

**CITY OF ISSAQUAH  
Environmental Board**

6:30 PM  
July 12, 2023

**MINUTES**

Tibbetts Manor, 750 17th Ave.  
NW, Issaquah

**BOARD AND ADMINISTRATIVE PERSONNEL PRESENT**

*Board members:*

Don McQuilliams, Vice Chair  
Anne Newcomb  
Tom Anderson  
Alix Lee-Tigner  
Ashwin Kannan\*  
Janet Wall  
Joy Lewis  
Dixie Bair

\*Youth/young adult members.

Jamie Finch, Chair (excused absence)  
Prajakta Ghatpande (excused absence)  
Nancy Davidson (excused absence)  
Ashwin Manoharan\* (unexcused absence)

*Administration/Staff:*

Stacy Vynne McKinstry, Sustainability  
Manager  
David Reedy, Sustainability Coordinator  
Stephen Padua, Long Range Planning  
Manager  
Christian Geitz, Planning Manager  
Matt Ellis, Utilities Engineering Manager  
Evan Brumfield, Environmental and  
Regulatory Program Administrator  
Julie Wartes, Environmental and Regulatory  
Program Administrator

Dave Harms, Senior Engineer, BHC  
Consultants  
Sondarya Krishnamurthy, Engineer, BHC  
Consultants  
Shannon Saramaa, Senior Project Engineer,  
Mead & Hunt  
Andrea Boyd, Engineer, Mead & Hunt  
Justin Rinauro, Water Resources Engineer,  
Mead & Hunt

**CALL TO ORDER**

DON MCQUILLIAMS called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The Chair introduced the minutes, which were included in the agenda materials. The minutes were approved as presented by unanimous consent.

- a) Minutes of June 14, 2023

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

CONNIE MARSH provided public comment on the three main topics covered at the Environmental Board meeting. MARSH noted that it can be difficult to know if our policies laid out in the comprehensive plan are working without a matrix that highlights requirements. MARSH expressed that it is important to use the comprehensive plan for 20-year planning; however, current materials provided by the city are making it difficult to help or understand how this is working. Related to the Natural Environment checklist, MARSH explained a desire to have the Environmental Board updated on projects instead of focusing on neighborhood meetings. MARSH noted that the Natural Environment checklist is not currently providing the Environmental Board with the information needed for good decision making as it currently stands. Finally, MARSH explained that connecting all residents to the sewer system will just flush water out of the town limits which might lead to difficulties for a properly functioning water system.

**AGENDA ITEMS****a) Comprehensive Plan Update (D)***Presented by:**Stephen Padua, Long Range Planning Manager*

PADUA discussed the new environment element that will be included in the periodic update to the Comprehensive Plan. PADUA noted that the focus of the Environmental Board conversation was to provide background on the comprehensive plan, the comprehensive plan's connection to functional plans such as the ICAP, give an update on the process, and ask for feedback on the name of the new environment element that the City is developing.

Board Member LEWIS asked about peat and bog policies and the ways the city can incorporate these policies into the comprehensive plan process. PADUA noted that peat and bog policies are too detailed to go into the comprehensive plan but rather should go into a functional plan. Board Member LEWIS recommended we explore options to address these gaps in comprehensive plan policies. Board Member ANDERSON asked whether there is a way that the City tracks whether the functional plans can trace back to the policies within the comprehensive plan. PADUA noted that the city is working towards more data driven decision making which will allow the city to more accurately track how actions are connected to comprehensive plan policies.

PADUA asked for feedback on potential names for the new environment element. Board Members ANDERSON, NEWCOMB, and LEWIS recommended using the word stewardship in a potential name. Board Member NEWCOMB liked the third option presented, "Natural Environment and Climate Resilience". Board Members NEWCOMB and LEWIS suggested more direct language than nearby cities and provided additional wording options including "greenhouse gas emission reduction". Board Member MCQUILLIAMS noted we may not need the word "natural" in the name and based on the comments of other board members suggested "Environmental Stewardship and Climate Resilience". Board Member NEWCOMB noted the difference between climate mitigation and climate resilience.

Board Member NEWCOMB asked for clarification on targets related to job and housing growth targets included in the presentation. Board Member NEWCOMB discussed if we could include work from home opportunities in job growth targets. PADUA provided clarifications on the growth targets and discussed the conversations happening at the state level on assessing how growth targets are being reevaluated in the current context. Board Member NEWCOMB recommended encouraging businesses to promote work from home policies versus requiring employees to come into the office to reduce greenhouse gas emissions associated with transportation.

