

Planning Policy Commission  
6-30-16

**CITY OF ISSAQUAH  
PLANNING POLICY COMMISSION  
MINUTES**

June 30, 2016

City Hall South  
Council Chambers

135 E. Sunset Way  
Issaquah, WA 98027

**PPC MEMBERS PRESENT**

Joan Probala, Chair  
Carl Swedberg, Vice Chair  
Ron Faul  
Joy Lewis  
Justin Walsh  
Larisa Kolcz, Alt.

**STAFF PRESENT**

Trish Heinonen, Policy Planning Manager  
Lucy Sloman, Land Development Manager  
Christen Leeson, Senior Planner  
Jennifer R. Woods, Associate Planner

**SPECIAL INVITED GUESTS**

Randy Harrison, Chair, Development Commission  
Mel Morgan, Development Commission member

**CALL TO ORDER**

PROBALA, Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:36 PM. She thanked the new members for their thoughtful comments and discussion at the May 12, 2016 meeting.

*(Note: Alternate Members participate in, but do not vote on, decisions at tonight's meeting as there is a quorum of Regular Members present.)*

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

MOVED BY WALSH, SECONDED BY SWEDBERG that minutes of the PPC meeting on May 12, 2016 be approved as presented. MOTION CARRIED BY THE UNANIMOUS VOTE OF ALL PPC MEMBERS PRESENT.

**PPC MEMBERSHIP**

PROBALA thanked the new members for their thoughtful comments and discussion at the May 12, 2016 meeting. She is impressed with the level of engagement and knowledge already being shown by the new members.

**CENTRAL STANDARDS AMENDMENTS – ROUND THREE – PART TWO**

Leeson made staff's presentation, beginning with item #9 Clarify Affordable Housing Provision in Density Bonus Program (Note: there are approximately 18 amendments to be reviewed this year as part of Round 3). She summarized the changes, including 1) changing the term "density" to "development" on advice of the City Attorney as adding height that is not able to be occupied, for example a higher ceiling height to get a loft penthouse is considered additional development yet not additional density; 2) allowing height exemptions that are also allowed city-wide, such as rooftop mechanical units (HVAC), flag poles, required elevator shafts, etc; and 3) exempting public schools and school facilities from needing to pay for additional development since their buildings already provide a public benefit to the community. She added that Table 5.4 Summary of Required Public Benefit was clarified, and that if an applicant is proposing adding height over the base height AND adding additional FAR (floor area ratio), then the calculation (additional height OR additional FAR) that results in the most development volume created is what the public benefit calculations is

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based upon. There was a commission discussion about how to calculate the required development density bonus, with some examples described regarding how this would be calculated, why counting (and charging the applicant) both separately would be considered “double dipping” and not appropriate, and the different situations where the public benefit of affordable housing and public open space is required “on site” with the proposal or can be located “off site”. LEWIS questioned the source of the \$15 per square foot payment in lieu of Affordable Housing, as she thought it seemed too low. Leeson said this was an original number from the 2012 Central Standards and we can revisit it during our work on the Housing Strategy.

Woods presented item #10 Clarify Minimum Plant Size and Spacing. This amendment is needed to revise the flexible standard for a modification to the minimum plant size and spacing standard for groundcover and prevents the misuse of the standard to simply plant less. She explained the intent of the 85% maturity of plants standard. The commission discussed the need for peer review and that there is not enough landscaping review to have a Landscape Architect on staff that is solely responsible for review of site plans, inspection of newly planted landscape and the 3 year inspection of the landscaping. FAUL asked if the City could share resources with a neighboring city, and Sloman replied that Issaquah has used other building inspectors from neighboring cities, however she’s not explored using another city’s landscape architect.

