

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

6:30 PM
October 9, 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
Chris Reh
Lindsey Walsh

Administration/Staff:

Wally Bobkiewicz, City Administrator
Andrea Snyder, Deputy City Administrator
Tisha Gieser, City Clerk

CALL TO ORDER

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

Council President Walsh acknowledged Indigenous Peoples' Day and provided a land acknowledgement recognizing the Snoqualmie Indian Tribe.

AGENDA ITEMS

- a) **Public Comment** - None.
- b) **ID 1510 - Enhancing Permit Review Efficiency**

Presented by:
Minnie Dhaliwal, Community Planning & Development Director
James Gray, Building Official
Christian Geitz, Planning Manager
Emily Appleton, Engineering Manager

The City Council provided feedback on the following questions:

Do the following goals capture City Council's goals and priorities for permit process improvements?

- **Timeliness**
- **Quality Efficiency, Clarity, Consistency**
- **Cost Recovery**

- Yes.
- Request seeing what our peer cities are doing to provide context and comparison.
- Interest in seeing more specificity around goals - what is being done.
- Agree with an emphasis on cost recovery.
- Timeliness is going to be very important with the upcoming state law (SB 5290) when revenue is at risk if timelines aren't met.
- Also consider adding "innovation" as a goal or somehow capturing it in existing goal.

Are there any ideas missing for the list of planned improvements or are there any that we should prioritize over others?

- Requested options and recommendations to help the City Council prioritize improvements and provide recommendations.
- Asked what can be done to ensure the City can meet the targets that will be required by state law in 2025. What resources are needed?
- Interested in a plan for how to meet state targets as well as targets established in the Citywide Strategic Plan Growth and Development areas.

What else should we be measuring as an indicator of success?

- Building housing that is affordable and planning Issaquah for the future.

General comments:

- It would be helpful to see some pre-COVID metrics to better compare more recent data against.
- Use state metrics as a floor not a ceiling.
- Interested in more root cause analysis with a focus on defects and waiting.
- Concerned about ability to meet new state permit timeline metrics.
- Important to keep an eye on staffing to ensure we are meeting new state targets.
- Interested in whether there are any policies the city would like to advocate for at the state legislature regarding permitting.

City Administrator Bobkiewicz recommended this item return to the City Council in January 2024.

Council President Walsh announced that, without objection, the City Council would take a 7-minute break.

The meeting was called back to order at 8:37 p.m.

c) ID 1509 - Policy, Funding and Services on the Housing Continuum

Presented by:

Jen Davis Hayes, Economic Development Manager

Christen Leeson, Senior Planner

Monica Negrila, Human Services Manager

The City Council provided feedback on the following questions:

Comments re: Operational funding (Behavioral Health Program and Emergency Housing):

- Would like to get the word out about this program in the community so residents know what resources are available.
- Would like to see more exploration of coordination with other agencies doing crisis response and behavioral health.
- Interest in getting feedback on the hiring process for behavioral health coordinators.

Policy & Regulation: Does City Council agree with moving forward with the development regulations analyses? What are the priorities to pursue?

- Inclusionary zoning and MFTE (multifamily tax exemption) program should be prioritized.
- Need to focus on policies that will give the City workforce housing and affordable housing.
- Want to encourage diversity of housing types.

- Not interested in pursuing courtyard or cottage housing in Multi-Family High zone; if pursued, would recommend doing so in lower density zones.
- Recommend providing a pre-permit review process for accessory dwelling units (ADU's), duplexes, triplexes and fourplexes to lessen permit costs and timelines.
- Would like to understand what true opportunities there are for single-family zones for having compact housing, other than ADU's.
- Would like to further understand costs to developers to develop in areas with a high-water table.
- Would like to understand what City requirements may have contributed to the slowdown in multi-family housing in 2018.
- ECONorthwest report makes it clear changes need to be made to inclusionary zoning for it to work.
- Expressed support for pursuing ECONorthwest recommendations, recognizing some of the recommendations need to wait until a parking study can be completed.
- Need to incentivize multi-family housing and affordable housing in Central Issaquah in order to meet housing goals.

The Council President announced that, there being no objection, the Policy and Regulation question will be further considered by the Planning, Development and Environment Committee.

Capital Funding: Does City Council agree with the Strategic Opportunity Funding policy approach?

- Councilmember Marts, Chair of the Service, Safety & Parks Committee, relayed that the Committee was supportive of this approach.
- Transit oriented housing is an important aspect of the policy.
- Interested in a goals and outcomes chart for this program.

The Administration will bring the Strategic Opportunity Funding item back to the City Council at the Dec. 4, 2023, City Council meeting for approval.

d) **Good of the Order**

Council President Walsh:

Metro Flex Pilot Ride Along - Sign up for a ride along via link provided in an email.
Pumpkin Derby - Reach out if interested in coordinating.

Councilmember Joe:

Celebration of SR18 & I-90 Project on Nov. 8 - Please RSVP.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:56 PM.

Lindsey Walsh, Council President

Tisha Gieser, City Clerk