

CITY OF ISSAQUAH
Planning Policy Commission

6:30 PM
 May 23, 2019

Council Chambers
 135 E. Sunset Way

MINUTES

COMMISSION AND ADMINISTRATIVE PERSONNEL PRESENT

Commissioners:

Ron Faul, Vice Chair

Randy Harrison

Bill Rinehart

Jason Voiss

Robin Beukers, Alt. (voting as regular member)

Thomas Haskins, Alt. (voting as regular member)

Commissioners Not Present (Excused):

Joan Probala, Chair

Janice Carle

Joy Lewis

Administration/Staff:

Trish Heinonen, Policy Planning Manager

Doug Yormick, Assistant Planner

Lucy Sloman, Land Development Mgr.

Others Present:

Maria Sandercock, State Department of Ecology

CALL TO ORDER

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- a) MOVED BY RINEHART, SECONDED BY BEUKERS that minutes of the meeting on May 9, 2019, be approved as presented. MOTION CARRIED, 6-0.

PUBLIC HEARING(S)

- a) **Amendments to Shoreline Master Program, as referenced by IMC 18.10.940, (R)**

Presented by:

Doug Yormick, Assistant Planner

Staff Presentation

Yormick made staff's presentation on the 2019 Shoreline Master Program (SMP) Update. He noted this update will be discussed at tonight's meeting and also continued to the PPC meeting on June 13, 2019. He gave some background on the SMP; Issaquah's shoreline jurisdiction map; a short history of City activities that have had an effect on the SMP since it was last updated in 2013; the purpose of the periodic update; and what the periodic update does not do. FAUL asked Yormick to elaborate on the statement that the update "*will not re-evaluate the ecological baseline established in 2013.*" Yormick said this update is not a re-evaluation of the shorelines that were established in the 2013 plan, which established current conditions. This update can only improve upon that baseline, such that there is no net loss to what was established in 2013.

Yormick continued his presentation on SMP policy changes, stating that tonight's discussion will focus on the policies. He noted the changes being proposed will make changes in the SMP to be consistent with other City goals and the zoning code, remove policies already mandated by State regulations, and make grammatical changes. He said the City's consultant on this project, The Watershed Company, will be available at the June 13 meeting to answer any questions from the Commission and have an in-depth discussion about the amendments.

Yormick continued his presentation on the timeline for the SMP update and next steps, leading to final submittal to the State's Department of Ecology by September 2019. He noted tonight's public hearing will be continued to PPC's June 13 meeting. He proposed that tonight's discussion focus on the seven items listed on page 11 of 149 in the agenda packet. The Commissioners agreed. FAUL added Commissioners can also e-mail any questions they would like answered directly to staff in advance of the next meeting.

In discussing the goal and six policies listed on page 11, the Commissioners made the following comments and suggestions.

Page 58 of 149, 3.3.1, Goal. BEUKERS suggested eliminating "*Parks and Recreation vision*" in favor of just a reference to the City's vision. Staff made a note of it. VOISS asked is the reference to "*a vibrant parks trail system within the city, neighborhood, and regional lands*" part of the City's vision. Heinonen replied that would be part of the Parks Strategic Plan, which PPC reviewed last year, and is used here for consistency. Sloman noted this is a vision; the City hasn't reached it yet but rather is moving toward the vision in the Parks Strategic Plan.

Pages 85-86 of 149, 5.5, Water Quality. RINEHART asked why references to erosion and sedimentation controls are shown as being struck out. Yormick replied those controls are already required in Issaquah's code (IMC16.26.050), so striking a reference to them here is not eliminating them. RINEHART asked does this refer to erosion and sediment control by planting vegetation and other methods. Yormick replied those would be post-development methods; this refers to controls as construction is taking place.

Pages 85 of 149, 5.5.1, Water Quality, Policies. FAUL initiated a discussion about the use of "shall" vs. "should" in response to a comment by BEUKERS. The Commissioners noted that "should" can almost be read as synonymous with "recommended," and lacks force of being required. Sloman noted that the definition of "should" is on page 24 of 149, #99, for the purposes of this manual, and explained the circumstances under which "should" might be more appropriate than "shall." After additional discussion, the Commissioners agreed that "should" is acceptable in items 2 and 3, but item 1 should be changed to "must." Staff made a note of it.

Page 95 of 149, 5.11, Parking. Yormick noted item #4 was eliminated as a result of the stormwater engineer's review of this document, who determined that Issaquah's high water tables makes LID (Low Impact Development) techniques and/or pervious materials in parking facilities an undesirable practice. RINEHART asked would this apply to all of Issaquah, not just the high water table area. Yormick replied it would apply to just the shoreline jurisdiction area; elsewhere, other standards would apply.

Page 122 of 149, 6.2, Public Recreational Use and Development, and other references. FAUL asked for clarification of the change from "launches" to "ramps," Yormick gave the rationale for the change. VOISS said "ramp" seems a more appropriate, broader term. Heinonen agreed.

