

**CITY OF ISSAQUAH
Development Commission**

6:30 PM
July 15, 2020

Virtual Meeting

**SPECIAL MEETING
MINUTES**

COMMISSION AND ADMINISTRATIVE PERSONNEL PRESENT

Commissioners Present:

Richard Sowa, Chair
Mel Morgan, Vice Chair
Michael Brennan
Kevin Price
Richard Sanford
Brooke Shore
Arthur Schulte, Alternate

Administration/Staff:

Lucy Sloman, Land Development Mgr.
Cristina Haworth, Planning Consultant
Doug Yormick, Assistant Planner
Tisha Geiser, Deputy City Clerk

Applicant Team/Others Present:

Todd Sawin, Project Planner, AHBL
Tom Mullins, ISD Capital Projects Dir.
Michael Davis, Project Architect

CALL TO ORDER

MORGAN, Vice Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:33 PM. He provided guidelines to Commissioners, the public, and presenters for participating in tonight's virtual meeting. He explained that SCHULTE, Alternate Member, will vote as a Regular Member tonight in the absence of a Regular Member. [Note: SOWA joined the meeting at 6:50 PM.]

COMMUNITY CONFERENCE

**ISD High School and Elementary School Campus at 4221 228th Ave SE
Community Conference, (I)
COM20-00001; PRJ19-00008**

MORGAN gave some information about the purpose of a Community Conference and the purpose of tonight's meeting specifically. No formal recommendations will be made by the Commission tonight. He explained how the discussion tonight will be captured in a summary, and how any interested party can receive a copy of that summary. He explained the next steps in the process, leading to a Staff Report, another public hearing by the Development Commission and a recommendation to Council, and a final decision by Council.

a) **Staff Presentation**

Presented by:

Cristina Haworth, Planning Consultant

Haworth said tonight is an opportunity to take a preliminary look and have an informal meeting on the project; no decisions will be made. She continued her presentation with information on the site context; a site overview; an overview of the project; background on the project, beginning with a voter-approved school bond in 2016; future permit requirements for the project, including a Master Site Plan (MSP), a Site Development Permit (SDP), Administrative Adjustment of Standards (AAS), and construction permits; the SEPA environmental review process for the project; the development standards that apply to the proposed buildings, including elevation; compliance with floor area ratio (FAR) requirements; requirements for parking, and what is proposed; traffic requirements, impacts, and what is being proposed; tree retention; and retaining walls. She continued her presentation with the next steps in the process, beginning with collecting written comments through July 22, 2020 and culminating in a final

decision by the City Council on the MSP/SDP. Public comment is encouraged throughout the MSP/SDP/AAS reviews, during the SEPA process, and at public hearings.

[SOWA joined the meeting at this time.]

b) **Applicant Presentation**

Presented by:

Todd Sawin, Project Planner, AHBL

Michael Davis, Project Architect, Bassetti Architects

Mullins introduced the project team. Davis began the presentation. He gave information on the design concepts and major themes that drove the project design. He showed photographs and drawings of the site over time, depicting a cycle of existing forest, new growth, clearing, and regeneration. He explained how those concepts influenced the current project design. He described the project as a complex site and project with specific priorities, including meeting the goals of the Issaquah School District (ISD), the topography of the site, the need for safe and proper circulation, and sensitivity to the properties surrounding the site.

Sawin continued the applicant team's presentation. He explained constraints of the site, including buffering; access to the site, traffic, and circulation within the site; and the placement of the football field, ballfields, and the parking lot. Davis showed a birds-eye view of the site as proposed. Sawin said the applicant team welcomes comments and discussion with the Commission, particularly on FAR, landscaping, and screening of the retaining walls.

SCHULTE asked the applicant team to walk through the circulation plan for emergency vehicles and access into the site. Sawin showed where signalized access will be located; where vehicles will enter and exit the site, including students into the high school; where structured parking will be located; how emergency vehicles will access the site; and how bus traffic will enter and exit the site to serve both the high school and the elementary school.

SANFORD asked how buses will exit after dropping off students at the bottom of the site. Sawin showed the circulation plan on a diagram. SANFORD asked about access by bicycle and on foot. Sawin explained the provisions for a bike lane and pedestrian access. SANFORD asked why the option for the entry point was selected. Sawin replied the challenge was to find the right elevation option that would keep the grade to 11-12 percent.

