

**CITY OF ISSAQUAH  
PLANNING POLICY COMMISSION  
MINUTES**

November 13, 2014

City Hall South  
Council Chambers

135 E. Sunset Way  
Issaquah, WA 98027

**PPC MEMBERS PRESENT**

Joan Probala, Chair  
Raymond Extract  
Michael Foss  
Susan Kolwitz, Alt.  
Bill Ramos  
Carl Swedberg, Vice Chair  
Justin Walsh  
Paul Weller, Alt.

**STAFF/OTHERS PRESENT**

Trish Heinonen, Policy Planning Manager  
Jennifer Fink, Park Planner

**CALL TO ORDER/APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

PROBALA, Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:33 PM.

MOVED BY FOSS, SECONDED BY WALSH, that minutes of the PPC meeting on October 23, 2014, be approved as presented. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

**COMPREHENSIVE PLAN PERIODIC UPDATE INFORMATION SHEET**

Heinonen gave an update on the items to be discussed at tonight's meeting. She said last summer, staff made a presentation on the existing Parks Element to PPC as an education item, knowing that the newly drafted Parks Element would be ready for PPC to review this fall. She referred to the new version of the element in the agenda packet. She introduced Parks Department staff members Jennifer Fink, Anne McGill, and Brian Berntsen, who are on hand tonight to answer any questions.

She continued the Parks Element is the document within the Comprehensive Plan that contains the policies and goals for the Parks system, but the Parks Department also has a larger, more detailed Parks Plan. That plan needs to be updated every five years in order to be eligible to receive State funding and other grants, and is required to be updated by 2015. She explained what information is included in both the Parks Element and the Parks Plan, and reminded the Commission that the Element and the Plan are different documents.

**COMPREHENSIVE PLAN PERIODIC UPDATE: Parks, Recreation, Trails, and Open Space Element**

Jennifer Fink, Parks Planner, made staff's presentation. She gave more details about how work on the Parks Plan needed to begin before the work to update the Parks Element, and explained how the timing of work on the two affects what is included in each document. She read the mission of the City's Parks and Recreation Department and explained the various management documents that guide the Department. She referred to an upcoming survey for Issaquah residents that will also be used in planning future Park policies.

She addressed the policies in support of the Parks Element goals, beginning on page 17 of 92. RAMOS noted that the section on native vegetation on page 21 does not mention noxious weed

control. Fink said the City's noxious weed control policy is part of the City's Integrated Pest Management Plan, which is referenced later in the Element. RAMOS asked do any of the policies in the Element specifically speak to noxious weeds. Fink replied no, not directly. RAMOS suggested adding such a reference. Fink made a note of it and said staff will include it.

She continued her review with page 22 of 92. WALSH said on P-5.1, Visual Relief and Tranquility, the statement that we want to "mitigate the impacts of the urban environment" should state "the negative impacts of the urban environment," not all of the impacts. Fink replied staff will revise it to include that suggestion.

She continued her review of the policies. PROBALA asked for clarification of the "recreational scholarship program" referenced in P-6.2, Healthy Living. Berntsen said the scholarship program is intended to make sure that a lack of money does not keep a young person from using the City's active recreation resources. Examples of such resources would be the City's Community Center recreation programs and those in partnership with the school district, he added. WALSH suggested modifying the language to "foster development of scholarships for recreational programs and facilities."

PROBALA asked how would Parks staff "encourage healthy living," as stated in the policies. Would healthy living be advertised, for example. Fink gave examples of trails and parks that could be easily accessed by residents and become part of a healthy approach to everyday living. PROBALA asked how would the Park's staff encourage that. Berntsen referred to brochures, resources available on the City's Web site, and outreach with schools. PROBALA said perhaps more detail could be added to P-6.2 to explain how healthy living would be "encouraged."

Fink continued her presentation with page 23 of 92. WALSH noted that Sections 8 and 9 speak to cooperative relationships with federal, state, local, and private partners to receive funds and grants, but not to any external sources of funding that might be available and are not necessarily tied to a cooperative planning situation. He continued he would like to see something added, possibly to Section 8 or a new P-9.3, that speaks to looking for money elsewhere as well. Fink made a note of it.

EXTRACT said in his opinion, one constituency that is underserved is the senior population. He suggested the City look at the Silver Sneakers program and consider it for the City's community centers. Fink made a note of it and thanked EXTRACT for his suggestion.

PROBALA noted the Arts Commission is putting together a brochure for the public that identifies all the art facilities in the City. She asked whether the Parks Department has something similar for all parks in the City, including how they are connected. Fink referred to information in the Parks and Recreation Guide and the parts of the new Element that contain this information. PROBALA asked can that information be accessed without having to go online to do so. Fink said work has not yet progressed to that point. She continued the Parks Plan will be completed and posted in 2016, and that would be the opportunity for staff to consider a brochure. PROBALA said she would like to remind staff that not everyone looks for all the information they want online, and that a brochure that includes a resource map would be very useful for a lot of people. Fink made a note of it.

