

SEATTLE PLANNING COMMISSION
APRIL 24, 2003
APPROVED MEETING MINUTES

Commissioners in Attendance: John Owen, Chair; Denise Lathrop, Vice Chair; George Blomberg, Matthew Kitchen, Jeanne Krikawa, Lyn Krizanich, Mimi Sheridan, Tony To, Paul Tomita.

Commissioners Absent: Angela Brooks, Angali Bhagat, Gregory Davis, Joe Quintana, Steve Sheehy.

Staff: Cheryl Sizov, Acting Director; Barbara Wilson, Planning Commission Analyst

Visitors:
Martha Lester, central staff; Bob Morgan, Central Staff; Jackie Kirn, OPM.

Call to Order
Chair John Owen called the meeting to order at 7:00 am.

Approval of Minutes
Commissioner Lyn Krizanich motioned to approve minutes, Commissioner Jeanne Krikawa seconded and the Commission unanimously approved.

Chairs Report
Commission Chair John Owen reminded the Commission of the **Seattle Monorail Project Public Workshop on Access Issues “Connecting with the Monorail”** to be held on **Saturday, April 26, from 8:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.** at WS Convention and Trade Center. He asked if anyone from the Planning Commission could attend to represent the Commission and report back. Commissioner Denise Lathrop volunteered to attend in the morning and Commissioner Krikawa volunteered to attend in the afternoon. Cheryl Sizov said she would also attend a portion of the workshop.

Chair Owen informed the group **that the Commission has been requested to brief the City Council on Monday, April 28, 2003**, primarily sharing how it intends to respond to the questions Councilmember Steinbrueck has raised regarding Northgate. Chair Owen stated he was willing to be one of the SPC representatives. Commissioner Tony To also volunteered and Commissioner Lathrop will check her schedule and coordinate with Cheryl Sizov. This group will confer and work with Cheryl to formulate talking points for the briefing.

Commissioner Owen gave a reminder about the upcoming **Executive Committee on Tuesday, April 29, 2003, 11:30 am at which** the PC will have a discuss general Design Commission/Planning Commission coordination with Design Commission Chair and Co-Chair Don Royse and Jack Mackie, respectively, in addition to other business items.

He announced that the first **Waterfront Planning Forum has been scheduled for Thursday, June 26th and Saturday, June 28th**. He noted that the planning is well underway and that it has been proposed to have event co-hosted by Design Commission and Planning Commission; details to be presented soon by CityDesign staff to SPC. Barbara Wilson noted that we need to Identify Planning Commissioners for a planning subcommittee and the event itself. She noted that

the subcommittee will form early May. John Owen and Jeanne Krikawa volunteered to participate. Other interested Commissioners should contact Barbara or Cheryl fairly soon.

Chair Owen reminded the Commission that as a part of its communications strategy they will be placing **articles in DCLU Info** on a quarterly basis. The next opportunity is June issue, article due May 20th; tentative topic “What/who the Planning Commission is and what it does” with PC efforts in Housing Choices as context. Commissioner Krizanich agreed to work with staff to craft the first article.

COMMISSION BUSINESS/DISCUSSION

• NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT

Nominating Committee chair Lyn Krizanich noted that the committee has been calling Commissioners individually to get a sense of who is interested in taking on a leadership role and to solicit nominations. She reported that they have not been able to reach everyone yet but have compiled the following information;

- For the **Commission Chair** position, John Owen is willing to serve again but would be happy to step aside if there is someone who might have more time to devote.
- For **Commission Vice-Chair** Denise Lathrop will continue to serve until July and then will step aside. Steve Sheehy, Mimi Sheridan, and Paul Tomita have all been nominated for Vice Chair.
- Lyn Krizanich stated she would be willing to continue as **co-chair of the Housing, Neighborhoods, and Urban Centers Committee**. Tony To and Denise Lathrop indicated they would serve on this Committee.
- Commissioner Tomita said he would consider staying on as **chair of the Transportation Committee** but would also step aside if there is someone else who may want to do it. Commissioner Tomita stated he is also stated that he would be willing to be on the Monorail review committee but if he did, he would not be able to continue on as Chair of the Transportation Committee. Matthew Kitchen and Jeanne Krikawa were nominated as chair. Anjali Bhagat stated she would serve as a member of the committee.

