

BELLTOWN HOUSING AND LANDUSE SUBCOMMITTEE (BHLUS)
MEETING NOTES
MEETING OF JUNE 14, 2010

DATE/TIME: Monday, June 14, 2010, 6:30 – 8:30 PM
PLACE: Centennial Tower Meeting Room, 2515 Fourth Avenue
ATTENDANCE: Ron Turner, Jud Marquardt, Bea Kumasaka, YiFei Ma, Greg Schuler,
Janis Ford, Sharon Edelstein, Catherine McCoy, Robert Dunn, Alexandra
Dunn, Elizabeth Campbell
GUEST: Seattle City Councilmember Sally Clark

1. Ron Turner called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM.
2. Interim Use Agreements: Ron introduced C/M Sally Clark, who was attending to participate in the discussion of interim use agreements. Ron reported that DPD Director Diane Sugimura had sent BHLUS draft documents related to the proposed ordinance and that these were being reviewed by the members. So far, the main concerns of the community were (1) activation or lack of activation of the streets in areas where interim uses would be employed; (2) surface parking lots and problems associated with them; and (3) the City's ability and capacity to manage interim uses. C/M Clark summarized the background leading to the need for some form of interim use ordinance and pointed out that many other cities are faced with the same issues in this poor development environment. The dilemma is providing a mechanism that is good for the developers and good for the community. A draft of the proposed ordinance is out for the SEPA notice period and comments are required by June 24. Several comments were made by the members on possible interim uses. The Seattle Design Commission put out an RFP seeking proposals for various uses and received 80 responses. However, the biggest issue will be the desire of owners to put their properties into "temporary" surface parking lots. Some believe that, practically speaking, the choice is between developing a surface parking lot or just leaving the property as a vacant lot – the question being which would be more attractive in the community. Nevertheless, there is a prevailing view that parking lots contribute to street crime, violence, drugs, and prostitution and that they work against the development of an attractive pedestrian environment. The outcome of this discussion is that Ron will ask the BHLUS members to review the draft documents and provide comments to Greg Schuler. Ron is asking for these comments by June 28.
3. Branch Library/Community Center: Janis and Bea have met with the City Parks Department, which is putting together a new Project Advisory Team to review plans for the Belltown Community Center and, since there have been many changes in the community since the plans were originally developed, to incorporate any new thinking into the plans. For one thing, there has been increasing emphasis on developing a stronger family environment in Belltown. Additionally, Parks has become more open to long-term leasing.
4. Viaduct Lands Study: From reviewing the RFQs for the preliminary study of viaduct lands, the committee selected Weinstein Architects and Urban Designers for this engagement, which will be managed by the Department of Neighborhoods. Ron advised that more members from the waterfront are needed on the advisory committee.
5. Emergency Planning: A committee meeting was held last week, and the meeting minutes will be forthcoming soon.

6. Chihuly/Seattle Center: The Seattle Center issued RFPs for the development of the former Food Circus and adjoining areas, but there was little “planning structure” to assist in formulating proposals. There was concern that at the same time as the Center was talking about maintaining open space in the area, they were negotiating with Chihuly for a major development, which would be contrary to the approved Master Plan. Ron Turner will draft a letter to this effect to the City/Seattle Center and send it out for review. Those at the meeting agreed that BHLUS should take a position to maintain the site as open space for recreation consistent with the Master Plan.
7. Olympic Sculpture Park/Selig: It appears that Selig may wish to construct in 7-story office building instead of the originally proposed 14-story apartment.
8. Third and Cedar: Ron is writing a letter that the reasons for the requests by the architects and developers for departures from the land use ordinance are not appropriate.
9. Grant Requests: Elizabeth Campbell reported that the grant request for Regrade Park scored reasonably well in the first round of evaluations as did the request for the P-Patch and Cottages. A City-wide review team has recommended 100% funding for the Cottages.
10. Volunteers: Ron said that the community is blessed with having knowledgeable volunteers working on projects supportive of the BHLUS efforts. Yi Fei Ma is working on mapping projects, Diana Benson is working on the Viaduct Land Study, and Catherine McCoy is starting a “State of Community Study” which will lead to the presentation of a series of planning papers over time.
11. Next Meeting. The next meeting will be in the Plymouth Housing Group conference room, probably on Monday, July 13, and commencing at 5:30 PM

Meeting was adjourned at 8:10 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Greg Schuler