

Economic Vitality Commission
5-17-17

**CITY OF ISSAQUAH
Economic Vitality Commission
SUMMARY MINUTES**

May 17, 2017

City Administrative Offices
Pickering Room

1775 12th Avenue NW
Issaquah, WA 98027

<p>MEMBERS PRESENT Karl Leigh, Chair Kristi Tripple, Vice Chair Amit Bhardwaj Therese Garcia Jeff Howlett Laura Milikan Saikat Sen Ethan Stiles Lincoln Vander Veen</p>	<p>STAFF PRESENT Jen Davis Hayes, Economic Development Manager Keith Niven, Econ. Dev. & Dev. Svcs. Director David Favour, Project Manager</p>
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CALL TO ORDER

LEIGH, Chair, called the meeting to order at 5:35 PM.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOVED BY TRIPPLE, SECONDED BY VANDER VEEN that minutes of the Economic Vitality Commission meeting on February 15, 2017 be approved as presented. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

MOVED BY TRIPPLE, SECONDED BY VANDER VEEN that minutes of the Economic Vitality Commission meeting on March 15, 2017 be approved as presented. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

MOVED BY TRIPPLE, SECONDED BY VANDER VEEN that minutes of the Economic Vitality Commission meeting on April 19, 2017 be approved as presented. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

WELCOME/INTRODUCTIONS

Davis Hayes noted that DOKE has resigned due to work conflicts. She continued Kathy McCorry will be his replacement, pending confirmation of the appointment in the next few weeks by the Council. Staff facilitated introductions of new members BHARDWAJ, GARCIA, SEN, and VANDER VEEN to the other members of the Economic Vitality Commission.

OLDE TOWN PLAN UPDATE

Favour made staff's presentation. He gave some background on the Olde Town Subarea Plan, including a "condensed version" of the presentation recently given to Council. He discussed the purpose of undertaking the update to the Olde Town Subarea Plan; the geographical boundaries of Olde Town; why an update to the original Plan developed in 1999 is being done now; and the timeline of activity on the Olde Town Subarea Plan Update from 2014 to 2017, including projected adoption of Olde Town Design Standards in 2018.

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He discussed public outreach on the Update, including an online survey in March and April 2017 on Olde Town, including Sunset and Front Street, and perceptions about traffic. He continued with a summary of the public input results, specifically the respondents' perceptions of challenges facing Olde Town; what respondents like about Olde Town; and what respondents would like to see in terms of a vision for Olde Town.

He continued with the recommendations the Administration will be presenting to Council. They include: a change in Olde Town's boundary, specifically removing a portion of what has been included in Olde Town that incorporates Confluence Park. He noted that the Policy Planning Commission (PPC) did not favor that recommendation in its recent deliberations of the Update. Davis Hayes added if that parcel goes to the Central Issaquah Plan (CIP) area instead of Olde Town, it will be part of the gateway to the City as people exit I-90. STILES asked so taking it out of Olde Town makes it become part of central Issaquah. Davis Hayes replied yes. STILES asked so the height requirements of central Issaquah would apply. Davis Hayes replied yes, although the height allowance might not be significantly different from Olde Town. Niven said the question seems to be where the transition point is, or should be; and it seemed to the ad hoc committee studying Olde Town that the Creek seems like a natural break. He discussed options for defining a gateway at Front and Gilman, and said part of the problem is we don't know how the potential realignment with I-90 may change that intersection. STILES said his concern is that keeping it in Olde Town could further inhibit the traffic flow through the City, and added it's a little odd that the boundary might start from a point other than an intersection.

SEN asked why this is under discussion. Favour said the City is looking at development options for those underutilized parcels, and part of what we are doing is to look at whether there is an advantage to those parcels being part of central Issaquah rather than Olde Town in terms of economic opportunity. He continued some people are concerned about four-story buildings being allowed on Front Street, and Olde Town is more likely to have more restrictive standards than central Issaquah.


He continued his presentation on the vision for Front Street, noting the recent closure of Front Street Market in the last few days, which has been a fairly large tenant for Front Street. He noted that changes would be implemented through a revised design standards document, accompanied by changes in the City's code.

