

MINUTES OF THE METRO OPERATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING

December 6, 2000

Council Chamber

Councilors Present: Rod Monroe, (Chair), Ed Washington, Bill Atherton (late arrival)

Also Present: Peggy Coats

**Chair Monroe** called the meeting to order at 1:12 p.m.

**1. CONSIDERATION OF THE MINUTES**

**Motion:** **Councilor Washington** moved to adopt the minutes of the November 21, 2000, Metro Operations Committee meeting.

**Vote:** There were no amendments or revisions to the minutes. The motion passed unanimously.

**2. Resolution No. 00-3019, For the Purpose of Approving the Expo Center Master Plan and Authorizing Staff to File the Plan with the City of Portland, Office of Planning and Development Review.**

**Mark Williams**, MERC General Manager, stated that a Master Planning process was requested of MERC by the Metro Council with regard to the Expo property. The plan before the Committee is a Master Plan document, developed by the MERC Commission, staff and consultants. **Mr. Williams** provided the Committee with a brief history of the Expo Center. Hall "D," completely financed by Expo revenue, is expected to be opened in April 2001. IMAX is expected during the Fall of 2004. MERC agreed with the surrounding neighbors to engage in a masterplanning process to be presented to the City of Portland for approval before beginning any Expo construction. The document being discussed today is a land use technical document to be filed with the City, subject to City planning processes. The document does not require construction as depicted, nor does it require Metro funding, but rather grants permission within the land use context to move forward for eventual construction and completion. The MERC Commission passed the plan unanimously at their last meeting.

**Mr. Clark Worth**, Barney & Worth, Inc., 1211 SW Fifth, Portland, OR 97204, representing MERC regarding the Expo Masterplan. He said this is a permit application, a requirement of the City of Portland before proceeding with development, addressing anticipated impacts and resolution of them. The current proposal consists of replacement and upgrading of existing facilities to match the quality of newer Expo construction, beginning with Hall "D," replacing the northern exhibit halls, and adding meeting rooms to the east. Replacement parking of 495 spaces will be situated on the southern portion because of the displaced parking by the Expo expansion and light rail construction. There would be a net loss of 200 parking spaces. The riverfront portion would remain undeveloped. **Mr. Worth** stated that the elevation drops off on the southern and eastern portions of the property. The parking portion to be developed is close to the existing Expo elevation, and has been filled using former Expo displaced fill. The road running southerly and easterly will be relocated, and the dropped off portion will be the environmentally reserved portion.

**Councilor Atherton** asked if there was to be a path way in the Master Plan. **Mr. Worth** said there is no plan proposed on-site for a nature path. There is no specific development plan for the environmental reserve that has been set aside. **Mr. Williams** said that, although it is not included in the Master Plan, Expo is currently in negotiations with the Port of Portland to transfer the entire environmental reserve to

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them in exchange for land adjacent to Smith and Bybee Lakes. **Councilor Atherton** asked where the surface water would drain. **Mr. Worth** said most water is collected, treated on-site, and discharged to the wetland area. There will be a new water collector at the new parking area. **Mr. Williams** said the City of Portland had requested the stormceptor system, over others, for water treatment. **Mr. Worth** pointed out, among the appendices distributed to the Committee, (attached and incorporated as a permanent part of this record) was a Transportation Demand Management Plan, describing techniques to encourage Expo employees to use alternative forms of transportation, as well as, an Events Management Plan, describing efforts to encourage event-goers to use alternative forms of transportation.

**Chair Monroe** opened a public hearing at 1:35 p.m.

**Jay Mower**, Columbia Slough Watershed Council, 7040 NE 47<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Portland, OR 97218, said the Council has had a long-standing interest in this development. They are concerned with the minimal involvement the Council has had in this plan. They recommend that the parking lot not be extended as far south as it is on the plan, but rather in alignment with the Harbor Oil line, consistent with the Pen 1 recommendations. (See referenced document which is attached and incorporated as a permanent part of this record.)

**Joseph Annett**, Kenton Neighborhood Association, 1849 N. Kilpatrick Street, Portland, OR 97217, became involved with the building of Hall "D" and the amphitheater. It was decided by Expo and the neighborhood association that a Master Plan would be developed, and a citizen advisory group formed. He said the association felt things were happening too fast without the citizen advisory group having adequate input. The Master Plan was changed with the addition of a bike trail, following the second advisory group meeting. The loss of 200 parking spaces could be remedied by going back to the Harbor Oil line plan, if additional parking space will be leased for larger events anyway. He said that the plan is good, just needs adjusting.

**Peter Teneau**, Audubon Society, supported keeping the parking contained above the Harbor Oil southern boundary, extending east. He suggested modifying the plan, eliminating 250 spaces, regaining them by eliminating the perimeter road, reducing traffic into the unspoiled natural area. These issues could have been solved prior to today, had the citizens been involved in meetings, other than the two that were held. The result is open spaces vs. parking space. The parking situation can be handled in another way.

**Christine Palmer**, Palmer/Wires & Assoc., 4001 NE Halsey, Portland, OR 97232. **Ms. Palmer's** company is an Expo tenant of 22 years. She is very supportive of the Master Plan. 1905 parking spaces on the east side of the lot is not sufficient. The latest event did not have sufficient parking. The parking lot is not in proportion to the building space.

**Jerry Klinger**, 1027 NW Fir Street, Gresham, 97030, Chairman, Portland Swap Meet, said the meet has been at Expo for 37 years. It is a very largely attended event. The parking is disastrous. It has cost over \$15,000 to rent busses to shuttle visitors. It is a major attraction to the Portland area. In the last few years, attendance has diminished because of the lack of parking. **Councilor Atherton** asked if light rail would assist an event such as theirs. **Mr. Klinger** said no because people cannot carry on light rail the products sold at some of the major events. Even contracting with other parking vendors in the area, the parking is maxed out.

