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

MEETING NO.: 6

LOCATION: Yesler Community Center, 917 East Yesler Way

DATE: Wednesday, May 23, 2007, 5:00 p.m.

ATTENDEES: Committee Members

Norman Rice, Chair
 Aregawi Abiraha
 Elise Chayet
 Herold Eby (alternate)
 John Fox
 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 and Yvonne Kraus, PRR
Martin Regge, NBBJ

I. Call to Order

Acting Chair McCumber called the meeting to order at 5:10 p.m. McCumber stated that Chair Rice had an unavoidable conflict with tonight's meeting and Rice asked her to act as Chair in his absence.

II. Approval of the Minutes of the April 25, 2007 Meeting

McCumber asked for amendments or corrections to the minutes of the Committee's April 25, 2007 meeting; There were none. Quinn moved to approve the minutes as presented; Sherbrooke seconded the motion; all those present voted AYE; the motion passed unanimously.

III. CRC Chair Comments

McCumber stated that a request was received by Committee member O'Donnell in an email sent on May 21 regarding the acceptance of public comment at the beginning of the meetings. McCumber said that this issue will be discussed at the next meeting so that the Chair of the Committee can address the matter.

IV. SHA Executive Director Comments

Executive Director Tom Tierney stated that he would like to reaffirm SHA's commitments noted at the last meeting. He said that SHA is committed to: (1) replacing all of the units at Yesler Terrace, and, at the very least, replacement would occur within close proximity of the existing site boundary; (2) allowing those residents who remain eligible under the current rules to return to Yesler Terrace; (3) providing replacement housing at housing costs no greater than what they would otherwise be at Yesler Terrace; (4) integrating housing types as much as possible; (5) creating opportunities for in-home businesses; and (6) redeveloping Yesler Terrace in a way that is sensitive to surrounding commercial and residential areas.

Tierney said that Yesler Terrace must be redeveloped due to the deterioration of the buildings and infrastructure, pest infestations, the lack of ADA accessible units and the lack of units for larger families. However, because federal funding of public housing programs is being increasingly cut, as demonstrated by the information from the National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials distributed by Felton, he said SHA must leverage the value of land on which Yesler Terrace sits in order to pay for the cost of redeveloping Yesler Terrace. Tierney said this raises the question of whether SHA should examine the potential to expand the site boundary and uses permitted in order to provide a greater array of development options, including the potential to construct additional units.

In response to a question from Williamson, Tierney said that staff can provide the Committee with current wait list information for housing at Yesler Terrace.

Harold Eby, Michael Ramos and Timothy Leary arrived at the meeting.

V. Overview and Discussion of Prominent Community Features and Program Options

Martin Regge of NBBJ made a PowerPoint presentation to the Committee, noting that the purpose of the presentation is to encourage dialogue between Committee members and to ask questions of the consultants and staff. He reviewed slides presented at the February 28, 2007 meeting with regard to surrounding neighborhoods and uses, major public rights-of-way for vehicles and pedestrians and environmental factors. Regge said that the purpose of the remaining slides is to help identify the many factors that define Yesler Terrace and to assist the Committee in making a recommendation about how Yesler Terrace should be redeveloped. The first slide in this series characterizes a typical city containing a core, suburban and outer lying areas followed by three slides that depict existing uses abutting the Yesler Terrace community. The next six slides are intended to help the Committee understand density, and how different design approaches can affect density. The next two slides identify existing zoning standards for Yesler Terrace and the abutting areas and depict an example of a vertically integrated mixed-use building. The next three slides identify development precepts such as fitting naturally into the environment, connecting vehicle and pedestrian grids and ensuring land use compatibility. The final slide was included in the packets and identifies nearby properties owned by SHA and a potential planning boundary for the redevelopment of Yesler Terrace represented by a yellow line that is approximately one-quarter mile from the existing site boundary. Regge reiterated that the purpose of this presentation is to assist the Committee in developing ideas about redeveloping Yesler Terrace with respect to the site boundary, density, uses, etc., and that this planning/concept phase should be influenced by the guiding principles.

In response to a question from O'Donnell regarding the Urban Village Element of the City's Comprehensive Plan, Quinn said that the redevelopment of Yesler Terrace would need to be consistent with these policies and other relevant policies of the Comprehensive Plan.

James Kelly arrived at the meeting.