PRICE asked about the proposed traffic signals. Sawin replied we are working with a traffic engineer now, and it appears that we will best minimize impacts on neighborhood traffic with a signal at the main entrance. There has been discussion with the City of Sammamish about intersection improvements at the Bellewood entrance, but no conclusions have been reached. PRICE asked about signalization at Providence Point. Sawin said the City has a project under way now to improve the entrance point to Providence Point, at SE 43rd.

MORGAN asked about the "grey" area on the diagram to the south of the elementary school. Sawin said that is an outdoor, hardscape play area. MORGAN asked about sports field lighting. Sawin replied the baseball and softball fields will not be lit; the tennis courts will be.

SCHULTE referred to the northwest corner of the ball field nearest Providence Point, and asked how do you plan to treat that corner. Sawin displayed that section on a diagram, and explained the topography there. He said we plan to save some trees and plant additional trees, and noted there is about 40 feet between the field and the Providence Point property line. SCHULTE asked what are the projected heights of the proposed trees there. Sawin replied we have talked

at length about the need to use trees that are readily available and that are the most likely to survive. It is likely that some trees will be in the 8-foot and some in the 12-foot range, he added.

BRENNAN asked the applicant to describe conditions at the proposed main entrance at SE 228th, particularly the heights of retaining walls that will run parallel there. He asked what will be the experience for people entering the site. Sawin replied widening at SE 228th will be required to meet traffic needs and City of Sammamish requirements. The retaining walls there will be 12-15 feet in height, and we are working to ensure we are saving trees, and the right trees, there. He continued the intent is to avoid a “hallway” feel in favor of a more boulevard feel. He gave additional details about the intent to keep scale in mind for the retaining walls so they don’t appear massive.

SHORE asked where are existing wetlands onsite. Sawin showed Wetlands B and C on a diagram. SHORE asked will Wetland B remain after construction. Sawin replied that is correct. SHORE asked whether tree replacement as off-site mitigation has been considered. Sawin replied we have discussed it and are exploring options. SHORE asked about basic treatment vs. enhanced treatment of stormwater runoff on the site, as described in Section 2.6 MR—Runoff Treatment in the project narrative. Sawin explained why student parking is considered “employee” parking for the purpose of calculating and determining which areas will receive basic treatment. He continued the project team thinks it is possible to provide enhanced treatment for just one area, the visitor parking and all access roads, and the remainder of the site will receive basic treatment. SHORE asked are there any plans for the school facilities to be open to the public outside of school activities or hours. Sawin replied those discussions and plans are still in the works.

c) **Public Comments/Questions and Discussion**

SOWA opened the meeting for public comment at 7:30 PM. He explained how previously received comments, comments made tonight, and comments submitted in the next week will be used by the applicant, staff, the Commission, and the Council in their planning and deliberations. He gave instructions for those who would like to give comments via telephone or virtually now.

Dave Osmer, 22433 SE Highland Lane, Issaquah, spoke about the difficulties created for citizens to examine plans and diagrams virtually. His comments addressed these basic concerns: reducing classrooms for stadium capacity; not sharing stadium or sports field capacity with other existing schools; the projected need and use for portables; not pursuing more green building objectives; the preposterous size of the project, given the size of the property; the failure to address the pandemic and how it could radically change how schools operate safely in the future.

Roberta Brown, Issaquah, made comments about her concern that the proposed massive sports and athletic facilities are comparable in size to the entire elementary school area. She spoke about the original bond issue that authorized funds for new schools, specifically that it did not allude to providing for extracurricular activities. She spoke in favor of reducing the size of the stadium and placing more emphasis in the design on natural and outdoor learning spaces. She also asked the Commissioners not to consider any decisions on this proposal until a project-level environmental impact analysis is completed.

Janell Tamaela, 23390 SE 52nd Street, Issaquah, said this comprehensive school is needed and there are no accommodations in the plan that can be left out. She said the idea that some features such as the stadium are not needed is unfounded. The stadium is needed for many

activities, not just football and sports. Despite the pandemic, she continued, life will go on, and we need schools to accommodate students, who are already being taught in packed facilities.

