

Portland Planning and Sustainability Commission

Tuesday, June 11, 2013

10:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Meeting Minutes

Commissioners Present: Andre' Baugh, Karen Gray, Don Hanson, Mike Houck, Lai-Lani Ovalles, Michelle Rudd, Katherine Schultz, Howard Shapiro, Chris Smith, Irma Valdez

Commissioners Absent: Gary Oxman

BPS Staff Present: Susan Anderson, Joe Zehnder, Michael Armstrong, Sandra Wood, Eric Engstrom, Deborah Stein, Alisa Kane, Desiree Williams-Rajee, Tyler Bump, Julie Ocken

Retreat Facilitator: Arty Trost

Guests: Mayor Charlie Hales, Ed McNamara, Josh Alpert, Matthew Robinson (Mayor's office)

Documents

- [Retreat Agenda](#)
- [Detailed Retreat Agenda](#)
- [Review of Projects](#)
- [PSC Vision and Role](#)
- Comprehensive Plan Worksheet
- [Draft Comprehensive Plan Implementation Workplan](#)
- [Boston Public Schools Racial Equity](#)
- [Equity Toolkit Draft](#)
- [Brownfields Equity Lens Activity](#)
- Gentrification Map
- Gentrification Slides
- [What is Sustainability?](#)

Welcome and Agenda Overview

Susan welcomed commissioners to their third retreat as the PSC. Today we'll talk a bit about what's important to each commissioner and where the group wants to be heading. The Portland Plan is done and Comprehensive Plan Update work is well underway. We want to look at how the PSC can have an effect in creating a healthy connected city, including areas east of 82nd, working on greenspaces and protecting/enhancing industrial lands. Susan thanked *Chair Baugh* for his leadership over past few years.

Chair Baugh thanked each commissioner for their individual support, advice and hard work. The PSC has credibility based on the fact that people know the commissioners listen, and the public feels heard and sees an impact from what the PSC does. There was credibility with the previous Council and it continues with this new Council based on input and suggestions from PSC members. Less planning, more doing is a goal for the PSC. *Chair Baugh* offered thanks to Susan and Joe as well as the BPS staff who do a great job of keeping PSC members informed so they can make informed recommendations.

Susan introduced Arty Trost, who is helping to facilitate today's retreat.

Debrief about PSC's work in 2012

What are you proud of that makes you feel good being a commissioner?

Commissioner Valdez: We listen to people. It is easy to forget that for the person before us for 3 minutes it is critical for the individual to be heard. People come to the commission who feel

strongly about the topics. The PSC is a sounding board for the City, and we do a good job of listening.

Commissioner Rudd: Especially in the context of the PEGs, we are questioning what our assumptions are. We can use that to know what we're accomplishing.

Commissioner Smith: I was an activist and testified before the former Planning Commission. I appreciate listening to citizens as well as explaining to citizens what the choices are and what can get us to those decisions.

Commissioner Ovalles: We still need to improve how we engage the community. I want to make sure people have more than the 3 minutes to express their thoughts. Innovative partnerships through BPS have enhanced this.

Commissioner Houck: I am the only former Sustainable Development Commission member who agreed to join the PSC. I told Susan that I wasn't interested in serving if we only looked at code implementation. I'm pleased that the PSC decided to take a much broader advocacy role. One example is that Metro was not paying attention to the negative park and environmental impacts of the Portland-Milwaukie Light Rail. Through the PSC we got a letter from Mayor Adams to Metro directing them to address those issues. This goes beyond specific topics to help make the PSC make a better recommendation in a broader sustainability context.

Commissioner Shapiro: I am proud for all the reasons stated. Everyone brings an expertise. This is the funnel for where ideas from Portlanders come together. PSC is the translator of the community. We are good listeners and are representative of the city.

Commissioner Hanson: The forum we create for people is important. Portlanders like discussions rather than speeches. We are making long-range decisions for the city, which is rewarding. I'm proud of the transition we've gone through from code-only to a much broader range of topics and a broader view.

Commissioner Gray: When we have to introduce ourselves at different meetings, I include being a PSC member. It's because I'm proud to be on the commission. There is a balanced group of people, an interesting mix of really smart commissioners, who come from all points of view. We are not afraid to argue our point of view to advise our City Council what to do.

