CITY OF ISSAQUAH
PLANNING POLICY COMMISSION
MINUTES

January 11, 2018

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.
Troy Rahmig
Carl Swedberg
Lindsey Walsh

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

CALL TO ORDER
PROBALA, Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:32 PM.

PUBLIC HEARING: AMENDMENTS REGARDING SAFE INJECTION SITES (Community Health Engagement Locations)

Presentation
Heinonen gave background on why the City is deliberating prohibiting safe injection sites from being located in the City, including the Council's decision to enact a six-month moratorium on the issue in October 2017. She gave an explanation of what a safe injection site is and how it works. She gave a brief recap of staff's research on the experience of safe injection sites elsewhere, including the decisions made to date by other jurisdictions in King County. She noted that King County is looking to identify a second "pilot" safe injection site in the County in addition to one in Seattle, and that no jurisdiction has yet volunteered to be the second "pilot" site. She explained the next steps in the City's review and deliberation process on the safe injection site issue, leading to tentative Council action on March 19.

PROBALA asked did the Council vote to prohibit a safe injection site in the City, or just decide on a moratorium. Heinonen said after the Council approved a six-month moratorium, there was language in the ordinance directing staff to draft code language specifically prohibiting safe injection site in all zones in Issaquah. She noted that SALDANHA, who is not able to attend tonight, has recommended that the matrix as shown on page 4 of 17 of Permitted Land Uses in the code specifically say "not permitted" rather than be blank. She continued the City's practice has been to either specify a "P" for "permitted" or leave the space blank for "not permitted", and SALDANHA stated it would be less confusing to specify "not permitted" than to leave the space blank. PROBALA asked would it be a significant difference. Heinonen replied no, and referred to the City's past practice. The Commissioners generally agreed that keeping the standard practice was preferred so that all uses that are now "not permitted" would need to be changed to the new format.

SWEDBERG asked why there are two amendments rather than just specifying that a safe injection site would be prohibited everywhere in the City. Heinonen said it is similar to the marijuana issue, in that the language has to appear in two locations, the land use code that applies just to central Issaquah and the code that applies to everywhere else in the City.

Public Comments
PROBALA opened the meeting for public comment at 6:43 PM.

James Dennis, Talus resident, referred to a photo of a sample safe injection site that staff showed earlier, and noted that a nurse was included in the photo. Does that mean that an onsite nurse would provide medical aid in case of an overdose situation, and would the City be liable if that overdose occurred on a site that the City had approved, he asked. He said it seems like a liability issue for the City, and it might be better if a nurse was not available there at all. Heinonen said that's a great question to which staff does not have an answer tonight.

Hearing no additional requests to speak, PROBALA closed the meeting for public comment at 6:46 PM.

Commission Deliberation
RAHMIG said he is somewhat surprised and disappointed that the City and Commissioners seem to be saying "no" so quickly to considering a safe injection site. He continued his interpretation of the Human Services Commission letter to which staff referred in its presentation on this issue is that HSC has undertaken some efforts to educate themselves on addiction issues facing our community and wishes that the City was taking more time to really understand the issue, but at the same time HSC also understands the Council's position. He continued he finds just saying "no" at this point to be a bit short-sighted. He said there are risks in trying to solve the crisis of unsafe injections and addiction, but isn't sure that just closing the door at this stage to helping solve the problem is the right action. He concluded not including a prohibition in the code does not indicate the City wants to undertake a pilot program, but saying "prohibited" does close the door to further opportunities.

SWEDBERG said he doesn't understand any argument that says illegal activities should be permitted, and supports prohibiting a safe injection site in Issaquah.

HUNT said she also read the HSC letter differently than staff has characterized it tonight. She said she agrees that Issaquah is likely not an appropriate site, but also thinks that there is a need for more education around this issue. She continued she would like to have more information available, and while the activity at the site would be illegal, people do overdose in our community and this is intended to prevent overdose situations and potentially save lives.

WALSH said her reading of the ordinance is that if the City were to take no action specifically prohibiting a safe injection site, that does not mean that a site would automatically be located in Issaquah. She said she is open to having more discussion about whether Issaquah is an appropriate site, although she thinks that the lack of supporting medical and mental health services means that the City is probably not a good candidate. The City does not have to say "no" to this now in order to eliminate it as a possibility, she said.

FAUL said he feels strongly that allowing a safe injection site in the City would create a lot of problems, and opening our doors to that possibility is taking the City down a dark and dangerous road.

PROBALA referred to Seattle's inability to solve its problems with homeless people living in tents, handling the garbage generated by tent camps, and so on, and said the City doesn't have the resources to provide the kind of help that a safe injection site would require. She said she feels

comfortable voting to prohibit a safe injection site in Issaquah, and thinks the City can take other actions, in addition to education, to address the problem.

WALSH said her understanding is that public feedback has been strongly in the direction of "no," but she does think there should be more conversation about the issue. Heinonen noted the Human Services Commission members were invited to attend tonight's meeting and explain their thinking and actions the City is already taking to help address the addiction problem. She said she will try to get more local information to PPC members on this topic.

