CITY OF ISSAQUAH
Development Commission

7:00 PM Council Chambers
December 4, 2019 **MINUTES** 135 E. Sunset Way

COMMISSION AND ADMINISTRATIVE PERSONNEL PRESENT

Commissioners Present:
Richard Sowa, Chair
Mel Morgan, Vice Chair
Michael Brennan
Kevin Price
Richard Sanford
Arthur Schulte, Alt.
Commissioners Not Present:
Ben Rush (Excused)
Brooke Shore (Excused)
Mark Rigos, Alt. (Not Excused)
Nischitha Venkatesh, Alt. (Not Excused)

Administration/Staff:
Lucy Sloman , Land Development Mgr.
Valerie Porter, Associate Planner

Others Present:
Ric Tolleshaug, Milbrandt Architects
David Burnett, Milbrandt Architects
Bob Wenzel, Inneswood Apartments project owner

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 November 20, 2019 be approved as presented.

AGENDA ITEMS

a) Consultation on Revisions to Inneswood Apartment Site Development Permit (A), Application No. SDP16-00006; ASDP19-00006

Presented by:
Valerie Porter, Associate Planner
Ric Tolleshaug, Milbrandt Architects

Staff Presentation

Porter made staff's presentation. She gave some background on the project, including the Development Commission's review and approval of the site development permit (SDP) for the project in 2016. She said tonight we will be discussing design changes that occurred after the SDP was approved. She said the design changes are within the Administration's purview and meet City code, but because they result in a substantially different appearance to the project, the Administration is seeking input from the Commission.

She continued her presentation with a description of the site, the proposed project, and the permitting timeline. She displayed comparisons of the approved SDP for Buildings I and II versus the construction drawings, and described the changes. She referred to a diagram, also included in the agenda packet, that displayed an example of how minor changes can accumulate, and gave more details about the differences between the proposal in the SDP and the proposal in the construction drawings. She concluded her presentation with questions for the Commission (page 16 of 31) for which staff is seeking answers tonight. SOWA said an important consideration, in his opinion, would be whether the proposed changes to the exterior, either singly or cumulatively,

would conflict with the accepted guidelines in the City's Central Issaquah Development and Design Standards (CIDDS). Sloman agreed and said that will be an important consideration going forward.

Applicant Presentation
Ric Tolleshaug, Milbrandt Architects, introduced himself and David Burnett, Milbrandt Architects. He gave some background on the project, and noted that the SDP, which was approved in December 2016, included 55 conditions. He added that all 55 of the conditions have been addressed. He described the effort required to meet the design development and construction drawing phases of the project. He said we have tried to stay true to the design concept approved by the Commission. He displayed an inventory of proposed changes prepared by staff, and noted that staff has classified the result of the changes to the facade as "improve," "neutral," and "diminish." He noted the changes that fall into the "diminish" category will be described in more detail tonight. He also said the applicant team wants to highlight two "neutral" changes that affect a sizable portion of the site, and provide more details about what drove those changes.

He continued with slides comparing 3-D perspectives of Building I, including the street façade, floor plan for floors 3-6, end façade (south), rear façade, and end façade (north) in the approved SDP versus the construction drawings, as summarized and described on pages 19-22 of 31; and slides comparing 3-D perspectives of Building II, including the street façade, south façade, rear façade, and north facade in the approved SDP versus the construction drawings, as summarized and described on pages 23-24 of 31. He concluded his remarks by stating that the applicant team believes the proposed facades in the construction drawings are substantially similar to the SDP facades approved by the Commission.

Public Comment
Loren Campbell, 750 NW Everwood Drive, described his tenure since 1992 as an Issaquah resident, and said he has lived in his current residence for seven years. He described his participation in the review process several years ago when this project was first proposed, and said he was informed then that he "didn't understand modern development." He continued he does understand modern development, and said he chooses not to live in modern developments like Talus and the Highlands. He gave more details about what he values about his neighborhood, and what he considers its degradation due to encroaching development. Among his other comments were his recollection that City staff admitted that the City has knowingly violated its own critical areas ordinance; that the rear view of these proposed buildings will not be visible to anyone except those living in existing residences, including his residence; that he was told a public trail would not be part of the conversation about developing this property, but it was built anyway; that the time and effort the applicant has spent on this project is not relevant to the need for developers to follow the rules; that allowing developers to build on critical area slopes ultimately costs taxpayers; and for staff, Commissioners, and elected officials to represent the public's interest and not developers' needs and preferences. He asked that the applicant consider not painting the back of the buildings that will face existing houses, especially the bright yellow color, and to install screen trees. He said he would like to see developers and architects design projects that are cohesive with the surrounding neighborhood. He said residents should not have to battle with the City to get screen trees or ask that buildings that face houses not be painted in circus colors. Staff, boards and commissions, and public officials are here to represent citizens, and protect the integrity of the City.