Chair Baugh: I value the diverse views that everyone brings. We put a human voice to pages of plans to show how it will impact the city and individuals.

Susan: We have spent 4 years working together to build core values in the Portland Plan. We are also a person (the PSC), and we should have a number of adjectives that people think of when they think of the PSC. E.g. credible, multi-perspective. At the first retreat, Susan share her thoughts on [what sustainability is](#), and she reread the statement. Everything is connected. Sustainability is about how things are linked together. Whatever you do today affects tomorrow.

Commissioner Houck: I presented yesterday in Seattle at a Biocarbon Summit. People are blown away about what's going on in Portland, including Steve Whitney from the Bullitt Foundation. He told the crowd that what made Portland unique was its social capital. It's all about relationships. The ability to talk to staff one day with concerns and butt heads comes with a trust that the next day you can spend time working together on another project. Disagreements aren't personal.

Discussion with Mayor

Questions for discussion:

- Relationship with Council: PSC's interaction and role.
- Portland Plan implementation: how can the PSC work to facilitate development?
- Mayor's vision for the PSC's interaction and role with all City bureaus and how to serve that role/function for projects before they head to Council.
- Relationship-building between PSC officers, Mayor, other Council members.

Susan welcomed the Mayor. The PSC has a wider perspective than "just" planning. How can the PSC work best with the Mayor and Council?

Introductions by Mayor, PSC members and staff.

The Mayor likes debate. "You learn from each other. It's ok to argue." He noted he is an iterative learner/thinker and likes visuals and dialogue. Experimentation is ok as well. He expects the commission to get projects to about 90 percent complete. Council may then make modifications to recommendations. It would be helpful to Council to have the PSC come with a recommendation as well as the other alternatives considered to get a view into the PSC's work.

The City has a corporate responsibility to act like a single department, and we should use the Portland Plan as a comprehensive view with areas of focus for the city. The core work for the PSC remains stewardship and tuning on the land use plan. This needs to be continually effective, which requires constant efforts.

Now that bureaus are assigned, Mayor's office will be focusing heavily on planning and development issues. The Office of Neighborhood Involvement is also to Mayor's office. Citizen engagement, planning and economic development need to work together. The role of the PSC is bigger than the zoning code but must include it.

Chair Baugh: Regarding implementation of the Portland Plan — the PSC can ask how we can use all the tools to experiment in neighborhoods. For example, at a small scale, how can we implement the Portland Plan? We want more doing and less planning to find ways to achieve goals.

Mayor: Experimentation is good. But there are long-term consequences, so we have to be careful on what.

Commissioner Hanson: Collaboration is a key — a good example is at 82nd and Division with PCC. Cully neighborhood improvements in land use and transportation that are influencing the character of the area too.

Commissioner Shapiro: Reconfiguring PDC could be something PSC can assist with. I also have confidence in the PSC to give Council 95 percent complete plans.

Mayor: The 90 percent idea is so the Council takes some of the heat. Expectations should not be that the PSC gets rid of all controversy for projects to keep the Council from hearing the tough issues and concerns. The PSC looks at full spectrum of issues, make recommendations for the future and why.

Commissioner Valdez: Something about downtown is that it's getting more dangerous. Police on foot would be beneficial to make a safer city so we don't lose our downtown. How do we care for people and the city?

Mayor: We are getting a map of all publicly-owned buildings in the city to take a look at what is owned by whom. In the Central City, many sites owned by public agencies are fallow. Organizations need to care for their property and be good stewards. Disposition of the

properties could be something the PSC could weigh in on. How to fund systematic repair, fund the street grid and 60 miles of unimproved streets is something else PSC can help think about.

Commissioner Houck: Likes the description of the 90 percent and sharing the other options the PSC considers. While the Comp Plan and Climate Action Plan are job one, other City plans/documents like the Watershed Plan and Parks Vision 2020 are also within the PSC's purview and should be adhered to and inform the PSC's decision. Everyone talks about Forest Park, but it's the green infrastructure and other smaller parks like Tanner Springs that bring and keep wildlife in the city as well.

The Mayor noted partnerships between bureaus are key.

Commissioner Gray: One of the best evolutions in the City has been the concept of an equity lens. Equity has become a buzz word. With OEHR in Mayor's purview now, what is the role?