Commissioner Krizanich gave a run down of the other **Ad Hoc Committees and Activities that Commissioner** are participating in which may help people decide where they may want to put their time and energies:

- **LRRP**, current members are Matthew Kitchen, Mimi Sheridan, and George Blomberg.
- **Commercial Code**; John Owen will represent the Commission on the Mayors advisory board. Joe Quintana has also been appointed to the advisory board. The Commissions work on Code revision will happen as a part of the **Housing, Neighborhood Urban Centers committee**.
- **Waterfront** subcommittee volunteers are John Owen and Jeanne Krikawa.
- For **Monorail** work we have divided into work areas; **Station Area Planning, EIS and the Project Review Committee**. Mimi Sheridan will serve on the Design Commissions Monorail Project Review Committee. Other possible members are Commission Tomita, Commissioner Bhagat and Commissioner Kitchen.

Appointments for committees and subcommittee work will continue to be fleshed out by staff and the nominating committee. The committee is still waiting to hear back from several

Commissioners. They plan to have a slate ready for review at the Full Commission meeting on May 22.

Commissioner Sheridan asked when Angela Brooks Get Engaged term was over. John Owen thought it was August and that a prior meeting we had stated to Alex Field that the Commission would like Angela to be approved into a regular Commission spot. It was also brought up that the Planning Commission is actually a couple of Commission positions short of its full roster. The Commissioner expressed a desire to have a new Get Engaged member.

- **MONORAIL**

Debrief on Green Line Tour – Transportation Chair Tomita reported that several Planning Commissioners, Design Commissioners, City staff, as well as Council members Licata and Pageler and councilmember staffers attended a bus tour of the Monorail green line tour on Friday April 18th. Commissioner Tomita reported that it was a great tour and great day. Many questions were asked and many of the questions got answered. It was nice to have Licata and Pageler with us for the whole tour.

Commissioner Kitchen stated that Joel Horn did a good job of tour guiding and that the monorail staff in attendance also did a nice job helping to provide context and giving folks a good understanding of the project. The tour was a good opportunity to ask questions. People felt like SMP staff gave honest answers.

Barbara Wilson stated that there was a walking tour through Seattle Center which helped give context for the guideway, alignment and stations for things like height and how it will fit into the Center.

Commissioner Krizanich said the tour was well organized and helped to make sense of it from a conceptual level. In many cases it was clear that the Monorail staff could not yet answer some questions but it was useful to ask and to know what the process is for finding out some specific questions. It helped lay out a good foundation for what the questions are and for what the impacts are for different choices.

Commissioner Sheridan said it was useful for illuminating areas where things are still unclear. One is the Ballard crossing and how it will impact and affect the area. Because we were on a bus going over the crossing it was hard to really get a sense of where columns would be located. Commissioner Sheridan suggested that we take Joel Horn up on his offer to have some walking tours at key points in the proposed line as it was very helpful to have a detailed tour and discussion at Seattle Center. It helped illustrate the impacts of the proposed alternatives, the impact of the proposed alternative is greater than she expected. Commissioner Sheridan also suggested a walking tour of downtown as there will be some pretty significant impacts to buildings. We will need more detail about 5th and then going across. They also talked about second and which side of second.

Commissioner Lathrop asked how much property takings will drive their route and their decisions. For instance in West Seattle there are some buildings it would make sense to go over or to go through but instead they are moving it up into the residential neighborhood next to single family homes. She wonders if the financial considerations of property takings are what is driving that particular decision and how much overall takings will drive the route decisions. Commissioner Sheridan stated it seemed to be one of many factors they are considering but it did not seem to be the main criteria in some decisions.

