

**CITY OF ISSAQUAH**  
**Development Commission**  
**SPECIAL MEETING**  
**MINUTES**

7:30 PM  
 May 19, 2021

Virtual Meeting

**COMMISSION AND ADMINISTRATIVE PERSONNEL PRESENT**

*Alternate Meeting Format: On March 6, 2020 the Mayor declared a civil emergency due to the outbreak of novel coronavirus (COVID-19). On March 24, 2020 the Governor issued Proclamation 20-28 relating to the COVID-19 emergency and open public meetings. The proclamation has been extended. Due to these factors, the meeting was held using a remote meeting platform.*

*Commissioners Present:*

Michael Brennan  
 Richard Sanford  
 Richard Sowa  
 Patty Dillon  
 Kevin Price  
 Arthur Schulte  
 Jon Ikeda, Alternate (non-voting)  
 Melvin Morgan Jr., Alternate (non-voting)

*Administration/Staff:*

Lucy Sloman, Land Development Mgr.  
 Holly Keeton, Senior Planner  
 Minnie Dhaliwal, Director, CD&P

*Applicant Team:*

Leo Suver, Steve Burnstead Construction

*Commissioners Not Present:*

Brooke Shore

**CALL TO ORDER**

SOWA, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:38 PM.

**AGENDA ITEM(S)**

a) **Officer Elections, (A)**

*Presented by:*

*Lucy Sloman, Land Development Manager*

SOWA explained the process to be followed for electing officers. He called for nominations for Chair. SANFORD nominated BRENNAN as Chair. There were no other nominations. BRENNAN is confirmed as Chair.

BRENNAN asked for nominations for Vice Chair. SOWA nominated PRICE as Vice Chair. PRICE nominated SANFORD as Vice Chair; SANFORD declined the nomination. There were no other nominations. PRICE is confirmed as Vice Chair.

b) **Community Conference: Firs at Talus Plat, (I)**

Project Location: 7303 Renton-Issaquah Rd SE

File Number(s): COM21-00001, NM21-00003, PRJ21-00005, PP21-00001,  
 SEP21-00004

*Presented by:*

*Holly Keeton, Senior Planner*

*Leo Suver, Steve Burnstead Construction*

**Staff Presentation**

BRENNAN explained the process to be followed for a Community Conference. Keeton made staff's presentation, beginning with how Commissioners and the public can participate in the

meeting tonight. She explained the purpose of a Community Conference; gave an overview of the site; provided background and history on the project; and described future permit and processing requirements. She explained the review process, including the development standards initial review, particularly stormwater drainage. She concluded her presentation with the review process leading to a recommendation by the Development Commission to the Hearing Examiner, the decision-maker for this project, and next steps.

### Applicant Presentation

Suver made the applicant's presentation. He displayed an aerial view of the site, including the proximity of existing homes. He showed where there is at least 250 feet between the closest existing retaining wall at Talus and the nearest element of the proposed project. He continued his presentation with a description of the wetlands and streams on the site, including buffers. He described the tree retention plan, noting that about 20-25 percent of trees on the developable area of the property will be retained. The majority are along SR-900, plus there is a significant vegetated buffer to be retained between this development and the existing Talus development. He showed where steep slopes are located on the site.

He continued with a description of access to the development from SR-900, and said one option is to use a woonerf there; we are working with staff on that. He described how sewer, water, and utilities will be provided. He said parking is proposed as allowing two parking spaces for each residence in garages, plus 12 additional parking spaces for guests scattered throughout the site. He indicated where a large open space adjacent to SR-900 is proposed, and said we are working with staff and the community on a possible trail connection there.

He summarized the proposed townhomes as being three bedrooms/two bathrooms/about 2,000 square feet. Each lot will have a separate sewer, storm, and water connection. Two detention vaults are proposed to detain and provide phosphorus treatment and will discharge to the existing storm system in SR-900. Due to site constraints, he continued, using stormwater BMPs (Best Management Practices) are not proposed. The proposed sewer will also connect to the existing sewer in SR-900 and the proposed water system will connect to the existing water in the Forest Heights development in Talus. No additional frontage improvements are proposed beyond a new driveway approach off SR-900. The design includes two vaults under the roadway that would also be used for additional guest parking. It is designed to retain all impervious surface runoff from the site, which is then treated and filtered to bring water quality into line with City standards. BMP is not an option on this site.

### Commissioner Questions

PRICE asked the applicant to explain where retaining walls would occur. Suver said as you enter the site, retaining walls are required on either side of the roadway. Some will be cut and some will be fill, up to the first building site. He described how the walls would appear to someone entering the site. Above the buffer, he continued, a retaining wall will span the length of the alley, ranging from 2 to 10 feet in height. At the top of the site, about ten feet of retaining wall will serve to limit impacts to the surrounding buffer area. The design also calls for smaller retaining walls at the top of the site, 2 to 6 feet in height; some will be the backyards of residences.

DILLON asked for clarification of the maximum density per acre. Keeton replied the previous project under the original development agreement was vested at 1.24 dwelling units per acre, so that level of development is allowed to move forward as long as the project aligns with what was in the development agreement.

MORGAN asked for clarification of the height of the proposed retaining walls. He noted the geotechnical report stated that walls would be up to 18 feet near Lot 7. Suver said he is not aware of any proposed retaining walls on this project over ten feet.