Connie Marsh, Squak Mountain resident, made comments on the following points. This is essentially a quasi-judicial proceeding since the MSP is being reviewed simultaneously with the SDP. That is not a pathway that had to take place; the MSP could go forth separately, and it doesn't need to go forward that way in the future. She spoke about the need for an AAS or variance for tree removal. On the concept of "regeneration" as a driver of the design, she said most of us won't be here in 80 years to see that part of the cycle. She suggested looking at how Bellevue College planned to use buildings to take up grade rather than remove trees. She said she agrees with earlier comments that sports fields are unnecessary, and said part of using compact schools thinking is reexamining whether the same things we always had are really needed now. She noted that Laughing Jacobs Creek is one of the last Kokanee salmon runs, and said stormwater drainage needs to meet sensitive lake standards. She also commented on how the proposed elementary school siting will prohibit students from walking to school, and that lighting the tennis courts isn't needed. She encouraged the applicant to reduce grading so more trees can be retained, not to reduce FAR, and rethink how schools are designed, especially in light of the pandemic. Lastly she said virtual meetings are not good formats for Community Conferences.

Richard Johnson, Issaquah, said he echoes the comments made by Mr. Osmer and Ms. Marsh, and asked the Commission to please take counsel of what they are telling you.

Sawin said the applicant team can provide more answers in the report staff will be compiling, but he can attempt to answer some of the points raised in public comment now. He explained what was eliminated from the plan to meet the compact schools requirements and the site topography challenges. He noted the tennis courts were cut from six to four, for example, and practice fields were eliminated. He gave statistics about the number of students who will be served by these two schools. He said the team has tried to be transparent that it intends to use portable schools to expand capacity if required. He showed where grading issues exist on a diagram of the site. He clarified that students are not considered "employees," but their parking usage is comparable to that of staff and other school personnel, and so are counted in the same category. If enhanced stormwater treatment is deemed necessary by the City, he continued, the team will work through the issue with City staff. Similarly, if there are ways to keep existing vegetation, we will do that, using more information that will come from walking the site with an arborist. The stormwater treatment will essentially take the site back to its forested condition. Most of the runoff will be taken around Providence Point and out to SE 228th for discharge.

Davis spoke to the issue of getting the most function possible from the tight site, including the use of stacked elements. He clarified that including the stadium and athletic amenities did not take away from any educational activities or facilities. The high school itself will have multiple hands-on, 21st-century learning opportunities, and will compare very well to other high schools. The lot size is typical for siting schools in established communities.

SOWA gave instructions for making additional comments via email or in writing. Hearing no additional requests to speak, at 8:03 PM SOWA closed public comment for tonight's meeting and continued the public hearing to the next Development Commission meeting.

d) Commission Questions, Clarification, and Discussion

BRENNAN asked about green building and sustainability features of the project. Davis replied the design integrates sustainability measures including the basic footprint, placement of buildings, heating, lighting, daylighting, high-efficiency mechanical systems, and so on. He said the buildings themselves incorporate a lot of sustainable elements. Sawin added we didn't

allude to green building and sustainability much in our presentation because a lot of it is required by City code now. He mentioned other measures in the site design, such as rain gardens, a minimized footprint of impervious surfaces, and use of pervious materials.

BRENNAN asked what is the applicant seeking in terms of suggestions for addressing FAR compliance, and what is the process for determining compliance. Sawin explained the applicant team is seeking an AAS to reduce the minimum FAR below the City's 0.75 standard. The City can approve a reduction of not more than 50 percent of the FAR, or .375. We are proposing allowing the deduction of curriculum-based spaces from the FAR calculation, including the stadium, elementary school playground, sports fields, and other outdoor spaces. We are also requesting consideration for deducting the mature vegetation along the east side of the property as an educational component of the site. Haworth added approving a reduced FAR standard is an administrative process outlined in the City's IMC compact schools regulations, and has opportunities for additional public comment. BRENNAN asked does the Director of Community Planning & Development make the AAS decision. Haworth replied correct. BRENNAN said so the higher FAR is actually driving more development on the property. It seems like a challenging requirement for schools, he added.