Commissioner Tomita was surprised by the number of building owners SMP said are willing and happy to have Monorail there (in addition, of course, to other businesses that are opposed).

Commissioner Sheridan pointed out that Walgreen's wants the station but she wonders if there is sufficient room. Commissioner Krikawa said replacement parking is an issue. Commissioner Tomita stated there is plenty of room but they would have to take parking. Commissioner Krizanich pointed out that in addition to considerations about property takings, another big question is the interplay with Metro bus connectivity. This really came to play in the Interbay Magnolia area and several other spots along the line.

Commissioner Krizanich had questions about the need to understand and get more substantive information about the coordination and the discussions between Metro and Monorail since the bus connections and Metro's ability to serve stations will be an important parameter.

Commissioner Sheridan stated that the need for bus turn-around space will be a big factor in decision making and could create bigger problems with the need to take more buildings than originally envisioned.

Commissioner Tomita suggested that acquiring property for the station will not be as big a deal because it is up in the air allowing for transit oriented development below the stations. Commissioner Lathrop stated that her understanding of SMP's thinking is that putting the monorail in will likely lead to private development at stations. There are opportunities to be gained and lost and what factors get prioritized will determine development opportunities.

Commissioner Kitchen stated that SMP's approach has not been to hold up the project in order to first change the nature of land use around their service, for good or for bad. This is very different from how transit systems are normally envisioned. We learned with light rail that trying to get the timing just right to align development and transit planning can be very tricky. SMP is taking a reasonable approach and should be given the flexibility to defer stations until such time that there really is a development opportunity. There are multiple benefits to doing that.

Commissioner Owen said it would be useful to be able to look at examples of where a good pedestrian environment has been created under an elevated system. He asked staff to try and capture this discussion in the form of feedback in a written document. Commissioner Lathrop asked if we could put together a list of outstanding questions. Some, she realizes, are immature but as things evolve they will be important in the review process.

Commissioner Krikawa asked that we follow up with Joel Horn's invitation to be involved in visual simulations. Being involved in selection of view point selection will be critical.

Chair Owen asked the staff to create appropriate documents for Commission review on the issues articulated by himself, and Commissioners Lathrop and Krikawa.

- **NORTHGATE: RESPONSE FOR REVIEW OF MAYOR'S PROPOSAL**

The Commission received an updated review "matrix" and compiled Commission comments as a tool to help make decisions and to guide the discussion of the SPC process/timeline to review the Mayor's proposal and draft a letter of response to Council President Steinbrueck. Chair Owen suggested our timeline for response to Councilmember Steinbrueck would be to respond in the next couple of weeks. The other goal for the discussion at hand will be to have an agreed-upon response for the Commission's presentation to City Council on Monday.

Commissioner Owen asked for feedback on what SPC's general overall response should be. Commissioner Sheridan suggested that the Commission aim for something in the nature of one to two paragraphs for each of the questions outlined in the matrix. She recommended the goal be to make the product be short and concise so it is more likely to be read.

Cheryl Sizov asked for guidance from the Commission regarding how much and what additional work still needs to be done by the Commission. Will our response to Peter Steinbrueck be the bulk of our involvement or is the Commission planning to look at this issue more carefully? Commissioner Tomita suggested that the Commission will have to do a more in depth review and more work. Commissioner Sheridan said as they go through each question they can

determine what needs additional work done by the Commission. Commissioner Tomita said we can analyze whether or not the Commission has more to contribute on each of the questions they have been asked to consider by President Steinbrueck.

Commissioner Krizanich stated that the Commission has a few years worth of experience, knowledge, and work with the community etc. but that we don't necessarily have the resources and capacity to do a full analysis of the plan. What we can and should do is dust off the past work we have done and in this context represent the knowledge that we have already compiled. Most of the answers to his questions already exist in our collective knowledge, or the knowledge of City staff.

