

Queen Anne Community Council

Queen Anne Community Center

July 2, 2008

At 7:00 pm Board President Ellen Monrad called the meeting to order. The Board approved the agenda and June minutes. Margaret Okamoto reported that QACC earned 33 cents in interest for a total of \$527.47 on hand. Ellen introduced special guests, Richard Conlin, Seattle City Council President, and Nick Licata, City Council Member.

2-Way Mercer

Richard Conlin described the development of the current Mercer plan, noting that the 30 stakeholders involved in the process approved the concept. He argued that the plan combined both transportation and urban planning and characterized the current situation as “a freeway on-ramp running through an urban center.” The project began in 2004 and City Council votes in the following years kept it alive. It is the Council’s intent to integrate South Lake Union and Downtown plans.

Council President Conlin said the purpose was to find a good design that moved vehicles, freight and people. The final appearance and cost are unknown because the design is unfinished. He said there were no plans to pay for the project through property taxes at this time.

In describing the priorities for “Bridging the Gap” taxes, Conlin listed the Spokane Street Viaduct as number one and Mercer as two but no money is currently available for the Mercer project and it may depend on funding from Olympia. SDOT is looking at potential funding sources.

Nick Licata described the history of the Mercer project, beginning with an earlier version that maintained Mercer as a one-way street going east and used Valley for westbound traffic, with a curved road linking the freeway the Valley. Cost estimate for the original project was \$15 million but grew to as much as \$40 million before Mayor Nickels scrapped it.

According to Councilmember Licata, the price on the current plan is over \$200 million and growing. Land acquisition costs, pegged at \$10 million less than a year ago, are now at \$60 million. He described a history of acquiring land in the area, then selling it to developers, only to have to buy some of it back again as the project design changed. He claimed that the earlier plan provided better traffic flow for 20 percent of the cost of the one now on the table. Building it would require all of the funds generated by the parking tax plus other money yet to be identified.

He reported that SDOT side-stepped the need to consider other alternatives in an Environmental Impact Statement by doing an Environmental Assessment, which does not require the same degree of public input.

Both Council members agreed that the SDOT study showing longer travel times on 2-Way Mercer should have been public much sooner.

Questions from QACC Board members and guests concentrated on costs, travel time, and the effects of linking the project to potential transportation projects that might be done in the future. They were also asked if the City Council knew that QACC was not one of the stakeholders

involved in the planning and replied that they did. Council President Conlin noted that no matter what the plan, financing is a deterrent.

Following the presentation, QACC Board members reviewed the revisions made to the 2-Way Mercer letter approved at the Board's June meeting. Motions made and approved changed wording in the letter's second and third bullet points. The Board accepted the changes by majority vote and the modified letter was to be sent to the Mayor and City Council.

Fire Station 20 Update - Before Council members Licata and Conlin left, Ellen Monrad asked them if they were aware of the consultant's study and the manipulation of it by Fleets & Facilities Department. Both acknowledged the problem.

Neighbors of Fire Station 20 reported on the consultant's findings, noting that the current location ranked below a number of others, including some on the west side of 15th Avenue West such as the parking lot at the golf course and a City Light lot on 17th West. A motion was made and approved authorizing the Executive Committee to send a letter supporting the consultant's conclusions and opposing Fleets & Facilities Department's interference in study. The Board authorized Mike Warren to take the letter to the District Council for approval of a similar endorsement there.

Election Committee - A voter's pamphlet will be prepared containing 50 word, or less, statements from Board candidates. The information will be sent to the Queen Anne News. Mike Warren reported that nine current members are running again and two are not.

Parks – Don Harper reported on the contents of the proposed park levy. He noted that the levy committee had no members from our area. Our area received the least benefit from the levy but the Potlatch trail and the Northeast Greenbelt were included. Maintenance of the Asian Art building at Volunteer Park was included at \$11 million although no one mentioned or supported that item at any public hearing. Several Board members noted that this Park District is to receive the most density and population growth in the city. He asked that a letter be approved noting our displeasure with the results. The Board approved the motion. John Coney reported that the City Council was considering renaming the Queen Anne Pool for a former mayor. The Board approved Don's motion that we oppose renaming the pool.

Transportation – John Coney noted that he had been asked about connections to Vulcan at the June meeting. He took exception to those comments and said they were insulting. He then reported that he was working with residents living near Boston and Queen Anne Drive to develop responses to thru traffic in the area.

Queen Anne Fun Run - Ellen encouraged people to sign up for the Queen Anne Fun Run, which benefits the Helpline. This year the city is requiring 500 participants before it recognizes the Run and issues permits.

Attendance - Board members present were Ellen Monrad, Kirk Robbins, John Coney, Scot Baker, George Counts, Steve Wacker, Jim Smith, Don Harper, Mike Warren, Glenn Avery, Ron Mason, Sharon LeVine, Jessica Vets, Chris Grekoff, Margaret Okamoto, Laura Kleisle, Allan Panitch, Robert Vets, Kemp Hiatt, and Marty Kaplan. Absent were Craig Hanway, Matt Corsi, and John Rashby-Pollock.