

**CITY OF ISSAQUAH  
City Council Committee-of-the-Whole**

6:30 PM  
April 24, 2023

**MINUTES**

Council Chambers  
135 E. Sunset Way

**COUNCIL AND ADMINISTRATIVE PERSONNEL PRESENT**

*Councilmembers:*

Barbara de Michele  
Zach Hall  
Victoria Hunt  
Russell Joe  
Tola Marts (*Excused Absence*)  
Chris Reh (*Excused Absence*)  
Lindsey Walsh

*Administration/Staff:*

Wally Bobkiewicz, City Administrator  
Tisha Gieser, City Clerk

**CALL TO ORDER**

Council President Walsh called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM.

**AGENDA ITEMS**

a) **Public Comment**

The following individuals provided public comment:

- Eric Oliner, Issaquah Food and Clothing Bank (IFCB) Board member, recommended changes to Title 18 to provide additional flexibility to meet the IFCB's parking needs.

The following individuals spoke regarding ID 1347 - Affordable Housing & Housing Action Implementation Grant:

- John Schwartz, developer in Issaquah, made comments regarding ID 1347 - Affordable Housing & Housing Action Implementation Grant, regarding affordable housing incentives and the importance of having requirements that allow a project to be financially practical.
- Brian Runberg, representing the owners of Pickering Place, spoke in support of Strategy 6 of the Affordable Housing Action plan and the changes requested in the ECONorthwest Report. Mr. Runberg also spoke regarding concerns with the currently proposed Area Median Income (AMI) range requirements.
- Conor Hansen, representing SRM, shared the considerations for different Area Median Income (AMI) requirements and spoke in support of the recommendations in the ECONorthwest Report.
- Mariah Bettise, Issaquah Food & Clothing Bank (IFCB) Board Member, spoke regarding the IFCB's desire to stay in the core of downtown Issaquah and the desire to continue partnering with the City on human services issues.

b) **ID 1350 - Police, Court and City Hall Planning: Future Options**

*Presented by:*

*Autumn Monahan, Administrative Services Director  
Bob Stowe, Stowe Development and Strategies  
Mike Jobes, The Miller Hull Partnership*

The City Council provided feedback, including:

- 1) Should Issaquah Police stay in the current facility at 130 E. Sunset Way and make tenant improvements, or consider a new facility?
  - The City Council unanimously expressed support for this option.
  - Also, important to think about whether the current location provides for enough growth.
- 2) Should Issaquah Police and the Issaquah Municipal Court remain adjacent to each other?
  - The City Council unanimously expressed support for this option.
  - Important to keep these facilities well served by transit.
- 3) What options should Issaquah further study for City Hall space needs – building new construction, leasing or purchasing/renovating?

A majority expressed initial interest in studying a municipal campus approach in Olde Town to keep City services together.

Other City Council feedback included:

- Interest in understanding the historic value of the current buildings and preserving character of existing historic buildings.
- Interest in having a discussion about a potential municipal campus before discussing more specific options such as building, leasing, etc.
- Interest in shared space with other entities, including local nonprofits, and cost efficiencies that come with this option.
- Interest in building or leasing at this point.
- Interest in building or purchasing/renovating due to long-term financial benefits versus leasing.
- Interest in looking at existing properties and the highest and best use of those properties.

Request for more information:

- General breakdown of cost between building, land and parking in Rough Order of Magnitude (ROM) estimates.
- Information about parking needs - not just requirements - with expected usage separated by police, court and City Hall.
- Rough timeline for project - is short-term leasing an option we will need to pursue?
- What are our funding levers?
- Is there a viable option in Olde Town that would allow for new construction of a City facility that is the size that we need?

c) **ID 1347 - Affordable Housing & Housing Action Implementation (HAPI) Grant**

*Presented by:*

*Wally Bobkiewicz, City Administrator*

*Jen Davis Hayes, Economic Development Manager*

*Christen Leeson, Senior Planner*

*Monica Negrila, Human Services Manager*

The City Council provided feedback, including:

**1) Does City Council agree with the approach on the Housing Action Strategy (HAPI Grant)?**

- See the problem with condominiums as a supply issue; unsure if proposed state advocacy will address this.
- Interested in considering necessary steps to make the inclusionary zoning policy more effective.

- Appreciate the feedback from ECONorthwest.
- Interest in bringing forward pioneer project conversation and including it in the City's code; recommend bringing it forward as part of conversation on ECONorthwest recommendations.
- Interested in potentially moving inclusionary zoning forward before waiting for parking study to be completed. Recommend looking at best practices and what has worked well in other cities.
- Concerns about moving inclusionary zoning up as a priority when significant work is needed to conduct parking study and missing middle work.
- Support for proceeding with parking study first.
- Important to distinguish what can be done through policy to support housing for lower Area Median Incomes.
- Support approach to diversity of housing and prioritizing this.
- Need to ensure community engagement is occurring.
- Suggest making legislative request re: Condo Act more specific.

**2) Does City Council agree with the approach to allocate affordable housing funding for this biennium?**

A majority expressed support for the recommendation of setting aside the allocation of \$5 million for the Transit Oriented Development project; reallocating and adjusting funds for the Motel 6 emergency housing program to allow for a City run program; and adding two behavioral health coordinator positions to support a co-response model.

Other City Council feedback included:

- Interest in considering adding two additional behavior health coordinators at a later time as part of a larger budget discussion and further discussion on funding sources and proposed model.
- Uncertain about necessity of strategic fund.
- Concerns about use of affordable housing funds for behavioral health specialists rather than capital investments.
- Interest in learning more about proposed response model.

A majority provided direction to bring forward support of behavioral health coordinator positions at the May 15 City Council meeting under Regular Business.

d) **Good of the Order**

*Councilmember Joe:*

Business Leadership Forum - Is being held on May 10 in the Issaquah Highlands.

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 10:08 PM.

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Linsey Walsh, Council President

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Tisha Gieser, City Clerk