

Development Commission
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CITY OF ISSAQUAH
Development Commission
MINUTES
May 2, 2018

City Hall South
Council Chambers

135 E. Sunset Way
Issaquah, WA 98027

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT

Richard Sowa, Chair
Mel Morgan, Jr., Vice Chair
Michael Brennan
Randy Harrison
Ray Leong
Kevin Price
Richard Sanford, Alt.

STAFF PRESENT

Lucy Sloman, Land Development Manager
Dan Martinez, Assistant Planner

APPLICANT TEAM PRESENT

Robert (Bob) Power, Gilman Point LLC
Greg Percich, Jackson Main Architecture
Lara Barnes, Jackson Main Architecture

CALL TO ORDER

SOWA, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOVED BY MORGAN, SECONDED BY HARRISON that minutes of the Development Commission meeting on April 18, 2018 be approved as presented. MOTION CARRIED by unanimous vote of all Commission members present.

PUBLIC HEARING: ISSAQUAH STUDIO LOFTS (Q)

PROJECT NO. PRJ 17-00003, an application for construction of one four-story mixed-use building measuring about 47,043 square feet, including two ground-level retail spaces and three stories of individually leased workspaces, and 71 ground-level parking spaces, associated landscaping and utilities, at 160 NW Gilman Blvd.

Sloman began staff's presentation on the quasi-judicial role of the Development Commission in making a recommendation on this application. She explained procedural and substantive due process, and the purpose of following that process. She presented a list of questions intended to determine whether individual Commissioners can be fair and impartial in their deliberations on this project. All Commissioners indicated "no" to all questions. She asked whether any ex parte communications have taken place. MORGAN said a member of the public approached him after the last meeting and asked him several questions about the version of the Design Manual being used by the applicant and in the Commission's deliberations. He said he realized later that he should not have had that brief discussion, but he doesn't think it will affect his judgment in this matter. BRENNAN said he was standing next to MORGAN during that conversation, and that MORGAN's description represents his recollection of the conversation as well. BRENNAN described his participation in the conversation. STANFORD said after the meeting, a member of the public also asked him which version of the Design Manual he was using and which design standards were being used in the meeting. Sloman asked whether there were any objections from the applicant team or members of the audience to any of the Commissioner's continued participation in the deliberations, and there were none.

HARRISON asked what is the expectation of Commissioners in terms of physically visiting a prospective project site in advance of deliberations. Sloman said the present City Attorney has

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indicated that Commissioners can visit a site but should not draw any conclusions. It is probably prudent to also disclose whether you have visited the site, with whom, and so on, she added.

Staff Presentation: Architecture and Urban Design Manual Analysis

Sloman continued her presentation on applying the Architecture and Urban Design Manual (Design Manual) to this application. The Commission briefly described how to proceed. SOWA suggested starting with having staff go through the Design Manual checklist and summarize staff's evaluation of the checklist. Sloman noted a final version of the manual is in the preparation stages now, so we can discuss your ideas for a final version at the end of the meeting. HARRISON asked does an applicant have a chance to view the checklist along with the Design Manual in preparing their application. Sloman said yes, and explained how the process has worked for this particular application. She said it is also our standard practice to give a copy of our Briefing Response Memo to the applicant before it is presented to the Commission.

She continued with Sections 2 and 3 in the Briefing Response Memo that are manual-related (pages 3-11 of 18) and gave highlights from what is in the staff report, including Crandall Arambula's response about massing and asymmetry in the Arts and Crafts Style. She continued with Exhibit C (page 43-65 of 179), Staff Evaluation of Gilman Worklofts with the Central Issaquah Architecture & Urban Design Manual. She gave details on items where staff felt that the design did not comply with the specifications and where they did not apply ("NA"), and explained the additional conditions staff is proposing as a result of the evaluation.

Staff Presentation: Briefing Response Memo

Martinez made staff's presentation. He presented some background on the application, including the results of the Commission's first meeting at which it was discussed on April 4, and gave some details about the project. His presentation of the Briefing Response Memo included (1) Procedures; (4) Building Design, including new Conditions 31, 32, and 33; (5) Plaza Design, including results of a stakeholder meeting on Trail Plaza Design held since the last Commission meeting and subsequent changes proposed by the applicant; (6) Parking and Circulation, including new Condition 34 and removal of Conditions 10, 11 and 12; (7) Traffic Signal; (8) Environmental; (9) Trees; and (10) Bus Stop.

