

Planning Policy Commission  
2-9-17

**CITY OF ISSAQUAH  
PLANNING POLICY COMMISSION  
MINUTES**

February 9, 2017

City Hall South  
Council Chambers

135 E. Sunset Way  
Issaquah, WA 98027

**PPC MEMBERS PRESENT**

Carl Swedberg, Vice Chair  
Ron Faul  
Joy Lewis  
Jon Stob

**STAFF PRESENT**

Trish Heinonen, Long-Range Planning Manager

**CALL TO ORDER**

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

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

SWEDBERG asked for any corrections or changes to the draft minutes of October 13, 2016. FAUL said on page 9 of 19, second paragraph, he would like to clarify a statement attributed to him, which is "...he is concerned that the City is growing too fast..." He said the statement should be "...he is concerned that the City is growing faster than our projected resources can handle."

MOVED BY LEWIS, SECONDED BY STOB that minutes of the PPC meeting on October 13, 2016 be approved with the correction noted. MOTION CARRIED BY THE UNANIMOUS VOTE OF ALL PPC MEMBERS PRESENT.

**PUBLIC HEARING: PROPOSED 2017 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN DOCKET**

Heinonen made staff's presentation, including background on the proposed docket of Comprehensive Plan amendments for 2017. She said the state GMA (Growth Management Act) requires that jurisdictions address potential amendments to their Comprehensive Plans only once a year, and she explained how the City has chosen to address making its annual proposed amendments. She gave a timeline for bringing the docket to Council, with projected approval by the Council on March 20. She added the Land Use Code can be amended at any time during the year.

She continued her presentation with an explanation of the proposed amendments, as outlined on pages 13-15 of the agenda. She listed the first 8 of the proposed amendments as those that the Administration is recommending be addressed in 2017, as follows:

1. Capital Facilities TIP Updates
2. Population Updates
3. Community Facilities Redesignations/Rezoning
4. Central Issaquah Plan
5. Olde Town Subarea Plan Update
6. Create Housing Element Implementation Strategy
7. King County Island Annexation—Amend Maps/Other Elements
8. Issaquah Highlands and Talus Development Agreement Close-Outs

She said staff would like to address the remaining proposed amendments, but the City simply doesn't have the staffing and resources needed to get to all of them in 2017. LEWIS asked for clarification of the lack of staffing and resources. Heinonen explained how the moratorium has

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impacted staff's ability to work on both the Comprehensive Plan amendments and the strategies to address concerns that prompted the moratorium. Heinonen noted there are a number of vacant planner positions at the City now, but even if positions now vacant were filled, the staff could not get all this work done. She explained some of the work that has been done on #9, Create Transportation Element Implementation Strategy, and said there has been movement on this issue, such as the Council considering a new Transportation Committee. However, she continued, #9 would be more of a planning document, not an action plan, and the Council has indicated it wants action addressing traffic congestion, which is what would have been possible had the bond issue last fall been approved. She continued with a brief description of the items that the Administration is recommending be postponed until the 2018 docket, as follows:

9. Create Transportation Element Implementation Strategy
10. Create Parks, Recreation, Trails, and Open Space Element Implementation Strategy
11. Standards for Sustaining Places: Add Innovation and Other Measures
12. Create Land Use Element Implementation Strategy
13. Create Utilities and Public Services Element Implementation Strategy
14. Create Economic Vitality Element Implementation Strategy
15. Create Cultural Element Implementation Strategy
16. Create Capital Facilities Element Implementation Strategy
17. Create Human Services Element Implementation Strategy

LEWIS asked when the Land Use Element was last updated. Heinonen replied in 2015, the City overhauled all the elements in the Comprehensive Plan, and took out all the code-related implementation parts that need work but that don't really belong in the plan. They need clarification about how they would be implemented, so they really are more aspirational at this point, she continued, and we would like to have the power of law behind them. LEWIS asked whether the Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) program would be addressed in 2017. Heinonen said TDRs will be reviewed in 2017 as part of the end of Development Agreements, but she said she wasn't sure whether they would be addressed beyond that. LEWIS said that should be part of the City's land use code. Heinonen explained that TDRs are currently addressed in the land use code, and how the TDR program works in the Central Issaquah area as bonus density. She said perhaps the City can explore how to make the TDR program flow better through its work with TDRs in the Development Agreements.

LEWIS asked for clarification about items such as #12, Create Land Use Element Implementation Strategy, and said she assumes that these strategies don't actually exist at this point. Heinonen said that is correct, and referred to an appendix at the end of the Comprehensive Plan that lists what would be included in the strategies, but added they have not been solidified with specifics.

STOB asked whether delaying looking at items #9 through #17 might create problems. For example, #13, Create Utilities and Public Services Element Implementation Strategy, would not be addressed before #6, the Housing piece. Would that be putting the cart before the horse, he asked. Heinonen said adequate utilities capacity is there; this would be a way to take goals such as water conservation out of the element and make some policies that would be implemented and measured. She continued we know we have the supply of utilities that we need for growth that we have accommodated in our zoning, and said she will send STOB further information about the Strategy lists.

LEWIS asked whether it would be possible to stage some pre-planning meetings in 2017 for those items that are being postponed to 2018. Heinonen gave more information about the staffing resources of the Planning Department and the City in general. FAUL noted a lot of the amendments being proposed for postponement are very important, and said he would hate to see

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the City not be able to focus on some of these key initiatives until 2018. Other Commissioners agreed.

