

Planning Policy Commission
10-13-16

**CITY OF ISSAQUAH
PLANNING POLICY COMMISSION
MINUTES**

October 13, 2016

City Hall South
Council Chambers

135 E. Sunset Way
Issaquah, WA 98027

PPC MEMBERS PRESENT

Joan Probala, Chair
Ron Faul
Joy Lewis
Troy Rahmig
Jon Stob
Carl Swedberg, Vice Chair
Justin Walsh

STAFF PRESENT

Trish Heinonen, Long-Range Planning Manager
Christen Leeson, Senior Planner

CALL TO ORDER

PROBALA, Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:34 PM.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOVED BY FAUL, SECONDED BY STOB that minutes of the PPC meeting on September 22, 2016 be approved as presented. MOTION CARRIED BY THE UNANIMOUS VOTE OF ALL PPC MEMBERS PRESENT.

PUBLIC HEARING: 2016 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AND ZONING MAP AMENDMENTS

Heinonen made staff's presentation. She explained that tonight the Commission will be addressing the 2016 Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Map Amendments as a whole, and noted that the amendments have been introduced and discussed individually at previous PPC meetings. She reviewed the 2016 proposed Comprehensive Plan Amendments docket on pages 15-17 of 96.

During staff's presentation of the proposed amendments, the following discussion points were raised:

- *Capital Facilities Element (Exhibit B-1).*

STOB asked about the projected potential deficit in fire apparatus, with the understanding that the deficit applies only if Issaquah does not continue its participation with Eastside Fire and Rescue. What is the risk of that happening, he asked. Heinonen said the City would have to plan to opt out of participating with EF&R, which would mean having to put money in the budget for equipment before we could decide to go solo. The City would still have to figure out how to ensure that it had enough fire equipment, she noted. WALSH said the deficit doesn't actually amount to a negative in terms of current level of service, and no potential cessation of participation in EF&R is being contemplated by the City. Heinonen replied to her understanding, that is correct.

SWEDBERG said it appears that by 2020, we would have a deficit of 10 fire trucks but a surplus of only a half a building. Where would the 10 fire trucks go if the City decided to purchase them rather than be part of EF&R, he asked. Heinonen said all those kinds of decisions would have to be made as part of the choice to go solo and leave EF&R.

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PROBALA asked does the Police Department participate in determining the data about what is needed to provide police services. Heinonen replied yes; the Police Department participates in the rate studies and also reviews the Council's proposed budget. She noted that changes in technology, such as traffic cameras, impact the Police Department's needs, and the Police Department takes those changes into account when it reviews amendments to the Comp Plan as well as the annual budget deliberations. PROBALA said the City is growing, and it makes sense that there would be a need for additional police services. STOB asked what is the frequency of the rate study. Heinonen said there is supposed to be one done every three years, but the latest was in 2008. STOB asked what factors kept the rate study from happening. Heinonen replied there were other priorities and not enough funding. STOB noted the rate study might cost the City, but a new rate study could also potentially result in more fees. He asked where does the money come from for such a study. Heinonen replied from the City's general fund.

PROBALA asked for clarification of the per capita calculation in CF-5, Parks Level of Service Standards. Heinonen said staff assigned a value to each park amenity and property and then figured out the cost per person of providing that level of service. The City uses that number to figure out how much we will need to serve growth, and it is used in figuring out impact fees, she continued. PROBALA said it is hard for citizens to look at these values and see how much it will cost to, say, build a park. For example, it may cost \$1 million to build a park but the park has a value of \$2 million, and the City bases its tax rate on \$2 million, not what it costs to build it. Heinonen said the per capita calculation is not an exact science. She said to date, the impact fees have not acted as a deterrent to development; people want to live here. She gave more background on why the City's focus in recent years has been on buying land rather than on building individual amenities such as tennis courts and pools.

- *Land Use Element (Exhibit B-2).*

LEWIS said if the City exceeds the target for what it needs in terms of accommodating growth, is there a plan in place to slow acquisition. Leeson said the City can't just stop growth, but if the Council chose to, it could downzone, for example, or use some other mechanism to slow it. She continued the growth assumption of 7,750 new housing units was created when the City received designation as a Regional Growth Center. The assumption is not a target to reach and does not carry with it any deadline. That is what our current zoning would allow, she clarified. LEWIS asked how does the City compensate for surplus growth if it reaches the growth assumption figure. Leeson said the City would use its population estimates on which to base its service levels. Heinonen said that is done on an annual basis, and gave examples of what would serve as flags to the City that it needed to add services to accommodate growth.

PROBALA asked would the City stop development if the growth could not be served by transportation or other services, or just continue with development until the deficits could be fixed. Heinonen explained how transportation concurrency was used in the 1990s to curb certain development because new projects would fail the City's concurrency standards. System improvements were made, and when projects no longer failed concurrency, they were allowed to go forward, she noted. PROBALA asked does staff feel comfortable that there is enough support to accommodate traffic from more growth without planning for more roads. Leeson said the City is planning for more roads. Heinonen referred to the projects in the TIP, impact fees, and the pending bond issue as ways the City is continuing to plan for more roads.

