CITY OF ISSAQUAH
PLANNING POLICY COMMISSION
MINUTES

November 30, 2017

City Hall South
Council Chambers

135 E. Sunset Way
Issaquah, WA 98027

PPC MEMBERS PRESENT
Joan Probala, Chair
Ron Faul, Vice Chair
Victoria Hunt, Alt.
Joy Lewis
AJ McGauley, Alt.
Lindsey Walsh

STAFF PRESENT
Trish Heinonen, Policy Planning Manager
Keith Niven, Economic Dev. and Dev. Services Director
Jennifer R. Woods, Associate Planner
Christen Leeson, Senior Planner

CENTRAL ISSQ. TASK FORCE MEMBERS PRESENT
Ken Konigsmark
Mary Lynch
Mel Morgan, Jr.

CALL TO ORDER

PROBALA, Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:34 PM. She said tonight's meeting is a continuation of the November 9 public hearing on proposed amendments to the Central Issaquah Plan district visions, and welcomed members of the Central Issaquah Task Force and audience to PPC's discussion tonight.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOVED BY WALSH, SECONDED BY FAUL, that minutes of the PPC meeting on November 9, 2017, be approved as presented. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

MOVED BY LEWIS, SECONDED BY WALSH, that minutes of the PPC meeting on November 16, 2017, be approved as presented. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

PUBLIC HEARING: PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO CENTRAL ISSAQUAH PLAN DISTRICT VISIONS

Niven began staff's presentation on the changes made to the proposed amendments since the last meeting. He explained how the version of the district visions for discussion tonight was developed. He noted staff and the Chair are proposing to take public comment at various intervals in tonight's deliberations rather than waiting for a formal public comment period at the end of the discussion. The Commissioners agreed with this approach.

He continued with some background on the Central Issaquah Plan (CIP), and how the district visions piece fits into the overall CIP. He asked for feedback as to *whether the "story" in the first few pages of the revised document on district visions is clear and understandable*. WALSH said in general, it works; but what's missing is the "why" in order to get the community's buy-in. Konigsmark said the overall benefit to the community is missing; why should residents support this. He suggested adding language that references "sustain and maintain quality of life even as we grow." FAUL said the economic piece is missing; specifically, what is the job situation going to look like. That's a key piece, he said. Niven agreed. HUNT said some of the information appears in two places in the document, and gave examples. It does tell a story but it repeats in a way that isn't clear, she said. She also suggested re-listing the items so that livable is first.

McGAULEY suggested how the words “neighborhoods” and “districts” should be used in the document. Konigsmark said the foundation from the Task Force was the concept of the green necklace, yet it is not documented much in this proposed document. He gave examples, and said the concept of the green necklace is not really captured here. McGAULEY and Konigsmark made suggestions for how the illustrations in the document should be shown in color. HUNT said it should clearly show the proposed districts and neighborhoods for the benefit of the public reading this.

Konigsmark said on page 17, second to last paragraph, the statement about making our community better and not be a detriment shouldn’t begin “Finally..." as though it is not important. It is a good statement, but it should be more prominent, he said. McGAULEY suggested using the phrase “harness growth” in talking about facilitating a better neighborhood and better city. In other words, he continued, we will achieve good things not because we are reacting to growth but because we are growing. McGAULEY also asked for clarification of the following sentence in that paragraph. Niven provided some clarification.

FAUL said references to streams and fish, as well as parks, are also missing, and gave examples of how those important features of Issaquah could be emphasized. Lynch agreed, and said wildlife corridors and passive open space also needs to be discussed in the environmental section. Staff made a note of the suggestions. LEWIS said she agrees that wildlife corridors are important, and having broader language about that in the environmental section is needed. McGAULEY said he’s not sure that wildlife and fish should be emphasized in a plan for what is being envisioned as the most urban, walkable portion of the City. Leeson said the City has policies that speak specifically to riparian corridors, but references to fish and wildlife can easily be added to the “story” section of the document. Niven agreed.

Niven asked whether audience members would like to comment on the discussion so far at this point. Connie Marsh, audience member, said a new item needs to be added about linking the vision and the implementation; the environmental section should be placed under sustainability; and the four descriptions of the districts could be collapsed rather than repeated elsewhere in the document. David Kappler, audience member, said linking the vision to the reality is a big concern for him. Steve Pereira, audience member, said he has agreed with many of the comments made so far; he added that he would favor increasing linkages within the document with the storytelling so that the important elements of the City are not lost.