LEWIS asked for clarification on #2, Population Updates. Heinonen explained how the State Office of Financial Management gives cities population numbers based on housing units, permits issued, and so on, and then the cities take those numbers and roll them into their projections that require population numbers. That is also the basis for which cities receive state revenue, she stated. LEWIS said she recalled that last year the Commission asked for more updated data on capital facilities planning and fees. Heinonen said the City is updating its 6 year capital facilities plan this year. She explained that last year's plan was based on data that was several years old, and an update is expected later this year.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Steve Pereira, 170 NE Dogwood, Issaquah, said it seems to him that the Commission does have the ability within its purview to recommend prioritizing these amendments to the Council. He commented that the City needs to have these amendments in place before additional development goes forward, and encouraged the Commission to recommend additional resources to get this work done. He spoke of his concerns about proposed changes to Olde Town, as is implied in #5, Olde Town Subarea Plan Update. He also said #6, Create Housing Element Implementation Strategy, should including zoning changes that would allow smaller houses on smaller lots to be developed. He also spoke about his concern about #1, Capital Facilities/TIP Updates, specifically an option to have Rainier connect to Gilman Blvd. rather than Juniper, and said he has questions about that. He spoke in favor of the City's work on housing issues since the moratorium, and said the City's plans to promote affordable housing needs more "teeth."

Zach Liebowitz, Seattle, spoke about his concerns with moving #9, Create Transportation Element Implementation Strategy, pushed back until the 2018 docket. He continued it seems to him that City traffic is almost at full capacity now, particularly during peak hours, and questioned how pushing that item back another year would adversely affect growth, and what action the City would do to prevent adverse effects created by the delay.

Heinonen said in response to a comment made by Mr. Pereira, no substantive changes of increased density or height are proposed in #5 at this point for Olde Town.

### **Commission Decision**

FAUL said he would favor proposing a recommendation that the Council consider that the City's current staffing levels are inadequate to tackle the work items in the docket, and as a result, several very important pieces are being postponed until 2018. SWEDBERG said it's a good point, and noted that only 8 of the 17 proposed amendments are being proposed for the 2017 work plan. FAUL said he would leave it to others to determine how to fund the activities and staffing required to address all these items, but it seems like PPC has a responsibility to bring it to the attention of Council that only 8 of the 17 items that we would like to have addressed will be worked on in 2017.

LEWIS asked why items such as #7, King County Island Annexation, have been given a higher priority than #12, Create Land Use Element Implementation Strategy or #13, Create Utilities and Public Services Element Implementation Strategy. Heinonen explained that the City has already committed to a partnership with King County to purchase part of the King County island parcel, and in fact this item was not addressed last year and is being carried forward to this year.

LEWIS asked for clarification of how the timing of #4, Central Issaquah Plan (review in September and recommendation to Council in October/November) and #5, Olde Town Subarea Plan Update (review in April and recommendation to Council in June) interact. Heinonen explained that both

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address the same parcel, and if the Olde Town Subarea Plan Update boundary isn't decreased, as proposed in #4, then the Central Issaquah Plan boundary increase is a moot point. She described the boundary in question and the reasoning for proposing the change.

SWEDBERG suggested the Commission could take action on the Findings of Fact as they are written in the staff report, with language added to reflect the Commission's recommendation that the Council consider identifying and prioritizing additional City resources to enable staff to take action in 2017 on all the items in the 2017 proposed Comprehensive Plan Amendments docket. The Commission agreed that staff should draft the Findings of Fact with the additional language for the Chair to sign, and forward it to the Council next week.

MOVED BY LEWIS, SECONDED BY FAUL that the Planning Policy Commission recommend approval of the 2017 Docket of Proposed Comprehensive Plan Amendments, as listed in the staff report dated February 9, 2017, with additional language recommending that the Council consider identifying and prioritizing additional City resources to enable staff to take action in 2017 on all the items in the 2017 proposed Comprehensive Plan Amendments docket. MOTION CARRIED BY UNANIMOUS VOTE OF ALL COMMISSIONERS PRESENT.

### **DEVELOPMENT MORATORIUM UPDATE**

Heinonen gave an update on the temporary moratorium enacted by the City Council last September. She outlined the activities taken since then, including public outreach, and noted the full list of activities is available on the City's website. She gave more details about the activities undertaken so far toward developing a housing strategy, and showed where the process now stands on a flow chart. We are now in the Needs Analysis step, she continued. The next step is Policy Conversations, to be held in May and June, then the final Housing Strategy step, which will be completed by September. The housing strategy will address both immediate housing needs and also the housing needs projected for the next 20 years.

She continued with a brief description of other issues to be addressed during the moratorium, including architectural fit/urban design concerns, vertical mixed use, parking, and visions for each Central Issaquah district, as outlined on page 18 of 19. She briefly described PPC's role in reviewing each of these concerns, and noted that other projects for PPC review include the Olde Town Plan Update and the end of Development Agreements for Talus and the Highlands.

She concluded her presentation by referring to the calendar of PPC meetings projected for the rest of 2017. LEWIS asked what topics, if any, will be addressed at the February 23 and March 9 PPC meetings, as the calendar is blank for those dates. Heinonen said she will get back to the Commission with the topics to be discussed.

Heinonen also noted that the City is looking for interested residents to serve on its boards and commissions, including PPC, and would appreciate PPC members' help in soliciting good volunteers for board and commission membership.

### **ADJOURN**

With no additional business to conduct, SWEDBERG adjourned the meeting at 7:40 PM.

Susan Lowe  
Recording Secretary