Applicant Presentation

Lara Barnes, Jackson Main Architecture, presented the applicant team's solutions to concerns raised at the April 4 Commission meeting. She showed the previous trail plaza design and the applicant team's new proposal, and noted that the new design responds to concerns expressed at the stakeholder's meeting described by Martinez. She explained the plaza design now relates more to the back of the building and provides enhancements to the users' experience, such as a water feature, curving walkways, landscaping elements, and so on.

She continued with changes to bring the building more into line with the Arts and Crafts Style, including arched doorways, adjustments to window pairings, removal of shake-wood texture, and a steeper roof pitch. She explained the stair and elevator towers have been modified with new colors and treatments to make them stand out less, new windows have been added to the tower, adjustments made to the roofline, and a chimney-like element added for more complexity, as described in the Arts and Crafts Style and requested in Conditions 26 and 27. She explained the proposed design to add asymmetrical elements to the south elevation. She showed a perspective view from the Pogacha Restaurant parking lot adjacent to the property, as requested at the last meeting. She showed the east façade, both as originally proposed and as modified, with changes to limit the amount of light that would leave the garage. She spoke to

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Conditions 28, 29, 30, and 32 and how the new proposed design meets the requirements in those conditions. She also spoke to changes to meet the weather protection concerns.

Robert Powers, applicant, said he has appreciated collaborating with the City on this project, and he supports the work that the architectural firm, Jackson Main, has done on this project.

Public Comment

SOWA opened the public hearing for public comment at 8:05 PM.

Connie Marsh, resident of Squak Mountain, explained why she thinks a mid-block crossing should be included in this project. She said walking along Gilman Blvd. at this location isn't pleasant. Not having a mid-block crossing is not in keeping with what we have said we want in the CIP and elsewhere, such as a small grid, walkability, not having pedestrians have to interface with traffic, and so on. She said we need to look holistically at this grid, reaching out 30 years into the future, and try to envision how pedestrians will go through this parcel. She said she also has issues with how tree removal and retention are addressed. Issaquah is a "Tree City USA," and has addressed a tree canopy goal and tree retention in its code, but staff keeps saying that all we can do with this project is put funds into a tree fund and maybe plant trees offsite somewhere. She said it is frustrating to see "where feasible" applied to this issue, and said how much can you change a development in order to say it is "not feasible" to plant trees. She suggested looking at how the hardscape being proposed for a plaza could be used as a location to plant trees. She said staff showed slides during their presentation that talked about the community's desire for "a verdant sensibility," "this location needs to be special," and so on, but this plaza design doesn't meet what the public has said they want. She said the plaza feels like it is a little bump being stuck into the design because it is required. She said she also is concerned because the County has not yet indicated what it will allow, and she would encourage consideration of a Condition that would indicate the design as proposed is a placeholder, and the final design will be determined after conversations with the County have taken place.

David Kappler, 255 SE Andrews Street, Issaquah, said he supported the original development agreement for this project because he didn't want to see curbs put in that would have to be torn up later. He continued the design to make this five-cornered intersection represents a gain for the City and a substantial financial investment from the developer. He said he appreciated the stakeholder meeting arranged since the last Development Commission meeting, and said the interaction with the Parks Department was a good first step forward. He continued he doesn't really see how the proposed design for the Worklofts is in harmony with the adjacent storage building. He said the design solution for how the trail will work isn't perfect but he recognizes that the City is still working on it. He said he would like to see trees added to the back of the site in addition to the cottonwoods that are already there. He said the proposed landscaping in front of the buildings is a definite improvement. He said he isn't sure how to deal with the asymmetry issue, but cautioned that if real bricks are going to be used on the proposed chimney element, to be sure they are well attached in the event of earthquakes.

Hearing no additional requests to speak, SOWA closed the public hearing at 8:19 PM.

