

Planning Policy Commission
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**CITY OF ISSAQUAH
PLANNING POLICY COMMISSION
MINUTES**

April 26, 2018

City Hall South
Council Chambers

135 Sunset Way
Issaquah, WA 98027

PPC MEMBERS PRESENT	STAFF PRESENT
Joan Probala, Chair	Trish Heinonen, Planning Policy Manager
Ron Faul, Vice Chair	Christen Leeson, Senior Planner
Troy Rahmig	
Carl Swedberg	PPC MEMBERS NOT PRESENT
Lindsey Walsh	Joy Lewis
AJ McGauley, Alt.	Jon Stob

CALL TO ORDER

PROBALA, Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOVED BY FAUL, SECONDED BY RAHMIG that minutes of the PPC meeting on April 12, 2018 be approved as presented. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

PUBLIC HEARING: PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO ISSAQUAH MUNICIPAL CODE REGARDING TRANSFER OF DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS RESULTING FROM END OF ISSAQUAH HIGHLANDS DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENT (R)

Heinonen made staff's presentation. She gave some background on King County's Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) program, from which the City developed its own TDR program. She said the amendment before the PPC tonight is very narrow, and only applies to TDRs related to replacement regulations for the Issaquah Highlands. She explained that PPC held a public hearing on ending the Issaquah Highlands Development Agreement (DA) last September, and in March of this year the Council adopted replacement regulations for the Highlands that included replacement regulations for the TDR program in the Highlands. This action is intended to make sure that the end of the Highlands DA regulations match with regulations for the City's TDR program.

She displayed a map of the proposed TDR map in 2018, both receiving and sending sites, that would result from this action. She said the actual changes would result in no additional residential density, no additional building height, and no additional impervious surface. The change would, however, put those parcels shown as TDR receiving sites on the map as potentially able to receive more density next year than is allowed under the existing zoning cap.

McGAULEY asked what is the current status of unused TDRs in the City. Heinonen said she isn't sure. McGAULEY asked would this mean that a developer would not be able to use their TDRs until next year. Heinonen replied this would only apply to any new development in the Highlands. There would be no changes to receiving sites in Central Issaquah, she clarified.

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She continued her presentation with a description of Tables 18.10.2050 (A)(2), (3), and (4) on pages 17-19 of 79. She characterized the amendment as a “clean-up amendment” required as part of the process of closing out the Highlands DA.

SWEDBERG asked what is the trigger that would change the TDR situation in a year. Heinonen said this is the map that was approved in the regulations to end the Highlands DA (“the Zoning Cap Map”). The map could change as a result of a neighborhood vision effort the Highlands will undertake next year, which could increase the zoning capacity. SWEDBERG said so this is just to recognize the potential for possible up-zoning. Heinonen replied that is correct; it functions as a sort of bookmark.

WALSH asked does this affect Lakeside Industries or its DA. Heinonen replied no. WALSH confirmed that Lakeside is a potential TDR receiving site. Heinonen replied that is correct; TDRs are addressed in their DA, and are not affected by these proposed changes.

Public Comment

PROBALA opened the meeting for public comment at 6:45 PM. Hearing no requests to speak, she closed the public hearing at 6:46 PM.

Discussion

MOVED BY FAUL, SECONDED BY SWEDBERG that the proposed amendments to Issaquah Municipal Code regarding Transfer of Development Rights Resulting from the End of the Issaquah Highlands Development Agreement, as presented in the agenda and staff comments, be forwarded to Council for approval. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

DISCUSSION: OLDE TOWN SUBAREA PLAN AMENDMENTS

Leeson made staff’s presentation. She began by recapping what PPC asked staff to do when this item was last discussed, beginning with a brief status of the Downtown Streetscape Conceptual Plan, Phases One, Two, and Three. She explained there is a proposed budget attached to each of those phases. She continued with potential activities in future phases for which funds have not yet been identified.

FAUL asked when the public has been asked whether they might be interested in donating to planting a tree, or having the City partner with a nonprofit to explore donating to the treescape. Leeson said she isn’t aware of anything like that, and made a note of it. McGAULEY asked what is the funding source for tree plantings and landscaping. Leeson said funding for Phase One activities will likely be a mix of grants and City funds. McGAULEY asked what is the intended funding for all three phases. Leeson replied grant funding, with the City contributing as much as it can.

PROBALA asked will any of the planned trees impact the flow of traffic. Leeson replied no. PROBALA asked what about parking. Leeson replied parking will be slightly impacted because of the addition of bulb-outs and safe-pedestrian crossings, but the impact will be minimal.

WALSH said enhanced crossings are addressed at Alder and in other places, and asked are those included in the activities shown on staff’s slides tonight. Leeson replied they are part of the details in the plan, and what we are showing you tonight is the broad outline of the planned enhancements.

PROBALA asked when will Phase One, Two, and Three take place. Leeson replied Phase One was originally proposed for the fall of 2018, and now some of that work has been pushed out to

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2019. The remaining work in Phase One, Phase Two and Three will take place begins beyond six years. FAUL asked why is the work being pushed out so far. Leeson explained the funding issues, and how the work was prioritized. WALSH asked should the urgency to have this work done, specifically identifying funding, something that PPC should address with the Council. Leeson replied that is an action PPC could take. PROBALA said she would like to see all the work moved up. Others agreed.

