SEATTLE HOUSING AUTHORITY
YESLER TERRACE CITIZEN'S REVIEW COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

MEETING NO.: 7

LOCATION: Yesler Community Center, 917 East Yesler Way

DATE: **Wednesday, June 27, 2007, 5:00 p.m.**

ATTENDEES:

Committee Members

- ☒ Norman Rice, Chair
- ☐ Aregawi Abiraha
- ☐ Elise Chayet
- ☒ Herold Eby
- ☒ John Fox
- ☒ Asmeret Ogbe Habte (alternate for Elise Chayet)
- ☐ Abdisamad Jama
- ☐ James Kelly
- ☐ Timothy Leary
- ☒ M. Michelle Mattox
- ☒ Mary McCumber
- ☒ Quang Nguyen
- ☒ Kristin O'Donnell
- ☒ Father Hoang Phuong
- ☐ Adrienne Quinn
- ☒ Michael Ramos
- ☒ Sue Sherbrooke
- ☐ George Staggers
- ☒ Sue Taoka
- ☐ Donya Williamson
- ☐ Norma Zavala

SHA Staff

- ☐ Judi Carter
- ☒ Virginia Felton
- ☒ Linda Hall
- ☒ Brett Houghton
- ☒ Judith Kilgore
- ☒ Ayan Musse
- ☐ Leslie Stewart
- ☐ Tom Tierney

Facilitator: Marcia Wagoner, PRR
Presenters: Martin Regge and Liz Birkholz, NBBJ
Recorder: Yvonne Kraus, PRR

I. Call to Order

Chair Rice called the meeting to order at 5:13 p.m.

II. Approval of the Minutes of the May 23, 2007 Meeting

Rice asked for amendments to the minutes of the Committee's May 23, 2007 meeting. Fox stated that he abstained from the vote on accepting the Definitions and Guiding Principles on page 3 of the minutes. It was agreed that the minutes would be amended to reflect Fox's abstention from the vote. There were no other amendments to the minutes; the minutes were approved as amended.

III. Discussion of Accepting Public Comment at the Beginning of CRC Meetings

Rice proposed a change to the Committee meeting format in order to accommodate a public comment period. He suggested a 30 minute public comment period at the beginning of the meeting with a three minute limit per person. He said that this structure would strike a balance between the CRC accomplishing its work while implementing a mechanism for community input and feedback at the meetings. Rice asked whether there were any objections to the proposed format. There were none.

IV. Community Comments

Yesler Terrace resident Ama expressed concerns about the redevelopment asking when will it happen, how will it affect the residents, how will it change the community that exists now and whether residents are guaranteed a residence in the redeveloped community. Rice responded that these questions are the overriding concerns of the community and the CRC. He added that he would provide a summary about the answers to these questions during this meeting and invited Ama to talk to him during the break if those answers were not satisfactory.

There were no further public comments.

Father Phuong arrived at the meeting.

V. CRC Chair Comments and Report from June 7 & June 14 Community Meetings

Rice introduced community meeting facilitators Marcia Tate Arunga and Mayet Dalila. He said that the facilitators will be summarizing the community meetings tonight. He said additional community meetings are scheduled for July 11 and July 23, and that a special meeting with the daycare providers would be scheduled in the future.

Arunga distributed a handout that included a community meeting summary report, a list of the key questions that were asked at the community meetings, a letter addressed to the CRC from the community members and a list of recommendations that she and Dalila have prepared to assist in the redevelopment planning process. Arunga stated that the main concern expressed at the community meetings was whether residents would be guaranteed that they would be able to return to the community. Additionally, she said that the next three top concerns expressed were parking, maintenance, and safety. Dalila stated that other questions asked at the community meetings concern the process for community involvement; how relocation will be handled, particularly for seniors and those with disabilities; whether residents will have the ability to choose their housing; whether residents would be in temporary or permanent housing when they first move back; and concerns about housing for those with various immigration statuses. Dalila stated that information needs to be disseminated to the residents regularly and a consistent dialog should occur to address resident questions and concerns. Arunga read the six recommendations presented in the report to help close the communication gap between the policy makers and community members.

Rice thanked Arunga and Dalila for their contribution to this process so far and said additional community meetings will take place. He said that SHA will respond to the questions of the community that have been outlined in the report presented by Arunga and Dalila. Rice announced an SHA Board of Commissioners meeting will be held on July 16 at 5:00 p.m. at the Yesler Terrace Community, and he welcomed the CRC to attend.

