CITY OF ISSAQUAH
PLANNING POLICY COMMISSION
MINUTES

November 21, 2013

City Hall South
Council Chambers

135 E. Sunset Way
Issaquah, WA 98027

PPC MEMBERS PRESENT
Carl Swedberg, Chair
Joan Probala
Chantal Stevens
Peggy Dreisinger, Alt.

STAFF PRESENT
Jason Rogers, Associate Planner

CALL TO ORDER/APPROVAL OF MINUTES

SWEDBERG, Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:35 PM.

MOVED BY DREISINGER, SECONDED BY PROBALA, that minutes of the PPC meeting on July 25, 2013 be approved as presented. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

PUBLIC HEARING: 2013 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AMENDMENTS (Review and Recommendation)

Rogers made staff's presentation on the 2013 Comprehensive Plan Amendments. He provided some background on the annual review process for the amendments, including the state's Growth Management Act requirements. He referred to the docket of proposed amendments, included in the agenda packet as Exhibit A.

STEVENS asked when will this docket next be presented and reviewed. Rogers explained a new docket will be brought forward for review in early 2014, and the annual review process in 2014 will extend longer than usual, until June 2015. The reason is because every seven years or so, the State requires a major review of jurisdictions' comprehensive plans, and the 2014 review year is one of those cycles.

Rogers proceeded to go through each proposed amendment, beginning with Amendment #2, Population Estimates Update. He referred to the Population and Household Projections chart on page L-2 and explained the data in the chart. He continued with Amendment #1, Capital Facilities/Transportation Improvement Program, including Level of Service for Fire, Patrol Vehicles, Investigation Vehicles, and Building Space.

SWEDBERG said in determining the level of service for police, does the type of vehicle make a difference. In other words, an SUV represents a difference in cost than a squad car, he continued, and asked is that difference reflected in the update. Rogers explained for the purpose of determining level of service, the kind of vehicle required is not really relevant. He explained some of the reasons why the type of vehicles required by police and by detectives are different, and said while there are reasons why each need a specific type of vehicle, for level of service purposes it is irrelevant. SWEDBERG noted there can be a substantial difference in cost between types of vehicles. Rogers agreed, and said this amendment helps inform the City Council as to what the future needs will be, but the exact costs are determined through the budget process.

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Rogers continued his presentation of the proposed amendments, as summarized on pages 2-5 of Exhibit H:

- Amendment #2, Facilities Updates, including Parks and Open Space, Municipal Facilities;
- Amendment #3, Community Facilities Rezone (Pritt Property rezone to Open Space);
- Amendment #4, Central Issaquah Plan;
- Amendment #5, Evaluation of Klahanie Potential Annexation Area;
- Amendment #6, Bike/Pedestrian Plan;
- Amendment #7, Purpose and Intent of Community Facilities Zoning District;
- Amendment #8, Update of Human Services Element;
- Amendment #9, Annexation of McCarry Woods;
- Amendment #10, Annexation of Issaquah Middle School Unincorporated Island;
- Amendment #11, Sustainable Indicator Targets;
- Amendment #12, Utility System Updates; and
- Amendment #13, Costco Development Agreement.

Rogers said the next step following PPC's review and tonight's public hearing is for the Council to consider this docket of amendments and hopefully take action to approve them.

PUBLIC COMMENT
SWEDBERG opened the public comment period at 6:55 PM.

Elizabeth Maupin, 410 Mt. Jupiter Drive, Issaquah, said her comments are intended to address Goal 3 of the Land Use Vision, "Innovative development policies will provide diverse housing that will meet the growing demand for urban moderate and low-cost housing…". She said her understanding is that the City has already met its 2022 housing targets, but noted that it would be appropriate for virtually all new housing units to be affordable to those below median income. She discussed scarce housing for the working poor in Issaquah and how lack of housing is breaking up families. She said that all population groups, from children to seniors, are in need of more affordable housing. She noted that people are what give real character to a place, and urged the Commission to keep low-income housing in mind because it is really needed throughout Issaquah. She said low-income housing should be distributed throughout neighborhoods and not just concentrated in areas that are primarily low-income. She gave additional reasons why low-income housing benefits communities, and said she has materials from the King County Committee to End Homelessness that she can share with Commissioners.

She continued she was disappointed to hear that the City is not moving forward with development of a Human Services Campus. If a campus is not feasible right now, she continued, perhaps the City could consider a day center for the homeless people living among us. It would not be ideal but would be a starting point to begin addressing homelessness and the socioeconomic forces that are forcing people into living in their cars and in public places. She said the City needs to think about the need for safe places for homeless people to survive while the supply of affordable housing catches up with the demand. She added that housing costs tend to rise as building codes change, and asked is there a different way to look at the building code to see if shifts can be made that would allow some creative alternatives for more affordable housing in Issaquah.

Roy Anderson, 105 Mountain Park Blvd. SW, Issaquah, said he has lived at the Hutchison House Apartments for about 11 years. He said he was homeless before that, and has been homeless on and off for most of his life. He said he considers himself very knowledgeable about affordable housing and problems facing the homeless. He displayed a large rubber band and used it as a reminder that problems can only be solved by being flexible and thinking outside the box. Otherwise, he stated, we will continue to have the same problems for the next five, ten, fifty, or 100

years. He continued that creating jobs and affordable housing requires us all to expand our thinking, much like a rubber band. He said one solution he particularly favors is constructing housing over retail, or over transit facilities, such as can be seen in Redmond and Overlake. He urged the Commission to support that kind of new construction.