McGAULEY said it's important not to let this plan go stale while we are waiting for funding and then have to redo it in five years. He said he isn't inclined to meddle with all the great design work that is contained in the plan. Leeson reiterated PPC is being asked to look at the proposed work and how it is phased, not the design, and see if there are any suggestions they want to make to Council. McGAULEY asked where is the phasing located in the document. Leeson referred to page 47 and the following pages.

FAUL asked why all the tree plantings planned for Phases One and Two couldn't be done in Phase One. Heinonen explained it's a sequencing issue; trees in Phase Two will be planted after the renovation work of Alder Street has been done. Leeson explained how a woonerf there will work.

McGAULEY said there is a reference to a LID (local improvement district) on page 47. He added this work will add a lot of value to the surrounding property and a LID seems appropriate. Leeson said a fiscal study needs to be done to see what the best funding mechanisms would be, of which a LID is a possibility. McGAULEY said a feasibility study to identify a permanent source of funding should be done first.

WALSH said she is somewhat surprised no one is here from the DIA (Downtown Issaquah Association) to discuss what could make a big difference for downtown Issaquah. Heinonen said she thinks that the DIA hopes the phases will go ahead as planned.

RAHMIG said his general impression is that he would like to see the streetscape work in Phases One and Three prioritized over work on the festival street. WALSH said the streetscape work in Phase Three between Alder and Dogwood is \$2.3 million, whereas the \$1.3 million for the festival street might get the downtown community excited and that work would be more likely to get done. McGAULEY asked why is work on the stretch between Alder and Dogwood so much more expensive to accomplish. Leeson explained the additional infrastructure work, such as irrigation, that needs to be done in addition to the streetscape enhancement work.

McGAULEY asked does anything here directly impact safety. Leeson replied yes, the crosswalks. McGAULEY said pulling that work forward makes sense if it will improve public safety. Leeson explained how work on sidewalks, for example, needs to be scheduled so that sidewalks are not having to be ripped up and done again. Again it is a sequencing issue, she stated. McGAULEY said he understands that, but would favor "safety first" when possible. Staff made a note of it.

FAUL asked clarifying questions about what years the phases will take place. He said he is concerned about an economic decline due to a cyclical market which could result in the need to push out some of these projects three to six years. That would mean they could be pushed out indefinitely if they are scheduled for completion during the downturn.

Leeson said PPC can make suggestions to Council about prioritizing any of the work or the phasing. WALSH said she would like to push up the "Welcome to Issaquah Gateway" sign.

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McGAULEY said it should be positioned to acknowledge the inclusion of Old Route 10 as part of Olde Town. PROBALA said it will probably go where it is feasible in terms of sight lines and safety.

McGAULEY said looking at funding is probably more important than looking at sequencing.

PROBALA said she assumes that the Olde Town Subarea Plan update's authors looked at what needs to be done and in what order, and she doesn't want to pull out smaller bits of work that would mean having to redo them later. She said her concern is making sure the plan is "top shelf," not forgotten, and receives funding sooner than six years from now if possible. FAUL agreed. He said he would like to add specific year commitments to the phases in order to make the timeline more specific. McGAULEY said he's not sure how useful that is if the funding hasn't been identified. WALSH said it may be a little bit of an empty gesture but it seems important to put dates on the action plan, as well as making the funding study a priority. RAHMIG said 2019-2021 for Phase One, 2020-2022 for Phase Two, and so on is more realistic, with two years per phase as a target.

SWEDBERG asked has the City taken any steps toward a LID, or a BID (Business Improvement District). Leeson replied no. SWEDBERG asked who initiates that process. Leeson replied the City's Public Works Department upon direction from Council. SWEDBERG said relying on grants isn't a very certain method of getting funding, and it seems that the City should be doing something to initiate a LID or BID process. Heinonen briefly described what steps the City would need to take. WALSH asked are there any current LIDs that Olde Town property owners are paying now. Leeson replied no; there have been in the past, but the last one ended several years ago. WALSH noted a parking solution for downtown, which has come up in recent conversations, could potentially require a LID as well. She questioned whether competing dollars from LID sources could be a concern. McGAULEY said he would favor keeping them separate; parking is a big, citywide concern.

Leeson suggested including "begin discussions and/or research on a potential LID" in the 2019-2021 work plan. McGAULEY suggested "identify a permanent source of funding" in the 2018-2019 time frame. PROBALA said this would be a long process, including working with the business community.

FAUL noted all phases of this work will be very disruptive to Front Street, and asked if we don't have the money to do all the work in all three phases now, and it has to be phased, is there any net savings to be gained by waiting until we have all the money and can do the work all at once. Leeson said her guess is that funding is the issue. McGAULEY said that's FAUL's point; is it worth it to just wait until the funding is available from, say, a LID, and do all the work at once. Leeson said that would be part of the consultant's funding and feasibility study.