RAMOS said staff should check the numbers in the chart on page 29 ("Property Acquired Since 2009...") as the numbers look "off." He also clarified that, in case he did not make it clear in his

earlier remarks about including a reference to noxious weed control, he is suggesting that a new policy be added to section P-4.

PROBALA thanked the Parks Staff for a good job on the Parks Element.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

PROBALA referred to an e-mail received earlier today from Connie Marsh, and asked for public comment at this time.

Connie Marsh, business owner at 1175 N.W. Gilman Blvd., Suite B-11, Issaquah, and Issaquah resident, gave some background on her work over the last 15 years or so with the Issaquah Environmental Council and various environmental advocacy groups. She said she is speaking about the Parks Element update now for the third time, and is not seeing many of the changes she has spoken in favor of. She referred to the work the Council is now doing on establishing level of service (LOS) standards for parks and impact fees. The impact fees will determine what can be done in terms of the City's parks, she continued, and the current LOS standards are funding a negative balance for parks. Because the City has determined that we are meeting our LOS standards, we do not get enough money to make a great parks system, nor is there a vision of what that kind of system would look like. She continued the proposed Parks Element isn't organized in such a way that seems functional to her, and referred to the version she forwarded in her e-mail to PPC members. She said she thinks we should understand how well our neighborhoods are being served by all the components in our parks system, then decide how much money we need and how to prioritize the money to get a great parks system, and then use that to drive the impact fees that developers pay. She said one important standard used by other communities is how far each neighborhood is from a park facility, and said this should be part of this Element. She said this reorganization of the Element seems to emphasize recreation and slights wildlife corridors. She said she would like PPC to rethink how the City is analyzing its parks, and come back with ideas on how we can create a better system for funding, maintaining, and prioritizing City parks. She concluded that the Comp Plan also states that the City is supposed to have a 51-percent tree canopy but does not, and that the Parks Department should be responsible for ensuring that we meet that standard.

PROBALA asked at some point, will staff have a comprehensive parks plan that indicates where parks will be located, what will be included at each park, and so on. She said PPC has no responsibility for establishing impact fees, as that is a Council function, but she would like to know whether staff is working toward having all information about existing and future parks gathered in one place. Heinonen explained that the Central Issaquah Plan indicates where several neighborhood parks have been identified once redevelopment at those locations takes place, such as west of the City on the Mull property. However, she continued, the details of what those parks will look like has been left open, because it will partially depend on the demographics of who each park will serve. Also the Planning staff will want to work with the Parks staff because they will have additional criteria to determine what those parks should look like, she added.

PROBALA said she wants to be reassured that this kind of "big plan" effort will happen. Fink said yes, and referred to an upcoming survey that will also be used to determine what park and recreation services would be most appropriate. She said historically National Recreation Association standards were used to determine what should be included in parks, but that approach is no longer viewed as valid. Instead, people are determining what is good for their own community in terms of park amenities and recreation programs, using feedback from residents about what they want.

RAMOS said his overall impression is that the Parks Element is a little light on “vision.” He also said that as a resident, he doesn’t think the public knows where all the City’s parks are located, and he would like to see that kind of concrete information here in the Element. For example, he has heard many references to the “Green Necklace,” but he doesn’t really know exactly what it includes. He said adding some concreteness to this vision would be helpful. He said it is good to lay out all these policies for taking advantage of funding opportunities as they come along, but the City needs to combine that with a concrete vision as well, and not just take advantage of funding because an opportunity presents itself.

**COMPREHENSIVE PLAN PERIODIC UPDATE: Human Services Element**

Heinonen said PPC is receiving the Human Services Element again for review because staff realized that required goals and policies regarding Food Security were better located in this element than in the Land Use Element. So we drafted some policies and modified HS Goal B, “Ensure healthy and sustainable food access and security...” (2), on page 78, and sent them to the Human Services Commission for review, she noted.

RAMOS, Human Services Commission member, indicated that the Commission had approved the proposed changes.

RAMOS noted some discrepancies in fonts throughout the Element and said he presumes those will be cleaned up in the final version. Heinonen replied yes.

WALSH suggested adding looking at whether “food deserts” exist in the community and how to mitigate them under the policies for Goal B. Heinonen agreed that the term “food desert” is frequently used in other jurisdictions’ planning documents, and can be added here.

She asked whether the matrix of existing and proposed language was helpful to PPC members in their review. PPC members indicated yes.

**OTHER BUSINESS/ANNOUNCEMENTS/ADJOURN**

Heinonen noted there will be no PPC meeting on November 27 (Thanksgiving) or December 25 (Christmas Day). The next scheduled PPC meeting will be held December 11.

With no further business to conduct, PROBALA adjourned the meeting at 7:35 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Lowe  
Recording Secretary