With regard to the question of returning to the community, Hall stated that SHA is committed to put the guarantee to return in writing at three critical points during the redevelopment process: (1) At time of adoption of the guiding principles and definitions by the SHA Board of Commissioners in 2007; (2) At time the SHA Board of Commissioners votes on proceeding with the redevelopment of Yesler Terrace in 2008 after which time residents will receive letter from the Board guaranteeing a return to the community; and (3) At the time of actual resident relocation, anticipated in 2010, at which time a letter will be provided by Yesler Terrace property management as part of a relocation package, again guaranteeing the return to the community.

Hall stated that the issues related to daycare will be addressed and input will be sought from daycare operators at Yesler Terrace, childcare resources organizations and others. She said that issues to be addressed are current licensing, daycare operations during relocation and design issues related to daycare operation at the redeveloped Yesler Terrace. Hall said that SHA is committed to integrating daycares into the redeveloped community.

Rice recessed the meeting for a break at 6:08 p.m. The meeting was reconvened.

VI. Definitions and Guiding Principles – Remaining Policy Issues

Discussion resulted in the following revisions:

Recorder's note:
Bold text - Committee additions
~~Strikethrough Text~~ – Committee's deletions

Policy Question #3: *Should the guiding principle proposed under social equity be retained?* "Utilize the City housing inventories and other resources to avoid further gentrification of the neighborhood"

In response to a question by Sherbrooke about the meaning of "other resources," Hall said that SHA will need to work with the City to identify resources to provide housing for individuals and families whose incomes are above 30% of the average medium income (AMI), but below the level needed to afford rising prices of the area. Fox suggested adding a principle specifically directed toward those with incomes between 30% and 50% AMI. Further discussion resulted in a proposal to modify the principle as follows: "Utilize City housing inventory and other resources to avoid ~~further gentrification of~~ **displacement from** the neighborhood."

Wagoner requested a vote of the Committee on the following proposed principle: "Utilize City housing inventory and other resources to avoid displacement from the neighborhood;" all those present voted AYE; the motion passed unanimously.

Policy Question 5: *Should the ninth guiding principle under one-for-one replacement housing to be modified to state,* "If the footprint of Yesler Terrace is expanded to include adjacent low-income housing, any lost units at those sites will be replaced in the neighborhood **one for one at comparable rent and without sacrificing existing limited local funding such as trust fund or levy dollars to replace those units."**

Hall stated that if Yesler Terrace boundary is expanded, any low-income units lost as a result of the expansion would be replaced at comparable rents. She said that when preserving affordable housing in areas identified as a priority, all resources should be available; therefore, SHA proposes to delete the language noted in bold font above. Fox disagreed saying that without the proposed language, SHA can use levy, trust fund or tax credit dollars that could otherwise be used to expand affordable housing. Fox stated that the additional language is needed to ensure that SHA preserves existing affordable housing in the neighborhood. Rice stated that he is concerned that the proposed language could potentially limit flexibility in the design and configuration of the units. Fox clarified that this language would not prevent the use of other non-finite sources to expand affordable housing.

Hall asked if Fox would agree to omit the language he proposes if SHA guarantees long-term, low-income rents on any units that replace those lost as a result of expanding the boundary of Yesler Terrace. Fox responded that trust fund or levy dollars should not be used to replacement units lost due to expansion as those funds are needed to expand the low-income housing stock. He said that other sources, such as internal subsidies, should be used to acquire and redevelop existing adjacent housing. Sherbrooke asked about the distinction between subsidized low-income units and those that are below market, but not defined as affordable housing. Fox responded that he feels SHA has an obligation to replace unsubsidized low-income units at SHA's expense without using public funds.

Additional discussion resulted in the following proposed language: "If the footprint of Yesler Terrace is expanded to include ~~adjacent~~ **publicly regulated** low-income housing, any lost units at those sites will be replaced in the neighborhood **one for one at comparable rent and without sacrificing existing limited local funding such as trust fund or levy dollars to replace those units.**"

Wagoner requested a vote of the Committee on the following proposed principle: "If the footprint of Yesler Terrace is expanded to include adjacent low-income housing, any lost units at those sites will be replaced in the neighborhood one for one at comparable rent and without sacrificing existing limited local funding such as trust fund or levy dollars to replace those units;" Fox, O'Donnell and Ramos voted AYE; the remaining seven members voted NAY; the motion failed.