**Susan Barthel**, Bureau of Environmental Services, City of Portland, represented Nancy Hendrickson, and spoke about the stormwater treatment in this area. She suggested not only using stormceptors, but also integrating working landscapes into the design in keeping with the natural area. The area is a heavily utilized public area, and possibly moving the road from the edge of the environmental preserve area could better protect the environment. She said the most heavily used space should not be at the buffer. It would be good to work together on the 40-mile loop connection in masterplanning. **Chair Monroe** asked if the City of Portland had approved our Master Plan. **Ms. Barthel** clarified that it had not been submitted yet,

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but would be after Council review. **Councilor Atherton** asked which road had flooded. She responded that North Forest Avenue had flooded.

**Charlie Ciecko**, Director, Parks and Open Spaces. **Chair Monroe** asked for guidance regarding protecting land south of the Harbor Oil line. **Mr. Ciecko** distributed photos which are attached and incorporated as a permanent part of this record. He said it is a matter of degree; that the fill placed on-site to a depth of 12 - 15 feet represents the southern most extent that would be filled. The southern portion is to remain at its roughly natural grade and is the most valuable for restoration. The already filled area could be restored, but would be very expensive. There is discussion of swapping the southern portion of this property with a parcel of land that the Port of Portland owns adjacent to Smith and Bybee Lake. Since the Port indicated no interest in the northern portion of the property, it is possible that the northern portion in its current form has less restorative value than the southern portion. Councilor Atherton asked if the golf course enhanced the connectivity value. **Mr. Ciecko** said the habitat is potentially connectable, though not as pristine as some areas because it is bisected by Force Avenue. The wildlife value is evident. **Councilor Atherton** asked if any portion of Force Avenue could be vacated. **Mr. Ciecko** could not respond to importance of the street connection.

**Bruce Warner**, Chief Operating Officer, Executive Office, said the Executive Officer is pleased about MERC's involvement with the neighborhood and supports the plan as being good for MERC, good for Metro, good for the Port of Portland, and good for the general public. The funding plan needs to come next, and the Executive Officer is positive about securing funding to move forward with this plan at a future time. **Councilor Atherton** asked if Mr. Warner had listened to Mr. Annett's testimony. **Mr. Warner** said he was not present during the testimony. **Councilor Atherton** repeated what Mr. Annett had said about the absence of citizen involvement. **Mr. Warner** suggested the question be posed to MERC and its staff who were involved in the process.

**Councilor Atherton** asked Mr. Williams about the lack of citizen involvement. **Mr. Williams** referenced a list provided to the Committee regarding public contact initiated. **Mr. Worth** said Section 11 of the application has a description and chronology of public outreach. A number of changes were made in the planning process in response to points of view offered by the citizens, including the removal of the concert pavilion option scheduled for the southwest parcel. **Mr. Worth** provided a copy for Mr. Annett. **Councilor Atherton** asked if there was a rigorous neighborhood review would it upset the time table. **Mr. Williams** said he felt that had already taken place, major changes having been made because of the input, that the plan needed to be filed now, but through the City's public involvement process could be changed later. The light rail plan needs to be filed with the City which is critical to the opening of Hall "D" in April 2001. **Councilor Atherton** paraphrased by saying citizen input could still be heard. **Mr. Williams** said there is ample opportunity for further citizen input.

Public hearing closed at 2:22 p.m.

**Councilor Washington** said the problems surfacing today will and should be exposed at the City of Portland public hearings. He said our staff has worked hard to get this far in the process.

**Councilor Atherton** asked Mr. Tenneau about the public involvement in the Expo process. **Mr. Tenneau** said there definitely had been public outreach, but the real work is done in the committee meetings, working on individual items by detail. The outreach showed considerable concern for the preservation of the natural space. This process was affected by the lack of public involvement at the committee level. The parking and trail issues could have been resolved at that time.

**Chair Monroe** commented that the amphitheater had been dropped as a result of the neighborhood association's involvement. If parking is overly restricted, there will be more spillover into other areas which should concern the neighborhood association. Another area in question is the fill dirt that has been placed over decades and is too expensive to remove. The parking would not further degrade the habitat and because of that, he supports this resolution. **Chair Monroe** verified with staff that if approved at this

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meeting, this resolution would go to Council on December 12, 2000, wherein the public would have another opportunity to give testimony. **Councilor Atherton** is disappointed that the nature trail was not incorporated in the plan, but with all the good things in the plan, would give it his support.

**Motion:** **Councilor Washington** moved approval of the resolution.

**Vote:** The resolution passed unanimously. **Councilor Washington** will carry Resolution No. 00-3019 to Council.

**Councilor Communications - Councilor Atherton** thanked those who gave testimony.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia Mannhalter

ATTACHMENTS TO THE PUBLIC RECORD FOR THE MEETING OF  
DECEMBER 6, 2000

Document Number	Date	Document Description	RES/ORD
120600.01	November 2000	Expo Center Conditional Use Master Plan; Barney & Worth, Inc., Yost Grube Hall Architecture, Kittelson & Associates	Resolution No. 00-3019
120600.02	November 2000	Expo Master Plan - Fact Sheet	Resolution No. 00-3019
120600.03	November 3, 2000	The Columbia Slough Watershed Council	Resolution No. 00-3019
120600.04		Photos of Expo Site	Resolution No. 00-3019