Mayor: The only chance for "equity made real" to the City internally and within the community is for OEHR to be under the Mayor's office. We can be more responsive. We will apply the lens to trends of what's happening.

Commissioner Gray: The environment in front of City Hall has changed. It's a beautiful building, but this needs to be addressed.

Mayor: The first floor was designed to be public space, but now feels like the entrance to a government office building. We will have open space to create positive, welcoming activity.

Commissioner Smith: About the 90 percent plans and communicating to Council – usually this has been in writing and sending members of PSC to Council hearing. Are individual briefings with City Commissioners ok?

Mayor: It's ok for PSC members to have individual City Commissioners for briefings. There are also larger issues that could have Council informal sessions with PSC members to have everyone at the same conversation.

Chair Baugh: It would be great to have more conversation and dialog with Council, especially prior to large project recommendations/decisions.

Commissioner Smith: I also sit on the Citywide Budget Advisory Committee. We want to convey values of the Portland Plan in the budget, and a good first step was taken this year. How do we institutionalize this in the budget process? Can equity and Portland Plan connection tie to budget scoring?

Mayor: The budget office is functioning well as an independent office. We didn't think as much about policy/Portland Plan or equity because of downsizing crisis this year. The forecast for the next few budgets is to be relatively stable.

Susan noted she met with the budget office last week and discussed how to use the Portland Plan as a strategic plan for performance-based budgeting.

Commissioner Rudd: Projects should include suggestions to leverage investments – things you can do in conjunction with projects that provide additional benefits.

Mayor: Ideas for leveraging and working with other bureaus or agencies is good. We make mistakes, but over the last 30 years in the city we have had great improvement in quality of life and the environment and the way people live. PSC's work is critically important. It is the think tank for the future of the city. I appreciate the commitment of PSC members.

Looking Ahead

- Review of vision and role (handout).
- Reaffirm the PSC's vision and role.

Given the discussion with the Mayor, what does the PSC want its role to be? How to be advocates with/at Council?

Julie shared a summary of the work the PSC has done and projects it has heard since the last retreat.

Review of [PSC Role and Vision](#)

Commissioner Valdez: This reaffirms how I see the PSC. I feel strongly about creating the best city. We will have debates on what is best for the city, but it's encouraging to hear we can have dialog with the City Council about what is best.

Commissioner Rudd: I would call out the language of the Portland Plan. That most furthers our objectives.

Commissioner Shapiro: "Affective public involvement... proposals." We should include "providing recommendations to City Council" within this statement. We should be more proactive as noted in one of the bullet points.

Commissioner Schultz: We can also involve/advise other bureaus as noted. What is the definition about how/who brings projects to the PSC? What is the threshold?

Susan: We tend to have a full docket. People/projects are willing to come, but it depends on time. There could be informal or formal connections/opportunities e.g. chairs meeting together informally.

Commissioner Houck: What is our relationship with other City commissions? Bird-friendly design is one example we talked about having come before the PSC again in conjunction with the Design Commission and Parks Board. If there is a logical nexus between what the commissions are talking about, it would be helpful to meet periodically.

Chair Baugh: I met with DC and HLC chairs last week, which is a quarterly meeting. The Design Commission is very busy right now. Neighborhoods want to control what is going on in their areas and are more willing to appeal, talk about other options.

Commissioner Schultz: It's important to understand issues neighborhoods are seeing to potentially discuss at PSC.

Chair Baugh: Part of the issue is animosity against developers. Individuals can push a neighborhood to take on a development, whether it is good or not. The PSC should be more active, with rationale about why.

What about the idea of "advise" and being proactive? What does this mean for the PSC's role?

Commissioner Shapiro: The Mayor has offered for Council to meet with PSC. That gets the 90 percent plans closer. We should hold the Mayor to these suggested meetings.

Chair Baugh: It gives a place to say "we've heard XYZ", but when you consider this project, keep in mind "ABC."

Inform, explain, advise, advocate. How will the PSC choose along that spectrum does? Is it possible to inform without a bias to advocacy? Do we need clarity on how the PSC is defining the words?

Commissioner Smith: We can/should be advocates for our recommendations.

Commissioner Houck: I agree. We feel strongly about our recommendations.

