

Planning Policy Commission
4-12-18

**CITY OF ISSAQUAH
PLANNING POLICY COMMISSION
MINUTES**

April 12, 2018

City Hall South
Council Chambers

135 Sunset Way
Issaquah, WA 98027

PPC MEMBERS PRESENT	STAFF PRESENT
Joan Probala, Chair	Keith Niven, Econ. Dev. & Planning Director
Ron Faul, Vice Chair	Trish Heinonen, Long-Range Planning Mgr.
Joy Lewis	Christen Leeson, Senior Planner
Troy Rahmig	
Jon Stob	
Lindsey Walsh	
AJ McGauley, Alt.	
PPC MEMBERS NOT PRESENT	
Carl Swedberg	

CALL TO ORDER

PROBALA, Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:33 PM.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOVED BY FAUL, SECONDED BY RAHMIG that minutes of the PPC meeting on March 22, 2018 be approved as presented. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

CITYWIDE STRATEGIC PLAN: OUTREACH

This item was deferred until a future meeting.

OLDE TOWN SUBAREA PLAN UPDATE (R)

Leeson made staff's presentation. She gave some background on the work done in 2017 on the Olde Town Subarea Plan update. She explained that Council remanded this work item back to PPC for additional review and discussion in late 2017. She outlined PPC's points of discussion tonight on the draft update as (1) whether the draft captures PPC's previous intent; (2) did PPC learn anything from developing the Central neighborhood visions that might apply here; (3) are the additional Action Items helpful; and (4) should Old Route 10 from Central Issaquah be added to the Olde Town boundary.

She continued with a description of the changes made since PPC last reviewed the updated plan, and the applicable Action items for 2018 (4. *Action Program*--page 10). LEWIS asked why 3.8 in Goal I, page 17 ("Develop an opportunity for an Olde Town Community Garden"), is not scheduled to be implemented sooner. Leeson replied no location has yet been identified, but the implementation schedule could be moved up. LEWIS said there may be higher-priority items, but it seems counter-intuitive not to include items that are not car-oriented such as this one as soon as feasible. Staff made a note of it.

RAHMIG said in the goal for improving transit options in the 2018 list, it seems odd to look at parking first, then transit options later. He said he would like to see improving transit simultaneously with looking at parking. Similarly, he continued, in the 2019-2021 list (page 11),

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it states that the City will “develop strategies for minimizing impacts on regional traffic.” That is something the City is likely to always be doing, he said, and it may be something we want to include in the 2018 list so that people know the City is working on it now.

McGAULEY asked why “biking” is listed in the 2019-2021 list rather than the 2018 list (“Prepare an inventory of missing pedestrian and bicycle facilities”). Leeson replied the City plans to do a bicycle inventory in that time frame, but PPC could recommend that the schedule for completing it be moved up. WALSH asked what is the linkage between the two lists for 2018 and 2019-2021. She said she thinks the Streetscape Plan, which is on the 2019-2021 list, is very important, and would favor seeing it implemented earlier rather than later. Leeson replied the 2018 list, which was developed in 2017, lists those items that the City intends to get done this year. Niven explained how the City funds its capital projects, and how funds will be used in 2018 to accomplish the current capital funding plan. He noted that capital funding decisions are made by Council, but PPC could suggest or “lobby” for a different speed at which the Streetscape Plan is implemented.

Leeson suggested that some facets of the Streetscape Plan could be selected for an accelerated schedule. LEWIS agreed that would be a good approach. STOB noted that major projects coming up on the transportation side might also have an effect on this project, and gave examples. WALSH said pulling things out of the plan to look at possibly implementing them earlier is a great idea. Leeson said staff will send a link to the Streetscape Plan in advance of PPC’s next discussion on the Olde Town Subarea Plan Update.