#### Public Comments, Questions

David Kappler showed where the 18-foot figure for retaining walls came from and said it may be an error. He said a 100-foot setback makes the site quieter and less visible to the public, and overall makes it a better place to live. He spoke in favor of the significant horizontal and vertical separation between the proposed site and existing Talus development. He continued trails here are important for the community and said the exact location will probably have to be worked out with the Homeowners Association (HOA). He said he hopes a lot of care and attention is being paid to the driveway access to SR-900, which will be used by school buses, bicyclists, and pedestrians. He said he has already spoken about donating trees to the project that Mountains to Sound Greenway (MTSG) is doing. He said he encourages the City Parks Department, City staff, and the developer to work together on figuring out a trail that will work to benefit everybody, with low environmental impact and low maintenance needs.

Connie Marsh said the MTSG tree reuse project has been characterized as mitigation; I don't agree that it is mitigation, but it is goodwill, and that can be an amazing thing in a community, she said. She spoke to the forested buffer that was originally required at Talus, and asked in the new standards, is that considered a developable area. If not, then the tree retention figure sounds low. She also said the applicant said the "flat space" could be used as a community/public area, but the area doesn't seem functional because it is a long way from where people would be living. She said some kind of recreational space is needed. She said she didn't see a cut-and-fill map in the materials, and she would also like to see more information about staging and moving dirt into and out of the site. She continued with her observations about difficulties getting in and out of SR-900 and said the plan needs to account for how people can turn left if only a right-hand turn is allowed. She asked about maintenance of the retaining wall, and urged the applicant to think about sound and noise in the project design. She concluded that the applicant should perform outreach and communication with people up-slope about noise from the development.

#### Commission Comments

SANFORD asked the applicant to show setbacks for lots 19-24 and where steep slopes are located on the site diagram. Suver also explained where areas most proximal to wetlands are located.

SCHULTE asked the applicant to address fire department access. Suver explained that the grades and turning radius for emergency vehicles have been designed to City standards. He continued we are proposing a 50-percent road grade, which is allowable. We are still discussing maintenance vehicle issues with the City. SCHULTE asked for clarification of how the woonerf would function at this site. Suver replied the woonerf would span from near the entry all the way up the main road. The proposed road option would require us to seek a modification of standards, and a woonerf option would not. We are still working with staff on how best to address the main road going into the site. SCHULTE said he would encourage the design to focus on safe access for pedestrians and bicyclists and on safety features. Sloman agreed, and said Eastside Fire and Rescue will be reviewing the plans to be sure it meets all their standards.

PRICE asked the applicant to describe a "woonerf" and how it might apply to this site. Suver gave a definition and noted that woonerf standards exist in the Talus Development Agreement.

Keeton clarified that the number of units to be developed is 24, at a rate of 1.24 dwelling units per acre. MORGAN noted the applicant said 21 percent of trees will be retained, and the staff report says 30 percent of significant trees. Keeton replied the proposal is still being reviewed and that has not yet been clarified. SANFORD asked does one of the tree retention numbers refer to the total number of trees to be retained and the other to the caliber of trees to be retained. Keeton replied staff will address the tree retention issue in the Staff Response Memo.

IKEDA asked for clarification of the retaining walls at the toe cut, specifically where they will drain. Suver replied all retaining walls will have a drainage system. All detention will be located well downhill where we can capture and collect any groundwater that comes through either the primary or secondary vaults, where it will join the main drainage system.

BRENNAN asked about work on establishing trail connections. Suver said we have had some offline discussions with Mr. Kappler and other interested citizens about potential locations. Some of the initial reactions and suggestions have proven to be quite steep, he continued. BRENNAN asked will decisions in the works now on changes to wetland buffers be made in time to apply to this project. Keeton replied Title 18 is being updated in 2021, and will likely take the better part of one or two years to complete. The amendments being made to critical areas are based on Ecology's recommendations and best practices, and we know what those will be. She continued we have explained the options to the applicant, and they have indicated they may need to apply for a variance.

BRENNAN asked will the road be maintained as a public or private road. Suver replied it will be a private road. BRENNAN said where the roadway connects to SR-900, the condition of the road is fairly steep. Will it flatten out at the bottom, he asked. Suver replied yes; it does flatten out at the bottom; the steeper area is nearer the top of the site. Sloman noted City standards for private roads are the same as for public roads.

PRICE asked about maintenance of retaining walls and roads. Suver said the development will have a HOA formed prior to sale of any units. The HOA will arrange for road and wall maintenance. PRICE asked about potential conflicts with the sight triangles at the SR-900 connection point. Suver said a sight distance review is part of the review we do with City staff, and will be addressed by our consultants with them.

BRENNAN asked for any general observations or comments. MORGAN said he appreciates all the work going into this project. He said if the option of a woonerf came up, he would favor the way it is designed now rather than designing it with a woonerf. BRENNAN noted it is a tricky site in terms of its ability to be developed, and he appreciates the efforts so far to accommodate the challenges of the site.

#### **OTHER BUSINESS / ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Sloman explained the business expected to come to the Commission in the coming months, both permits that have been submitted and/or are in process, and the Title 18 update process. The next DC meeting is scheduled for 7:00 PM on June 2, 2021.

BRENNAN welcomed new regular member DILLON and alternate member IKEDA to the Commission.

Keeton said comments from the public and Commissioners on the project discussed tonight will be summarized and provided to property owners and other interested parties of record.

Dhaliwal commented that staff may propose that the Development Commission schedule some joint meetings with PPC in the coming months to review the City's work on updating Title 18, depending on Commissioners' availability and interest.

**ADJOURNMENT**

With no further business to conduct, the meeting was adjourned at 9:05 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Lowe  
Recording Secretary