

**CITY OF ISSAQUAH
Economic Vitality Commission**

5:30 PM
October 16, 2019

MINUTES

Pickering Room
1775 12th Ave. NW

COMMISSION AND ADMINISTRATIVE PERSONNEL PRESENT

Commissioners Present:

Therese Garcia, Chair
Kathy McCorry
Ashwin Muthuvenkataraman
Tom Rogers
Saikat Sen
Kristi Tripple

Administration/Staff:

Christopher Wright, Economic Dev. Mgr.
Tim Dutter, Economic Dev. Mgr.

Commissioners Not Present (Excused):

Christopher Beaudoin, Vice Chair
Pavel Aprikian
Amit Bhardwaj

CALL TO ORDER

GARCIA called the meeting to order at 5:42 PM.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOVED BY TRIPPLE, SECONDED BY McCORRY that minutes of the Economic Vitality Commission meeting on August 21, 2019 be approved as presented. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY, 6-0.

AGENDA ITEMS

a) REVIEW AMENDMENTS TO OLDE TOWN CODE, (D)

Presented by:

Christopher Wright, Economic Development Manager

Wright gave some background on the proposed amendments to the Olde Town Subarea Plan, which will be considered by Council later this year.

TRIPPLE said she was aware of some of the public comments offered at the Planning Policy Commission's public hearings on these amendments, and asked have any of the property owners who commented been contacted by the City. Wright replied yes, staff has met with most if not all of them, and has answered their questions about how the code amendments would affect them.

Wright continued his presentation with some background on the Olde Town Subarea Plan, including the adopted Action Plan, of which the proposed amendments under discussion tonight are part of the Immediate Actions. He described the proposed code amendments, as summarized in the agenda packet on page 9 of 39. He also commented on the purpose of the code amendments, including the public process that was undertaken by the City to update the Olde Town Subarea Plan.

Wright described the discussion that has taken place at PPC to allow (1) just retail or (2) retail and commercial/office on the ground floor of new or renovated properties on Front Street. The Commission discussed the advantages of having retail and commercial rather than just limiting it to retail only. McCORRY spoke in favor of having a balance so that businesses such as

restaurants can get business during the day as well as in the evening and on weekends. Others agreed that allowing both retail and commercial seems to be a better option.

The Commission also discussed the proposed amendments allowing small-scale, stand-alone retail use on East Sunset Way only up to 4,000 gross square feet; removing Olde Town parcels as Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) receiving sites; and developing incentives to reduce parking requirements for neighborhood-oriented commercial projects.

Wright explained how the proposed parking requirements would apply for a change in use for an existing building. The Commission discussed both existing and hypothetical examples, including how shared parking could apply.

Wright said PPC recommended approval of the packet of proposed code amendments, and noted that the Council could elect to consider the amendments separately or as a group. He asked whether EVC members would like to write a letter in support of the code amendments, and members indicated yes. Wright suggested that staff draft the letter for EVC's review and consideration at the November 20 meeting. The Commissioners agreed with this approach.

b) DEVELOP OUTDOOR RECREATION FORUM, (D)

Presented by:

Tim Dutter, Economic Development Manager

Dutter presented information about the Outdoor Recreation Forum held several years ago. He said \$750 in grant funds from the Port of Seattle is available until the end of October for the City to arrange another Outdoor Recreation Forum. He posed several questions for discussion by EVC about such a forum, including the appropriate venue; who should be invited; how to grow businesses in this sector; how the City can help with that effort; and marketing ideas. He said he will forward the list of potential businesses to participate in the forum to EVC members, and asked them to email him with names of any others for the list as well as any ideas for the forum.

NEW BUSINESS

Dutter presented highlights from the "Visit Issaquah" survey, including the survey purpose; methodology; and key findings. He will forward the complete survey findings to EVC members.

McCORRY noted that survey respondents indicated they visit Issaquah for the unique experiences they can find in Issaquah and not elsewhere, such as the Village Theater, restaurants, Front Street, shopping at Gilman Village, and so on. Of the primary reasons respondents gave for visiting Issaquah, she continued, dining out was the highest, which is an interesting finding. Shopping and stopping on the way to another destination were also frequently given responses, she said, whereas outdoor activities was further down the list. She added outdoor recreation is largely more important to residents rather than to visitors. GARCIA asked what outdoor recreation opportunities are unique to Issaquah. Commissioners agreed that the paragliding center is unique, but that many other neighboring jurisdictions offer opportunities to hike or mountain bike. McCORRY added this survey was geared to visitors, rather than residents.

The Commissioners briefly discussed how Issaquah could differentiate itself from other jurisdictions in terms of outdoor recreation. TRIPPLE suggested that participants in the Outdoor

Recreation Forum could ask their customers what they think is unique about recreation in Issaquah, what gear they are interested in buying, and so on. Staff made a note of it.

SEN added Lake Sammamish State Park also adds to the unique recreational opportunities in Issaquah. McCORRY and others said it would be great if destination-type amenities, such as restaurants, that would draw people to the area could be outsourced by the state at Lake Sammamish State Park.

AUDIENCE COMMENTS

None.

OTHER BUSINESS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

a) Project and Event updates: TRIPPLE noted today is National Support your Local Chamber of Commerce Day. The Commissioners also discussed last weekend's Salmon Days event, which was very successful and drew a much larger audience than anticipated.

b) Creative District Certification application: Wright said staff is still pulling together a Creative District Certification application for submittal to the state in early 2020. He said we are gathering letters of support from the community, and suggested that EVC might want to include a letter as part of that effort. The Commissioners agreed. Wright said staff will draft such a letter for review by the Commission at its November 20 meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

The next meeting is currently scheduled for November 20, 2019 at 5:30 PM in the Pickering Room, City Hall NW. With no additional business to discuss, GARCIA adjourned the meeting at 6:53 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Lowe
Recording Secretary