

CITY OF ISSAQUAH
Economic Vitality Commission

6:00 PM
 November 15, 2023

MINUTES

Tibbetts Manor, 750 17th Ave.
 NW, Issaquah

COMMISSION AND ADMINISTRATIVE PERSONNEL PRESENT

Commissioners:

Chris Reichley, Chair
 Ashwin Muthuvenkataraman, Vice Chair
 Thomas Brown
 Jennifer Larson
 Joan Probala
 Kymberly Lee
 AJ Taylor
 Christy Garrard
 Landon Halverson- excused absence

Administration/Staff:

Jen Davis Hayes, Economic Development
 Manager
 Farel Otieno, Economic Development
 Coordinator
 Juliana da Cruz, Economic Development
 Coordinator

Art Freas, Alternate- excused absence
 Nicoleta Mocanu, Alternate- called up to an
 Acting Commissioner
 Anuradha Tadepalli, Alternate- called up to an
 Acting Commissioner

JOINT MEETING

The first portion of this meeting is a joint meeting with members of the Economic Vitality Commission and Planning Policy Commission. The purpose of the joint meeting is to discuss the Central Issaquah Pioneer Program.

CALL TO ORDER

Chair REICHLLEY called the meeting to order at 6:08 PM.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

The Commission received in person public comments from Jessica Roe and Brian Runberg. Jessica Roe is a land use attorney and expressed general support for the Pioneer Program. Jessica spoke in favor of the funding levels outlined in options 1 and 2 in the staff memo. Brian spoke in favor of using the MFT program, impact fees, and adjustments in the affordable housing levels under options 1 or 2. Josh Friedmann spoke virtually. Josh is lawyer at Lewis and Clark Law Firm but is not speaking on behalf of a client. He spoke in favor of option 1 or 2, but especially option 2. Gage Stromberg with SRM Development spoke in favor of the Pioneer Program. John Schwartz of the Schwartz Company spoke in favor of the Pioneer Program's options 1 and 2 and encouraged additional examination of waiving impact fees and SEPA reviews.

AGENDA ITEMS

a) **Welcome & Introductions (I)**

Presented by:

Chris Reichley, EVC Chair

The Commissioners introduced themselves.

b) **Pioneer Program (D)***Presented by:**Jen Davis Hayes, Economic Development Manager**Mike Stanger, Senior Planner, ARCH*

Economic Development Manager Davis Hayes provided background information regarding the Pioneer Program specifically the goal of the program to spur the development of housing in our urban core where services and amenities are densely located. She reviewed the purpose of this meeting which is to provide feedback to the City Council on December 4. She defined Pioneer Program as time-limited initial residential projects within the plan area that are given additional incentives to balance the risk associated with being first in the market. Economic Development Manager reviewed the options: Option 1 requires 8% affordable housing units at 60% AMI and an 8 year MTE. Option 2 requires 10% affordable housing at 80% AMI and an 8 year MTE. The joint commission was asked about how many projects, and how long the Pioneer Program should be implemented, if adopted. Commissioner Tadepalli asked for additional information regarding the renter's demand at 60 AMI vs 80 AMI. The Commissioners inquired about the feasibility of 60 AMI versus 80 AMI. The answer is that both options are feasible according to input from developers and analysis by City staff and ARCH. The Commissioners clarified that waiving impact fees is not being considered under the Pioneer Program. The Commissioners reached consensus regarding limiting the program based on the number of projects, rather than the number of units. But some Commissioners clarified that there should be a minimum number of units and maximum number of units per project required to ensure that the projects achieve the goal of starting development and prove viability but also managing the City's risk with the investment. The Commissioners also reached consensus rejecting a timeline for the program limits. Commissioners also discussed setting geographical boundaries on the projects so that they are distributed throughout the urban core. The Commissioners deferred on making a geographic suggestion, but were supportive of City staff's suggestions regarding where those geographic areas were located.

****End of joint meeting. 5 minute break to excuse members of the Planning Policy Commission.****

The Economic Vitality Commission accepted public comments. DIA Executive Director Corby Casler provided public comments about the Economic Development Action Plans and remarked that DIA's workplan will compliment the Economic Development Action Plan.

c) **Economic Development Action Plan (D)***Presented by:**Economic Development Staff*

Economic Development staff gave an overview of Theme Three of the Economic Development Action Plan. Due to time constraints, the Commission decided to defer the prioritization exercise to a later date.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a) Minutes of October 18, 2023

The minutes were approved as read. The motion was made by Commissioner Mocanu and seconded by Commissioner Garrard.

REPORTS**Industry Trends, Business Openings & Closures (D)***Presented by:**All Commissioners*

The Commissioners discussed business openings and closures, including Sola Salon, Crumble and Flake, and Blazing Bagels.

Reports - City Council, Commission Committees (I)

Presented by:

All Commissioners & Staff

2023 Schedule (I)

Presented by:

Chris Reichley, Chair

The December meeting date is to be determined.

OTHER BUSINESS / ANNOUNCEMENTS

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:08 PM.

The next meeting is currently scheduled for December 20, 2023.

INQUIRIES

Please contact Jen Davis Hayes at (425) 837-3414 or jenh@issaquahwa.gov.

Note: Times listed for meetings topics are approximate and items are subject to change.

(A) Action, (D) Discussion, (I) Information