

Neighborhood Planning Advisory Committee

June 16, 2009

City Hall, Bertha Knight Landes Room
600 4th Ave, Seattle, WA 98124

MEETING SUMMARY

Prepared by Triangle Associates, Inc.

ATTENDANCE

✓ In attendance, □ Not in attendance, X Excused absence

Neighborhood Planning Advisory Committee Members			
Last	First	Affiliation/Neighborhood	In Attendance?
Ashkenazy	Boaz	At Large/Wedgewood	X
Bailey	Adrienne	Central Area District Council/Central Area	✓
Brower	Josh	Seattle Planning Commission/Beacon Hill	✓
Coney	John	Magnolia-Queen Anne District Council/Queen Anne, Magnolia	✓
Coxley	Christie	Southeast District Council/Rainier Beach	✓
Edwards	Judith	Greater Duwamish District Council/North Beacon Hill	✓
Hale	Jeannie	Northeast District Council/ Laurelhurst	✓
Harris	Ashley	Ballard District Council/Ballard	X
Hill	Eddie	At Large/Southeast	✓
Im	Thomas	At Large/Downtown	✓
Knapton	Kay	Seattle Planning Commission	✓
Meeks	Sharonn	Southwest District Council/West Seattle	✓
Oien	Heidi	At Large/Capitol Hill	✓
Ramirez	Maria	Delridge District Council/Delridge	✓
Saxman	Dennis	East District Council/Capitol Hill	✓
Stanford	Catherine	Downtown District Council	✓
Staton	Renee	North District Council/Pinehurst	✓
Stineback	Kate	At Large	✓
Thaler	Toby	Lake Union District Council/Fremont	X
Vergis Vinh	Diana	At Large	✓
Wall	Irene	City Neighborhood Council Neighborhood Planning Committee/Phinney Ridge	✓

Alternates			
Last	First	Alternate for	In Attendance?
Barker	Cindi	Irene Wall	✓
Benjamin	Craig	Dawn Hemminger	✓
Counts	George	John Coney	□
Hinrix	Robert	Judith Edwards	□
Joncas	Kate	Catherine Stanford	✓
Lee	Mona	Christie Coxley	□
Leighton	Amalia	Josh Brower and Kay Knapton	✓
McAfterty	Blayne	Northwest District Council	□
Miller	David	Renee Staton	□
Murakami	Pat	Adrienne Bailey	□
Ramey	Brian	Toby Thaler	✓
Wainwright	Mark	Sharonn Meeks	□

Project Team/Other City of Seattle			
Last	First	Organization	In Attendance?
Bicknell	Lyle	Department of Planning and Development	✓
Clark	Sally	Seattle City Council Planning, Land Use & Neighborhoods Committee	✓
Kern	Michael	Triangle Associates	✓
Nolte	Dan	Councilmember Clark's Office	✓
Stern	Renee	Triangle Associates	✓
Tenna	Sebhat	Department of Neighborhoods	✓

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Public			
Last	First	Organization	In Attendance?
Ramirez	Gloria	CSE Planning LLC	✓
Tufte	Jamie	ICEC	✓

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Co-Chairs opened the meeting, welcomed the Neighborhood Plan Advisory Committee members, and led a round of introductions. Co-Chair Irene Wall noted that she will be on medical leave for several weeks following this NPAC meeting. The facilitator then reviewed the agenda (available from the Committee’s website) and welcomed Seattle City Councilmember Sally Clark, Chair of the Planning, Land Use and Neighborhoods Committee (PLUNC), who had agreed to attend the meeting for a mid-year check-in/conversation with the Committee.

Conversation with Councilmember/PLUNC Chair Sally Clark

Councilmember Sally Clark thanked the Committee members for their hard work and dedication. She said that, in many ways, the process of updating neighborhood plans is “uncharted territory” and requires some improvisation as it develops. She noted that Seattle is seen as a national leader in neighborhood planning. She said she appreciates the intense conversations the Committee has engaged in regarding values, inclusivity and roles in the neighborhood planning update process.

Councilmember Clark addressed four questions provided to her by the Co-Chairs in advance of the meeting. The first was as follows: “Does PLUNC perceive that the neighborhood planning process is going well? What, if any, changes would you recommend?” Councilmember Clark emphasized that she cannot speak for the rest of PLUNC (let alone the full City Council or the Mayor). However, after attending six community meetings in the “quick start” neighborhoods in Southeast Seattle, she believes the process is going well. She is impressed with the outreach effort to date, although it is different from what she originally envisioned. She acknowledged that the expedited process in these Southeast areas has been somewhat messy and uncomfortable, but feels that turnout at the meetings was very good. She noted that a lot of new people have been coming to the community meetings. She would like the Committee to think about ways to engage these newcomers in neighborhood planning in the long-term.