SEN asked why not modernize Olde Town a little. He said it's possible to keep the character but also modernize. Favour referred to the results of citizen surveys, and said many respondents have indicated they like the look of the Library as a mix of modern and historic.


Davis Hayes gave some background on the City's choice to focus growth, thereby protecting both the historic downtown and the hillsides. The Commissioners discussed the City's height restrictions and where the City is trying to encourage density. VANDER VEEN expressed his view that there isn't much activity downtown during the week, but there would be more activity if more people were living downtown. Niven discussed potential redevelopment opportunities on Front Street, including the Staples site and now, the Front Street Market site. He said right now, Front Street is mostly services and restaurants, and would be more successful if it had more retail. GARCIA asked if I was a developer, what would incentivize me to build in Olde Town if there were more obstacles to doing so. Are the businesses there satisfied, she asked. Niven said we can have the Downtown Issaquah Association (DIA) Executive Director speak to you about that, but his sense is that yes, they are.

SEN said he has heard comments that Issaquah lacks nightlife. Other Commissioners agreed. Davis Hayes said one challenge is finding adequate space for events that would appeal to, say, teens and young adults. She said the Commission will be discussing this in more detail in future meetings. LEIGH suggested that staff schedule some discussions with EVC on the CIP and other significant plans that are affecting the City. Davis Hayes agreed.

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Olde Town Subarea Plan Update



Olde Town Subarea Plan Update

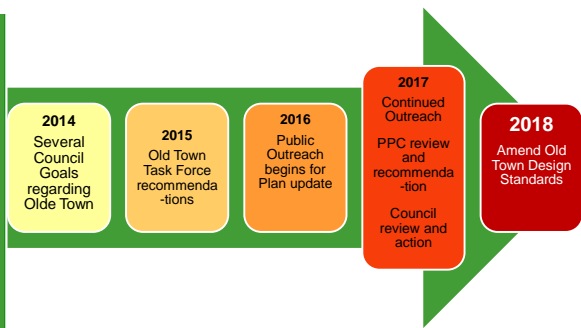
City Council Work Session
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Process Timeline

Olde Town Subarea Plan Update




- 2014** Several Council Goals regarding Olde Town
- 2015** Old Town Task Force recommendations
- 2016** Public Outreach begins for Plan update
- 2017** Continued Outreach
PPC review and recommendation
Council review and action
- 2018** Amend Old Town Design Standards

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Subarea Planning

- What?
- Why?



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Public Outreach

Olde Town Subarea Plan Update

- 2015: Old Town Vitality Task Force process
 - Multiple meetings (about 12)
 - Council Walking Tour and Presentation
- 2016: Front Street Streetscape Plan process
 - Several Open Houses and Two Surveys
- May 25, 2016: Open House
- November 16, 2016: Open House
- March 28, 2017: Senior Center
- March 29, 2017: Brew House
- March – April, 2017: On-line Survey, Paper surveys distributed throughout Olde Town

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CITY OF ISSAQUAH WASHINGTON

Public Input Results

Olde Town Subarea Plan Update

- ❑ Challenges? Barriers to commercial development • Traffic • Large scale residential development • Parking • Pedestrian & Bike gaps
- ❑ What do you like? Small scale historic • Quiet neighborhoods • Walkable
- ❑ Vision? Preserve the historic scale and character of the commercial and residential areas of Olde Town while increasing the vitality. (Same as 1999)

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CITY OF ISSAQUAH WASHINGTON

Front Street: Building Scale & Character

Olde Town Subarea Plan Update

Vision: Maintain the traditional character and scale of the CBD while allowing it to grow and evolve.

- Increase height from 45 to 50 feet to allow 4 stories
- Keep step back above 2nd floor to maintain pedestrian character at the street



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CITY OF ISSAQUAH WASHINGTON

Boundary Map

Olde Town Subarea Plan Update



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CITY OF ISSAQUAH WASHINGTON

Front Street: Building Scale & Character

Olde Town Subarea Plan Update

Vision: Maintain the traditional character and scale of the CBD while allowing it to grow and evolve.