With regard to the potential for locating some replacement housing off site and rezoning Yesler Terrace to increase density and expand the uses permitted, Fox stated that he is concerned this would jeopardize other adjacent low-income housing and uses. Fox asked about the number of units on the adjacent properties that SHA currently owns or would like to acquire. Tierney responded that these properties include: (1) the Baldwin Apartments with 35 units; the Ritz Apartments with 30 units; and (3) one duplex unit. He said that SHA owns these aforementioned properties, and other properties in the immediate adjacent areas that SHA owns or would like to acquire are either uninhabitable or commercial uses. In response to a question from Fox, Tierney said that if the Yesler Terrace boundary is expanded, he fully supports the replacement of any off-site low-income housing that is lost due to the expansion. Tierney added that it would be SHA's preference that any additional properties acquired would be non-residential.

Wagoner asked Committee members to express their viewpoints with regard to Regge's presentation.

Ramos: Need to consider the zoning of adjacent areas in the context of potentially rezoning Yesler Terrace.

Staggers: Likes the idea of increasing density and uses, but not for low-income housing units. There many examples of the failures of low-income high rise buildings. High rise structures change the character of the neighborhood and can degrade the quality of life and low-income housing.

Leary: Open to all possibilities presented so far, but more information is needed. Agrees with Staggers about the negative aspects of low-income high rise structures.

Sherbrooke: Wants to learn more about integrating adjacent neighborhood plans. Likes the notions of creating a more urban Yesler Terrace with mixed-income residents and mixed-uses and also of taking advantage of the site characteristics and leveraging the value of the land.

O'Donnell: Residents enjoy the existing lower-density of Yesler Terrace. Not all residents are experiencing the problems that SHA is basing the need for redevelopment. Residents will miss the views they currently

enjoy if redevelopment results in the loss of these views. Agrees with Staggers about the failings of low-income high rise housing.

Taoka: Yesler Terrace is an urban neighborhood with a suburban feel. Likes the mixed-use concept for Yesler Terrace in order to integrate on site as many needs of the community as possible. This will increase the vitality of the residential and business communities.

McCumber: Interested in how Yesler Terrace can be integrated into the community and accomplish the objectives raised by Taoka. Looking at the urban village plans of adjacent neighborhoods is important in order to determine how they can be connected to Yesler Terrace.

Williamson: Likes the idea of integrating the redeveloped Yesler Terrace into the existing street grid system, and by doing so Yesler Terrace will be less isolated from adjacent communities.

Quinn: Likes the idea of better connections with the adjacent communities, and businesses in Yesler Terrace should be complimentary to those in the surrounding areas. Green space in Yesler Terrace can be retained with the construction of buildings with a variety of heights. Agrees with Staggers in that low-income high rise structures are not desirable, but high rise structures could be mixed-income and/or mixed-use.

Fox: Ideally, redevelopment would not occur, and the existing structures would be renovated. Open to considering higher density, mixed-income and mixed-use development options, but in the context of maximizing service to public housing eligible residents.

Phuong: There will be some tradeoffs and tough decisions with redevelopment in order to serve the community as a whole. A mixed-use development can be a benefit to the community.

Chayet: It would be helpful to examine the vision of the planners for Yesler Terrace when it was originally developed so that this vision is not lost. Important to connect the urban plans of adjacent neighborhoods to Yesler Terrace which allows other groups to participate in the planning.

Eby: Residential high rise buildings are dangerous. There are many possibilities to consider in redeveloping the community, but it should be more accessible and residential structures should be low rise.

Kelly: Design should be focused on Yesler Terrace as an important gateway to downtown as well as to Rainier Valley. Likes the idea of increasing density and expanding the site boundary, but this should be done in the context of addressing environmental factors, such as discouraging the use of vehicles. Need more on incentives around redevelopment that would include the public and private sectors.

McCumber recessed the meeting at 6:40 p.m. for a ten minute break. The meeting was reconvened.

VI. Definitions and Guiding Principles – Remaining Policy Issues

McCumber stated that a revised version of the draft definitions and guiding principles dated May 23 was distributed to the Committee tonight. She said that several policy issues remain unresolved and are listed on page 4 of the document. Kilgore clarified that staff is seeking direction from the Committee regarding the revised draft definitions and guiding principles as currently written; however, those definitions and guiding principles that are affected by the policy issues on the last page will be amended to reflect the outcome of the policy issues once they are resolved by the Committee. She said that if there is disagreement among the Committee about the policy issues, those members with dissenting views have the option of submitting a minority report.