Niven continued his presentation on the green necklace, and explained how the concept of the green necklace was crafted in the document. He asked *does the map that was developed help people understand the green necklace, and if not, how could it be improved*. He displayed the map and asked for comments. Konigsmark said it is helpful, but it needs to be more accurate, and gave examples. He gave his perspective on how the green necklace was envisioned, and said verbiage of the green necklace needs to be right upfront in the story portion of the document. FAUL suggested that we might want to add more connectivity as a result of ST-3, and gave examples.

PROBALA asked is a connected pathway envisioned in the green necklace concept, with connections between all the green spaces. Konigsmark replied yes, much like the Mountains to Sound Greenway. PROBALA and WALSH spoke in favor of having more specifics about exactly where the parts of the green necklace will be. WALSH referred to an existing map in the CIP, Exhibit 7, page 43, as having the right level of detail. McGAULEY said you need both a detailed map and also the vision. LEWIS said she thinks we need a graphic, but not this one, and spoke in favor of a graphic that is designed more like a spider web. LEWIS and McGAULEY gave

more suggestions for how the design could be improved. HUNT said the map being displayed looks a bit cartoonish, and gave suggestions for how it could be improved. Konigsmark said based on conversations he has had with Parks Department staff, the Parks Department could come up with a real plan for the green necklace within six months or so with a specific, detailed route and plan on a parcel-by-parcel basis.

McGAULEY suggested making a page in the document for the green necklace, the same as the other neighborhood visions. WALSH said the graphic could also indicate what segments are missing, which would then become an implementation plan. PROBALA asked can more detail be added to this diagram so people can get a better idea of where this is going. She made some suggestions of what should be added, and staff made a note of them.

Kappler said several "spokes" and known segments are missing from the map being displayed; we need a much more defined map eventually for developers so they know what to expect. Marsh said connectivity and the green necklace are laid out on top of each other in some cases, and said the green necklace is an overarching issue that is connected to all the neighborhoods. She continued the green necklace development has to be planned, controlled, and developed; a decent map would help us understand what we need in terms of connectivity. Pereira said he doesn't think of the green necklace as just a connectivity method but more as a way to maintain the small-town, natural environment feeling of Issaquah. He said the preservation of riparian and wildlife corridors needs to be right upfront as part of the story, including the story of the green necklace.

Niven posed the next question for discussion, *should the Service District be removed from Central Issaquah.* Niven explained the Service District's existing zoning and what changes would take place for property owners in the Service District if this change was approved by the Council. McGAULEY asked would there be a subsequent code action and a deliberation process that would include the public. Niven replied yes. Konigsmark said one thought the Task Force had was that the Service District, which is the eastern gateway to the City, could become an incubator area, or a grand entryway to the City from the east. He questioned whether that would be possible if the Service District was removed from Central Issaquah as a district. Kappler asked for some clarifications of existing zoning. Pereira referred to the existing trailer park in that area, and said he would like to be sure that affordable housing remains. Other Commissioners agreed with removing the Service District from Central Issaquah.

Niven asked should *the Old Route 10 District be removed from Central Issaquah*. He explained how Old Route 10 might be affected by changes being contemplated now to the Olde Town Standards. He explained the work staff would do to change code if Old Route 10 District was included in Olde Town, and how that work would be reviewed by PPC. Konigsmark spoke in favor of removing Old Route 10 District from Central Issaquah. Lynch said "destination" was what the Task Force thought was important there, as well as accessibility to the trails by bicyclists and walkers. Pereira said he would like to see that area down-zoned and he agrees it doesn't belong in Central Issaquah. John Mabbott, manager of the Grange in Old Route 10 District, commented on the possibility of creating an Olde Town loop that would include Old Route 10. He also spoke of plans for increasing curb appeal at the Grange and other changes taking place in that neighborhood.

PROBALA asked where connections could be from Old Route 10 to Olde Town. Niven said that would have to part of a future discussion, and gave some preliminary thoughts about it. FAUL said he thinks that Old Route 10 should be a subset of Olde Town, with its own codes that enhance the attributes that are specific to Old Route 10.

Niven asked *should the potential Confluence neighborhood be part of Central Issaquah*. He showed the boundary of the proposed Confluence neighborhood on a diagram and described its character. FAUL said he thinks it should be taken out of Central Issaquah. WALSH asked where is Gilman Village in relation to Confluence, which Niven showed on a map. He noted Gilman Village is now part of the East Valley neighborhood, which we can discuss later. McGAULEY said he likes the idea of having this area as a transition from the growth center area to Olde Town. LEWIS said she would keep it in Central Issaquah. Lynch said her understanding is that residents of the Confluence neighborhood are anxious that they not be part of central Issaquah. Konigsmark said this area has value as a "funky" part of historic Issaquah that should not be lost. It doesn't need to be in Central Issaquah, he continued, so this could be a transition area. Morgan said he disagrees; he favors keeping the Confluence neighborhood as part of Central Issaquah. Lynch said a lot of the homes there are older, and as they are redeveloped, the City needs to keep them as housing. The newer homes going in there, she continued, are not inexpensive homes, and those people have said they don't want another Atlas going in next door. FAUL said he understands the comments made by his colleagues, but tends to favor Confluence being classified as a transition area and maybe not be part of Central Issaquah.