MORGAN said page 17 of 29 in the Staff Report states, "These standards restrict lighting levels to no more than five percent of the illumination the IESNA publishes for high school stadiums...". Does that mean that there can't be more than five percent spillover lighting, he asked. Haworth replied it means lighting cannot exceed those standards by more than five percent. MORGAN asked so lighting can be at 105 percent of standards. Haworth replied correct. MORGAN asked would all the trees along the border be maintained. Sawin replied we are proposing to retain trees where possible. We will walk the perimeter with an arborist and look at trees on an individual basis, so we can't be sure right now which trees will remain. MORGAN added this is a significant piece of the proposal. He also noted on the east, south, and west elevation views, there seems to be a lot of somewhat blank, grey metal panels. Davis replied the grey actually is not a dull grey, but rather is light silver with almost a sparkle.

PRICE asked about future growth, what it would look like and how it would be done. Davis replied we have included plans for temporary buildings if they become necessary, and future permanent buildings as well. He showed on a diagram where classroom wings could be expanded. There are no plans to expand vertically, he added, because the cost would be prohibitive. PRICE asked does this represent full build-out or phase one. Sawin said this is the plan for 550 students at the elementary school and 1,400 students at the high school. The expansion plan, using portables and/or adding wings to existing buildings, could raise that to 2,500 total students on site, plus additional parking.

PRICE asked is the stadium just a field surrounded by a track, or does it also include seating. Sawin replied structured seating is proposed on both sides of the field, and showed it on a diagram. He explained the constraints of placing the sports field on the site. The plan combines other sports-related elements like locker rooms and sports equipment storage with the high school itself. PRICE asked is it possible that the softball and baseball fields could be combined somehow. Davis replied no, and gave the dimensions each field requires. The two sports have different distances between plates, from the pitching mound to home plate, and so on.

SANFORD said he would like to follow up on the question of combining the softball and baseball fields. He noted there appears to be a lot of real estate between the fields and SE 228th, and asked could they be shifted closer to 228th. Sawin explain how the grading conditions pose issues for shifting the fields, and would result in retaining walls that would need to be much higher. Davis said we didn't want a hallway-like feeling there, but rather more of a park-like feel, which was also a big driver in where the fields are sited. Sawin showed where a berm will be

installed between the school property and Providence Point, which will provide a greater buffer there than now exists. SANFORD asked on the FAR issue, would reconfiguring the elementary school playground, shown in grey on the diagram, as a performing-arts type space help in the FAR calculation. Sawin replied no. The FAR calculation allows us to remove outdoor areas from FAR, so the elementary school playground has been removed from the FAR calculation.

SHORE asked do school sites generally have FAR issues. Sawin replied schools are usually exempt from having to meet FAR requirements. The City's FAR requirements are relatively new, and it is not surprising to us that there are some challenges in meeting this relatively new code requirement. SHORE referred to the use of MSE walls in the design, and asked did you consider any other types of walls to minimize tree removal. Sawin replied the plan has a number of walls onsite. We are proposing MSE walls next to SE 228th, as well as a lot of other fill-type walls and eliminating cut walls as much as possible. We tried to make fill walls fit the site wherever possible.

SHORE asked the applicant team to comment about noise, especially from the sports field. Davis said we have looked at it extensively, and tried to lower the grade of the field to mitigate sound. We also looked at enclosing the back of the bleachers and how best to aim the intercom. The use of berming and landscaping will have some impact, he continued, but to be honest it is probably not going to be as much as we hoped. Davis added any sound walls would have to be very tall. Any barrier dissipates sound, he added, but the noise reduction of the berms will be somewhat small. Sawin added the sound system will be directed toward SE 228th and away from the neighborhood.

SHORE asked whether the pandemic has played any part in the design development. Mullins replied no, there is nothing specific in the design that addresses the pandemic, other than some internal plexiglass shields at the reception desk and things like that. Changing the design of the schools may not be as big of a concern in two years, he continued, and whatever steps are taken would have to be applied to all our existing schools.

SCHULTE asked the applicant to indicate on the diagram where portables would be located. Sawin noted to get to the 0.75 FAR requirement, an additional 400,000 square feet of building would have to be added. SCHULTE asked would the temporary portables mimic the larger buildings in terms of materials, colors, and so on. Sawin replied we have looked at locations but not at the details of what they would look like. Davis added portables are a short-term solution and not meant to be long term, but painting them is always possible.