Kelly moved to accept the revised draft definitions and guiding principles, with the stipulation that, once the policy issues noted above are resolved, the final document will be revised to reflect these outcomes. Taoka seconded the motion; all those present voted AYE; the motion passed unanimously.

With regard to the policy questions, Fox stated that he feels “on-site” should be incorporated into the definition and guiding principles. He said that once the cost of purchasing property for off-site replacement units is factored in, it becomes a financially imprudent option, and SHA can replace all of the units on site, if not expand the number, without additional land costs. Additionally, he said that redevelopment of other SHA communities resulted in a net loss of low-income units at these locations, and what is to prevent this from happening with the redevelopment of Yesler Terrace unless specified in writing. Tierney responded that he

disagrees with Fox on the issue of replacement housing at SHA's other redeveloped communities. He said that although the off-site units were not technically defined as public housing, all of the units replaced off site were done so with large federal subsidies consistent with City guidelines and provide housing for those who qualify for these subsidies. With regard to Fox's comments about the cost of off-site property, Tierney said that the land on which Yesler Terrace is located is more valuable than any other property that SHA could potentially purchase for replacement units. In addition to leveraging the value of Yesler Terrace to build additional low-income housing, he said that there are other advantages to expanding the site boundary, such as phasing the project to minimize disruption to the residents and constructing lower-density housing for families. Tierney stated that with federal cuts, SHA needs to identify funds to pay for the cost of redevelopment, and he reiterated that Yesler Terrace is the most expensive property that SHA owns. McCumber summarized the issue of on-site vs. expanding the project boundary saying that the question is whether all of the units for public housing eligible residents should be replaced on the current site of Yesler Terrace or if they can be replaced within an expanded project boundary. Tierney added that there is also the question of whether the replacement of units needs to occur within the public housing system. Fox responded that SHA did not factor in the cost of land for replacement units when it redeveloped its other communities, and that SHA could replace all units on site for no additional land costs. Fox said that he would like the Committee to evaluate alternative scenarios for redeveloping Yesler Terrace that includes replacement of all units on the current site. In response to a question from Leary, Fox said that, in addition to the cost, his other concern is that Yesler Terrace is will be reserved only for the affluent.

There was majority consensus among the Committee that the potential incorporation of the term "on-site" into the core values is a critical issue and that language to this effect should preface the core values.

Quinn moved to remove the term "on-site" from the Policy Questions 1a through 1c and add an a sentence after each of these statements to read: *"In addition, redevelopment options will be considered that would guarantee no net loss of very low-income housing serving public housing eligible residents on the current site of Yesler Terrace"* and, with regard to Policy Question 1c and 4, modify the language to state, *"Provide replacement housing at housing costs **consistent with public housing rent formulas** and continue to serve very low-income residents"*; Chayet seconded the motion; all members present voted AYE except Fox who abstained from voting; the motion passed unanimously.

Kelly moved to define replacement housing by all three elements listed under Policy Question 2 (by number of units, number of bedrooms and number of residents served); Taoka seconded the motion; all those present voted AYE; the motion passed unanimously.

VII. Next Steps

McCumber provided an update on the activities related to community outreach and upcoming meetings noting the following:

- Fact sheets regarding redevelopment have been translated into the predominant languages spoken at Yesler Terrace.
- An information kiosk regarding redevelopment will be located at the Yesler Community Center and information continues to be posted on the website at <http://www.seattlehousing.org/Development/yesler/Yesler.html>.
- Two community meetings will be held next month, the first of which will occur on June 6 at 5:00 p.m.
- The next CRC meeting will be June 27 at 5:00 p.m. to continue the discussion from tonight's meeting regarding the planning program outlined in Regge's presentation and the remaining Policy Questions 3, 5, 6 and 7.

O'Donnell announced that there will be a Juneteenth celebration on June 15 at 5:00 p.m. at the Yesler Community Center and that the next Yesler Terrace Community Council meeting will be held on June 19.

Chayet announced that a construction trades fair will be held on June 21 from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at the Yesler Community Center.

VIII. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:51 p.m.