Regarding ways to improve the process, Councilmember Clark acknowledged that increased time, money and collaboration are always a benefit. However, in the current budget climate, funding for neighborhood planning efforts is a major concern. She also noted that she would like the Department of Planning and Development (DPD) and the Department of Neighborhoods (DON) to provide relevant documents to the Committee further in advance, to allow Committee members to provide informed advice and feedback. However, she noted it is not the Committee’s role to “look over the staff’s shoulders” in a detailed review of these documents.

Councilmember Clark then addressed the second question: “Which of the NPAC tasks included in the resolution and ordinance are the top priorities for PLUNC?” She emphasized the importance of providing advice on what happens after 2009. She looks forward to receiving advice from the Committee on what an updated neighborhood plan looks like, on strategies to foster plan validation of neighborhood plan updates, as well as ideas regarding methods and principles for selecting and prioritizing the next neighborhoods to receive plan updates. She noted that the City hasn’t given much thought into how to move beyond the next three plan updates, which will also focus on neighborhoods containing transit stations (though not necessarily LINK Light Rail stations).

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The third question was: “What is PLUNC hoping will result from the sector open houses that NPAC is called upon to co-host with the Seattle Planning Commission? What will be done with the Status Reports and ‘State of the Neighborhoods’ Report?” Councilmember Clark said her goal is to foster a community-based, data-driven approach to checking in with the neighborhoods.

The fourth question was: “What is the City’s vision for neighborhood planning beyond 2010? Is some or all of it ‘preordained?’ To what degree will NPAC’s advice influence that vision?” Councilmember Clark suggested that this is an important issue to address with City Council and Mayoral candidates in the upcoming election. She hopes that funding will continue and that neighborhood plans will be updated through 2013. She noted that the care and stewardship of neighborhood plans is an ongoing responsibility and hopes that there can be mutual accountability and increased cooperation between the neighborhoods and the City.

Committee members then asked Councilmember Clark questions and made comments on neighborhood planning issues. One Committee member stated that many people in Beacon Hill do not trust the City or the neighborhood planning update process and this is major barrier to overcome in plan validation. Councilmember Clark stated that distrust of the City in Beacon Hill is a deep and unfortunate issue, but noted that Beacon Hill has a strong neighborhood plan that has had a great deal of implementation. Another member stated that public trust of the process is low, outreach is poor, and the DON mailing list is inadequate. He said validation of the plan updates will not be possible, given the inadequacies in outreach and funding.

Another Committee member stated that the neighborhood plan update process is underfunded and the City will not get reasonable validation if funding is not adequate. It was suggested that the City hire public outreach professionals and consider alternate sources of funding for neighborhood planning, such as the Seattle Foundation. Councilmember Clark noted these concerns and agreed that funding and budget cuts are serious threats to the process. In answer to a question, she added that the City Council cannot reprogram capital funds for neighborhood planning. In response to a suggestion that the Committee draft a letter in support of adequate funding, she indicated that such a letter would need to be completed quickly, as the budget development process is underway.

Several members said that they have been impressed with the outreach to new faces and voices. But while it is important to get people engaged and enthusiastic, they are concerned about next steps and follow up from the initial outreach efforts. Councilmember Clark stated that this is an important issue and there is concern that the City may be raising people’s expectations too high. Some neighborhoods may be required to wait several years before receiving a neighborhood plan update. However, Councilmember Clark said there is also value in asking “how is your plan doing?” even if an update is not imminent. She looks forward to receiving advice from the Committee on how to best address these issues.

In response to a question about the Committee’s recommendation to extend by six months the timeline for completing the plan updates in the three southeast Seattle neighborhoods, Councilmember Clark stated that she wants the process to continue on track and meet the Comprehensive Plan deadlines. She would like to see goals and policies by the end of the year, but is not sure whether an update requires specific strategies. She would like the Committee to consider what action items may accompany the neighborhood plan updates and what implementation strategy could be considered. She added that she would like to see a citywide framework for implementation and stewardship of neighborhood plans.