Victoria G. Travilla, 130 North Creek Way, Issaquah, referred to her experience as the lead for the community services meal program here in Issaquah. She said the City desperately needs housing for people who don't have any place to go, so they can have a hot meal and a shower. People are literally freezing to death without a home, and are living in their cars, she added. She said lots of people are facing homelessness, including children, older people, and the working poor. She said we want to help these people, and don't want them to just give up. She continued affordable housing actually saves public money because people can eat and shower in their own homes instead of relying on community services. She encouraged the Commission to make affordable housing a priority.

Hearing no additional requests to speak, SWEDBERG closed the public hearing at 7:09 PM.

Commission Discussion

STEVENS said the comments the Commission has heard tonight bring up some important issues. There are other issues that also need to be examined, she continued, and asked what is the Commission's role in the Comp Plan. She said she understands that a major revision is coming up next year, and asked is the Commission free to address other issues surrounding the Comp Plan. Rogers replied the amendment docket is open for proposed amendments to be submitted, including by this Commission. The amendments on this particular docket, he said, were proposed by the Administration. The housing element will be looked at in-depth as part of the major review next year, he continued. But information heard tonight and other information will go into that discussion, and will include opportunities for public comment. So the public's and the Commission's voice can be heard during the process and can help change the goals and policies. He noted the ways in which the City does already support services for the homeless through its participation in ARCH, the food bank, and so on. There are a multitude of ways to influence how the City Council chooses to allocate the City's budget, he continued, and the Comp Plan is only one of them.

SWEDBERG noted that the proposed builder for the area known as Government Square, located in central Issaquah, has indicated they are not interested in building a mixed-use project with retail on the bottom floor and housing above. He said the City Council was concerned to hear that, because the Central Issaquah Plan's intent was to promote that kind of construction with the objective of producing more affordable housing in the City. But if builders aren't interested, there's not a lot the City can do. On the other hand, he continued, the Central Issaquah Plan is a work in progress, and the public should let their Councilmembers know their thoughts, and perhaps the requirements can be given another look.

Mr. Anderson referred to the John Hancock building in Chicago, which has retail on the ground floor, offices in the middle floors, and apartments on the upper floors. We need to have buildings with multiple uses to meet multiple needs, and they need to be flexible so we can maximize how we use them, he said. This is true not just for Issaquah but all over the world, he continued. The problem is that we only have so much land area to work with, including in Issaquah, and we have to think of the best way we can use the land we do have.

STEVENS said she agrees, and said that is the basic spirit of the Central Issaquah Plan. Now that the plan has been approved, she continued, we are trying to make sure that what is planned gets built as planned.

PROBALA said the City can put its rules and regulations in place, but the builders and developers have the final decision about whether or not they want to build, based on whether they think they can make a profit. All the parties have to come together, she continued. The intent was always to have projects with housing above retail, she said, and I think it will still happen. It may not happen as quickly as we would like, she concluded, but I do think it is coming. She said she does appreciate all that the City does to help the homeless and people who need help, and we are moving in the right direction. She thanked those who gave public comment tonight for their heart-felt comments.

MOVED BY PROBALA, SECONDED BY STEVENS that the Planning Policy Commission recommend approval of the Comprehensive Plan Amendments 1, 2, 3, 4, and 9 as submitted to the City Council; and to make no recommendation on Amendments 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, and 13 as those amendments have been deferred, as described in Exhibit H in the staff comments; and that the Planning Policy Commission Chair be authorized to sign the Findings of Fact and recommend approval of the amendments to the City Council. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

PROBALA asked for clarification of the "surplus" square footage in the 2013 calculation of how much square feet the Issaquah Police Department has. Rogers said the 2013 calculation was 1,355 square feet, and the Police Department did not think it needed to consider expanding; whereas the estimate for 2017 is 2,787 square feet, which may or may not mean that the Police Department needs to think about acquiring additional space at that time.

OTHER/ADJOURN

Rogers said the December 12 PPC meeting will be a workshop-style meeting from 6:30 to 8:00 PM in the Eagle Room of City Hall to present the results of the Bike & Pedestrian Plan. There will be display boards and information available, he continued, but no formal agenda. He encouraged all PPC members to attend if they are available.

He continued PPC's tentative schedule is to hold a public hearing on the 2014 proposed docket of Comprehensive Plan amendments on January 23. He said staff is also working on minor adjustments to the City's adult entertainment code, and hopes to have that piece ready for PPC review at the January 23 meeting as well. He said generally, staff anticipates scheduling more PPC meetings in 2014 than were held in 2013.

PROBALA asked about the schedule for rezoning in order to accomplish all the objectives of the Central Issaquah Plan. Rogers said the Council adopted new standards in April that required changes in zoning when it approved the Central Issaquah Plan. Those changes are in effect, he continued, and may require some further adjustments as the plan moves forward.

With no further business to conduct, SWEDBERG adjourned the meeting at 7:25 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Lowe
Recording Secretary