Joint Discussion

LEONG asked for clarification of property lines on survey drawings and the drawings shown on pages A-1.0 and C-1.0. Sloman noted the survey drawings reflect the existing context for this application, as it now exists. LEONG asked clarifying question about how Fire Department responders would access the building, and whether Fire Department vehicles would have

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adequate space to enter and exit the property. Martinez noted all the parking for this building is under-building parking; it is ground-level but covered, and responders would have no problems accessing the building. The Fire Department has reviewed these plans and has indicated it sees no problems with the layout as proposed. LEONG also asked clarifying questions about how people will access the building. He noted there are three main entrances, but they seem spread out, with no central point of entry. He also said there is only one elevator to serve the entire building. Given that some occupants may be using their space for crafts and other projects, they may need to use the elevator rather than the stairs, and one elevator doesn't seem like enough, he stated. Martinez said the main use of the lofts will be for office space, specifically as incubator space for start-ups. He explained how building residents will be able to access the building from Gilman and the parking lot, as well as from the lobby to the retail spaces. He said occupants can use either the elevator or the stairs. Primary entrances are required to face the street, he continued, and the plan complies with that requirement. LEONG asked whether the building includes a mail room. Martinez replied yes, and showed it on a diagram. He also explained how loading will take place at the building. LEONG suggested that the abbreviations S (standard), M (motorcycle), L (loading) and C (compact) be spelled out and included on the plans.

SANFORD asked is the planting on the trellis screening referred to in the parking section intended to be seasonal or evergreen. Greg Percich said our landscape architect is not here to speak to that, but it is his understanding that it is intended to be evergreen. We will work with the City on that, he said. SANFORD asked about treatment on the west side where the building faces the storage building. Percich replied parking isn't exposed on that side. Sloman referred to Sheet Level 01, A-2.0.

SANFORD asked is any information on signage available at this time. Percich replied no. Martinez added signage will be addressed after construction of the building is complete, and will have to comply with City regulations. He added that decisions about compliance with signage regulations would be a City decision, and we don't anticipate that the applicant will request any proposed deviations from the City's regulations.

SANFORD asked is there a bus stop closer than the one shown in front on Gilman Blvd. Sloman showed the existing bus stops on a diagram. She explained Metro Transit will not add a new bus stop, but will consider relocating the existing one.

SANFORD asked what elements of harmony does the applicant team see between this project and the storage building. Power said when we went through the development agreement process, the original plan for the storage building would have resulted in a far different color scheme than what we have today. By the time we got the City's new Design Manual guidelines for the storage project, we couldn't really modify anything structurally, but we did convince the storage facility operator to change the color palette to comply with the City's new design standards, he said. So the issue is not really what has been done to the Worklofts project to achieve harmony so much as it is what we could do to the storage building at the last minute to achieve that goal, he added.

HARRISON asked whether the proposed water feature will have a public water fountain and/or a source of water for dogs, and noted that drinking water is not available to trail users and bicyclists for miles. He said he sees that there are no provisions in the plan for a public water fountain, but there is space for a bicycle repair station. He questioned whether the plaza design should be put on hold until clarification is reached of its status with King County. Sloman said staff's recommendation is to continue with the trail plaza as shown, and noted the building is

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separate from the plaza. If we can't reach agreement with King County about the trail access issues, the City would still have options, and could return to the Commission to discuss those options. She also described the proposed bicycle repair station. HARRISON also noted in the photo on page 14 of 28, Figure 6 of the parking structure and surface parking screening, deciduous trees are shown, which will only be effective for six months or so of the year. Sloman replied the intent of that illustration was to just show the view from the Pogacha Restaurant's parking lot.

MORGAN asked the project architect to explain where the materials and colors provided will appear on each portion of the building. Barnes showed where the base and accent colors and materials will appear on both the storage building and the Worklofts. The Commissioners expressed general satisfaction with the colors selected for this project.