MOVED BY FAUL, SECONDED BY WALSH that PPC recommend that the Council approve proposed amendments prohibiting safe injection sites in Issaquah. MOTION CARRIED BY A MAJORITY (4 to 1) OF PPC MEMBERS PRESENT. (FAUL, WALSH, PROBALA and SWEDBERG voted in the majority; RAHMIG voted in the minority. HUNT, Alternate, also voted in the minority.)

PUBLIC HEARING: 2018 DOCKET OF COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AMENDMENTS

Presentation
Heinonen presented the proposed 2018 docket of amendments to the Comprehensive Plan (pages 15-18 of 21). Niven clarified the reference to "compact schools" in item #6, and noted that staff will make a correction to "urban schools" to the reference in the docket. Heinonen presented two new items as follows, and noted that their inclusion will result in a renumbering of items that follow the two new items:

11. Capital Facilities Element: Update, if needed, based on 2018 update of Water System Plan
12. Update Implementation Strategies (Appendix B) for "general" and all elements

FAUL asked whether the Council's recent discussions to add law enforcement officers should be reflected in the proposed amendments. Staff explained that the data available for level of service calculations is not current, but that the Council can add officers without new data. Staff indicated they would check on whether funds for a rate study were approved by Council in the 2018 budget. FAUL asked so items 1-12 are being recommended move forward in 2018, and the original item #11 is not because the data is outdated. Heinonen said yes, although if the funding was made available in the 2018 budget by Council then some data might be available toward the end of the year.

WALSH asked about school and impact mitigation fees. Heinonen said the City and Issaquah School District are in discussions now about a better process for planning for schools.

Commissioners raised questions about other City programs and initiatives not included on the list and staff responded as follows: microcells/small cell (code is being drafted now); Lake Sammamish Development Agreement (more project-oriented than policy-oriented); Parks Plan (staff will add); the Green Necklace; a zero-traffic death initiative like Bellevue's; redevelopment of commercial business parks that would result in "no net loss" of jobs, like Redmond is doing; and ST-3 station issues (to be discussed in Council's strategy planning discussions).

Public Comments
PROBALA opened the meeting for public comment at 7:40 PM.

Connie Marsh, Squak Mountain resident, said she has questions about how information gets onto the docket and would like more information about the process, which seems awkward to her. She

raised the following issues as potential items to be included: the Shoreline Master Plan; addressing the City's Treasures; the ST-3 maintenance yard; and the Community Engagement Program.

PROBALA asked which of her suggested ideas seem most important to her. Ms. Marsh replied the Treasures, because they could disappear if they are not addressed.

Hearing no additional requests to speak, PROBALA closed the public comment period at 7:45 PM.

Commission Deliberation
PROBALA asked Niven to comment on the items mentioned by Marsh in her comments. Niven replied work on the Shoreline Master Plan may not be in done in 2018. Heinonen added it can be added as a placeholder for later years. Niven continued addressing the rail yard maintenance facility would go hand-in-hand with a conversation about a rail station, and we are not at the point for those conversations yet. He noted the Council will be having strategic planning discussions early this year, which will likely address the rail issue. He said he agrees that a new, updated discussion about the Treasures is needed, but he does not recommend adding it to the 2018 docket because the City just does not have staff resources available to add that to what is already on staff's plate for 2018. He suggested adding the Treasures to the list for 2019. He continued the Community Engagement Program is not likely to generate more policies that would need to be reflected in the Comprehensive Plan. He gave examples of changes in public involvement activities the City is already undertaking.

RAHMIG referred to item #12, Create Transportation Element Implementation Strategy, and said even though this item is recommended for postponement until 2019, he is glad to see any and all items about transportation included, as transportation continues to be a very important issue.

Leeson clarified that the Council did include funding for a rate study in its 2018 budget, so potentially some updated rate study information could be available by the end of 2018, depending on when the consultant is able to begin work. The Commissioners generally agreed that in that case, the original item #11 should be added to the docket for 2018. HUNT said she would like to begin discussions about the Treasures in 2018, recognizing that such a discussion would probably span several meetings. The Commissioners generally agreed. Heinonen noted that another public hearing on the proposed Comprehensive Plan amendments is tentatively scheduled for PPC's meeting on September 13.

MOVED BY SWEDBERG, SECONDED BY WALSH that PPC recommend approval of the 2018 Docket of Proposed Comprehensive Plan Amendments items as presented, with the addition of new items #11 and #12, and the original item #11 added to the docket for 2018. MOTION CARRIED BY UNANIMOUS VOTE OF ALL PPC MEMBERS PRESENT.

AUDIENCE COMMENTS
None.

OTHER/ADJOURNMENT
Heinonen said staff will be polling Commissioners about possibly adding Wednesday, February 28, to PPC's meeting schedule for another discussion on district visions. With no additional business to conduct, PROBALA adjourned the meeting at 8:11 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Lowe
Recording Secretary

(Note: Alternate Member(s) voted at tonight's meeting as indicated in the minutes, but the vote was not included in the final vote count as there was a quorum of Regular Members present.)