STOB asked for clarification of item 5 in the 2019-2021 list (“Develop Olde Town Community Engagement Program”). Leeson explained the intent is for the City to host some community meetings where the residents of Olde Town can get together and discuss mutual concerns. LEWIS asked would those meetings be held only for Olde Town. Niven explained some neighborhoods in the City have active, well-organized homeowner associations (HOAs) and some do not. Olde Town does not, and the City has proposed that it could serve that function in terms of hosting community meetings. He added Olde Town residents also expressed interest in doing that. LEWIS noted that kind of interest may develop in other neighborhoods without HOAs over time. WALSH agreed, and said such meetings also provide the City with a way to hear directly from residents.

STOB asked for clarification of the activities included in item 6 (“Adopt Neighborhood Redevelopment Infill Toolkit”), and asked when it would be created. Leeson explained a toolkit is something that other communities have used, and would be created in the 2019-2021 time frame. In response to a comment by LEWIS, Heinonen noted the toolkit was broken out as a separate item and not included in item 10 on the 2018 list (“Implement the Housing Strategy...”) because it was not part of the Housing Strategy that the Council approved last year.

FAUL questioned why item 5 (“Make improvements to internet connectivity...”) is in the 2022-2025 list when the need for 5G service and small-cell technology will already be here. McGAULEY said the language is sufficiently vague that it could cover any code adjustments that might be needed then. Niven explained that the proposed small-cell code for the City does not allow new poles on Front Street or Gilman, or the addition of antennas to the post-and-globe poles that are already on those streets. This item acknowledges that providers may seek placing equipment on Front Street and Gilman and a code adjustment could be required, he said. LEWIS suggested it be moved to the 2019-2021 list.

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After some discussion, the consensus among PPC members was to change the language to “Support and review...” instead of “Make improvements...” and to move the item to the 2019-2021 list. McGAULEY suggested staff might want to add language along the lines of “insure cell service is adequate on Front Street.”

LEWIS said she wishes that the options mentioned in item 4 on the 2022-2025 list (“Increase mobility options such as the Trolley, shopping shuttle, etc...”) could be visited sooner. WALSH said those items will likely be addressed when the City does its parking study this year. RAHMIG referred to his earlier comment and said it would be good for residents to know that the City is looking at ways to relieve congestion as well as providing parking; they are parallel efforts. Niven suggested staff can add language about providing “out-of-area parking beyond a parking shuttle” to item 4 on the 2019-2021 list. Leeson said staff will review the language used in all the parking and traffic items on these lists before PPC’s next discussion.

Leeson showed the proposed boundaries for Olde Town on a map, and PPC members discussed the proposed inclusion of the Old Route 10 (page 29 of 201). Heinonen clarified that the City Attorney has indicated the zoning could remain “Destination Retail” within the Central Issaquah Standards until more discussions about any zoning changes could take place. McGAULEY asked would that mean that Old Route 10 properties would not be included in the Central Issaquah Plan but Central Standards would apply until the zoning question was settled. Heinonen replied yes.

PPC members asked questions about the small “pocket” area to the east. Leeson replied it is owned by WSDOT. FAUL asked about the “divot” at the southern boundary of Olde Town. Heinonen replied the boundary has been like that for a long time; the rationale may have been that the homes there were not hooked up to the City’s sewer system. PPC members asked why the high school and middle school properties are included in Olde Town. Heinonen explained that schools are considered Community Facilities, and so they were included in the boundary, like City Hall, the Community Center, the Issaquah Library and other Community Facilities.

It was the consensus of PPC members to approve the proposed boundary change as shown, including the addition of Old Route 10. Leeson said staff will bring zoning and boundary maps to the next meeting.

Leeson returned to the four objectives for tonight’s meeting, and asked does the draft capture PPC’s previous intent. The Commissioners replied yes. She asked whether anything was learned from the work on Central neighborhood visions that could be reflected here. LEWIS replied she learned that because these neighborhoods are relatively close to each other, she thinks the City can feel more justified in enforcing standards for each neighborhood, because other options are not far away. She said she also likes the format of this update and the direction it is going. WALSH suggested that the format could be more like the Central’s format for consistency and to help users. McGAULEY suggested adding references to Confluence Park. STOB suggested adding references to entrance points to Olde Town.

