



City of Seattle Seattle Planning Commission

Linda Amato, Chair
Barbara Wilson, Executive Director

SEATTLE PLANNING COMMISSION MARCH 26, 2009 APPROVED MEETING MINUTES

COMMISSIONERS IN ATTENDANCE

Chair-Linda Amato, Vice-Chair Chris Fiori, Josh Brower, Colie Hough Beck, Mark Johnson, Martin Kaplan, Kay Knapton, Amalia Leighton, Kevin McDonald, M. Michelle Mattox, Leslie Miller, Michelle Zeidman

COMMISSION STAFF

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

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT

Tom Eanes, Jerry Finrow, Tony To

GUESTS

David Goldberg, Department of Planning & Development

IN ATTENDANCE

Catherine Benotto, David Cutler, Christopher Persons, New Commission Appointees; Debera Harrell, free lance reporter; Lee Roberts, former Planning Staff Intern

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 Linda Amato called the meeting to order at 7:30 a.m.

COMMISSION BUSINESS

▪ Minutes approval

Commissioner Zeidman made a spelling correction.

ACTION: Commissioner Kevin McDonald moved to approve the March 12, 2009 minutes as amended. Commissioner Leslie Miller seconded the motion. The motion to approve the minutes passed unanimously.

- **Chair's Report**

- Chair's Report: Commission Chair Linda Amato

Chair Amato announced the upcoming meetings: the next Executive Committee meeting will be Tuesday, March 31; the next HNUC Committee meeting will be April 7; and the next Full Commission meeting will be April 9. She noted that the LUT Committee meeting will be rescheduled because of the retreat on April 16. Chair Amato stated that the new commissioners would be confirmed by City Council at a special Planning Land Use and Neighborhoods Committee (PLUNC) meeting tomorrow. She also welcomed Lee Roberts, the Commission's former intern.

Ms. Wilson reported that the Commission would co-host (with Councilmember Clark) a lecture about sustainability with Helle Soholt from Gehl Architects at the end of April. She noted that Neighborhood Plan Status Report open house meetings have been delayed until June and that David Goldberg would attend the meeting to share a draft status report.

Ms. Wilson stated that the Commissioners Eanes and Johnson presented the Commission's draft preliminary discussion points to City Council's Planning Land Use and Neighborhoods Committee yesterday. She noted that the Commission will have a lot of opportunity to influence the final legislation.

Commissioner Kaplan asked how differences would likely get resolved for the proposed legislation. Ms. Wilson replied that is a collaborative process and as Council moves forward with their review, they will continue to consult with DPD and the Executive, but ultimately the Mayor could choose to veto the legislation. Commissioner Johnson noted that the Mayor is not authorized to use a line item veto. Ms. Wilson further noted that the Mayor does not often veto legislation. She then briefly outlined the content of the report. Commissioner McDonald noted that with such a broad audience, it is particularly important to have a really clear message.

REVIEW & DISCUSSION

- **Review & Discussion: Seattle's Transit Communities background and best practices**

Ms. Wilson began by reminding the commissioners that the Transit Communities report is still very much in a draft format. She asked commissioners to provide examples of transit communities from other cities that could be helpful. She also noted that the recommendations have yet to be written. She indicated that the purpose of today's discussion would be to focus on the policy direction of the report.

Commissioner Johnson stated that he thinks the City does have development capacity to meet growth targets. He noted that it might be beneficial to provide incentives for additional growth in transit areas and perhaps additional policy language could reinforce that goal.

Ms. Wilson noted that staff has had a number of ideas about how to organize the second section of the report. She noted that while a lot of regions have begun adopting growth management strategies, many of the best practices for transit communities relate to greenfield rather than infill development. She indicated that the report identifies six common themes:

1. Consider the context of each neighborhood;

2. Create and enable choice and diversity;
3. Invest public resources strategically;
4. Prioritize people over cars;
5. Recognize opportunities for different modes of transit; and
6. Plan for growth.

Chair Amato reminded the commissioners that the goal of this report is to identify what transit communities should look like and to provide a tool kit for developing them in Seattle. She also suggested that today's discussion should avoid the topic of parking. Commissioner McDonald agreed, noting that parking is a difficult issue and one size will not fit all neighborhoods.

Commissioner Kaplan asked if there is an amount of parking required by each household, similar to the chart on page 18. Ms. Sheehy replied that she has not found any data and noted that many factors influence the number of cars owned by households.

Vice Chair Fiori suggested that the commissioners identify the key issues that would help policy makers.

Commissioner Miller offered that there needs to be more photographs and graphics if the report is to be useful for neighborhoods. She indicated that visual cues from Seattle would be particularly helpful. She also suggested that the report have two tiers so that it could be useful for both policy makers and citizens. She noted that it is also important to address the fear some people have that transit communities will eradicate existing neighborhoods.

Commissioner Brower suggested that changing the format could help make the report useful for both audiences and that an executive summary with the findings and recommendations would be particularly helpful.

Chair Amato agreed that an executive summary is important. She also noted that the background information could be helpful for some elected officials. She suggested adding a glossary. Chair Amato said that the themes also seem like broad recommendations. She agreed with Commissioner Miller that it is important to be sensitive to existing communities.

Commissioner Leighton offered that it could be helpful to remind residents that as neighborhoods attract more residents, the area will be able to support more businesses.

Commissioner Hough Beck suggested that the quotes in the margins should focus more on Seattle. She indicated that might be more useful than having the recommendations in a separate section. Ms. Wilson agreed that most people will focus on the recommendations.

Commissioner McDonald suggested that the maps on page 22 include illustrations of lower density development and development along a corridor rather than just nodes. He also noted that the report should address how to help neighborhoods preserve the existing character while accommodating growth.

Commissioner Knapton suggested that the report could be helpful in terms of the neighborhood planning updates. She noted that there is a real need to help residents understand and feel more comfortable about changes in their neighborhoods.

Commissioner Johnson noted that sidewalks and complete streets are essential and that it should be a priority to make sure that stations are easy to walk to.

Commissioner Kaplan agreed that the report needs an executive summary. He also agreed that it could be a helpful tool for neighborhoods, particularly if more images are included.

Commissioner Zeidman reiterated the need for an executive summary and suggested that it should also be able to serve as a standalone piece. She suggested three areas to address:

- (1) Identify the goal.
- (2) Describe what Seattle is doing.
- (3) Identify what needs to be done.

Mr. Cutler asked what the big picture is; how specific does the commission want their recommendations to be?

Vice Chair Fiori noted that a bibliography should also be included. Ms. Sheehy agreed and stated that the electronic version will include hyperlinks.

UPDATE & DISCUSSION

- **Briefing: Neighborhood Plan Status Reports**
 - David Goldberg, DPD

Mr. Goldberg began by reminding the commissioners that the neighborhood plan status reports are intended to provide a snapshot of each community. He noted that City Council has specified a lot of information that needs to be included – demographics, development shifts, etc. He briefly outlined some of the challenges of the neighborhood plan implementation database. He noted that the handout is a working document with three elements – (1) a citywide summary, (2) an individual neighborhood summary, and (3) detailed neighborhood information. He indicated that everyone who attends the open house meetings would get the first and second handouts and that the more detailed information would be available for those who are interested. He also noted that all of the information would be available on-line with links to even more information.

Commissioner Brower noted that NPAC will also provide recommendations about the status reports. Mr. Goldberg agreed and stated that DPD hopes to get their responses back in April. He noted that the Commission's input will be very helpful.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Amato adjourned the meeting at 9:05 a.m.