



**SEATTLE PLANNING COMMISSION
DECEMBER 02, 2003
APPROVED MEETING MINUTES**

Commissioners in Attendance: John Owen, Chair; George Blomberg, Vice Chair; Angela Brooks, Matthew Kitchen, Jeanne Krikawa, Lyn Krizanich, Denise Lathrop, Joe Quintana, Steve Sheehy, Mimi Sheridan, Tony To.

Commissioners Absent: Anjali Bhagat, Ray Connell, Paul Tomita.

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

Guests: City Council Member Richard Conlin, Jackie Kirn, OPM; Martha Lester, Council Central staff; Scott MacColl, Council Central staff; Bill; SMP Phyllis Schulman, Legislative Staff; Rebecca Herzfeld, DON; John Eskelin; DON,

Call to Order

Chair John Owen called the meeting to order at 7:35 a.m.

Approval of Minutes

Commissioner Mimi Sheridan made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Jeanne Krikawa, to approve the November 13, 2003 minutes as written. Motion was unanimously approved.

COMMISSION BUSINESS

CHAIR'S REPORT

Chair Owen noted that this is the last regular Planning Commission meeting for 2003 and that the Commission will be planning January meetings, so input from Commissioners is welcome regarding presentations; briefings, etc. that they want to have put on our agendas.

Commission Recruitment

Chair Owen reported that the Commission has 20 applicants for the three open positions with a good array of people, with diverse skills and backgrounds. He thanked Commissioners Bhagat and Blomberg for working with staff to review the applications and interview finalists. Ms. Curry passed around the set of applications and asked Commissioners to share any knowledge they have of the applicants. She stated that the intent is to make recommendations to the Mayor by the middle of December.

Planning Commission Year End Dinner, December 11

Chair Owen reminded Commissioners of this upcoming year-end social event and noted that we will be saying farewell to Denise Lathrop who has worked hard for her five years on the Commission.

Downtown DEIS

Chair Owen stated that Department of Planning and development (DPD) has recently released the Downtown DEIS; and that comments are due at the end of January. Commission Analyst Barbara Wilson asked for interest in forming subcommittee to review this document and prepare draft comments to bring to the full Commission for approval. Commissioners Quintana, Krizanich and Sheridan have indicated interest in reviewing the document, so we are looking for at least one more person, preferably someone who does not have a direct stake in the outcome. Commissioner Tony To volunteered. Ms. Wilson informed Commissioners that DPD staff will hold a public hearing on Monday, December 15 at 7:00 p.m. Plymouth Congregational Church. She also indicated that she will send out information to the commissioners who will review the DEIS.

North Link SEIS

Chair Owen informed the Commission that Sound Transit has released its SEIS for the North Link segment of the light rail project and that the 70 day review period goes until the end of January. Commission staff have met with LRRP staff and are proposing that the Commission's LRRP members form the Commission's review team, along with 1 – 2 additional Commissioners with support and expertise from other commissioners as appropriate.

ACTION: LRRP and SPC staff will use LRRP's two January meetings (January 6 and 20) as review worksession to work with Commissioners formulate joint comments for the for the North Link draft SEIS. All Commissioners are invited and encouraged to attend. The joint committee will submit draft comments for review after the January 20 meeting. The comments will be passed on to Sound Transit by the January 31 deadline and forwarded to Mayor Nicles and the Seattle City Council.

COMMISSION BUSINESS

UPDATES

Preparation for December 3rd meeting meeting with Mayor Nickels

Chair Owen reminded Commissioners that the basis for this meeting was the letter the Commission sent a month ago regarding the City's commitment to neighborhood plan implementation. He thanked Commissioners Kitchen, Sheridan, Lathrop and Krikawa for agreeing to attend the meeting along with him. He asked if there was anyone else who is interested in attending noting that while we want to have a smallish group for this meeting, the real key is that all make concise and clear observations and recommendations to the Mayor. He went over the key points that have been drafted and asked if there were other issues or points that should be made.

Commissioner Krizanich noted that with the loss of the functions now fulfilled by the Neighborhood District Managers (NDM's) she will be most interested to hear from the Mayor on his thoughts about how that capacity will be fulfilled. Ms. Curry mentioned that John Rahaim has been invited to attend and will hopefully be able to help think through this with the Commission and Mayor.

Commissioner Sheridan noted the need to highlight the past role of DON and clarify its continuing role. Commissioner Owen stated his interest in exploring the question of how neighborhood plans integrate with the Comp. Plan and also wondered where it intersects with the Mayors agenda. He feels that losing this function could make it tougher to get the Mayor's agenda passed.

Commissioner Blomberg stated his interest in learning how Mr. Rahaim views potentially adding additional workload and capacity to DPD responsibilities. Ms. Curry stated thus far he is open to the idea

of being more engaged and believes that some of the future neighborhood planning work could be done effectively by DPD, but adding staffing capacity is a must if such functions are assigned to DPD.

Commissioner Kitchen stated that he believes a reexamination of the structural approach is warranted and there are multiple ways that this can move, but a collective agreement and plan will be necessary. Commissioner Quintana suggested that it will be helpful to understand that the Mayor's is taking an approach to projects that emphasizes interdepartmental cooperation and that dealing with these questions structurally as Mr. Kitchen is suggesting is useful. He also suggested that the Commission help think about what really needs to be done and give that feedback to the Mayor.

ACTION: Planning Commission representatives will meet with the Mayor on December 3 and share observations about Neighborhood plan implementation, including the role of DPD in additional analysis/planning that will be needed in the future.