WALSH said one of the "Next Steps" on page 48 is "*Economic Development staff and the Finance Department will need to perform a financial study to further explore funding mechanisms and recommend a funding path.*" She said it sounds like that is what the Commission would like to be brought into Phase 1. After some discussion, the Commission agreed that the item should be reworded as "2018-2019: Perform a financial study to identify funding for all phases."

Leeson continued her presentation on plan edits to "Quality of Life and Plan Framework." PROBALA clarified that the "e" in "Olde Town" is being retained. Staff replied that is correct. Leeson continued with a new definition of "cut-through traffic" and edits to the Short

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Term and Longer Term action program. Commissioners offered minor edits. She also addressed edits that have not been incorporated yet into the plan but which will be in the next iteration of the plan.

McGAULEY suggested that preserving specific views, particularly the view of Mt. Rainier from Front Street, should be addressed. He spoke in favor of addressing specifically which views we want to protect, and said he is looking for more specifics than exist in Sections 3.2 and 3.3 of the plan. WALSH said going south toward Squak Mountain on Front Street, being able to see Squak Mountain is an important view.

PROBALA said she hopes that if all the possible views aren't illuminated and specifically called out in this plan, that doesn't mean those views will be lost. Heinonen said the only views the City can protect are views from a public street or public property. FAUL suggested adding views of Poo Poo Point on Tiger Mountain from Front Street.

The Commission discussed other possible views to add, and it was the consensus to specify views of Squak, Mt. Rainier, and possibly Tiger in the plan. WALSH said views should be added from parks, such as Confluence. McGAULEY suggested adding this item to the PPC tour of downtown Issaquah and Olde Town scheduled for May 24.

Leeson continued her presentation on the plan edits not yet addressed, including the Treasures. She said the Treasures are currently noted under policy 1.4. WALSH said she would like to see the Treasures called out in the plan. McGAULEY suggested referring to them in a reference/link to the current list in the Comprehensive Plan.

WALSH suggested adding something about Old Route 10 to the wayfinding section. Leeson suggested waiting to develop a policy until after the tour. She said another item for the tour will be Olde Town's boundaries, and displayed a map. McGAULEY said the parcels south of Clark on Front Street should also be addressed after the tour.

Leeson explained the steps that staff will take to address outstanding issues on the Olde Town Subarea Plan update between now and the public hearing on June 14.

FAUL asked about inclusion of the "notched" area on the southern boundary of Olde Town. Heinonen gave some background about why the boundary was established that way, specifically so that the bus barn and school were included because they were community facilities. WALSH said there was some question about sewer service there, and noted we can look at that on the tour as well. FAUL asked could the School District purchase the land. Staff said that would be a question for the Issaquah School District to address.

CITYWIDE STRATEGIC PLAN: OUTREACH

Heinonen gave some background on the City's outreach efforts to collect input for preparing a strategic plan for the City, its priorities, and its future. She continued with an explanation of the strategic plan planning process; the purpose of the strategic plan; how the plan will be used; why the City is doing this; and outreach efforts. She described the activities to take place in Phases 1, 2, and 3 of the Issaquah Strategic Plan Process.

SWEDBERG asked how many people will be asked to participate in this outreach effort. Heinonen said as many as possible. SWEDBERG said from his experience, he suspects that the Council will get the results and say, "these aren't the results we want." Other Commissioners had comments about the process. Heinonen said staff's direction is to follow the

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established protocol for this effort, and follow the process that has been established. Audience member Ken Esemann, Talus resident, was invited to participate in the discussion. Heinonen said staff will record the responses to five questions on a whiteboard, as follows:

- What do you value about Issaquah?
- What aspirations do you have for Issaquah in the next 15-20 years?
- Why are those aspirations important?
- What are the challenges we face in reaching those aspirations?
- What changes are needed to reach those aspirations?

Heinonen thanked PPC members for their responses and briefly explained how the responses will be used in developing a Citywide Strategic Plan. She also referred to an anonymous written survey in the agenda packet and on the City's website, and invited participants to complete the form, either online or on paper.

AUDIENCE COMMENTS

Ken Esemann, Talus resident, 2473 NW Stoney Creek Drive, said he was interested in earlier comments about the importance of views of the Issaquah Alps to Commissioners. He said he'd like to address the Bergsma parcel tonight, and described where it is located on Cougar Mountain. He said he and many others would like the City to buy that parcel, and explained what is planned there by a developer and how it will put a huge scar on Cougar Mountain. He quoted from the Comprehensive Plan about protecting forested areas and views, and said the Comp Plan appears to be an aspirational document only with no teeth. Why is the City working with a developer to put a project on Bergsma that will destroy many acres of forested hillside, and why does it take hundreds of residents getting together with petitions and signs expressing their objections to the project to get the City to see that the project isn't in keeping with what is in the Comp Plan. He said staff will say it is because they are just following what is in the Municipal Code. He continued his former question is a rhetorical question; his real question is when is this Commission going to translate what is in the Comprehensive Plan into the Municipal Code, with some real teeth behind it.

ANNOUNCEMENTS/OTHER/ADJOURNMENT

With no additional business to conduct, the meeting was adjourned by PROBALA at 8:45 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.)