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The Committee and Councilmember Clark briefly discussed zoning and Comprehensive Plan changes as they relate to neighborhood planning. Councilmember Clark said the changes to the multifamily code will not cause re-mapping or significantly effect neighborhood planning. She noted that there will be a public workshop on June 30th to review changes to the multifamily code (see her website for details). Regarding the Comprehensive Plan update, she noted that it will have impacts on neighborhood planning, as new growth targets will be determined for 2040.

Review Materials/Approve Summary

After thanking Councilmember Clark, the facilitator reviewed the meeting materials (available from the Committee's website). The Committee reviewed and approved the May 19, 2009 meeting summary by consensus.

Status Report Subcommittee/Open House Subcommittee

The Status Report Subcommittee and Open House Subcommittee presented a joint report outlining their activities and recommendations (see the Committee's website). A co-lead of the Status Report Subcommittee reported that the Subcommittee met to discuss the role of the draft status reports in the upcoming sector open houses. The majority of Subcommittee members agreed that rather than walk through the status reports in detail, the sector open houses should be used to gather qualitative information about the neighborhoods that cannot easily be collected by DPD. A dissenting Subcommittee member stated that the City is tasked with seeking input at the open houses on key issues and informational gaps. He asked how these gaps can be determined without getting into the data of the status reports. The Subcommittee requested that DPD include this qualitative information collected from the open houses in the finalized status reports.

A member of the Sector Open House Subcommittee reported that the Subcommittee met to discuss orientation and preparations for the upcoming first round of open houses. All but six NPAC members and two Planning Commission members were able to participate in the first sector open house orientation session on June 11. A second orientation will be offered on June 18. It was noted that NPAC members will facilitate the sector open houses and Seattle Planning Commission members will co-facilitate and take notes. A second round of open houses will follow in September and/or October.

DON presented information on outreach efforts for the sector open houses. Due to budget constraints, no mailings will be done. Outreach will focus on electronic communication and word-of-mouth. The City's translation and interpretation policy ensures that a translator will be present at public meetings in communities where five percent or more of the population speaks that language. If DON is specifically contacted and requested to provide additional translation services, DON can work to meet those requests. Most of the sector open houses will have a Spanish translator present and materials will also be translated. Press releases regarding the open houses have been submitted and materials will be posted in neighborhood service centers and libraries.

The lead for the Outreach Subcommittee noted that the Subcommittee has received DON's neighborhood planning contact list and will review it. This list can then be sent to the full Committee for review and additions, and then provided to DON. A Co-Chair suggested that NPAC members not wait for the list to be updated, but email information about the sector open houses to their constituent groups.

The Committee discussed data used in the status reports. One Committee member expressed concern about using 2000 census data given that it is so out of date. DPD agreed that it is not

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ideal, but stated that the City's demographer has been able to provide some updates to the data and can respond to questions during the sector open house orientation session. A Committee member noted that the Central Area boundaries described in the status report communications material is incorrect and requested that the City correct the description. She also expressed concern regarding the location of the sector open house meeting for the Southeast sector and asked that DPD move the open house to a more convenient place for Central Area residents.

PUBLIC COMMENT

A Committee alternate suggested that the City consider purchasing more recent data for inclusion in the status reports. DPD said that it would explore this option. No other public comments were provided.

NEXT STEPS/FINAL THOUGHTS

The lead for the Neighborhood Plan Updates Subcommittee noted that the Subcommittee has met twice and is planning to draft a report for the Committee's review and consideration at the July meeting. This report will include a set of general principles and a checklist of items for stakeholders to consider in the neighborhood plan update process. The Subcommittee lead also agreed to a request from the Co-Chairs to draft a letter of advice to the Mayor's Office regarding recommended funding for neighborhood planning in the next budget. This letter will be reviewed by the Neighborhood Plan Updates Subcommittee and brought to the July NPAC meeting for discussion and/or approval.

One Committee member urged the Committee to think deeply about the update process and about the City's promises and roles. He asked the Committee to re-read the ordinance and resolution and consider if this process is meeting expectations and allowing for community-driven decision-making. Another Committee member stated that he is anxious to move on with NPAC's advisory role and is optimistic about what may result from the neighborhood plan updates. A Co-Chair suggested that the sector open houses provide the Committee with the opportunity to foster a community-driven process. The open houses are a volunteer-driven initiative (NPAC and the Planning Commission) that will allow the neighborhoods to engage in this new process.

The Co-Chairs thanked the members for their participation and adjourned the meeting. The Committee's next meeting will be Tuesday, July 21, 2009 in the Bertha Landes Room at City Hall.