McGAULEY discussed the opportunities to brand Old Route 10 separately from Olde Town, and said PPC should probably have an in-depth discussion on that, with input from the community. Leeson said that topic can be added to the public hearing on the Olde Town Subarea Update. PPC members briefly discussed the advisability of a separate brand for Old Route 10 as kind of a sub-set of the Olde Town brand.

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STOB suggested also addressing the specific treasures, key properties, etc. in Olde Town in terms of making sure they are preserved. Leeson noted the list of City Treasures is in the Comprehensive Plan, and will be revisiting that list as part of the Comprehensive Plan amendments. About two-thirds of the Treasures are in Olde Town, she added. She added the branding conversation can be part of the zoning discussion as well. WALSH noted that the recently vacated Front Street Market is included in one of the photos in the update. Staff made a note of it.

AUDIENCE COMMENTS

David Kappler, 255 SE Andrews Street, Issaquah, said the City has no parking enforcement to speak of. How much money do we want to spend on creating parking garages so that people can drive into downtown, park all day and take Metro Transit. We don't want to become just a parking garage for light rail in the future, he said. He noted that the Olde Town community meetings have been mostly successful, particularly those that focused on pass-through traffic and traffic calming ideas. He said to get people to attend, specific topics have to be the focus of the meeting. He also gave his thoughts on proposed cell-tower technology, and said we need to think about view impacts and the impact in general of having the equivalent of 21 five-gallon buckets on light poles.

Kari McGill, Rowley Properties, 1595 NW Gilman Blvd., Issaquah, said the update speaks to preserving views, but it doesn't say which views, and needs more detail there. She continued she was glad to hear comments made tonight about connections from Olde Town to other areas, and noted that connections were emphasized in the district vision discussions. She said consolidation of services is also an area that could be addressed, such as consolidating garbage pick-ups, which would reduce the number of dumpsters and free up space for other purposes. She also said "cut-through" traffic needs to be better defined. For example, are people traveling from the Highlands to Talus considered "cut-through" traffic?

John Mabbott, Manager of The Grange, 145 Gilman Blvd., spoke in favor of branding the properties in Old Route 10, including The Grange, as part of Olde Town, not separately. He said few people who have lived here less than ten years have even heard of Old Route 10; they just consider properties there like The Grange to be part of Olde Town. He gave some details about The Grange's history in the City, its community sponsorship and involvement activities, and upcoming plans, such as remodeling, building a barn, putting in electric fuel-charging stations, and so on. He said we love our involvement in downtown Issaquah, and would strongly advocate to be made part of Olde Town. He said it would make for easier branding to not have a separate branding effort for Old Route 10.

Connie Marsh, Squak Mountain resident, spoke in favor of having the documents for all the subareas the same and patterned after Central Issaquah, so as tools they don't have to be relearned for each neighborhood. She said consistency would be easier for both planners when applying the standards and for the public. She also made some suggestions for changes in the format, including a park overlay that clearly shows connections to parks, different standards for different parts of the subarea, adding a festival street in the middle of Olde Town that could be closed to vehicular traffic, and more descriptions of special areas to highlight within Olde Town.

OTHER COMMENTS/SCHEDULE

McGAULEY said he agreed with comments made during public comment about tightening up references to views. FAUL said he agreed with the comment to better define cut-through traffic.

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The Commission briefly discussed ways that the Central visions document and the Olde Town Subarea Plan could be formatted to be more similar for users. WALSH said she understands that we don't necessarily want to tear either of them apart and that they are very different documents, but there is value to Marsh's observations. PROBALA said PPC members are welcome to look at the two side-by-side and forward any suggestions they have for more consistency between the documents to staff.

Heinonen noted that new PPC members will be coming on board in June. The upcoming meeting schedule will contain new member training and possibly a site tour of Olde Town, as discussed earlier in tonight's meeting. Staff will clarify the meeting schedule via e-mail to members and on the City's website.

ADJOURNMENT

With no additional business to conduct, the meeting was adjourned by PROBALA at 7:55 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.)