Niven gave examples of how the development standards for the Confluence neighborhood would change if it were part of Central Issaquah. He said the area is a truly walkable neighborhood; residents can easily walk to schools, parks, Olde Town, Gilman Village, a grocery store, and so on. Leeson said the Central Issaquah building standards, such as maximum height, would not apply to the Confluence neighborhood if it was removed from Central Issaquah. FAUL asked if it was kept in Central Issaquah, would that allow more density, taller buildings, more impervious surface, and so on. Niven replied yes. FAUL asked could the City do a zoning change to avoid, say, higher building heights there. Niven said we could have a conversation about that, but this is still at the vision stage. HUNT said this area, which is livable, walkable, and so on, seems to already be going in the direction of Central Issaquah, and it seems to fit with the Central Issaquah vision statements.

Pereira said he fears that Confluence will lose its unique feel if becomes part of central Issaquah; he would like to see it taken out. Marsh noted a lot of the critical area we are trying to protect is located in this neighborhood; if Confluence stays in Central Issaquah, developers would still have the ability to develop higher density buildings unless the code changes. She said she would prefer to keep it in the mixed-use residential zone (MUR) because she doesn't trust the linkage between the vision and the code. Kappler said Confluence is a very interesting neighborhood. It is walkable, has special characteristics, and is particularly good for retired people. We shouldn't mess it up, he concluded.

Niven asked *should the Regional Growth Center be one or two neighborhoods*. McGAULEY spoke in favor of one district—the Regional Growth Center district—with multiple neighborhoods within the district, and gave examples. The participants discussed possible neighborhood boundaries. WALSH described how the district could be divided into north and south, but they might have quite different feels. FAUL spoke about where jobs could be located if the Pickering area were developed as more residential. LEWIS said she doesn't like the idea of concentrating jobs in one district, like an industrial park, but rather favors having jobs spread throughout the City. Konigsmark said we need to avoid allowing a suburban office park situation; we have to do better than that. He continued he favors having two or maybe three neighborhoods. HUNT said she favors one district, with the understanding that the City will find ways to overcome the physical barrier presented by I-90. Konigsmark and FAUL both spoke of the changing nature of retail. FAUL said once ST-3 comes, that might become a very viable place for jobs. PROBALA

said light rail won't be here until 2041. Morgan said the only question we have to answer now is whether to keep this as two neighborhoods, accepting the "scar" of I-90 forever, or make one district with an aspirational vision to bridge the gap created by I-90 at some point in the future.

Niven described how the Pickering and Tibbetts Valley neighborhoods function now. He noted we can refine the actual boundaries of the neighborhoods with the Regional Growth Center district later. LEWIS said she favors one district with multiple neighborhoods. PROBALA agreed. Morgan suggested "City Center" instead of "Regional Growth Center." HUNT agreed, and said calling it the Regional Growth Center is missing the opportunity to call it something people can identify with. McGAULEY spoke in favor of the name Regional Growth Center from a marketing standpoint. Konigsmark disagreed. Lynch agreed that the name should be changed. Konigsmark suggested something more Issaquah-centric, like "Issaquah Center." WALSH suggested Valley Center, or Issaquah Valley. PROBALA asked is the consensus of the group to recommend one district, with two neighborhoods. The Commissioners said yes.

Marsh said she would like to see a roads map with mandated road crossings if there are going to be two neighborhoods, and noted that the two neighborhoods being discussed for this district have very different "feels." Kappler said the City will have to ensure that there is a massive lid built over I-90 to blend the two neighborhoods. Pereira agreed that a connection between the two neighborhoods is important, and the City needs a plan for that to happen. He said he still has concerns about what might be lost by designating just one district with two neighborhoods.

FAUL asked for an update on the Hyla area, and Niven gave a description of what is taking place and planned there.

Niven said another issue to be discussed tonight is filling in the blank in the statement, *Central Issaquah will be comprised of [how many] neighborhoods*. To answer that question, he continued, participants will need to discuss whether Western Gateway should be taken out of Central Issaquah. Before that discussion, he continued, staff would like participants to react to the question of whether *the boundaries are right for the Central Plan neighborhoods, including the highlighted area*. Niven explained the proposed boundaries for Western Gateway, Regional Growth Center, East Valley, and Confluence districts. After some discussion, the consensus was to change the boundary to exclude a small segment of East Valley.