Page 133 of 149, 7.3, Public Recreational Use and Development, Wayfinding. The Commissioners discussed what "encourage" means in this context ("*Wayfinding signage should be encouraged...*"). Sloman explained the City is undertaking a wayfinding and branding program this year to take a comprehensive look at all the City's signage, and said staff has just started that work. BEUKERS asked is the intent here to increase trail usability, or increase people's use of the trails. Yormick replied in keeping with the Parks Strategic Plan, it means having trails clearly identified, which in turn would encourage usage. BEUKERS suggested a stronger, more policy-driven word that "encourage." Staff made a note of it.

The Commissioners discussed the implications of what a change to “improving navigation” instead of “increase trail usability” would be. RINEHART said “improve navigation” seems too narrow, whereas usability can mean lots of things. Others agreed. HARRISON asked whether the widespread use of maps and wayfinding information available on cell phones has any implications for signage. RINEHART and VOISS noted that not all users carry cell phones, and cell phone coverage is not 100-percent reliable. HASKINS said proper signage could also help sustainability of trails by keeping people from improperly cutting switchbacks and so on.

HARRISON asked whether the City is considering signs in languages in addition to English as part of its wayfinding and signage project. Sloman replied that’s a good question, and said staff will pass the comment along to the group working on wayfinding and signage. FAUL noted multiple languages may become more important as the City increasingly seeks to be recognized as a tourist destination. HARRISON noted that Metro Transit’s new service to trailheads will also increase patronage of trails. Sloman agreed there are a variety of reasons for improving signage and wayfinding to help people navigate around the City. The Commissioners agreed that 7.3, #7, “*Wayfinding...*” on page 133 of 149 is an important issue for the City. Staff made a note of it.

PUBLIC COMMENT

FAUL opened the meeting for public comment at 7:23 PM. No comments were offered. FAUL said the public comment period will be continued to the June 13, 2019 PPC meeting.

Commissioner Discussion

Yormick asked for additional questions or comments. BEUKERS referred to proposed changes in buffers and wetlands as described in Table 3.1, and asked how changes would impact landowners whose property will be affected by these changes, such as property values. Yormick replied the State has mechanisms to address that, specifically a shoreline variance that would allow development and “reasonable use” to continue. He added no buffer changes are being discussed as part of this update. Potential wetland standards changes are being discussed internally now.

HARRISON asked how State and county regulations come into play with regard to buffers, and noted that the City would not be able to allow changes that would conflict with State and county buffer definitions. Sandercock explained the State’s role, including the use of Best Available Science and the State’s role for permitting a variance.

BEUKERS said looking at page 24 of 149, “*In order to utilize these updated wetland buffers, applicants are required to implement wetland minimization measures (see Table 3.4)*”..., what happens if mitigation isn’t possible. Yormick said that is part of what is being discussed internally now. Staff is working with Ecology to get its guidance on what this would mean for City residents. Sloman added we are weighing which of two choices would be most appropriate for our City. She explained the two choices, and spoke to the integral relationship between the shoreline regulations and the critical wetlands regulations, although they are two separate documents. She continued in the process of updating the land use section of the IMC (Issaquah Municipal Code), the SMP will reference the land use code, so we won’t have to change the SMP as a result of choosing between the two options.

BEUKERS asked for clarification of page 39 of 149, #4, “*The regulatory provisions of this Program are limited to shorelines of the State, whereas the planning functions of this Program may extend beyond the designated shoreline boundaries.*” Yormick replied if a property is partly within the shoreline boundary and partly outside of it, and development activity doesn’t touch the shoreline property, then the planning functions of the program would apply.

BEUKERS said the statement on page 41 of 149, #4, “*Classification of a use or development...*” is not clear. Yormick said this is intended to address a scenario where some function may be allowed by some underlying zoning but not allowed within the shoreline jurisdiction. Sloman said this is intended to indicate that a use or development would be subject to review and approval by the City and/or Ecology, and that conditions may apply.

RINEHART asked what are the next steps in the review process. Yormick replied we expect Ecology to complete its review by the end of July, and for the City Council Land and Shore Committee and Council to review the plan in August and September, with Council action anticipated by September. RINEHART asked if the SMP update be presented again to PPC as a result of changes made by Ecology. Sloman replied no, only if the changes were significant. She continued, if the version approved by the Council was basically consistent with what was presented to PPC, then it would not come back to PPC for another review. She added rather than take time at the next meeting to discuss any typos, grammatical issues, punctuation suggestions, and so on, staff requests that Commissioners submit any concerns of that nature directly to staff so that the meeting time can be used to discuss policy questions and technical issues.

BEUKERS asked does staff compile an inventory of properties that would be potentially impacted by changes as a result of the SMP update, and do you take that into consideration in your deliberations. Yormick replied yes; we are doing that work now. We are looking at a list of corridors, which properties would be affected, and so on. RINEHART added the City also undertakes a public notification process that informs property owners of potential land use changes that could affect their property.

HARRISON referred to a recent study on the effect of municipal runoff on Coho fry, and said his understanding is that the State is continuing to look at regulatory changes for both shoreline and wetlands areas as a result. Sandercock agreed, and briefly described the State’s stormwater regulations and manual. Ecology does periodically issue updates to its manuals, and the cities update theirs to be consistent with Ecology’s.

OTHER BUSINESS / ANNOUNCEMENTS

None.

AUDIENCE COMMENTS

None.

ADJOURNMENT

With no other business to conduct, FAUL adjourned the meeting at 7:57 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Lowe
Recording Secretary