Commissioner Owen suggested that we can refer to previous documents and also include the comments that have come forward from Commissioner Sheehy that address legal concerns we might have about the proposal, and address some overall topics. Commissioner Kitchen suggested we start by indicating to Council what our capabilities are and then make conclusions based on our own unique perspective. We will need follow up presentations and briefings from staff in order to understand the complexities of the proposal.

Chair Owen then started a discussion on the questions, one by one. **Question #1 has to do with zoning regulations.** Commissioner Lathrop reminded the Commission that SPO staff went through a whole update of the Northgate comprehensive plan and the neighborhood plan. Ann Sutphin did a detailed report that we should look to for answers. We should ask Ann as well as Gordon Clowers and even Diane Sugimura to provide us with some background and act as a resource. Either by coming to a meeting or providing a summary. Chair Owen suggested that we ask for a summary and there was general assent for this course of action. Commissioner Sheridan said we need a couple of statements that clearly state what the neighborhood or city's goals and policy objectives. Chair Owen said we also need zoning and current regulations. The Commission needs to have DCLU staff to give us this information via a summary that outlines clarification.

There was a question about what exactly constitutes the Mayor Nickels Northgate Action plan. Jackie Kirn clarified that there are 3 pieces of legislation that have been transmitted to council for approval; a development agreement with Simon Property Group, legislation that outlines two code revisions, and legislation on the capitol improvement for the stormwater project. Commissioner Tomita asked to have an explanation on the code revisions. Jackie Kirn stated that the two code revisions are 1) a repeal of the GDP and 2) to add flexibility to the way the open space requirement can be complied with.

Jackie Kirn outlined some of the broader considerations that go beyond the three ordinances that are currently before Council. For instance, they will submit a resolution that will give policy direction to a coordinated transportation plan. The other piece will be a purchase and sales agreement to convey the south lot. Cheryl Sizov asked if Ms. Kirn would put together a summary and timeline of the additional decisions that will be made but are not outlined in the Mayor's plan that was passed out at the community forum. Ms. Kirn will put together a timeline for decision making on the library, the storm water agreement, etc.

Commissioner Kitchen stated that throughout his comments to the questions there was an underlying question that needs to be answered. While it is clear this development agreement and its corresponding pieces do not get the city where it needs to be vis a vis the vision for Northgate, the fundamental question is whether or not it is a meaningful contribution and appropriate step in the right direction.

Commissioner Kitchen suggested there are two potential responses; one saying this proposal in and of itself is not sufficient to achieve Northgate goals (but may or may not be a fatal flaw since as a first step isn't expected to fulfill the entire vision). The other response could say this proposal, even as a first step, is taking us down the wrong path. The Commission expressed general agreement that this proposal alone is insufficient, whether or not this is taking the city

down a path toward a broader vision is a question the Commission can and should seek to answer. Is this a credible step? Commissioner Blomberg said we are really in need of a frame of reference to see if this plan is getting to a cohesive vision. Commissioner Kitchen stated that if we say we cannot move forward until there is a cohesive agreed-upon vision we are dooming ourselves and that is not an acceptable response. Commissioner Owen iterated that we need to ask how this plan helps achieve larger objectives, but not say we need a cohesive vision before moving forward.

Commissioner Lathrop pointed out that the questions Councilmember Steinbrueck is asking are the same kind of questions that came up when Vulcan came to talk about South Lake Union. Our question is how the Mayor's proposal fits within the context of the broader vision for Northgate. And making sure the city is not precluding themselves from making good decisions later.

Chair Owen asked the group to consider **question #3 re: the mall property**. He stated he thought the Commission should summarize what has been done before so we have clarity. He asked for volunteers to look at past policy analysis and to summarize it. Mimi Sheridan and Denise Lathrop stated they believed that DCLU and others have already done it and it we can get appropriate staff to pull it together that will review.