- Change to greenery from impervious requirement
- Standards may supersede on-site stormwater LID
- Update Standards to support traditional main street character



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MORATORIUM ITEM UPDATES: Topics Updates/Status

Davis Hayes discussed the five topics identified by Council to be examined during the moratorium (architectural review/urban design, vertical mixed use, affordable housing, parking, and district visions). Niven gave an update on the consultant’s work to date on architectural review/urban design standards, and said the consultant is working closely with the Development Commission. Guidelines have not yet been drafted, but are expected to be presented to the Development Commission in July, and a completed set of draft guidelines done by August. He

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described the specific issues, including those that surfaced after the recently completed Atlas Apartments that led to the Council's concern about architectural fit/urban design.

STILES asked whether the development community will have any input into the design standards. Niven said unlike the urban villages, which utilize a master developer to enforce standards, developers in central Issaquah will work directly with City code. He continued it does seem reasonable that the City would want to stress test the standards with developers to get their reaction. TRIPPLE noted having clear standards can be a source of predictability for developers and they are likely to appreciate having clear standards.

SEN asked about providing input into the process. Niven discussed why the Development Commission is the right commission to take the lead on the architectural fit/urban design standards, but said EVC is welcome to attend their meetings and also watch their televised meetings. SEN asked whether public input is being sought, noting that the objections raised about the Atlas Apartments that Niven cited earlier came from the public, not from the consultants. Niven said it's a good point, but people will have their own preferences. He said while he doesn't disagree with SEN, public opportunities for comment already exist and the process is scheduled to be done in August.

Davis Hayes made staff's presentation on the Council's concern over the lack of vertical mixed use taking place. She said the City is looking for additional resources to hire a consultant to look at not just vertical mixed use but all the components that are necessary for its creation. The issue will be discussed with the Council's Land & Shore Committee on June 1 and by Council on June 5, and if approved, we will move forward with bringing in a consultant.

Davis Hayes thanked participants for coming to the Joint Committee on Housing Strategy last week, and said that work is projected to be complete in September. The Joint Committee is meeting again on May 25. She described projects the City is considering, including looking at making ADUs less onerous to build and a MFTE (multi-family tax exemption) pilot project. She continued the Council was concerned when they looked at the Central Issaquah Plan's four-year report card, and saw that zero affordable housing units had been built.

Niven made staff's presentation on the parking issue within the moratorium. He described it as a two-pronged issue: are the City's parking standards too low, and should structured parking be required to meet all or a portion of parking minimums. He referred to the Atlas Apartments as an example of people using adjacent streets and the nearby Safeway parking lot for parking, in patterns that did not exist before the apartments were built. He said a consultant was hired to study the issue and concluded that the Atlas Apartments are "right parked." However, he continued, the City Council needs to have policy discussions about parking enforcement, limited time zones for parking, residents-only parking zones, and so on.

TRIPPLE noted an important conversation will be whether to mandate structured parking. She said developers note that street parking is free now, and are not inclined to build a parking structure for which they will have to charge a monthly parking fee when free parking is available. Niven agreed that those kinds of policy discussions are necessary, and said while every city's situation is different, we are watching Federal Way carefully now as it grapples with solutions to its parking problems.

Davis Hayes gave details about work done to date on district visions for the ten Issaquah districts, and displayed a vision statement for each. She said staff is doing public outreach meetings now to determine whether these visions still make sense, and to help define the

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districts. That work is expected to be completed by year end. STILES asked why the Council chose this work as part of the moratorium. Davis Hayes said the Council looked at the results of development in the Western Gateway district, and didn't feel it was in keeping with the vision for that district. She noted the other districts are not yet built out. After the visions are well defined, the next step will be to focus on getting better tools to achieve those visions. TRIPPLE noted she recently participated in an open house and in a business focus group on the vision for the Western Gateway district. She added this is a huge work program to be done in a very condensed time frame, and it will be difficult to balance all the multiple goals, public process, and dynamics that will be required.