SCHULTE asked whether the team looked at possibly stepping down the larger baseball field by a foot or so and shifting it to the left. Sawin replied there is about a 30-inch difference between the two fields now. We can take another look, but moving it means more dirt has to be exported from the site.

SCHULTE asked is the color scheme still a work in progress. Davis replied yes. The elevation views don't really reflect textures or reflected light, he said. Our objective is to reflect the forest in both color choices and verticality, but our selections are not set in stone at this point. SCHULTE asked will the Development Commission have a more in-depth look at the proposed building colors and materials. Haworth replied yes, as part of the full MSP and SDP review process. Sloman said that is correct, but the level of review for buildings in this part of the City may not be at the standard the Development Commission has seen for buildings in other parts of the City.

SCHULTE asked whether the applicant team has looked at all opportunities to provide terraced walls. Sawin replied yes, and explained why landscaping there doesn't make sense. He showed

the two areas where additional input would be appreciated. SCHULTE added a lot will be known after walking the perimeter with an arborist. Sawin agreed. He said we have done that twice already but we don't have any clear direction yet.

MORGAN asked about site drainage to the east, specifically whether that portion drains to Laughing Jacob's Creek. Sawin replied yes; drainage on the portion of the site that would naturally drain east would drain to Laughing Jacob's Creek, and to the west to Lake Sammamish. He described how the site drains now, and how it will drain in the proposed plan. Under the new plan, the site would primarily drain to SE 228th and the amount of flow going into the Providence Point system would be reduced.

BRENNAN asked was any consideration given to providing parking under the athletic field and shifting the ballfields to the east, away from the neighborhoods. Sawin replied yes, options were discussed, including putting parking under the tennis courts or the sports fields, but the economic cost of doing so would be pretty steep. Putting other uses on top of parking structures drives the cost way up, and there was some concern about the fields perhaps not standing up well in the long-term. Structured parking made more sense than other options, he concluded. Davis added safety and security issues, including supervision of the parking facility, were also big considerations.

SOWA asked Commissioners for any final comments. All Commissioners thanked staff, the applicant, and particularly the public for participating in the discussion.

MORGAN encouraged the applicant to maintain forestation as much as possible, and to put special attention on the view of the facility from SE 228th. He said it is important to consider the view of the property for people driving past there on 228th.

BRENNAN encouraged preservation of existing vegetation and trees along the perimeter of the site. He expressed concern about the large blank walls shown in the design and the 12-15 foot high retaining walls, particularly for the pedestrian environment there. He encouraged the applicant to find ways to soften the frontage, break up tiered walls with vegetation, add architectural interest, and take a look at creating a buffer between the pedestrian environment and the road itself.

PRICE asked the applicant to make sure they understand their responsibility to the neighboring retirement community, particularly in terms of impact from noise, light, glare, traffic safety, and so on. He said those are issues with siting any school, but it is an even finer point for these retirement communities, and how they are addressed by the applicant will be of significant importance to the Development Commission and the community.

SANFORD asked the applicant to reconsider any other approach that would allow the softball and baseball fields to be combined in any way, which in turn would allow retention of more trees.

SHORE asked the applicant to place emphasis on the environmental impacts of the project, including tree retention, stormwater treatment, and the impact of noise, traffic, and lighting to the neighboring community.

SCHULTE said he would like to see 3-D views of the proposed site design in future presentations by the applicant, particularly along SE 228th. He said he would like to see more details and views on how pinch points on the property will be treated, and for the applicant to consider whether shifting the baseball and softball fields two or three feet might possibly save

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trees. He also said a public comment was made about outdoor learning spaces, and he would appreciate hearing more on that as well.

SOWA outlined the next steps in the process, including how additional public comment can be submitted and how to receive a copy of the project summary and forthcoming Staff Report.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to conduct, SOWA adjourned the meeting at 9:09 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Lowe
Recording Secretary

NOTE: Due to the Governor's Proclamation 20-28 related to the COVID-19 emergency and open public meetings, this meeting was held remotely. Participation and listening options were provided in the meeting agenda.