Commissioner Gray: Advocating is not necessarily lobbying from a commission perspective. We work together to come to a recommendation.

Commissioner Schultz: Like the Mayor said, it is also important to state alternatives and opposing ideas the public has brought to the PSC or that individual commissioners may have.

Chair Baugh: Our being able to articulate the breadth of what we hear from the public supports our recommendation.

Commissioner Rudd: I think of advocacy as explaining “what else” we heard. Advocacy should not be used as a filter for our recommendations. We should advise with the testimony we’ve heard.

Commissioner Smith: Was the advocacy chair for City Club. It is not a lobbying body. “Advocate for the general interest” is how the City Club states it. “Act for the benefit for the people of Portland.” We are taking positions in the interest of the citizens, and can be forceful with Council to advocate for that position.

Commission Valdez: People who come before us have the time to do so and are usually well-educated. I could be an advocate for the voices we don’t hear. We need to find a good ground for our recommendations.

Commissioner Houck: Another way to look at advocacy is we are “making the case” with Council and others for why we came up with the recommendation.

“Lobbying” and “advocacy” can have similar connotations, but there are differences in interpretation. How does the PSC make a compelling case about what they feel strongly about? It’s important to recognize how words affect us individually.

Commissioner Houck: We did say we would be strong advocates. No where does it address how we interact with Council. When the PSC makes a recommendation, is there an instance where a commissioner would go as an individual to say s/he doesn’t agree with the consensus of the PSC?

Chair Baugh: This is important as the Mayor mentioned today. A minority report, with the “why” about that train of thought enhances our work. Council looks at both the views. We are still advocating for the betterment of the city. This gives Council an opportunity to evaluate the credibility of the PSC recommendation. We want to preserve the opportunity for PSC members who don’t necessarily agree with the commission’s view to sit at Council with the majority voice.

Commissioner Valdez: Hopes the PSC can come to consensus, and we usually do. That is preferable in general.

Susan: In general, we tend to be “Portland nice,” but less so today than before. Members are willing to disagree, but a compromise with a dissenting opinion is also ok. In terms of advocacy, sometimes we talk about that if we don’t advocate for specific things, they won’t be picked up

elsewhere in the city (e.g. education, health, climate). Other bureaus/commissions (e.g. parks) will speak for themselves too.

Commissioner Houck: If we can come to consensus as a body, that is great. But not agreeing is ok. Not agreeing can elevate our credibility too.

Commissioner Schultz: As a city we are not talking about ecodistricts. That is so much about what planning and sustainability is. The PSC can help to bring various bureaus together to help people look more holistically for planning. What is the right scale? This is a key component to the discussion. How do we get those conversations started?

Susan: There are technical aspects as well as a decision-making structure (bigger than household, not as big as NA) for ecodistricts. Similarly, district energy hasn't happened readily in the city because it's not required. This is all very place-dependent.

Commissioner Hanson: One of the barriers is getting all the players in the room. Making a cohesive process could help make things happen more easily.

Commissioner Schultz: The zoning code could encourage the process. The Conway site is a good example of a big site that is struggling with how to do this.

Michael: We have 4 different test ecodistricts in the city. We are approaching the time for the PSC to hear about the experiences of these pilots.

Hanson: Another big question is how you get people in the district to agree to the approach for the whole area.

Incorporating Equity

What does it mean to use equity as a lens? What are we trying to accomplish? How might things look different if we didn't use equity as a lens?

- Approach to including equity as a lens (BPS Equity Toolkit) as a response to the Portland Plan's equity focus.
- Brownfields Study as an example.

Desiree Williams-Rajee and Tyler Bump presented.

The role of government is to figure out how we can better serve the public for people whose needs are not being met. This is done through (1) process and (2) products/programs/policies we create. Outcomes tell us if we're doing well.

BPS staff started working on an equity toolkit about a year ago to help apply values. We looked at other jurisdictions' tools to address different decisions made inside the bureau.

The value of the toolkit is in the conversations it creates. Equity can't be done as a checklist. Questions we ask about are types of decisions; stakeholders, and how to involve them; causes of inequities; adverse impacts; advance equity; and measures of progress.