HOWLETT asked when the moratorium is likely to be lifted. Niven explained how the state statutes apply to moratoriums for jurisdictions, and the City Council's options for lifting and/or extending the moratorium. TRIPPLE commented that development tends to occur in cycles, and there is always the risk that a community can miss a cycle if a moratorium is in place. She continued for a developer, the general rule of thumb is that it takes five years of recovery for every six months that a jurisdiction has a moratorium in place. Multi-family housing is estimated to take five years from acquiring the property to the permit process, and the delays created by a moratorium can increase development costs by 45 percent. Those costs are in turn passed on to the consumer, she noted, so a moratorium really has a huge impact on developers. LEIGH said it is in the City's best interest to see the moratorium lifted by September rather than extending it, and suggested to staff that they make that point to Council on behalf of the EVC.

Upcoming Opportunities for Engagement

Niven said the consultant will submit a draft of their proposed architectural standards/urban design standards to the Development Commission in July, and EVC members are encouraged to attend the meeting and/or watch the videotape of the meeting. Davis Hayes said staff will be bringing specific points to the EVC for feedback.

TRANSPORTATION UPDATE

Niven discussed upcoming transportation projects, including:

- WSDOT's project to replace a culvert north of I-90, which will require closing East Lake Sammamish Blvd. from June 13-19.
- Eighteen (18) month closure of the intersection at 4th and 62nd, and the impact on surrounding businesses.
- The current closure of 221st to through-traffic, and how businesses are being affected.
- Two roundabouts to be installed this summer, one at the Gateway Apartments location and one at 7th and Newport.
- A roundabout to be installed this fall near Target on Maple Street.
- Flashing beacons to be added outside the other City Hall building on 2nd Avenue in mid-summer.

HOWLETT asked what kind of public outreach is being done about these projects, which will impact residents' commutes and traffic patterns as well as businesses. Niven gave examples of how the City will try to get the message out, and said we recognize that sometimes just knowing in advance is helpful. STILES referred to a small overhead sign in the Highlands that gives a "heads up" about traffic conditions, and said maybe something similar can be done elsewhere.

LEIGH asked whether there has been any discussion of improvements on the northeast side of the transit park-and-ride in the Highlands. Niven said it was not included in the City's recent pedestrian study, and he is not aware of any immediate plans there.

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ELECTION OF OFFICERS

LEIGH and TRIPPLE both indicated they would like to remain on the Commission but not as Chair and/or Vice Chair for the coming term. LEIGH opened the meeting for nominations.

MOVED BY TRIPPLE, SECONDED BY LEIGH that STILES be nominated as Chair.

MOVED BY LEIGH, SECONDED BY MILIKAN that HOWLETT be nominated as Vice Chair.

Hearing no additional nominations, LEIGH closed the meeting for further nominations.

MOVED BY UNANIMOUS VOTE OF ALL COMMISSIONERS PRESENT that STILES be elected Chair of the Economic Vitality Commission.

MOVED BY UNANIMOUS VOTE OF ALL COMMISSIONERS PRESENT that HOWLETT be elected Vice Chair of the Economic Vitality Commission.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Justin Sen, audience member, said he questions whether it is worth preserving the historic part of downtown Issaquah if it is, in fact, standing in the way of progress. He said he doesn't understand why the City should go to such great lengths to preserve something that seems to be more trouble than it is worth.

OTHER/NEXT MEETING/ADJOURNMENT

Niven noted interviews are taking place this week for the Economic Development Manager position vacated by Andrea Snyder.

Davis Hayes noted that the Association of Volleyball Professionals will be holding their third volleyball festival from June 22-25 at Lake Sammamish State Park.

Davis Hayes noted that EVC will meet with the Planning Policy Commission and Human Services Commission again on May 25, from 6-8 PM, to continue discussion of the City's housing strategy.

The next EVC meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, June 21, 2017. With no further business to conduct, LEIGH adjourned the meeting at 7:38 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Lowe
Recording Secretary

These minutes are a brief summary of the Economic Vitality Commission meeting. For more information or clarification, please contact the Economic Development Department at 425-837-3444.