Roosevelt corridor serve a regional base and he wondered if there was any flexibility in the calculations to allow those types of retail uses or a blanket ratio. Mr. Wentlandt stated that is a blanket formula and they do that for consistency. He added that most businesses there serve the locals. Ms. Wilson noted that she has asked experts their opinions on the development potential for this community and most all agree that Roosevelt is really primed to predominately be residentially focused with the market being good for both rental and owners but not likely to be a place for UW overflow commercial or office. It will likely be neighborhood serving retail and commercial. This of course is very consistent with the Commission's designation of Roosevelt as a Mixed Use Neighborhood as outlined in the Seattle Transit Community report.

Commissioner Leighton suggested that they might want to reorganize the points regarding height and redevelopment for more emphasis in the letter.

Commissioner Krikawa stated that it baffled her that there is not a grander vision of all the station areas in the city. Mr. Wentlandt responded that the City has gotten to these rezones in different ways and that it was not easy to get to this point. He added that getting something done with the current COBE committee will be a nice step. Mr. Wentlandt continued that the neighborhood wants to see something happen, even if it is not perfect.

Commissioner Benotto suggested a variety of housing types be included and that this area might need more lowrise zoning on the out edges of the walkshed outside the core, maybe a scale of housing that could be consistent with single family. She added that maybe West Seattle should be rewarded with a light rail station since they seem to be supporting a greater level, scale and placement of housing density next to a BRT "station".

Commissioner Kaplan wondered about the alternative proposal the community was going to submit and whether this was going to significantly slow the rezone down. Ms. Wilson stated that Councilmember Clark has told the Commission that this is one of her major goals to complete before her tenure as the Chair of COBE is done.

Commissioner Khouri asked what the process was for making adjustments to the FLUM. Mr. Wentlandt stated that the FLUM is updated through the Comprehensive Plan amendment cycle.

Commissioner Knapton wondered if we can make a recommendation that the schools should be rezoned as well as some areas that are within a 5-minute of frequent transit. Commissioner Brower noted that we can say that in the letter but that we can only change the FLUM during the annual Comprehensive Plan cycle. Ms. Wilson noted that the Commission has already made that point and that perhaps they may want to consider how they proactively propose that as part of the major update to the plan or through the next annual amendment process.

Chair Miller thanked Mr. Wentlandt.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Jessie Clawson, representing the RDG, clarified the lease agreement and stated that there has to be some type of upzone before redevelopment can occur. She added that there is no minimum but it needs to be an upzone. Ms. Clawson added that without a rezone the slum blocks will remain. She added that, regarding affordable housing, there is incentive zoning proposal that would change and in the future it will be based on FAR. Ms. Clawson stated that she would suggest caution in the “enhanced design review” proposed by some as it would set a dangerous precedent in treating this area of the City differently from the rest of the City. She added that views of the high school would be addressed through the normal design review process, as well as through referral to the landmarks board staff.

Doug Hofius stated that he works for Hewitt and that they have clients with Sound Transit and have worked with the RDG in the past. He added that they are working on the Roosevelt transit station, including the preliminary design. Mr. Hofius noted that the initial plan was to have the station along I-5 above grade. He added that the neighborhood wanted an urbane solution at one point in time.

Chair Miller noted that this discussion will be continued at the next Executive Committee meeting.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

Chair Miller adjourned the meeting at 5:30 pm.