RAUL asked for clarification of the pie chart on page 48 of 96. Leeson explained these figures were part of the environmental analysis done for the Central Issaquah Plan. The state's mandated target for the entire City is 5,750 more housing units by 2031. The City is assuming that build-out of

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the Urban Core could add another 1,435 units, and 565 units inside Central Issaquah but outside the urban core, for a total of 7,750 assumed units within central Issaquah.

Leeson continued with Figure L-2, Jobs Target. PROBALA asked what is the City doing to entice new businesses to develop in the City core. Leeson said that is the responsibility of the Economic Development Department, and briefly described their activities. Heinonen referred to the Department's website, which gives more details about the City's effort to become certified as a regional sports medicine and recreation center ("Innovation Partnership Zone").

Leeson continued her explanation of the information in Tables L-3, L-4, and L-6. She noted that data in Figure L-3 will be updated before the final version of the amendment is sent to Council for approval.

FAUL asked for clarification of the criteria used to prioritize funding in Policy K2, "*Prioritize funding for the Urban Core Regional Growth Center for transportation, public spaces, and other investments necessary to further support development of the Center.*" Leeson replied from the most recent impact fee study, the City compiled a short list of projects for the Comprehensive Plan, and about seven priority areas were used, including where density will go, connectivity, and so on. FAUL said his concern is about other areas of the City as well. Leeson said "priorities" does not mean that no activity will occur elsewhere in the City; criteria such as safety are also important, she stated. Heinonen gave examples of recent City investments in parts of the City outside the Center. WALSH said in the case of competing priorities, the Council would make those kinds of decisions. PROBALA agreed, and said the Council would make them with input from the community.

- *Rezones and Re-designations (Exhibit B-3).*

FAUL asked for clarification of the public space at the Atlas Apartments, specifically whether the public would have access to the space. Heinonen replied the public can access that space from Locust and Gilman, as well as from the Atlas Apartments, and described the proximity of the shared route trail from 7th Avenue to the space. FAUL asked whether staff thinks the park will get a lot of public use. Heinonen replied yes, given its location.

Leeson described the proposed rezones on maps 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6. Heinonen noted that notification letters were sent to all property owners within 300 feet of these properties.

- *Community Sustainability Indicators (Exhibit B-4).*

WALSH said he would like to re-voice his concern about the sustainability indicators being used and whether the City is using the best methodology for measuring those indicators. Heinonen said the Administration is hoping to review and revise both the sustainability indicators and the methodology. She added staff did receive a question via e-mail from Mary Lynch about this issue, and she received a response from David Fujimoto, Sustainability Director.

SWEDBERG noted a typo on page 73 of 96 ("Breen" should be corrected to "Green"). Staff made a note of it.

- *Transportation Element (Exhibit B-5).*
- *Central Issaquah Plan (Exhibit B-6).*
- *Land Use Element—Remove East Cougar Mountain from Issaquah's Potential Annexation Area (Exhibit B-7).*

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Leeson concluded her presentation with a description of next steps in the review process, leading to scheduled action by the Council at its December 19, 2016 meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT

PROBALA opened the public hearing at 7:35 PM.

Steve Pereira, 170 NE Dogwood Street, Issaquah, made a number of comments on the proposed amendments, including the following. He would like to see zoning for the Central Issaquah Plan restricted to north of I-90, particularly on the Costco side. He said on page 18 of 96, he would like to see more police enforcement activity on specific routes where motorists are using excessive speeds, including where redevelopment of Sunset is taking place, and vehicle coverage in the Comprehensive Plan addressed in order to provide more police capacity. PROBALA asked him whether he had communicated directly with the Police Department about those concerns, and he said no.

Mr. Pereira continued he would like to see the number of speeding tickets issued by the Police as a LOS measurement (page 21 of 96). On page 43 of 96, the CF-1 and CF-2 policies seem to say that the City is growing faster than the City is able to provide that growth with streets, police and fire services, so perhaps some of the growth should be down-zoned in some areas in order to direct growth to a certain area. On page 49 of 96 it seems clearer to describe the targets as goals rather than assumptions. They should be defined as goals and the City should encourage them to be achieved through policy, he said. Growth is needed for grants, he said, but if growth is not paying for itself and needs grants, for example, then growth needs to be limited. He said he understands that the City can wait up to ten years between assessing impact fees and spending them on mitigation, and that impact fees can be spent in areas other than the immediate area for which they were assessed, which seems counterproductive as a policy. On page 65 of 96, he continued, he would like to see a requirement that the number of housing units for a development that are to be affordable be spelled out, and at what level they are going to be affordable. That information should be part of the public review process for the development, including what the rates are going to be. On page 66 of 96, the first item to be measured in terms of level of service is business climate, and he would like to see more emphasis on categories other than business climate. It's important, he commented, but is not necessarily the most central one. On page 69 of 96, the City has some good public programs, but he would like to see other measurements as well, such as how often residents contact City staff, how quickly they get a response, how effectively the City uses e-mail blasts, distribution of agendas and minutes from boards and commissions, and other activities that would promote more engagement with the public. He said he wasn't sure how reasonable it is to include voter turnout as a major theme of public policy or as one of the City's goals (page 70 of 96). He said on page 76 of 96, he questions how much of the tree canopy is just canopy or actually protects and houses wildlife. He said there is a disconnect with the public policy of maintaining the City's tree canopy when the City allows trees to be cut down along Front Street, or waives a high-density developer's requirements for the number and type of trees to be included in the project. He also said the carbon footprint of trees, as described on page 77 of 96, should be included in the City's tree policy as well.