Wagoner requested a vote of the Committee on the following proposed principle: "If the footprint of Yesler Terrace is expanded to include publicly regulated low-income housing, any lost units at those sites will be replaced in the neighborhood one for one at comparable rent and without sacrificing existing limited local funding such as trust fund or levy dollars to replace those units;" Eby, Habte, Mattox, McCumber, Phuong, Nguyen, Sherbrooke and Taoka voted AYE; the remaining members voted NAY; the motion passed.

Wagoner stated that members with the dissenting opinion have the option of submitting a minority report.

Policy Question 6: *Should a new bullet point under one-for-one replacement housing be added to state,* "Pursue those alternatives for Yesler Terrace which will enable us to maintain the vast bulk of the site in public ownership, or that at a minimum will guarantee that after the term of any financing is complete, the bulk of the site will be returned to public use and ownership in perpetuity and continue serving first very low-income households."

Hall stated that because SHA does not have access to federal funding to help redevelop Yesler Terrace, it will be important to leverage the value of the land to pay for the cost of redevelopment. She said that placing restrictions on the land will lower its value. As a compromise, Fox suggested replacing the word "ownership" with "control."

Several Committee members expressed concerns about making any decisions on adopting this principle without seeing possible development scenarios or identifying potential expanded site boundaries. Wagoner stated that the goal of the Committee at this stage is to have a document that is sufficient for public review and that opportunity for further discussion and amendments is possible at a future meeting. It was suggested that a more general principle is needed which provides an overall sense that public control is important with the provision that there may be a need to revise the principle based on potential development scenarios.

Wagoner requested a vote of the Committee on the following proposed principle: "Pursue those alternatives for Yesler Terrace which will enable us to maintain, to the greatest extent possible, the vast bulk of the site in public ~~ownership~~ **control**, or that at a minimum will guarantee, to the greatest extent possible, that after the term of any financing is complete, the bulk site will be returned to public control in perpetuity and continue serving first very low-income households;" O'Donnell, Eby, Fox, Habte, Nguyen, Phuong and Ramos voted AYE; the remaining members voted NAY; the motion passed.

Policy Question 7: *Should a new bullet point under one-for-one replacement housing be added to state,* "Encourage innovative homeownership opportunities for low-income people on site including tenant ownership schemes such as land trusting and cooperatives to facilitate this as well."

McCumber suggested deleting the last clause, "to facilitate this as well." Committee members agreed.

Wagoner requested a vote of the Committee on the following proposed principle: "Encourage innovative homeownership opportunities for low-income people on site including tenant ownership schemes such as land trusting and cooperatives;" All members present voted AYE; the motion passed unanimously.

Wagoner stated that the definitions and guiding principles will be translated and distributed to the community for additional feedback.

VII. Review of Neighborhood Plans and Policies

Regge gave a PowerPoint presentation summarizing questions posed by the CRC at the May meeting regarding the primary planning elements of the neighborhoods surrounding Yesler Terrace. O'Donnell stated that the surrounding neighborhoods should be aware of and consulted in the discussion about the potential expansion of the Yesler Terrace boundary.

Birkholz presented information about surrounding neighborhood plans and land uses noting the potential implications of the plans and uses on the redevelopment of Yesler Terrace. Birkholz summarized the following neighborhood plans and projects: First Hill, Streetcar, Livable Downtown, Central District and South Downtown. Common themes in the plans include a need for:

- greater density throughout all neighborhoods;
- housing of all types to serve people with a variety of economic backgrounds;
- more jobs and economic growth;
- more open space; and
- better circulation by bus and streetcar and better connections to Downtown.

Regge distributed a two page document to assist the CRC in developing recommendations on how Yesler Terrace should be redeveloped. He said that the document outlines planning precepts that are based on discussions at CRC and community meeting on the redevelopment of Yesler Terrace. In response to a question from Fox regarding whether the CRC will adopt the planning precepts, Rice said that the precepts are intended to provide context and ideas, but the CRC is not bound to them.

VIII. Next Steps – July and August CRC Meetings

Rice recommended that July CRC meeting be cancelled. Committee members agreed. Rice said the next CRC meeting is scheduled for August 22.

IX. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8.05 p.m.

Yesler Terrace Redevelopment
Facilitation summary and recommendations

Submitted by:
Marcia Tate Arunga
And
Mayet Dalila

June 27th, 2007

Summary

As consultants, we were asked to enter into the role of facilitation between the Citizens Review Committee and Seattle Housing Authority and the Community currently residing at Yesler Terrace. In the Yesler Terrace Redevelopment process, we found that redevelopment planning was already underway and that some progress had been made at including the community in the planning process. We also found that there was a significant interest as evidenced by the turnout of community members to the community meetings (over 100 at each meeting) held earlier this month on June 6th, and June 14th.