Sloman presented item #11 Clarify Building Mass and Design. She introduced the topic with a memo outlining edits that are being proposed since the PPC packet was distributed. These edits are in three categories: 1) amendments proposed in response to public comments; 2) staff proposed amendments for clarification; and 3) Staff proposed amendments to address unintentional Track Changes errors. She continued by saying that Chapter 14 Buildings has been reorganized to be more user friendly by placing “like standards” together. She shared the existing table of contents for this chapter and the proposed table of contents to show that all the information is still included, yet in a different order. These amendments also incorporate staff’s experience based on challenges in applying standards, and feedback from City Council, the Commissions and the public. These amendments also provide more tools regarding building design, using proven tools used by the Issaquah Highlands Architectural Review Committee. She continued by highlighting the four items that were removed:

1. Buildings with a footprint greater than 45,000 sf shall be comprised of at least two masses. Replaced with requirements for buildings over 50 ft in length. [14.3.A.1]
2. Benches and seat walls along 25% of the length of the façade. Added as a treatment for blank walls. [14.4.A.10]
3. Consideration of making rooftops accessible to the public.
4. Specification of the Solar Reflectance Index. (This is in the IMC). Replacing with consideration of color based on visibility from above. [14.6.A.5]

There was commission discussion on these and why they were removed. Sloman continued with items added from the Issaquah Highlands Architectural Review Committee Standards:

1. Tools for treating a façade greater than 50 ft in length [14.3.A.1]
2. More techniques for designing a building in three horizontal parts (tri-partite). [14.3.A.2]
3. More specifics on identifying and designing building entrances. [14.4.A.6]
4. Building materials and colors [14.4.A.7&8]
5. More criteria for defining and dealing with a blank walls and corners. [Chap. 2 definition and 14.4.A.10&11]

There was commission discussion about building material and colors, and how best to use the three parts of a building for minimizing its bulk. The desire to require sustainable building materials

was discussed as well. Sloman continued with the seven items in Chapter 14 Buildings that are proposed to be amended as a response to public comments received before the meeting:

**#1 - 14.3.A.2, Building Mass, Tri-partite (track changes):**

2. Design a building with a tri-partite composition of base, middle and top through techniques consistent with the architectural style. (Tri-partite is an architectural term that means divided into or composed of three [3] horizontal parts.)
  - b. The middle is distinguished through either perceptible setbacks or varying character, materials, color or height. To relate to the pedestrian, buildings with heights over three (3) stories should have a three-story base. For floors above the third floor either:
    - i. establish a 'middle', this section will either be setback from the base of the buildings, or
    - ii. it will provide distinct changes in building materials, color, articulation and modulation for the floor(s) that serve as the 'middle', above the third floor that differs from the first three (3) floors.

**#2 - 14.3.A.3, Building Mass, Views and solar access (track changes):**

3. Internal and external views ~~and solar access~~ should be considered when locating taller buildings, particularly the requirements in 11.2.G, Views and Vistas. Tall buildings also impact solar access. Analysis of solar impacts from tall buildings will be used as a factor in determining the placement of the tall portions of buildings:
  - a. Provide sunlight at street level by thoughtfully locating building height.
  - b. Particular attention ~~should~~ will be given where building height would shade a Required or Significant Community Space, between 10am and 3pm. Carefully shape heights on the south side of streets to maximize sunlight on the sidewalk.

**#3 - 14.3.B.3, Building Use, Setbacks (track changes):**

- B. Building Use. Uses at the ground level of the building ~~should~~ will be active and contribute to the Pedestrian Friendly environment in the following ways:
  3. Provide setbacks for commercial and retail uses only if the adjacent building's uses are likely to use them or they are necessary for security purposes such as for offices. For instance, a restaurant or café may use the area for outdoor seating, a shop for retail displays, or office buildings could use the setback for an entry court, seating, fountain, or retail kiosks. Size the setback for the likely need and level of activity.