The Commissioners discussed Gilman Village. McGAULEY said Gilman Village should be in Confluence rather than in East Valley, and gave his reasons. LEWIS reiterated that a conversation about the code would lie ahead; this is for the purpose of establishing the vision only. WALSH said she thinks there has not yet been a good community conversation about what Gilman Boulevard should become. Niven discussed the function of transitional areas. McGAULEY discussed whether the Gilman Boulevard area should be part of the Regional Growth Center district, but said he favors giving Gilman Village its own neighborhood.

FAUL asked what are the ramifications of making multiple smaller neighborhoods within the districts. Niven replied the more we dissect the whole into pieces, then each piece has to stand on its own, and gave examples. FAUL asked could Gilman Village be redeveloped if it was bought by a new owner. Niven replied yes. FAUL said he tends to think that Confluence would be a better fit for Gilman Village if we want to keep it more like it is, rather than including it in the Regional Growth Center district.

Referring to a map, LEWIS proposed changes including adding pieces of existing parcels zoned industrial-commercial to East Valley, moving Gilman Village into the Confluence district, and

moving the Regional Growth Center district line to Issaquah Creek. There was consensus on these suggestions by Commissioners.

FAUL asked about the wall behind Fred Meyer, which appears to be on unbuildable land, and asked why it is part of Central Issaquah. Niven said the land is buildable, and Heinonen gave some background on plans to develop it as affordable housing when the Central Issaquah Plan was created. Niven clarified it is private property, with property rights, and someone could build on it to the standards allowed.

Pereira agreed with the proposed boundary changes. He said he thinks the name “Regional Growth Center” is appropriate and “truth in advertising." He said he would like to see the edible trail maintained along Gilman Boulevard. Marsh said she would recommend taking the jagged edge off the hillside, and putting that property into public ownership, as well as taking it out of Central Issaquah. Kappler said the wall is ugly and on City property, and gave some history of the wall.

Niven continued staff’s questions for the Commission by asking for *feedback on the overall structure used in the district descriptions in the document (today, future, outcome, city implementing actions, and measures of success).* FAUL asked how jobs are reflected in the document; we need jobs for a strong, vibrant community, as well as services. Leeson answered his questions about the City’s jobs target, noting that the City is at 32 percent of its target goal for jobs by 2031. Niven explained how the City monitors its jobs-housing balance, and the work the City is doing now to achieve the “sweet spot” in that balance. McGAULEY noted this is a living document that will be revisited in the future and updated. FAUL said he still thinks that a discussion on jobs and levels of service should be part of this discussion and part of this document.

WALSH said she thinks the “today” portion of the statement is clear; the “future” is not as clear; the development agreements are missing; the “future” section would benefit from some visionary maps; links to other pertinent documents would be useful; the “outcome” section has too many planning ideals; details such as Sound Transit’s plans are missing; and having sample photos from the Central Issaquah Plan or development agreements would be helpful.

LEWIS said the “outcome” section is not as clear as the others. She said the “measures of success” needs a larger conversation about what we need in these neighborhoods and how to measure success as defined by the neighborhoods’ needs.

HUNT said she likes the way “outcomes” are presented, but they feel more like objectives than outcomes. She suggested using the measures of success for outcomes, and noted there appears to be some overlap between measures of success and outcomes. Niven gave staff’s perspective that “outcomes” is what developers must do, so essentially "outcomes" becomes policy direction. He gave examples of outcome and measures of success. He continued staff is open to suggestions for “outcomes”, and clarified staff’s intent was to have a piece that can be used to get the developer to take a specific action. Konigsmark said we need to clearly link outcomes to the pertinent code and/or regulation. If the policies aren’t there, he continued, we won’t get what we want. Niven said he believes that if the policy is clear enough, it can also be used to get developers to do what we want. Konigsmark gave the Atlas Apartments as an example of where we have to do better. PROBALA said most of us agree that the codes were not enforced as envisioned. We are learning, she added.

HUNT suggested including a matrix with outcomes and city actions for livability, sustainability, and so on.

WALSH that the future statement is good conceptually, but not detailed enough. She said she doesn't know exactly how, but it needs to connect with details that appear later in the document. Niven said he doesn't disagree, and will think more about that. HUNT said she likes shorter, more concise future statements. McGAULEY agreed, and said it may be a struggle but he thinks the district descriptions should be kept to one page.