The brownfields example was used as a case study. Tyler provided an overview about project and economic equity in the city based on what and where brownfields are included in DEQ records. There are 910 acres on record. Costs would be about \$240M to redevelop, which would generate \$240M/year, including \$40M back to the City; most would go to the State for payroll tax. 31000 jobs could be created on these lands. Additionally, there are as many as 1300 acres of additional brownfields, many of which are located east of 82nd, that are not included in the DEQ records.

Another handout shows the income disparities by race and ethnicity compared to living wage jobs.

Tyler then showed a spatial distribution map of where people live versus where they work.

Desiree walked the PSC members through a worksheet to think about equity issues that arise in the brownfield study.

Our institutions have established rules, but not everyone knows those set rules. Those who don't abide by the rules may be left out. We need to review our policies and processes to make sure we get to our desired outcomes/purpose/goals.

What's in the system? What's in us individually? These can distance us if we talk about things in the system without acknowledging that we all carry our own biases too.

John Powell's concept of targeted universalism – policy that has a universal benefit – is something we should take into account. We need to target specific communities to meet with individual needs. Not everyone can be treated the same to get to an end outcome we desire.

Commissioner Gray: Our work is culturally-specific. Whether or not we share the code with others is important to “navigating the code.” As the PSC, if we don't help other groups to get to this place and silently allow a power differential to continue, there isn't equity.

How can the PSC make full use of an equity lens?

- Understand own privilege and power. It will take time to fully digest, and then you can understand your relationship with power.
- Apply the equity lens to conversations at the PSC as well as to those coming before the PSC. Ask people to critically analyze their work before bringing to the PSC.

Commissioner Houck: Coalition for a Livable Future invited John Powell when the organization was first forming. Bringing him back for some of these conversations would be greatly helpful. Race discussions are difficult to have. Powell does an excellent job of taking topics regarding poverty and race and leading productive conversations among diverse audiences.

Commissioner Shapiro: It's in part about unlearning racism. “Equity” has come up quite a bit after our recommendation to approve the Portland Plan. This is a lens we want to be looking at everything, but it is ongoing work.

Commissioner Ovalles: We need to be applying the philosophy of equity.

Susan: It's often about how people learn and how they change. We make change largely because others are doing something different. The more we can tell stories about our work helps us to mimic actions that have worked.

Chair Baugh: This is a way to connect the dots. Implementation means we'll interact more with other bureaus, and we will have these questions to ask them. The equity work will help bureaus think about what they will be doing in the community before they come to the PSC.

Commissioner Houck: There is a difference between a lens and a filter. For example, increasing urban forest canopy works to create a great city. But one could argue if equity is used as a filter then good environmental programs, which benefit everyone in the city and the environment might not be funded. On the other hand, if equity is truly a lens, then it's not a question of whether expanding the urban forest canopy is funded but where we invest the money and who gets paid to plant the trees. That's how equity as a lens should work, not as a filter.

Preview of Next Year's Workplan

BPS Budget (Susan)

BPS has a total of about \$15M, down from \$20M last year. About half is from General Fund; 30 percent solid waste management fund; and the rest from grants and contracts. One-time General Fund has gone from \$4M a few years ago down to \$350k this year. We ended with 10 percent cut to the General Fund budget and are losing 11 positions. We will refill just 3 of these, which are due to retirements. We will need a strong advocate for next year's budget. The large concern is that a leaner organization may mean shorter processes that may hinder our ability for outreach.

RICAP (Sandra)

The Regulatory Improvement Code Amendment Package (RICAP) work was an ongoing program for updating the zoning code (RICAPs 1-5) that has been unfunded the past few years. There are now a number of small code fixes that are on a list, and Council has funded BDS to provide time and positions to BPS for RICAP 6. A recommended list for a public hearing will come to the PSC on July 28. The top three project references currently are fences (height); temporary uses; and cell tower citing. These will be quick fixes that can be implemented before the larger Comprehensive Plan updates.

Portland Plan Implementation (Joe)

As we talked about, we are continuing to incorporate the Portland Plan into the budget process. This happened a little this year, but we will have ongoing discussions. We are also continuing contract with PSU to update the Portland Plan Indicators, with releases about updates coming throughout the year. BPS actions include the work Desiree is doing and the Comp Plan Update work.

