

**CITY OF ISSAQUAH
Planning Policy Commission**

6:30 PM
February 28, 2019

MINUTES

Council Chambers
135 E. Sunset Way

COMMISSION AND ADMINISTRATIVE PERSONNEL PRESENT

Commissioners Present:

Joan Probala, Chair
Ron Faul, Vice Chair
Bill Rinehart
Jason Voiss, Alt. (Voting as Regular Member)

Administration/Staff:

Christen Leeson, Senior Planner
Keith Niven, Econ Dev & Dev Svc Dir
Emily Arteche, Senior Planner

Commissioners Not Present (Excused):

Troy Rahmig
Joy Lewis

1. CALL TO ORDER

PROBALA, Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:31 PM.

2. PUBLIC HEARING

a) Proposed Amendments to IMC 18.06.130, Table of Permitted Land Uses (D)

Presented by:

Christen Leeson, Senior Planner

Staff Presentation

Leeson made an update on why the City is proposing a change in the land use code to no longer allow new duplexes and the use of the City's cluster housing provision in areas zoned Single-Family Suburban (SF-S). She noted this proposal would not change the code's provisions for Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs). She continued her presentation with an explanation of the affected areas, shown on a map; how potentially affected property owners were notified; why the City is undertaking this proposed change; the specific change in the code language, including to the permitted use table; impacts of the proposed change; and next steps in the review process, leading to anticipated Council action on May 20, 2019.

Public Comments

PROBALA opened the meeting for public comment at 6:36 PM. Leeson noted that to date, staff has received 34 comments from the public by phone and email, and the Commissioners have been informed about all of those comments.

Michael Leake, 195 Mt. Si Place NW, Issaquah, spoke about his perspective on the growth he has seen in the City over the years. He expressed his support for the proposed amendment and said the change is overdue.

Bill Werner, 1104 Lewis Lane SE, Issaquah, said he is not in favor of the proposed amendment for two reasons. One, he doesn't think the government should be providing more oversight about what individual property owners can do with their own property; and two, the hoops the City makes people jump through is already mind-boggling. He spoke against the restrictions he feels the City places on developers. He also noted that the City needs to address traffic

problems, including readdressing the SE Bypass. He spoke in favor of allowing people to maximize their financial dreams and investments.

Ed Erickson, 1434 Sycamore Drive SE, Issaquah, said he respectfully disagrees with the last speaker, and spoke in favor of open spaces, green spaces, and preserving the beautiful natural setting of Issaquah. He said eliminating duplexes in his Sycamore neighborhood would be advantageous to Sycamore residents and the community generally, and he fully supports the amendment.

Geraldine Carey, 955 17th NW, Issaquah, commended the City of this proposal to limit duplexes in suburban areas. She said she doesn't want to see more density in suburban areas, particularly not allowing two houses where previously there was only one, and to do so would further downgrade our living environment. She said she supports the proposal.

Alan E. Erickson, 1670 Brookside Drive SE, Issaquah, said he concurs with Mr. Erickson's comments and fully supports the proposal. He said the large multi-family structures allowed in some neighborhoods have damaged those neighborhoods significantly.

Leif Steffny, 385 E. Sunset Way, Issaquah, spoke against the proposal. He said property owners should be able to develop their property as they see fit, particularly as some people have purchased their property as a retirement investment. He also said he doesn't think the government needs to keep regulating what property owners can do with their own property. He also noted that big property developments like the Highlands are allowed to go forward but small-scale developments by individuals are not.

Joe Verner, 1230 Oakwood Place, Issaquah, said he supports the proposal.

Tony Pydych, 395 Mine Hill Road SW, Issaquah, said as an architect who has worked closely with developers for many years, he supports this proposal. He spoke in favor of the City taking actions to direct higher density in specific areas, and spoke of the real threat that allowing higher density poses to residential communities. He spoke about the importance of preserving Issaquah's unique qualities and character. He also said he feels there is room for additional City oversight of the design of buildings going up in this community, and gave examples. Additional building design oversight would benefit everyone, he stated, because design matters.

Bill McNiel, 1380 Sycamore Drive SE, Issaquah, spoke about his concern for how property owners who are not able to develop their property as they envisioned when they first bought it will be compensated by the City for their loss of potential income. He said in his opinion, the City has let development run amok and there is no character left in the City. He also said it's incredible that the City passed up the opportunity to build a SE Bypass.