PROBALA thanked him for his good comments, and said she hopes City staff takes at least some of them and puts them in front of the appropriate City departments for consideration. If some of the comments aren't possible or feasible, she continued, she hopes that he will get some answers from staff as to why they are not.

Hearing no additional requests to speak, PROBALA closed the public hearing at 7:50 PM.

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Commission Discussion

WALSH said he would like to point out the dismal state of the City's affordable housing gap, and said he hopes the City looks hard at what incentives we are offering to strengthen affordable housing and reduce that gap. He said he would also like to see the City move toward mandatory composting or at least mandatory availability of composting.

FAUL expressed concern that the City will exceed its state-required growth targets without making sure that its level of service for police and other services can support that extra growth. He said he is concerned that the City is growing too fast and growing beyond what is required by the state, and asked is that what we want. He referred to the population and housing chart on page 55 of 96 and the growth target pie chart on page 48 of 96. Staff explained that the growth assumptions in the pie chart, which are numbers prepared by a consultant in the EIS, take into account factors such as environmental and market considerations. The growth assumptions reflected in the pie chart are not goals but rather are assumptions, and there is no timetable for reaching the assumptions. Table L-6 is an estimated population and household growth chart that is updated every year, and does not take those factors into consideration. The numbers in that table include all the calculations in the pie chart, and making a comparison between them is an "apples-to-oranges" kind of comparison.

STOB noted the numbers indicate that, if growth continues as it has, the City will add more growth than required by the state assumptions, and asked is that what drove the Council to consider a moratorium. Heinonen said her understanding is that the Council's primary concern was with the kind of growth the City is experiencing; namely that the growth is not the growth that was hoped for in terms of architectural fit, urban design, affordable housing, clear district visions, no real structured parking, and no mixed-use development. Leeson said the issue seems to be not so much density as the kind of development that is taking place. Heinonen said the City's concern grew from a three-year monitoring report that showed that development is not what was envisioned, and so perhaps the City should take a pause and see what steps could be taken, including updating impact fees, to get more of the kind of growth that we want.

LEWIS said she understands staff's explanation, but it seems like a knee-jerk reaction to her when the data indicates that growth will exceed the state's targets for 2035. Leeson noted that the Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) requires 2035 growth projections, but the City will be renegotiating its growth targets with the state again in 2021. The 2035 growth projection has already been accepted for planning purposes by the City; it is not a number from the state.

WALSH clarified that Table L-6 is a projection of population and housing based on past growth patterns. The pie chart is an actual estimate from the City's EIS that shows the growth capacity for the City as a whole and what potential growth by 2031 could look like given additional factors. Heinonen agreed, and said the pie chart is just a tool and not the number we are using for planning purposes.

RAHMIG asked does the upcoming budget include a new rate study for police services. He continued with the City's recent growth, it seems like this is important data to have. Heinonen said there no pending rate study of which she is aware, and noted the Commission has also expressed concern that sustainability indicators need updating as well. STOB commented that any criteria that is more than, say, three years old should be examined to see whether the assumptions are still valid, and updated if possible. Heinonen agreed, and noted the capital facilities plan is several years old as well. PROBALA said the City needs up-to-date data, and while there may not be money allocated for studies, she hopes the Council will look seriously at ways to find funding to get more up-to-date information.

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Commission Recommendation

MOVED BY FAUL, SECONDED BY STOB that the Council be encouraged to take the steps required to reevaluate and update all indicators and rates at a maximum of three-year intervals so that the data the City uses in its decision making is current and accurate. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

MOVED BY WALSH, SECONDED BY STOB that the Issaquah Planning Policy Commission recommend approval of the Findings of Fact for the 2016 Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Map Amendments, as included in the agenda packet for the October 13, 2016 meeting, including (1) a proviso to make updates to Figure L-3 as noted in tonight's discussion and (2) a correction on page 73 of 96 ("Breen" to "Green"), to the City Council. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

STOB asked how the content of tonight's discussion will be communicated to the City Council. Heinonen said the discussion will be encapsulated in the staff report that transmits the Commission's recommendation. The meeting minutes will also be forwarded, she said, and Commissioners are welcome to attend the Council meeting to add their own perspective.

OTHER BUSINESS/ANNOUNCEMENTS/ADJOURN

Heinonen noted the Commission's meeting next week on October 20 is a joint meeting with the Human Services Commission and Economic Vitality Commission.

With no further business to conduct, PROBALA adjourned the meeting at 8:25 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Lowe
Recording Secretary