



**SEATTLE PLANNING COMMISSION  
JANUARY 08, 2004  
APPROVED MEETING MINUTES**

**Commissioners in Attendance:** John Owen, Chair; George Blomberg, Vice Chair; Matthew Kitchen, Jeanne Krikawa, Joe Quintana, Mimi Sheridan, Paul Tomita, Tony To.

**Commissioners Absent:** Anjali Bhagat, Angela Brooks, Ray Connell, Lyn Krizanich, Steve Sheehy.

**Staff:** Marty Curry, Executive Director; Barbara Wilson, Commission Analyst.

**Guests:** Jerry Finrow, Planning Commission Nominee; Tom Eanes, Planning Commission Nominee; Geri Beardsley, Council Central Staff; Scott MacColl, Council Central Staff; Dennis Meier, DPD; Jory Phillips, DPD; Lish Whitson, DPD.

**Call to Order**

Chair John Owen called the meeting to order at 3:10 pm

**Approval of Minutes**

Commissioner Matthew Kitchen made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Tony To, to approve the December 2, 2003 minutes as written. Motion was unanimously approved.

**COMMISSION BUSINESS**

**Chair's Report**

**Year End Dinner/Discussion:** Chair Owen offered thanks to Commissioners for a good year-end dinner and discussion noting that staff is preparing summary from our discussion that we'll use as we move into 2004.

**Downtown DEIS:** Chair Owen noted the DEIS working session on Friday, January 9, with the four Commissioners working as an ad hoc committee to analyze the DEIS and prepare comments. Commission Analyst, Barbara Wilson outlined the timeline and Commission objectives.

**ACTION: The ad-hoc committee on the Downtown DEIS will draft comments for a letter to be made available for a full Commission review before the comment deadline. The Housing, Neighborhoods and Urban Centers committee will also follow up with reviewing the draft comments at the January 13, 2004 HNUC Committee meeting.**

**Monorail Alignment/Station Location Letter to City Council:** Commission Director Marty Curry asked Commissioners to review the letter (in their folders) and to give final approval. Staff want to send this letter Friday, so Chair Owen asked Commissioners to get any final comments/revisions to staff by noon Friday. Ms. Curry and Chair Owen gave a quick summary of meeting (December 29) with MRP co-chairs, the SDC Chair and staff and the resulting agreement to reference one another's letters and establish regular communication/coordination between the MRP and the two Commissions.

## **COMMISSION BUSINESS**

### **Northgate 2004 Work Plan:**

Ms. Curry updated the Commission on next steps in moving forward with the agreement that was approved by the City Council in December. She stated that staff will be preparing a "work plan" for Commission involvement in the various initiatives that comprise the Northgate Council resolution.

### **Mayor's Appointments to SPC:**

Chair Owen thanked staff and Commissioners Anjali Bhagat, George Blomberg, and Denise Lathrop for their work in the recruitment and selection process. He stated he was pleased to announce that the Mayor has nominated two of our top candidates, Thomas Eanes and Jerry Finrow, for consideration to the City Council for appointment. Both Mr. Finrow and Mr. Eanes are attending today's meeting so introduced themselves. Ms. Wilson noted that the third open position is still under consideration and the Commission is providing the mayor with additional information to assist him in recommending the final open seat on the Commission.

**ACTION: Mr. Finrow and Mr. Eanes applications will be submitted to Council for consideration sometime this month. Also included in the package will be the nomination of Angela Brooks who was formerly our Get Engaged candidate and the reappointments of Commissioners Blomberg and Bhagat. Staff will continue to work with the Mayor's office in filling the final open Commission seat as soon as possible.**

### **North Link SEIS:**

Ms. Wilson reported that weather prevented holding the work session on Tuesday, but staff has asked Commissioners to submit their written comments this week.

Commissioner Kitchen noted that he was concerned that Sound Transit is not using available cost benefit analysis tools and guidelines, stating that this is an important issue for the Commission to include in its comments.

Chair Owen asked whether the Commission's review group would expect the Commission to recommend a preferred alternative alignment. Commissioner Kitchen stated that the working group is outlining a broad set of variables that should be used to make alignment decisions and

weigh what was learned in the DEIS process. He stated that one issue should be looking at the decision from a larger regional context. Commissioner Krikawa suggested asking how the various alignment decisions help in fulfilling Sound Move's vision. She stated that this would be an important parameter on which to base alignment and station location decisions.