Comp Plan Update and Implementation Package (Sandra and Eric)

Eric shared the Comp Plan Worksheet broken down by the periodic review tasks in 6-month increments of what's coming in the next year. The expectation is that the policies of the package will come to the PSC for hearings in early 2014. About 6 months behind the policies will be priority implementation actions – items for implementation as required by the State, followed by refinement projects, which are not time-sensitive. In December 2014 the recommendation from the PSC will go to Council for the Comp Plan policy document, along with draft code and implementation package for PSC consideration.

Sandra shared the [Draft Implementation Workplan](#) including the key criteria for including a project in the implementation phase. This phase is expected to take about two years to implement. This is a long wish list and hasn't yet been calibrated against staffing needs, so there will be adjustments made.

CC2035: West Quadrant and SE Quadrant Plans (Joe)

The West Quad Charrette to review a 50 percent draft is going on this week. In spring of next year the plan will come to the PSC. The Central Eastside is starting now with work on the transit stations; much of this work will take place over the summer and will come to the PSC for a hearing and recommendation in summer 2014. We can do walking tours of the areas for PSC members, and there are community tours being led over the next few weeks. Commissioners can review the [CC2035 calendar](#) for details about these tours and other West and Southeast quadrant events.

Climate Action Plan and Climate Change Preparation Strategy (Michael)

Staff briefed the PSC on these plans a few weeks ago. The steering committee, which Commissioner Houck and Commissioner Smith are members of, are at work now for the CAP update. They will be coming to the PSC in early fall with the preparation strategy, and slightly

later for the CAP update. Both projects are expected to be at City Council by the end of the year. Coal, cars, equity and natural systems interconnections are some of the key topics. Other components may include building performance policies, ideas around financing the work and other topics, which may come to the PSC individually/separately. *Commissioner Houck* noted that he felt strongly that the word adaptation is more appropriate than preparation and noted that information about soil remediation to improve carbon sequestration performance was an interesting topic that could be considered in these processes and might be especially applicable in the context of ecodistricts.

Healthy Connected Neighborhoods/Ecodistricts (Alisa)

Alisa provided additional information about ecodistricts. Ecodistricts do not have a checklist, and there are no hard actions, so each is an evolving form. There are now 6 ecodistricts in the city, which are place-making efforts, a few with a focus on being job hubs. The South of Market Ecodistrict (SOMA) includes PSU. This one in particular is a big business-community led effort. We will return to the PSC for a thorough review of ecodistricts and their potential in implementing the healthy connected neighborhood (city) strategy from the Portland Plan.

What other types of projects do you want to see in 2013-14?

We can't do everything, and the PSC has a full slate of projects. But there are possible additional projects the PSC would like to see/hear. What kind of criteria do you want to use to bring to the table possibilities for projects?

PSC suggested criteria for screening projects. As much as possible, projects should:

- Address equity while addressing healthy connected city
- Encourage partnerships – bureaus and external partners
- Leverage funding
- Provide “bang for the buck;” brings more clarity to minimize problems in interpretation
- Make the most difference for the most people
- Align with the Portland Plan; implementation (boots on the ground)
- Be adventuresome
- Meets multiple objectives
- Already has political support
- Avoid lost opportunities – timing of particular projects is crucial

Possible projects to come before the PSC:

- Climate change as a lens – consider integrating climate mitigation and adaptation, and how that shapes implementation of the Comprehensive Plan
- Set goals for prioritizing transit investments (capital and operational)
- Social equity and transit
- Test case for a “radical” project that focuses intensely on a small underserved area that acts as a catalyst (e.g. community center in east Portland)
- Help bring more revenue into the City (e.g. better code rules about vacation rentals by owners; property that is not on the tax role; PILOTs)
- On-street parking management

This discussion about big-picture and other possible projects could be added as a regular agenda item to PSC meetings to think about the bigger picture, what the PSC can work on next, and incorporating the BPS workplan requirements.

Commissioner Shapiro: The PSC's visibility is important to reiterate. We should follow-up on the Mayor's open door to collaborative work and his willingness to bring other Council members together with the PSC.

Chair Baugh: Thanks for all input commissioners have provided today. We have a tremendous opportunity to grow the commission to be more impactful in the community in a positive way. It can be more adventuresome and enjoyable with a hands-on-the-ground community work approach.

Submitted by Julie Ocken, PSC Coordinator