**b) Natural Environment Checklist (D)***Presented by:**Christian Geitz, Planning Manager*

GEITZ noted that there were no projects that went through the Natural Environment Checklist or that were completed since the last presentation to the Environment Board. GEITZ walked through the changes to the Natural Environment Checklist and asked for any input or feedback on the updates and changes to the checklist. Board Members noted that being able to see track changes prior to the meeting would be helpful in assessing changes. VYNNE MCKINSTRY noted that staff would send out a version with track changes.

Board Member ANDERSON asked for a post-project review to be built into the process to support continuous process improvement and connect to data driven decision making. Board Members LEWIS, ANDERSON, and MCQUILLIAMS suggested that the City try out the checklist in a simulation, even if there was not any real-world projects to help evaluate the operations of the checklists. Board Member LEWIS also recommended including information and references on site planning, peats and bogs, and model lighting ordinances as well as water runoff on areas outside of critical areas. GEITZ noted that we should be able to see and report on how the checklist was used as more projects are completed. Board

Member MCQUILLIAMS noted that the spreadsheet included as an attachment is hard to follow and recommended making it more readable. Staff will provide an updated spreadsheet with project simulations to the Environmental Board by the end of the year.

c) **Sewer Master Plan Update (D)**

*Presented by:*

*Matt Ellis, Utilities Engineering Manager*

*Evan Brumfield, Environmental and Regulatory Program Administrator*

*Julie Wartes, Environmental and Regulatory Program Administrator*

ELLIS provided an update on the sewer master plan and asked for feedback from the board on three main policy discussions related to onsite septic systems, maintaining sewer system capacities, and Fats, Oils, and Grease (FOG) policies. ELLIS walked the Environmental Board through the process, research, and modelling used to update the sewer master plan.

ELLIS began the policy discussions on the topic of On-Site Septic Systems. ELLIS provided an overview of suggested actions and policies related to this subject. ELLIS noted policy recommendations to extend sewer connections into neighborhoods that are within critical areas and proposed the specific policy changes that would be incorporated into IMC 13. ELLIS clarified that these policy changes would not force people to connect to the sewer system. ELLIS noted that the second policy suggestion in this topic is the extension of viable sewer connections to areas based on different criteria such as whether the property is within the 100-year flood plain. Board Member ANDERSON recommended gathering additional data before making policy recommendations. Board Member ANDERSON also noted that successful on-site septic systems can be environmentally sound as they keep water in the community; however, monitoring suggestions presented seemed appropriate. Board Member BAIR asked whether people would be given the option to fix their on-site septic system instead of connecting to the sewer system if their system is found in noncompliance. ELLIS clarified that noncompliant systems will be given the opportunity to fix issues depending on the issue in question. The specific situations and compliance requirements will be outlined as this process moves forward.

ELLIS next focused policy discussion on surcharge protocols and maintaining sewer system capacities. ELLIS asked if the board concurred with the concept of having different thresholds for improvement requirements based on sewer depth. Board Members MCQUILLIAMS and LEWIS confirmed that the board agreed with the approach. The second policy question presented was based on whether a developer would be required to contribute to sewer improvements based on predicted surcharging. Board Members MCQUILLIAMS and LEWIS noted that the board concurred with the approach and recommended that the team discuss with nearby cities to learn about their approaches.

The final policy discussion brought to the board was related to FOG policies. ELLIS highlighted actions and policies the city could take to tackle issues related to FOGs based on the sewer master plan development process. Board Member LEWIS agreed with applying the retroactive clause and suggested pursuing the 1-year installation requirement. Board Member BAIR noted that the burden for compliance often falls on the small business owners who operate properties and instead should fall on the landlord. To address this issue, Board Members BAIR and MCQUILLIAMS suggested that the city consider impacts to small business owners and explore alternative methods to prevent the burden from falling on small business owners. Board Member LEWIS recommended adding a program within the city to allow residents and businesses to drop off compost or FOGs for recycling. ELLIS presented the second policy under this topic which related to having mobile vendors develop greywater management plans. Board Member MCQUILLIAMS recommended working with the region on this policy question versus developing an Issaquah specific plan. Board Member LEWIS supports the language on greater oversight. Board Member BAIR suggested exploring options to reward mobile vendors for doing the right thing versus penalizing those who do the wrong thing.

Recommendations by the board included ensuring that the burden for FOG policies falls on the landlord and/or property owner, allowing long term payments for upgrades as part of utility bills, and providing grants to business owners for compliance with the above policy suggestions.

**REPORTS**

**OTHER BUSINESS / ANNOUNCEMENTS**

VYNNE MCKINSTRY highlighted the LEED for Cities certification celebration on July 24 and encouraged all members of the Environmental Board to attend.

VYNNE MCKINSTRY discussed the topics of the upcoming meetings and provided an Updated Environmental Board Schedule

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:27 PM.

**INQUIRIES**