

**CITY OF ISSAQUAH
Development Commission**

7:00 PM
November 20, 2019

MINUTES

Council Chambers
135 E. Sunset Way

COMMISSION AND ADMINISTRATIVE PERSONNEL PRESENT

Commissioners Present:

Richard Sowa, Chair

Mel Morgan, Vice Chair

Michael Brennan

Kevin Price

Ben Rush

Arthur Schulte, Alt.

Brooke Shore

Commissioners Not Present:

Richard Sanford (Excused)

Mark Rigos, Alt. (Not Excused)

Nischitha Venkatesh, Alt. (Not Excused)

Administration/Staff:

Lucy Sloman, Land Development Mgr.

CALL TO ORDER

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- a) It was the consensus of all Commissioners present that minutes of the Development Commission meeting on October 2, 2019 be approved as presented.

AGENDA ITEMS

- a) **Development Commission (DC) Get Acquainted Event, (D)**

Presented by:

Lucy Sloman, Land Development Manager

Introductions

As a team-building exercise, the Commissioners introduced themselves and shared information about their education, work background, experience on boards and commissions, interests and hobbies, and so on.

How the DC Fits In the Organizational Structure of the City

Projects Reviewed by the DC

Permit Application Process: Before, After, and at the DC

Sloman explained the City's organizational structure (legislative, judicial, and administrative); how the Commission's work feeds into the City's administrative functions; the kinds of permits that come to the Commission for review (site development, master site plan, and development agreements); and the Commission's role in reviewing and approving permit applications.

MORGAN suggested that the Commission schedule a future opportunity to walk the sites of projects that the Commission has reviewed to assess the results of the Commission's recommendations and decisions. Sloman said that is a great idea and made a note of it.

Sloman continued her presentation on still-active development agreements in the City; the land review process and where the Commission fits in; details about the appeals process; and the status of current development projects around the City, including those now in the appeals process. She gave more details about the Commission's portion of the land use review process, including the two public meetings/hearings that are typically held; staff's Briefing Response Memo; and the Notice of Decision or recommendation signed by the Commission Chair.

In response to a question from PRICE, Sloman explained more about how staff prepares and uses the Briefing Response Memo. The Commissioners agreed that the Briefing Response Memos that staff prepares are thorough and comprehensive. SCHULTE noted that the City's interactive map is also a very useful tool. The Commission provided positive feedback about how the Briefing Response Memo is organized and has evolved over time.

Sloman continued her presentation on the Commission's other responsibilities, including review of preliminary plat applications and how community conferences fit into the process.

Upcoming Changes to the DC

Sloman explained upcoming changes that will affect the Commission's work, including (1) the recently approved re-assignment of Urban Village Development Commission (UVDC) duties to the Development Commission and the Planning Policy Commission, and (2) work under way to reorganize, streamline, and update Title 18 (the City's land use code). She noted the Commission may also be addressing a review of architectural standards in Olde Town, as part of the planned actions in the Olde Town Subarea Plan Update.

Input on the DC Review Process

BRENNAN gave some feedback to staff on the Commission's opportunities to ask questions and give feedback that typically takes place at the first of two meetings on a project application. MORGAN noted it is helpful to be able to get all the information from staff and the applicant before the Commission asks questions and gives feedback. Sloman made a note of it.

MORGAN asked about the protocol for closing the opportunity for public comment at a community conference versus leaving it open until the second meeting. Sloman explained a public hearing has a different, more structured format than a public meeting, which has a more informal process. She gave examples of how and when public comment can be taken in public meetings and hearings, and said the Commission can choose to hear from the public at multiple points in the discussion at public meetings if they so choose. BRENNAN added speaking from his experience, even at informal public meetings some kind of parameters are needed around when public comment and discussion is taken. Sloman agreed. She added one important point is to ensure that every permit review is fair and consistent, including the opportunity to hear public comment. She also explained that the level of detail being provided to the Commission is not intended to be at the level of a building permit.

PRICE asked whether Commissioners should give their individual feedback directly to applicants during the opportunity for individual Commissioner comments and questions at community conferences. Sloman replied yes; like the public, the Commissioners can make any comments they choose. Most applicants are interested in receiving the Commissioners' feedback, and staff is as well, she said, and gave examples.

MORGAN said he values the input of his fellow Commissioners and staff when he or one of his fellow Commissioners makes a comment during the review process. He said hearing from all the different viewpoints represented on the Commission is valuable. RUSH, PRICE and others agreed. Sloman noted at Council meetings, audience members are invited to raise their hands at the end of a public comment if they concur with what has just been said. That technique could

be used to determine how many Commissioners agree with a comment that has been made by one of the Commissioners. BRENNAN agreed that would be a good approach, and spoke in favor of having Commissioners reflect their thinking on other Commissioners' feedback given during the summary comments period. Sloman agreed it is useful for staff to have a sense of how many Commissioners agree on a given point, and spoke in favor of having robust conversations among the Commissioners.

Sloman noted for the record, staff will follow up all "no" votes on permit applications with a request to explain why a Commissioner chose to vote "no." MORGAN noted a Commissioner who votes "no" on a project application does not need to vote "no" on the follow-up motion to authorize staff and the Chair to prepare and sign the Findings of Fact. Sloman agreed.

BRENNAN asked for any feedback from staff for the Commission. Sloman replied it is helpful when Commissioners have read the material in advance of the meeting and come prepared. She explained that typically, staff does not respond directly to public comments, but instead looks to the Commission for whether or not to respond to the comment. MORGAN asked for clarification of when the Commission should ask for a response to public comment from staff. Sloman suggested that the Commission hear all the public comment, then sort out what has been said and ask staff to respond during the Commission discussion rather than while a commenter is at the podium.

SCHULTE asked for feedback about asking the same question at subsequent project review meetings. Sloman replied questions at the first review meeting are generally answered in the Briefing Response Memo, but the second meeting is definitely an opportunity to clarify questions and answers for both the public and the Commission, and gave examples.

Sloman reminded the Commissioners to respond to meeting notices with an indication of whether they will be able to attend, as excused and unexcused absences will be recorded. After three unexcused absences, a Commissioner can be removed as a Commission member. She gave more details about upcoming meetings in December.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

OTHER BUSINESS / ANNOUNCEMENTS

- a) The next Development Commission meeting is scheduled for December 4, 2019 at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers, 135 E. Sunset Way. Sloman explained the meeting topic, Inneswood façade changes, is an administrative decision on which staff is asking for the Development Commission's feedback.

ADJOURNMENT

With no additional business to conduct, SOWA adjourned the meeting at 9:25 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Lowe
Recording Secretary