Commissioner Owen suggested that we can ask if there is enough housing, is the open space sufficient, is the incremental development sufficient and congruent with the goals and neighborhood and comp. plans? If the cap is at 144,000 square feet and this is 80% then does this preclude other development potential later on? Is the food court considered open space? Jackie Kirn volunteered to take notes on some of these questions and to provide the Commission with clarity on these points. Jackie said OPM would be happy to come back with DCLU and present on the code to provide clarity on these points.

Chair Owen asked **about #4 re; sufficiency of open space requirement**. Commissioner Sheridan suggested that this was a question that the Commission should use its judgment on. Commissioner Kitchen suggested the Commission ask to what degree the development agreement meets open space requirements. Commissioner To wants to understand what the trade off is for change. What is the rationale? It is unclear whether or not food court counts as open space or not.

Jackie Kirn stated that the amount of open space outlined in the GDP was tied to the amount of development. Commissioner Tomita said he is concerned that if the mall development happens incrementally over time and you get a lot of little 15% open spaces, then there will be little chunks of open space in place without a larger plan for how they connect and contribute to the whole. The Northgate overlay is different than other places in the city and adds confusion. Commissioner Tomita suggested that if 5th Ave improvements and the Bon reentry could integrate with open space by concentrating the open space there it would be a good benefit. Commissioner Sheridan suggested we make a statement about quality and location of open space more than exact amount.

With respect to #5 re: housing, Chair Owen stated he did not feel that the 150 units minimum was sufficient for a 5.9 acre lot. Commissioner Lathrop stated that we should be looking for housing targets in line with creating a urban center. Commissioner To asked what the housing zoning was and Jackie Kirn stated 150 was well below the maximum zoning but also reminded the commission that the 150 is a floor, not a ceiling. Commissioner Lathrop recommended that the city should really be striving for greater housing goals here. Commissioner Owen stated he thought this was using too much land for too little housing. He also stated that the incremental approach has big drawbacks for housing, open space and pedestrian circulation. He also stated that we should be striving for 60-80 units an acre in this area as King County is doing on the adjacently owned Transit Oriented development. Commissioner Lathrop recommended that the Mayor may want to consider shooting for a higher bar on this property because this will set a tone for future development and housing targets. Commissioner

Tomita pointed out that a dozen years from now when Sound Transit is there, this level of density will not make sense but we will have this housing for many years. It will look like a mistake. Jackie Kirn said a lot of this has to do with marketing and timing. Commissioner Kitchen asked to review all of the proposals that will impact Northgate to get a scale and sense of this place so we can determine if this is reasonable.

Re: #6 on alternatives to 150 units Commissioner Owen said it would be valuable to have an artist rendering of how it ALL fits together or an overall plan for the broader context. Commissioner Lathrop stated we had a lot of this through the town charettes that the Commission did. Barbara Wilson asked if it would be worthwhile to pull this out of the vision and charrette report that the Commission did and resubmit it in the response to City Council.

Re: #7 on the NACP and its continued viability relevance, Commissioner Sheridan suggested again that we look back to Ann Sutphin's work on the Neighborhood and Comprehensive plan. She also said the answer to the question is "yes" but the idea of how we change a neighborhood plan is a broader policy question that we aren't ready to tackle right now. It's a bigger question.

Since we ran out of time, Commissioner Owen asked if staff could put together a new iteration of these questions/comments and circulate it for further comments and to get to DCLU and other City staff right away to ask them to work on the various pieces of this. He also asked staff to begin articulating the Commissions response and circulate it via email. Commissioner Tomita stated to answer a question like **#9 re: other shopping malls** it would be useful to think about a place like Bellevue Square where they were in a similar place 20 years ago in housing and parking but they had a plan and vision to transform the area and build housing adjacent to a mall. It was a major city investment that transformed the area. But doing Northgate incrementally without a clear vision will not get us to the same place. We can look at examples like Bellevue Square and others for lessons.

Commissioner Owen stated that due to time constraints we should continue this discussion with an email replied to changes to the matrix.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

ADJOURN

Commission Chair Owen adjourned the meeting at 9:08 a.m.