Discussion of Design Standards

Sloman referred to Exhibit C, staff's completed worksheet, and displayed a blank worksheet for the Commission to fill out side-by-side with staff's completed worksheet. The following are areas where the Commission differed with staff's evaluations and/or asked specific clarifying questions:

- *Page 16, Massing; Asymmetrical Composition (Does Not Comply).*

MORGAN said to him, the design guidelines about asymmetrical composition are somewhat misleading, because while the narrative says that asymmetry is appropriate, the photos used as examples don't match very well with that verbiage. He said he doesn't feel that there is a big push for asymmetry here, based on the photos, and it is not necessary that the buildings be more asymmetrical than they are in the application. Others agreed, and noted where the building do reflect asymmetry, particularly how they are sited on the parcel. PRICE said he agrees that the buildings achieve asymmetry, particularly given how they are skewed from each other in a spatial sense that isn't reflected in an elevation diagram. BRENNAN agreed, and said the position of the building against Gilman is also angled. It was the consensus of the majority of Commissioners that the proposed building design does achieve the asymmetry of the Arts and Craft Style in the Design Manual, and to delete Condition 27 (*"The composition is not asymmetrical. The applicant shall revise the design to achieve the required asymmetrical composition through the use of materials, window groupings, and/or colors."*)

The Commissioners also discussed staff's conclusion that *"Roof forms shall be complex through the use of dormers and/or increasing the scale of the stairwell roofs to create more visible intersecting ridges."* LEONG suggested that complexity might be achieved by putting one dormer at each end of the roof. MORGAN noted the roof will be clearly visible in views from Gilman, and looking at the sample photos in the manual, seems to be a rather long, plain, noncomplex roof. PRICE and SANFORD both spoke to the difficulty of using a word like "complexity" in the guidelines, as complexity is subjective. After additional discussion about the advisability of being overly prescriptive in making suggestions for more complexity, the consensus of the Commission was to revise Condition 26 to *"Roof forms shall be made more complex through the use of dormers or other features consistent with the Arts & Crafts Style."* BRENNAN and MORGAN asked staff whether they had enough direction and specificity to feel comfortable working with the applicant to resolve the roof complexity issue. Sloman replied yes; staff can work with the applicant, including at our next scheduled meeting with them on May 16, and bring the proposed new roof design to the Commission for your confirmation at a future Development Commission meeting.

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SANFORD asked for clarification about placement of the proposed chimney, and asked is it just a visual benefit with no real function. Percich clarified that while it is not connected to a heat source, it is required to accommodate the elevator shaft, so it is not just stuck on the design with no function.

- *Page 18, Materials: Walls.*

MORGAN asked why the word “natural” was shown in strike-out text under “Appropriate.” Sloman replied this is taken from the July 2017 version of the draft manual, and noted the final version reads differently.

- *Page 62, Natural Context: Hillside & Natural Areas.*

BRENNAN said he thinks staff’s evaluation that this item is “N/A” for this project is okay, but thinks that questions about view corridors and whether projects “strengthen and reinforce the unique setting of Central Issaquah” is likely to come up again in reviewing other projects in the future.

- *Page 63-64, Compatibility: Harmony.*

MORGAN said this is a dangerous one because incremental development won’t necessarily be in harmony with adjacent buildings, and requiring harmony among buildings would not allow for many changes to be made. BRENNAN spoke to the learning process required as staff and the Commission begin to apply these guidelines. HARRISON agreed, and said this is actually a good project to start with and learn from.

- *Page 65, Block Size.*

MORGAN said the intent of this guideline is to not create super-blocks, but this project does not fit that description. He said he agrees with staff that this is N/A. PRICE added the proposed massing of the building fits with the examples in the manual. BRENNAN agreed, and said the requirements of this guideline don’t apply to this site.

- *Page 72, Building Edges: Enclosure.*

STANFORD asked that a provision be included to ensure that plantings referenced in “incorporate terraces and usable outdoor space” be year-round. Staff said that can be added to an existing condition.

- *Page 77, Entries: Ground-floor Retail.*

MORGAN said this may be more of an issue with the code than the design here, and explained the difficulty someone using the two handicapped stalls could have in accessing the retail portion of the building. Sloman said the consultant felt strongly that office and retail buildings in the core shouldn’t have their back door to the street and their front door to a parking lot. If we are indeed trying to build a more pedestrian environment, then buildings need to be situated so that they put “oomph” toward the street, she said. In any case, the ADA regulations would take precedence, and ADA regulations indicate that disabled stalls have to be the closest feasible proximity to the main entrance that also ensures safe travel between the parking stall and the building. She said staff will review this closely with the Building Department when it reviews the applicant’s permit, and also look at the final version of the Design Manual to clarify the wording there.

- *Page 81, Weather Protection.*

MORGAN noted the checklist indicates “Complies” and should be corrected to “Not Comply” as staff has added a proposed condition. Staff made the correction.