Marsh said she would like to see some language that will create a specific code package that applies to each district. She said she feels uneasy because we don't know when the code will follow these visions. PROBALA suggested that could be added to PPC's work plan, with a due date attached. Kappler said he is also concerned that the moratorium will soon be over, and new codes not in place. Niven added creating new code is a big piece of this, but the task now is to update the visions. Pereira said he agrees with many of Marsh's and Kappler's remarks. His other comments included the need for some kind of trigger mechanism for when the code can change; the verbiage for outcomes and measures of success are unclear; and the document needs specific metrics to measure success.

Niven asked for specific comments on each district at this time. Among the suggestions made were the following:

Four Districts: Western Gateway

- Need reference in "Connected" to bridging the gap created by I-90
- Add wildlife corridors from Cougar Mountain to the Lake, as well as references to salmon
- Change" Distinctive-1.2" from "are regional destinations" to "are adjacent amenities and regional destinations"
- Ensure the City is in control of designing the noise wall for Western Gateway (Actions-6) and for all the districts
- Look for ways to reduce noise other using than noise walls (Actions-6)

Four Districts: Regional Growth Center

- Add reference to development agreements
- Add depictions and conceptual drawings as well as photos to help readers understand the vision
- Reference Lake Sammamish State Park, specifically details about more activity in the "Future" section
- Add reference to access and connection to East Valley in "Connected"
- Change wording in Sustainable 4.4 from "has not resulted in a loss" to "resulted in a gain"
- Make reference to preference for situating Sound Transit light rail station in I-90 right-of-way as part of the vision
- Add reference to schools, both public and charter, and incorporate the upcoming verbiage on urban schools recently approved by Council
- Reword statement "The function of Gilman Boulevard remains undecided" in "Today" to something more positive
- Add reference to increasing connections and crossings, including a lid over I-90
- Add reference to preserving wildlife corridors
- Add reference to City's Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) program and mitigation to enhance density, perhaps in the story section

Staff noted that some of the suggestions are work items for 2018 and beyond, and it would be premature to include them in this document.

Marsh said the benefit to the citizenry should be clear. She continued she recently attended some public meetings in San Francisco where the city was very clear with developers about what and where they were allowed to build, including the use of photographs to provide very specific direction. Pereira noted affordable housing is mentioned in the "Livable" section of this district, but affordable housing has to happen throughout the City. Niven said some neighborhoods are being mentioned specifically because of the Council's recent approval of inclusionary requirements.

Four Districts: East Valley

- In "Distinctive 1.2," vertical mixed use should be included as well as horizontal mixed use
- The East Lake Sammamish Trail is a better option for bicyclists than East Lake Sammamish Parkway (Livability 2.3)
- Address "(3) Create public gathering place with views of Mt. Rainier" in the "measure of success" section
- In "Measures of Success (1)," add "and SE 56th Street" to "East Lake Sammamish Parkway"

Four Districts: Confluence.

- Look at ways to develop code that would help keep the characteristics of the Confluence neighborhood intact
- Include a reference to the tree canopy

Niven explained that the tree canopy issue is likely to have a major overhaul in the near future. It is a complicated issue, he continued, and staff will think more about whether it should be included here.

FAUL spoke in favor of asking the Council for funds to hire a third-party consultant with expertise in this field to help staff create a polished document on the district visions, as well as to develop the code that would implement those visions. He gave his reasons why he thinks spending money for such expertise would be prudent. MOVED BY FAUL that PPC ask the City Council for funding to hire third-party assistance to help staff with the vision effort. MOTION FAILED for lack of a second.

Kappler said "East Valley" is not very descriptive, and suggested "East Lake." Niven asked that any suggestions for other district names be sent to staff. Marsh said how do we get across the roads; all the streets should be looked at from a pedestrian orientation. PROBALA said she agrees with Ms. Marsh, and said she expects to see code that indicates where parks will be, how traffic is affected, where houses can be built, how cars will get in and out, and so on. The City already has intersections at "F" level of service and are failing, she continued. The Central Issaquah Plan was approved with the idea that the code would be in place to enforce the vision, and we know now what can happen without clear, enforceable code.

Niven invited participants to attend the Land and Shore Committee meeting at 6:30 PM on Thursday, December 7 when the proposed visions will next be discussed, and to offer honest opinions on the district visions issue to the Committee at the meeting. After some discussion,

the Commission agreed to meet again on Thursday, December 14 to review the final district visions draft document and make a recommendation to Council.

OTHER/ADJOURNMENT
With no additional business to conduct, PROBALA adjourned the meeting at 10:25 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Lowe
Recording Secretary

(Note: Alternate Members did not vote at tonight's meeting as there was a quorum of Regular Members present.)