



NENC Public Meeting Agenda--Minutes  
May 2, 2016, 6pm  
Trimble Forum - UPS Campus

1. Call to order, adoption of agenda—Adopted at 6:02.
2. Introductions and welcome—Welcome to everyone! Thanks for coming out on an evening where we'd all rather be grilling and paddle boarding. Board members present: Susan, Kyle, Jim M, Brian, Morf, Bea, Erica, Jim L, Rachel, Jim B and then about 30 in the crowd.
3. Approval of Minutes—approved
4. Treasurer's Report—Treasurer absent, so this report will be deferred.
5. Liaison Reports—
  - a. Tacoma Public Schools—water—an audit is in the works for the water system. April 29 TPS hired an independent group to assess the water. The school system is going for 15 parts per billion, which is lower than required. Based on that threshold, several schools have some sites that don't pass. Repairs are in the works. Hoping to test every fixture before the end of May. Some findings are already on the website. Schools built before 1986 are most susceptible to having lead. 571-1015 if you have questions.
  - b. Gail spoke for Proctor Arts Fest—We already gave them \$1,000. She presented the budget and suggested we attach our name to the Kid's Fest Sponsorship. We voted to do so.
  - c. Dan from TPD—car prowls are on the rise. Lock your doors. An arrest recently broke a wider North End burglary ring. Bolt your safes down. Lock your detached garages. Or alarm them. Be vigilant around vacant homes that are for sale.
  - d. Mary from Parks—Eastside Community Center is having an open house. There was feedback about Seymour Conservatory. Now there's a new

design that's smaller that you can check out. Still time for feedback. Parks was surprised by the water issue as well. They are testing.

- e. Rebecca from the City Manager's Office—T-Town Explore is this Saturday.
- f. Missy from the Destiny City Film Fest—It's in its third year. There are almost 30 films and a screenplay contest. Sponsors get some advertising and some tickets. They would like money. Jim Bush expressed some concerns about how much we give out and what our capacity is. Jim Merritt said we should look each year at our total and then plan for it in our budget. Rachel pointed out that we do that, but we've done more outreach this year, so we're getting some new asks. Missy is asking for \$500. Rachel motions that we get a report from Anna on where we are, we get a budget from the Destiny City Fest, and then we decide in June.
- g. Karen from Proctor Market—Come on out for Mother's Day. May 14 is the annual health and wellness event.
- h. 6<sup>th</sup> Ave—Just had 20 businesses in the Chocolate Stroll. May 21<sup>st</sup> is the Spring Fairy Festival. Watch out for bubbles and painted faces. July is Art on the Ave. Santa Parade is in the winter. 15K people come to one. Maybe 5K to the other. Lot of folks.
- i. KPLU—They are fighting to stay independent and on the air. Their campaign is Save KPLU. They need 7 million, but they are over 4 million already. There are events coming up all through May to support their cause. Go to [KPLU.org](http://KPLU.org) to support them.

#### 6. Presentation – Design Commission for Tacoma?

- a. Lisa Rutzick, Program Manager of Design Review from the City of Seattle, came to present some ideas for this. Jim Merritt introduced her and summed up some efforts in Tacoma already, like the Foss and the UWT footprint. Seattle's program is a little over 20 years old. They wanted better design and site planning, flexibility in the applicability of development standards, and improve communication among development stakeholders. Seattle is all under Design Review. They have seven Design Review Boards with five members each: community, design, development, residential, business. The board needs code authority in the program. There also need to be design guidelines. Some guidelines are for the city as a whole. Some are for specific areas, like a neighborhood. There were questions about funding and stakeholders. For Seattle, the planning department drives/facilitates the creation and management of guidelines, but they gather people to contribute. There are thresholds that trigger design review. Those thresholds are based on square footage or number of dwelling units or location. Design Review can alter development standards, but there are some that can't be modified. There are departure requests. There are three types of review: full, administrative, streamlined. Also, the boards make recommendations to the city. They are more than an advisory body, but in some cases they are not exactly decision-making either. Appeals go to

planning, not to the Design Review Boards. For the full review, there is an Early Design Guidance Phase (usually 3 months), which helps stakeholders agree on some things before too much money is involved. Those are public meetings. Those take place for buildings that have met a predetermined review threshold. Then there's the permit process. Then recommendations, which is more detailed. This is public again and is a way to see how the Early Design Guidance was followed. The length of the process adds to cost, a big part of which is the holding of land. There was a question about the value of design review. It's the quality of the built environment. If the process takes longer, maybe that's okay when compared against the life span of a building. Complaints drop rapidly after the first couple years once the system is in place. Their process is about the issue around a parcel's design. They don't look at parking or traffic so much. Do developers agree to do the review in Seattle because it's a desirable place to build? Some developers plan to build things just under a threshold so they don't have to go through the process. There is a lesser process for admin and streamlined reviews. That's again just a decision on what should be reviewed. They have a lot of projects going on right now. Landmarks districts are separate from Design Review districts, but they usually are on the same page.

[lisa.rutzick@seattle.gov](mailto:lisa.rutzick@seattle.gov)

- b. David Boe, architect and former city council member, has lots of involvement in design review in a variety of capacities. He likes more eyes and likes projects to fit in. However, he doesn't think he's ever seen a project of his own that's been improved by the process. He worries about fees for Design Review, which Seattle charges. Tacoma doesn't command the same level of rent. The Planning Commission currently has trouble filling spots. So more boards won't necessarily fill. He said the bonus height program was designed as a way to cheaply get at the design review without the monetary burden to the city or the developers.
  - c. Jim M says this is the start of a conversation. He doesn't see us doing something what Seattle does. He wants early awareness through a process that isn't onerous and still leads to better design. Jim B generally agrees with the more eyes. How do we preserve our sense of place and our livability without making the process negative? Even though there have been discussions before, maybe there's a time for discussions when the discussion will work. There was some talk about the Proctor process. The city made a good effort to reach out, but probably more people would show up to those meetings now since the awareness is higher. There was some conversation about Proctor Station and where we go from there. Can there be a test area for Design Review?
7. Old Business —Save Tacoma Water—We are looking at the issues around Tacoma's water and whether that should be something the city regulates differently, through community review. Brian voiced concern about denying water through elections. And a vote costs money. Jim M thinks it's really only onerous for huge users of water, which is a small subset. And he thinks

it's good stewardship. Robert Thoms says the residential users subsidize the industrial users. He thinks it's a poor way to manage the system through the initiative. Is the issue water use or water costs? And what about the area that TPU covers that isn't Tacoma? We are voting whether or not to endorse the charter amendment 5 and initiative 6. In favor 5. Opposed 4. Passes.

8. New Business –Planning Commission meetings—pay attention to those. They happen on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesdays.
9. Citizen's opportunity to comment (no more than 3 minutes, please).
10. Community Council Report—No meeting in May. There's an Eastside Street Fair. The Pierce County Auditor is encouraging people to sign up for passports.
11. Adjournment 7:30ish—Actual adjournment at 8:20.

**Coming Attractions in June:  
Rep. Laurie Jinkins**

**And July:**

TPU will help us firm up a strategy for the creative re-use for the Cushman substation (if you have questions or concerns, please send them to us so we can forward them to TPU).