Leslye Lewis, 185 SW Francis Lane, Issaquah, described her neighborhood and said she doesn't want to see what happened in Bellevue happen here in Issaquah. We have to say "stop" to development, she continued, and said she supports the proposal. Traffic is already bad, she noted, and urged the Commission to take this action to protect what makes the City special.

David Chryst, 23810 SE 59th, Issaquah, said like many people, he was attracted to the City's beautiful surroundings and open space, and that is why he moved to Issaquah. He continued beauty and open space to him means relatively low density. One positive aspect of this

proposal, he said, is that it will help protect the character of SF-F neighborhoods, and he hopes it is a small step in considering lowering or restricting density in other zones as well. He said he fully supports the proposal.

Dave Hitchner, 990 Pickering Place NW, Issaquah, said he's not sure what is driving this proposal. Cluster homes and duplexes generally require less materials and a smaller footprint than single-family homes, and they also tend to be more affordable. He said he doesn't understand why the City would want to make this change.

Bill Werner, 1104 Lewis Lane SE, Issaquah, asked staff to answer a specific question about how this proposal might affect the owner of a 15,000 square-foot SF-F lot. Leeson replied this proposal would restrict duplexes to cluster housing only, and cluster housing requires a lot of two acres or more. However, the minimum lot size for a single-family home is 6,000 square feet, and the property owner of a 15,000-square-foot lot could subdivide their lot into two parcels and a single-family home would be possible on both parcels.

Jeff Hostetter, 345 SW Mt. Baker Drive, Issaquah, said as a resident of Issaquah for the last 23 years, he doesn't agree with a previous speaker that the quality of life in Issaquah is gone. He said he still has the same wonderful neighborhood that he moved into, with open spaces, and doesn't think it is lost. He said he supports and applauds the proposal, and that there are other neighborhoods with clustered housing if someone wants to live in clustered housing.

Leslie Pantuso, 355 SW Mt. Baker Drive, Issaquah, said she supports the proposal. She continued that she has seen the character of the City deteriorate, and spoke of the qualities she likes about living in Issaquah, including the wildlife, open space, natural setting, and so on.

Hearing no requests to make additional comments, PROBALA closed the public hearing at 7:12 PM.

Commission Discussion

PROBALA said she appreciates hearing the different opinions expressed tonight. She said the City is trying very hard to preserve the qualities about Issaquah that we all appreciate, and while she doesn't like to have the government tell private citizens what they can do, either, sometimes it works.

VOISS also thanked everyone for coming and expressing their viewpoints. He noted a strong majority of those who spoke tonight, as well as the comments and phone calls that staff gathered and forwarded to the Commission, are in favor of the amendment. That doesn't mean that the arguments against it are not valid or important, he continued, but a majority of our citizens appear to feel that this proposal moves us closer to the City's vision of putting more density into central Issaquah.

FAUL said speaking to the point about investment value, a move to limit duplexes and more density in neighborhoods that are already single-family could actually result in higher property values. He said he can support the proposed amendment. PROBALA agreed. The City needs diversity in housing, she noted, but having a smaller number of SF-F neighborhoods will make the value of those homes increase tremendously. As a realtor, she said, she doesn't see this as resulting in a devaluation of any property in affected neighborhoods.

RINEHART also thanked those who offered comments tonight, and said he joined PPC as a way to help the City design better solutions to its growth problems, and shares some of the comments expressed tonight about growth run rampant. He said he applauds the City's idea here to direct growth where we know it can be sustained, and supports the amendment.

Commission Decision

MOVED BY FAUL, SECONDED BY RINEHART that PPC recommend Amendment 1, amending IMC 18.06.130 Table of Permitted Land Uses, as an amendment to the Issaquah Municipal Code, and forward a recommendation for approval to Council. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY, 4-0.

3. OTHER BUSINESS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

- a) *Upcoming Schedule:* No announcements.

4. AUDIENCE COMMENTS

None.

5. ADJOURNMENT

PROBALA noted that PPC is actively seeking new members for the upcoming term, and directed anyone interested in applying to the City's web site. With no additional business to conduct, PROBALA adjourned the meeting at 7:21 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Lowe
Recording Secretary