**#4 - 14.4.A.2, Building Design and Ground Level Details (track changes):**

- A. Standards for All Uses: Design the buildings to reinforce a Pedestrian-Friendly environment using the following techniques.
  2. An open design for gates and fences shall be used to allow social interaction where they are required or proposed, such as delineating semi-public and semi-private space from public areas. Where required or proposed, use elements such as railings or fences no more than three (3) feet tall (unless fall protection is required), or planters, or overhead elements.

**#5 - 14.4.A.8, Building Design and Ground Level Details (track changes):**

8. Building Colors:
  - f. The color palette for any one building should be an appropriate proportional to the material specified, building size, and architectural character, resulting in a coherent presentation rather than a hodgepodge, resulting in a mismatched and/or inconsistent pattern.
    - Coherent: united as or forming a whole;
    - Hodgepodge: a mixture of different things; jumble, patchwork, ...

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**#6 - 14.4.A.9, Building Design and Ground Level Details (track changes):**

9. Building Windows. To increase a building's architectural detail and level of interest, windows shall incorporate the following:
- a. Retail uses facing Circulation Facilities ~~should~~ shall use large street level windows that allow pedestrians to see activity within shops, ~~when feasible.~~

**#7 - 14.4.A.10, Building Design and Ground Level Details (track changes):**

9. Prohibit blank walls when adjacent to or within 50 feet of a Public Space, ~~except alleys,~~ or other areas when pedestrians are likely to be present in the following ways. The exception is along alleys, where blank walls are allowed, though they must comply with the requirements under Building Materials, 14.4.A.7.:

The commission proposed changes to define "tall buildings" mentioned in 14.3.A.3 Building Mass, Views and solar access. Development Commission members asked for more clarity to help them review future site plans. Much discussion occurred on how Development Commission uses the Standards in their review. Sloman concluded her presentation with the staff proposed amendments to address unintentional track changes errors.

Sloman presented item #12 Establish Criteria for Motorcycle Parking Spaces, stating that requirements for the number of motorcycle parking spaces have been established since the original Central Standards were adopted, however the size and location criteria for motorcycle parking spaces were inadvertently left out of the Standards. The commission had no concerns with the proposed amendments.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

Connie Marsh, business owner at 1175 N.W. Gilman Blvd., Suite B-11, Issaquah, and Issaquah resident, commented that she liked how staff handled the public comments and she liked how these amendments are giving Development Commission more tools for a better review. She disagrees that the landscape code is "working" and would rather the City refuse to return the landscape bond to help fix the landscaping. She enjoyed the commission's discussion on color and wondered what building colors the community would choose? What would be a way to ask the public for their views on color? She asked for a better public process to track how the Director's changes and exceptions are traced and implemented. Are they used as precedent for future projects? She likes the idea of including the City's Office of Sustainability to pre-application meetings with potential applicants so that the City's vision of sustainable development is clear early in the development process.

**Commission Deliberation**

The commission discussed the public comments and felt comfortable with the changes already proposed tonight. They were pleased that the Development Commission was invited to review the Central Standards amendments as their viewpoint is helpful to PPC in many ways. PPC training will continue when they are asked to attend the next Development Commission meeting where a proposed project within the Central Plan area is reviewed. PPC can learn by watching Development Commission "in action" during a project review.

MOVED BY WALSH, SECONDED BY LEWIS that the proposed amendments, including those proposed by PPC, be forwarded to Council for approval; and that the PPC Chair be authorized to sign the Findings of Fact transmitting that recommendation to Council. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

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At the request of the Chair, the amendments proposed by PPC will be drafted and shared with PPC at their next meeting. PROBALA trusts that staff understands the direction and intent of PPC's amendments so PPC is comfortable moving the full package of amendments forward to City Council.

**OTHER BUSINESS/ANNOUNCEMENTS/ADJOURN**

Heinonen said the next PPC meeting is scheduled for July 14.

With no further business to conduct, PROBALA adjourned the meeting at 8:26 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Trish Heinonen  
Acting Recording Secretary

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