Some community members expressed their concerns about feeling alienated from the redevelopment process. It appeared that some feelings of mistrust have been harbored by some and this has led to a significant breakdown of community input. During our facilitation, we found that by breaking into small groups according to language, an effective way to hear the concerns expressed by the community was accomplished. We also felt that patience was demonstrated by the SHA authorities and that they demonstrated that they are prepared to take the necessary time to build a more genuine rapport.

The second meeting took place exactly one week later and was designed to answer some of the questions that were brought up during the previous meeting. While about 30% of the questions were answered at the meeting, an additional set of questions resulted from the summary report back. At that meeting, the community was assured that more answers would be forthcoming in the next few months. Many of the community members insisted that answers should come in a more timely manner so that their participation in the process not be overlooked.

We sensed that the community, by and large, would feel more at ease if there was more involvement on their part and some assurance that they will be guaranteed housing for them (approximately 561 units) after the redevelopment plan is complete. While it was clearly stated that this is the intention of SHA and CRC, residents clearly expressed uncertainty about their future housing, after redevelopment.

The purpose of the following recommendations is to assist in the process of creating a planning atmosphere in which open dialogue can occur. We would like to facilitate a dialogue that is both empowering and productive to all of the parties involved in the planning process including, the residents of Yesler Terrace, the community, the Citizens Review Committee and Seattle Housing Authority. Therefore, we would like to recommend the following:

1. **Increased Relationship building to minimize mistrust**

It is crucial to address some of the current issues that have been voiced by many residents during the last two meetings. We feel that demonstrating cooperation and goodwill can be achieved by immediately addressing problems pertaining to parking, maintenance and safety. SHA immediate attention to these concerns may serve as an example that SHA is committed to the current residents of Yesler Terrace and is an entity that believes in "keeping their word'.

Recommendation: Immediately inform residents how SHA will work on the issues of parking, maintenance and safety and regularly report progress at community meetings. This will lay the groundwork for the discussion surrounding transition, boundaries and density by modeling for residents how their concerns will be addressed.

2. **Revise planning information and process to maximize community input**

While it is important to share planning information with the community we must reframe the content so that the information is assessable to everyone and is delivered in a manner that both creates the vision and at the same time, is inclusive for lay people.

Recommendation: Before each meeting discuss the strategy and approach pertaining to each piece of the agenda with community liason and language interpreters to edit all information for jargon, inaccessibility and tone.

3. **Strengthen Intercultural Communication skills**

One of the corner stones of a successful community process is communication. Taking into consideration the diversity that exists in this community and revisiting how culture, ethnicity and power influence how and what people hear and react can enhance communication and collectively get all parties on the same page.

Recommendation: Undergo Intercultural communications training to assist in revisiting aspects of conflict that emerge from power structure, including analyzing factors of race, ethnicity, gender, age, immigration and physical abilities. Explore strategies in which the principles of Intercultural communication can be applied to this community process.

4. Use language groups as an initial platform for communicating

The use of interpreters in language specific groups is helpful in facilitating an understanding of meeting information. It also is a place where people can share ideas and gain clarity with those who have the same language and in many cases share a common or similar cultural or national background. We stress that this is an initial approach and should be integrated as soon as is reasonable to avoid polarization, based on language limitations.

Recommendation: Continue to use language specific groups for as long as it is needed to ensure that information shared at the meetings is understood. However, when possible encourage open shared dialogue among the larger group so that everyone shares ideas and concerns with everyone in attendance. It may be most productive for the long term to consider coalescing members of various language groups in smaller planning groups.

5. Citizen Review Committee reconfiguration

The CRC has been a focal point of discussion throughout this process. While there are Yesler Terrace residents on the committee, they do not appear to reflect the diversity that exists in the community of Yesler Terrace.

Recommendation: Strategically and methodically add more community slots to the CRC. Include at least one person for each language group which resides in Yesler Terrace

6. Information distribution

The redevelopment project at Yesler Terrace is multi-faceted and has many complexities, it is understandable that the same questions get asked and answered over and over again.

Recommendation: Create opportunities for increased literature to be presented in various languages, and on going shared dialogue be a regular and constant activity. Post and present information about what has transpired so that as many Yesler Terrace residents are informed.