Commission Deliberation and Recommendation
SCHULTE asked which elevations will be seen from Newport Way. Tolleshaug replied the east façade of Building I faces Newport Way, and showed it on a diagram. He added Building II is located south of Building I. Burnett added about 100-120 feet exists between the two buildings. Sloman displayed the site plan.

SOWA addressed Mr. Campbell's comments. He said the Commission appreciates hearing comments and opinions, particularly early in the process when there are still opportunities to consider all options. Burnett added the project is not being constructed on all of the property; some of the critical slopes are not being disturbed. He showed where trees will be maintained.

MORGAN asked which parcel is Mr. Campbell's, and staff showed it on a diagram of the site. Bob Wenzel, project owner, gave more information about the trees that will be maintained. He noted we are keeping far more trees than we are allowed to remove under City code, and said we wanted to be conscientious and respectful of the neighborhood. SCHULTE asked are any new trees to be planted. Wenzel replied we are maintaining large amounts of what is already there, and added he does not recall any additional trees in the landscaping plan.

PRICE asked for clarification of the faux balcony (Topic A, page 19 of 31). Burnett replied the faux balcony is proposed for one end unit to bring it into line with the design of the rest of the townhomes. He noted it does have a fully active balcony to the south.

BRENNAN noted a discrepancy in the rendering of the drawing of Floors 3-6 of Building I. Burnett replied the drawings may not be 100-percent representative of the construction documents, and made a note of it. BRENNAN said he agrees with the additional treatment of blank walls, as described on page 12 of 31. SANFORD asked about the callouts "A," "I," and "J," and the applicant team provided explanations of what they represent.

PRICE asked what is the relationship of the ground floor to the homes behind the building. Sloman noted the Campbell residence is at about a 210-foot elevation, and the front of the site is something less than at the 80-foot elevation, so the building is significantly below the residences. PRICE asked is the roof flat, and is it a highly reflective color. Burnett replied it is flat and a medium to light gray. SCHULTE asked is there screening for HVAC located on the roof. Burnett replied yes, and explained how the raised parapets screen the HVAC equipment near the roof edge.

MORGAN asked about callouts "J" and "M" for Building II. SANFORD asked for an explanation of the overhang on the south elevation drawing of Building II, and for callout "U" on the south elevation drawing of Building II. The applicant clarified what is intended to address those items. He also noted that some apparent inconsistencies are the result of changes in drawing conventions in producing the construction drawings.

SANFORD said he assumes no rooftop use is planned for either building. Burnett replied correct. SCHULTE said he assumes no retail is planned. Burnett replied correct. SCHULTE asked why landscaping has been removed in "G" for Building I. Burnett replied that would be included in the landscape design drawings.

MORGAN asked whether signage would be located along with the addition of a screen wall, as described in "V" for Building I (page 20 of 31). Sloman replied that was one of the Commission's conditions for approval. Burnett replied that is what is proposed, although the signage permit will take place under another permit process. MORGAN asked about the materials for the screen wall referenced in "V." Tolleshaug replied what you are seeing there is part of the screen wall and part of the retaining wall behind it. MORGAN asked so the screen wall material is still subject to staff approval. Sloman replied yes. Burnett said our thinking was that a dark-grey was the best aesthetic choice. MORGAN noted that could be the introduction of a background format for the signage design.

SANFORD noted that on callout "G," south elevation of Building II, a rating is not given. He asked will light be visible through the windows referenced. Burnett replied that is not anticipated. He explained how the windows are tucked back from the street perspective, and said light from them may be completely invisible from the street.

SCHULTE asked for clarification of the decorative metal grate shown on the concrete garage wall (Building I, "I"). Burnett said the open garage was proposed in the SDP but the construction drawings indicate a metal grill, and explained the input that went into making that change. SCHULTE asked whether light poles will be installed along the path near the building's exterior stairwell. Burnett replied that will be part of the landscaping plan. Sloman added we have not done a lighting review yet, but because of the proximity to critical areas and neighbors, a motion-sensor lighting system might be warranted.