Northgate

Chair Owen gave a brief summary of the Council's current proposal and of the input he, Denise and Mimi provided at the Council's last two Northgate COW meetings, referring them to a one page summary of key points they shared with Councilmembers. He noted that the Council and Executive are working this week on a compromise package that can be approved by the Council and is agreeable to Simon and Lorig. Marty Curry also updated Commissioners on the proposed pedestrian connections/open space planning piece of the proposal that would involve the Planning Commission.

Commissioner Quintana asked about the status of the discussion between the Mayor and Council. Jackie Kirn from the Office of Policy Management (OPM) stated the various parties had a focused meeting on the 8th and were making big progress and that everyone seems motivated to find a compromise plan.

Ms. Curry stated that Council is interested in having the Commission's involvement and recommendations on public involvement and the creation of a stakeholder group. Commissioner Kitchen noted that the key to successful public involvement is being clear about what decisions will get made.

Ms. Kirn stated that she would contact the Commission about the next steps in the process and hopes to have a proposal for involvement and clarity of where the project is going very soon.

ACTION: The Planning Commission thanked Commissioners Owen, Lathrop and Sheridan for representing the Commission in the recent input to the City Council. It renewed its commitment to advising the Mayor, Council and City departments on Northgate issues and to helping to move forward with an effective public involvement mechanism and with key planning tasks.

Monorail Station Area Planning Workshops

Chair Owen referred Commissioners thanked the Commissioners who have volunteered to attend the Monorail Station Area Planning Workshops scheduled this week and next. Commission Analyst Barbara Wilson went over the workshop agenda and explained the proposed roles for the Commissioners at these meetings. She noted that Commissioners have been asked to give feedback to staff on the presentations, including the content and accessibility of the presentation and materials. City staff have also requested that Commissioners help track the big themes that come from the small group discussions.

ACTION: One or more Planning Commissioners and one Planning Commission staff member will attend and participate in each of the six station area planning workshops. Commissioners will debrief with staff after each of the sessions and at a follow up meeting to help ensure high quality public involvement in the Station Area Planning process.

Monorail Alignment and Station Location – Commission Input to Council

Chair Owen asked Commissioners to refer to the draft comments in their folders for discussion. He reminded Commissioners that Council has asked for the Commission's input on this and that the Transportation Committee has taken the lead in this effort. He asked Ms. Curry to guide people through this discussion. She asked first for the Planning Commissioners who sit on the Monorail Review Panel (MRP) to offer their opinions. Council staffer Martha Lester also noted that Council is likely to take a position on Seattle Center in December but is likely to defer other questions until the new year.

Commissioner Sheridan noted that perhaps the most important message that could be sent to Council is to urge for a go-slow approach. She also noted there was significant missing detail about the switches and that this is an important element with considerable impacts. The MRP is just beginning to learn about the size and impact of switches.

Commissioner Sheehy noted that the Planning Commission most likely cannot and should not spend the same amount of time that MRP spent looking at the alignment and station location question. He also said that much of the information needed is not available and it has been hard to make decisions without needed information to make a good decision. He advised that as the steward of the Comp Plan and neighborhood plans the Planning Commission should focus on the question of whether the project should fit into the plan or if the plan should fit within the project. He suggested that the Commission could outline this quandry to the Council.

Commissioner Quintana asked who will have access to the detailed information when it is finally provided? Commissioner Sheehy stated that the Mayor and Council will need to have this information to make their alignment and transitway decisions. Commissioner Kitchen stated that the Commission does not have a sense of the full range of issues and should limit its review to very specific immediate concerns including outline of whether or not the project is fundamentally consistent with the Comp Plan. The Commission should take a general approach on alignment and station location but he pointed out that this will not solve the City's problem in making the decision they are being asked to make at a time where important information is not available.

ACTION: The Commission will send comments to Council that focus on the following points; Go slow, consider conditional approval, retain some review authority after the DBOM is contracted, refer back to the Comp Plan, outline concerns about the overall decision making process, advise the City to ensure there is a commitment from SMP about mitigation steps, layout specific narrow decisions in relation to DBOM process including how items are treated within each agreement. The Subcommittee will meet Friday to incorporate these points into the letter and the full Commission will get one last chance to review after the subcommittee review.

PRESENTATIONS / DISCUSSIONS

Thank You to Neighborhood Development Manager's

Chair John Owen invited John Esklelin and Rebecca Heerzfeld to the table noting that Darlene Flynn and Deirdre Grace could not attend. He stated that the Planning Commission asked these staff to join the Commission so that we could "pay tribute" to each of the staff. Chair Owen offered his personal comments to all of valuable work of each of the NDM's and Ms. Herzfeld. Several other Commissioners offered their thanks and personal memories of hard fought battles, success and recollections of the great work they had all done through the past several years. Councilmember Richard Conlin offered his thanks to the DON staff and to the Planning Commission for having this tribute and also offered his personal accounts of their commitment to public service and the many years they had given to the City of Seattle. He said thank you and offered his appreciation for their tremendous efforts and their high principles.

Ms. Heerzfeld and Mr. Esklein received a signed letter of commendation and a small gift and then shared their thanks and their own reflections of their time working on a broad array of challenging neighborhood planning projects. The Commissioners concluded by offering their sincere gratitude and wishing them well.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comments were made.

ADJOURN MEETING

Chair Owen adjourned the meeting at 9:35 a.m.