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Discussion of Briefing Response Memo

Martinez asked Commissioners for any questions or concerns about topics in the Briefing Response Memo other than Topic 2 and Topic 3. Commissioners indicated many of their concerns were addressed in the memo, and expressed appreciation to the applicant for making modifications as requested at the April 4 meeting.

Topic 1, Procedures. No comments.

Topic 4, Building Design. No comments.

Topic 5, Plaza Design. STANFORD asked whether there was any opportunity for more trees at the trail intersection as a result of the plaza redesign. Martinez said King County did provide some trail guidelines, which were presented at the April 4 meeting. They specify that no trees can be planted within 15 feet of the pavement, he continued, although some shrubs and bushes may be possible. Even shrubs, however, have to comply with a three-foot setback requirement, he added. SANFORD asked how the roof trellis will be consistent with the adjacent storage building. Martinez showed the roof trellis on the storage building, and said that design will be carried over to the Worklofts building. BRENNAN said he's not convinced that the idea of a grand arrival is appropriate here. It seems we would want to welcome people and encourage them to keep going right into the shops and restaurants in Olde Town, he said. He asked who will be responsible for maintaining the plaza area. Sloman said the City hopes to work with the project applicant on maintenance as a partnership, with the City as a backstop. BRENNAN said is that a condition of the Development Agreement. Sloman replied yes. Martinez added the addition of a water fountain at this location is not possible as it is county-owned property.

Topic 6, Parking and Circulation. MORGAN noted his research indicates that the City of Seattle requires .5 parking stalls per 1,000 square feet for storage facilities and 1.0 stalls per 1,000 square feet for office space. This application seems to pretty closely match the City of Seattle's parking requirements, he noted. Martinez noted the City does have established standards for parking, although this application is different because of the intended use of the business.

Topic 7, Traffic Signal. No comments.

Topic 8, Environmental. No comments.

Topic 9, Trees. BRENNAN said it is his understanding that we do not have a lot of opportunity for additional trees here, particularly given WSDOT's position, and it may not be practical at this point to plan for more. Power said the applicant team may request some joint development there as part of our permit, which could result in more trees. HARRISON said he would favor additional language to one of the conditions that reflects the Development Commission's sense that this project should have as many trees as possible and feasible. Others agreed. After some discussion, staff agreed to add that language to existing Condition 14.

Topic 10, Bus Stop. No comments.

Commissioner Recommendation

MOVED BY MORGAN, SECONDED BY BRENNAN that the Development Commission approve Site Development Permit SDP 17-00003 for the Issaquah Lofts, Project Number PRJ 17-00012, as described in the Staff Report dated March 23, 2018, with Exhibits A through G; the Briefing Response Memo dated April 25, 2018, with Exhibits A through E; the project drawings and reports received November 16, 2017, and all subsequent submittals up to April 19, 2018, and subject to the conditions contained in the Staff Report, and removed and new conditions

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contained in the Briefing Response Memo (New Condition Nos. 25-34, and removed Condition Nos. 10, 11, and 12, and as amended tonight:

- ADD Condition 13. The parking structure's screening on the east side of the building shall use plantings that provide year-round screening.
- ADD Condition 14. The applicant will work to add as many trees on site as possible and that is practical and cognizant of tree health and public safety.
- REVISE Condition 26. Massing. Roof forms shall be made more complex through the use of dormers or other features consistent with the Arts & Crafts Style.
- DELETE Condition 27.

And that the Development Commission direct the Development Services Department to prepare Findings of Fact and Conclusions for review and approval by the Development Commission Chair, affirming the Development Commission's decision to approve the Issaquah Lofts project, Site Development Permit Number SDP 17-00003, subject to the conditions listed in the Staff Report, modified in the Briefing Response Memo, and as amended tonight. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY BY ALL DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT.

OTHER BUSINESS/ANNOUNCEMENTS/ADJOURN

SOWA and the other Commissioners thanked LEONG for his many years of participation and contributions to the Development Commission. With no additional business to discuss, SOWA adjourned the meeting at 10:32 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Lowe
Recording Secretary

(Note: Alternate Member(s) did not vote at tonight's meeting as there was a quorum of Regular Members present.)