MORGAN addressed the question of the use of color on the side of the building that faces the hillside. He asked staff to provide their thoughts on the possibility of having a more muted color scheme on that side. Sloman replied her recollection is that there are no requirements in the CIDDS for a façade that faces a hillside. She continued there are some requirements for a material or color change between the third and fourth floors, but only that the change be perceptible or visible. So proposing the exact change is more of a discretionary decision for the applicant, she continued. Burnett added the applicant team did make an effort to not ignore the rear façade, but rather to give it as much attention as the other facades. In our design, he continued, we tried to create a cohesive façade that spanned all sides of the buildings. Wenzel added we did participate in lengthy, extensive conversations with the City about the colors and hues to be used, but we could do a little more thinking about ways to make it appear "softer."

MORGAN said his recollection was that the Development Commission considered the proposed color scheme from the perspective of Newport Way, not necessarily from residences that will face the rear of the buildings. He said he could support staff and the applicant team revisiting the color scheme, either the number of colors used or the color choices, from the perspective of the neighbors that face the rear of the buildings. SCHULTE said the color that stands out to him as perhaps less appropriate is the yellow color. Perhaps it could be toned down, or not used on the rear view of the building. Tolleshaug and Wenzel spoke about the time and effort they spent with the City to identify the shade of yellow that was eventually approved.

BRENNAN said the applicant has already received approval for a SDP. He said he encourages staff and the applicant to be sensitive to what's going on behind the buildings, such as light and glare that crosses property lines. As for color, he continued, everyone has a different opinion about what are appropriate color choices, and if we start to make changes that please one party they may not please others. He continued he thinks we want to be cautious here. We have a project that has already been approved, but that said, he agrees with the points made earlier about being sensitive to those residents who will look at this project, particularly lighting concerns.

SOWA said he agrees with BRENNAN that the purpose of tonight's meeting is to weigh in on whether we agree that the proposed changes are acceptable. He said the project has already been approved, and added he appreciates the opportunity for the Commission to take another look at the project with the proposed changes.

Porter posed four questions, to which the general consensus among the Commissioners was to agree as follows:

(1) Is the new proposal consistent with the intent of the approved SDP elevations? Yes.

(2) Is removing or noticeably altering exterior elements such as the window design and/or layout considered a significant change to the building exterior? No, not "significant."

(3) Does the Commission generally view increases to exterior elements, such as the window size and shape, as an improvement to the overall building façade? Yes.

(4) What are the DC's expectations with regards to mitigation design changes that are prompted by Building and/or Structural Code requirements? In response to a request for clarification by SANFORD, Porter gave examples of mitigation design changes that were driven by code requirements. Sloman added staff's intent is to ensure that staff understands the Commission's sensitivities to relatively minor changes to the SDP in the construction drawings, and to make sure that staff are being good stewards of the Commission's review and approval process. PRICE said he agrees that the changes were significant enough to warrant asking the Commission to take another look, and thinks that staff is meeting expectations. SANFORD and BRENNAN agreed. BRENNAN added changes that take place after the original review process are also opportunities to enhance design and make an even better project. MORGAN noted the chart of "enhance," "neutral," and "diminish" was a helpful tool. SCHULTE said he appreciated the transparency and documentation that has gone into this review process, and respects the applicant's effort that have led to some positive changes.

Porter summarized the Commission's discussion that culminated in recommending that the applicant and staff meet to discuss:

- Exploring treatment of the wall next to the faux balcony;
- Ensuring that the rooftop HVAC equipment is properly screened;
- Addressing lighting, particularly lighting and glare that can be seen from off-site, and consider installation of lighting motion sensors; and
- Possibly reducing the number of colors and/or using less yellow color on the rear facade.

Burnett asked whether the Commission would want to be apprised of any further developments between staff and the applicant on addressing the rear elevation view and color scheme. SOWA replied no; the project has been approved, and the Commission's direction is for the applicant and staff to work together on exploring the above recommendations.

PUBLIC COMMENT
None.

OTHER BUSINESS / ANNOUNCEMENTS
The next Development Commission meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, January 15, 2020 at 7:00 PM in the Council Chambers.

ADJOURNMENT
With no additional business to conduct, SOWA adjourned the meeting at 8:47 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Lowe
Recording Secretary