Commissioner Blomberg noted that the needs and desires of the administration at the University of Washington will be a significant factor in determining this alignment. Commissioner Sheridan suggested that the biggest issue might be whether or not there is a station on First Hill.

Commissioner Kitchen asked how the City is approaching the North Link planning and draft SEIS in the context of the City Center circulation study. Chair Owen added his question about how the proposed Downtown Land Use changes, the Viaduct alternatives and North Link all tie together. Commissioner To agreed that there was a lot of convergence and cross-over in these issues as well as the Monorail and issues raised through the Downtown DEIS. He also noted that when we compare Vancouver's transit oriented development to planning efforts in Seattle that people should consider the importance of adequate infrastructure in planning for density. This is also helpful to understand when planning for the Mayor's economic development initiatives.

**ACTION: The joint LRRP / Planning Commission subcommittee will send their comments to staff who will compile a draft letter. This will go back to the subcommittee to refine, then will be sent to the full Planning Commission for review and approval at the January 22 SPC meeting. The comments will be sent to Sound Transit and cc'd to the Council, and Mayor. The subcommittee might also suggest recommendations on the North link alignment and station locations for consideration by the Commission.**

### **Commission Annual Retreat**

Chair Owen noted that it is time to think about our annual retreat. The Executive Committee has asked staff to prepare a draft work plan for 2004 for our next meeting – recognizing that much of our work is already cut out for us. The retreat will likely be more focused on prioritizing Commission work, and possibly selecting a topic to discuss in more depth. The Executive Committee has proposed that we schedule one half-day session, with the possibility of a second one if necessary.

**ACTION: Staff will send out a tentative retreat schedule before the next Commission meeting. Two Commissioners will work with staff in planning the retreat. George Blomberg volunteered to help plan the event.**

## **PRESENTATIONS**

### **Waterfront Plan:**

Chair Owen welcomed Dennis Meier, DPD senior urban designer to update the Commission on the Waterfront Principles and Priorities. He noted that Dennis is the author of a series of in-depth background reports on the waterfront and has drafted the principles and priorities that we are going to hear about today. Chair Owen directed Commissioners to the Draft Principles/Priorities in their folders. Mr. Meier also passed out extra packets from Forum #2 that contain other background information in addition to the Principles/Priorities.

Mr. Meier gave a brief description and presentation of the Principles and Priorities noting that they had been updated to reflect comments from both Forums and the discussion group feedback. Commissioner Krikawa asked what changes had been made after the second forum and what influence the interactive sessions had on the content as opposed to the discussion group feedback. Mr. Meier responded that the forum interactive sessions had a lot of influence especially in helping identify the bigger picture, whereas the discussion groups provided more technical feedback in the topical areas and related issues.

Commissioner Quintana noted that some of the statements in the principles might be contradictory or raise flags for groups like the Port or the Longshoreman's Union. He also asked if the priorities were in order, and stated his belief that economic development should be higher in such a prioritized list. He also recommended that financial screens be considered at some point in the process.

Mr. Meier responded that that Port of Seattle and the unions have been engaged throughout the process. He also stated that the 7 principles address the key issues and interests but that many have suggested that conflicts be more clearly identified. This reflects a desire to acknowledge and highlight the tradeoffs among competing goals and interests that will need to be resolved in developing the concept design and the ultimate plan.

Chair Owen noted that the joint SDC/SPC Waterfront subcommittee has indeed advised staff to cast a wide net first to bring in all of the underlying values, then to examine the conflicts and finally to look at feasibility (economic, environmental, etc) and other important concerns and screens. Commissioner Quintana stated that he felt the economic development screens and the fiscal backdrop should be place up front in order to not raise false expectations.

Commissioner Blomberg noted that the joint subcommittee has been comfortable with the approach taken by staff thus far in working through three levels of investigation and analysis; institutional analysis, expert panel evaluation, and then enriched by citizen participation. He feels this approach has thus far brought forth more balanced and measured outcomes. Chair Owen concurred that those involved have been engaged in doing the necessary and important due diligence.

Commission Kitchen asked for clarity on the use of the Principles and Priorities document. He suggested that the document could be more concise and that well-defined objectives for the document may help make it clearer. He also suggested it might be more useful to articulate what the concerns are and what is trying to be preserved rather than showing an alternative to the current Viaduct.

Commissioner Sheridan stated her concern that the document outlines a lot of conflicting ideas and asked if it was intentional or accidental. If intentional she suggests that it be made clear in the documentation and explained in the larger context of the decision making and process.

Mr. Meier stated that one of the objectives was indeed to lay out the fundamental issues that need to be focused on and struggled with as a plan is developed. These Principles really just lay out what needs to be focused on in creating an alternative vision. Commissioner Krikawa stated that the joint commission subcommittee felt that the conflicts really need to be brought to the surface at this stage of decision making.

Commissioner Quintana voiced concern that some of the statements about Terminal 46 could be taken wrong and some industry may perceive them as an invitation to leave Seattle. He suggested being careful with such language.

**Action: The Commission supports the current approach, scope and timeline for developing the Waterfront Principles. They believe that this planning phase and investigation of issues in the context of technical experts and a broader public lens is the right approach and urge a continued and expanded effort in this direction. They also express the Commission's willingness to participate in helping identify some of the screens and parameters that should be employed in the next steps such as fiscal feasibility. The Commission also recognizes this is a long term vision and that important elements and ideas need not be discarded and deemed not feasible because of short-term fiscal realities (i.e. in the next 5-10 years). The Commission will send a memo with its comments and advice to DPD staff on these draft Principles and Priorities to help inform the Charette process and more generally the City's Waterfront Planning efforts.**

### **Commercial Code Revisions**

Chair Owen welcomed Jory Phillips, DPD lead staff to the Commercial Code project and Lish Whitson from DPD Comprehensive and Regional Planning Division also working on the Commercial Code revision. Chair Owen noted that he had represented the Commission on the Advisory Committee and that Commissioner Joe Quintana also served on the Advisory Committee, representing the Seattle Chamber of Commerce.

Mr. Phillips gave an update on the project and outlined next steps and the timeline. He noted that the main goal for amending the commercial land use code is to advance the Comprehensive Plan's Urban Village strategy to promote new housing and job development in compact mixed use neighborhoods. He outlined six goals related to this primary goal. Mr. Phillips also briefly described the scope and methodology for the project including the work of the Advisory Committee; the staff background reports, inventory and preliminary analysis; and development of the draft concepts. The 3 concepts under consideration are the Urban Village strategy, a strategy that focuses on flexibility known as form based, and another that focuses on discretion.

Jory Phillips explained where and how the project will overlap with Comprehensive Plan updates, noting that while the Commercial land use code will be one of many Comp Plan amendments, it will have its own public process.

Lish Whitson briefly outlined the timeline for the Comp Plan Update and amendment process, including the public process. He also gave more details on the Commercial land use code's relationship to both the Comprehensive Plan and neighborhood plans. He noted that DPD's major objective in forwarding these changes is to advance the vision of the Comprehensive Plan urban village strategy, which will strengthen neighborhood plans and goals.

Mr. Phillips then requested that the Planning Commission agree to act as a focus group, providing its expertise to help DPD craft the message and materials for the Commercial Code public process and to review the content of the proposal. He also expressed his hope that the Commission would consider being involved in the public kick-off event.

Chair John Owen noted that the Mayor and the DPD director have asked the Commission to be very involved in the Comprehensive Plan update and that the Commission may have limited capacity to take on significant involvement in another public process. He added his opinion that it would make sense for the Commission to be engaged in a first level of review and as a sounding board for content and message. Commissioner Quintana agreed that the Planning Commission could play a valuable role in looking at content as well as process. Commissioner Tomita recommended that another objective of the Commercial Code revision should be to build in a logical way of amending it over time to prevent the layering of innumerable amendments that have made the current land use code complicated and difficult to use. Commissioner Sheridan agreed stating DPD would benefit from laying out a framework for ongoing review and amendments that could be further developed over time.

**Action: The Planning Commission will send a memo with its comments and input to DPD staff regarding its role in the Commercial land use code project, based on this briefing. Generally, the Commission supports the direction and approach for the project described by staff. The Planning Commission agrees to review the content of the proposal, the public process and materials for the initial public event. It will provide its expertise in a focus group session and other potential venues to be developed by SPC and DPD staff.**

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Chair Owen asked if there was any other comment. Geri Beardsley from Council Central staff introduced herself and thanked the Planning Commission for its hard work on the Northgate issues in 2003 and offered kudos for very fine analysis and support to the City in helping to find solutions that yielded positive outcomes for the City of Seattle and the community.

#### **ADJOURN MEETING**

Chair Owen adjourned the meeting at 5:40 pm