

**CITY OF ISSAQUAH
Planning Policy Commission**

6:30 PM
July 11, 2019

Council Chambers
135 E. Sunset Way

MINUTES

COMMISSION AND ADMINISTRATIVE PERSONNEL PRESENT

Commissioners:

Joan Probala, Chair
Ron Faul, Vice Chair
Janice Carle
Joy Lewis
Randy Harrison
Bill Rinehart
Jason Voiss
Robin Beukers, Alt.

Administration/Staff:

Trish Heinonen, Policy Planning Manager
Christen Leeson, Senior Planner

Commissioners Not Present (Excused):

Thomas Haskins, Alt.

CALL TO ORDER

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a. MOVED BY RINEHART, SECONDED BY VOISS that minutes of the PPC meeting on June 13, 2019 be approved as presented. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY, 7-0.

REGULAR BUSINESS

a) **Public Meeting - Amendments to Issaquah's Comprehensive Plan Land Use and Transportation Elements, (I)**

Presented by:

*Trish Heinonen, Policy Planning Manager
Christen Leeson, Senior Planner*

Heinonen began staff's presentation on the proposed amendments to the Comprehensive Plan to be discussed tonight. She gave some background on work done previously in 2019 to develop a docket of proposed Comp Plan amendments. She displayed the docket for the proposed Land Use Element amendment (page 43 of 87) and briefly described the annual updates to the adopted state housing target, population and household projections, and the adopted state job target.

LEWIS asked whether the City is tracking its progress in achieving the "missing middle" of housing availability and jobs. Heinonen explained how progress is estimated for housing and how "covered employment" is tracked in such a way that privacy is still protected. Leeson said the estimates sometimes differ depending on the source of the data. Heinonen said the City's Economic Development staff may have more details.

BEUKERS noted the City's housing and jobs progress as a regional growth center does not have a set time frame within which the assumptions must be met (page 12). Heinonen replied that is correct. She explained that the state's targets for the City, which are agreed upon by the state, the county, and the City, are citywide targets that must be met by 2031. The City's targets as a regional growth center, however, are set by the Puget Sound Regional Council, and do not have a deadline. She explained that the City laid out its plan for growth in central Issaquah

when it applied to be a regional growth center, and agreed to a certain number of housing and jobs, but there was no “due by” date established.

VOISS said the City has achieved about 88 percent of its housing unit targets, and is about 53 percent through the established timeline of 2006-2031. How does the City view that, he asked, and did that have any influence on establishing a moratorium on development in the City. Heinonen replied the Council will continue to discuss the target and timeline when the annual Central Issaquah Monitoring Report for 2018 is published later this year. She noted the reason the Council enacted a moratorium a few years ago was NOT due to the housing growth, but because the growth the City was experiencing was not what the Council had expected. So, Council enacted a moratorium on certain types of development to address: architectural fit; urban design elements; vertical mixed use; affordable housing; structured parking; and district visions.

The moratorium was lifted in mid 2018. HARRISON noted there was also a significant explosion in growth following resolution of the economic downturn that began around 2008, and a lot of applications were rather suddenly received by the City. Heinonen agreed, and gave more background about the dry spell in housing development that began around 2008.

PROBALA asked Heinonen to explain why the City chose Central Issaquah for the next allotment of growth, and the reasons why the City sought designation as a regional growth center. Heinonen continued her presentation on Table L-5, Population and Household Projections, and explained how the population number from the State Office of Financial Management is used in forecasting. VOISS noted the population number for the Highlands is the same from 2030 to 2040. Heinonen explained the number is considered capped and is now a specific number, as is the number for Talus, because the development agreements for the Highlands and Talus ended last year, with each development having a specific growth entitlement.

BEUKERS referred to Table L-5 (page 36 of 87) and asked why the population forecast for “Central Issaquah outside the urban core” (7,268) is different than the number just shown in staff’s presentation (7,750). Heinonen noted both are projections based on best estimates and are unlikely to be precisely correct. Leeson noted the 7,268 estimate in Table L-5 is a projection used for forecasting and the 7,750 estimate is estimated capacity based on what the City’s zoning would allow.

Heinonen continued her presentation on proposed amendments as shown on page 43 of 87, and explained staff’s reasons for keeping a reference to the Shoreline Master Program in the Comprehensive Plan (#3b). She continued with an explanation of the proposed changes to the Mountains to Sound Greenway goals (#3d). She noted that Kristi Tripple, Rowley Properties, submitted a letter to PPC (previously distributed) that addresses some of the implementation issues that could arise from the policies in the Land Use Element, including signage along I-90. The Commissioners generally agreed the letter raised some very good points and briefly discussed signage along I-90.

BEUKERS asked for clarification about the PPC’s role in reviewing the amendments to the Comprehensive Plan. Heinonen explained PPC’s role is to advise and make recommendations on creating clear policies for the City that guide implementation through City code and regulations. BEUKERS questioned whether the word “encourage” should be used. Heinonen said staff agrees that “encourage” is appropriate for a policy document but is not appropriate in code language because it is too open to interpretation.

PROBALA asked about staff's progress on working on the City's signage code. Heinonen replied it is on staff's work plan for this year. PROBALA suggested that Tripple's letter be included in the sign code discussions. Staff made a note of it.

FAUL initiated a discussion of a "Welcome to Issaquah" type of sign on I-90 that would promote businesses in the City for a cost to participants, and which would also help guide motorists to patronize local businesses. The Commission briefly discussed this idea. Staff made a note to share it with Economic Development staff.

Leeson made staff's presentation on the proposed Comp Plan amendments to the Transportation Element. She noted the proposed changes are not extensive this year because the City is embarking on establishing a Mobility Master Plan. She explained proposed amendments to the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and transportation concurrency (#1a and #1b, page 43 of 87).

LEWIS asked clarifying questions about impact/mitigation fees (pages 49 and 59 of 87). Heinonen explained that staff is working on that with Council now; all fees are expected to increase except general government buildings mitigation fees. A Council decision is expected in September, and Parks impact fees will be addressed in November. HARRISON asked how the City's impact fee structure compares with other similar jurisdictions in the region. Heinonen explained the City is consistently in the middle—not at the top and not at the bottom—and gave more details.

HARRISON referred to "by policy and regulation, the City of Issaquah is required to ensure that transportation programs, projects and services needed to serve growth are in place either when growth occurs or within six years" on page 48 of 87. Why six years, he asked. Heinonen explained that the six year requirement originally came from the Growth Management Act, and was later changed to ten years. She explained that the longer time frame was intended to provide a bigger window for complex infrastructure projects. HARRISON asked when does the clock start on the six-year window for projects in Issaquah. Heinonen replied it starts when the applicant gives the City its obligated monies. HARRISON said why mandated improvements can be delayed for that long is a major source of misunderstanding for the public, and gave examples.

PROBALA asked are all impact fees paid up front. Heinonen replied yes, when the building permit is issued. BEUKERS asked how are impact fees spent once collected. Heinonen explained how impact fees and mitigation fees are tracked. FAUL asked can impact fees collected for a project be spent anywhere in the City. Heinonen explained "simplified concurrency" for transportation and how the City determines where the money will be spent. She added this will be discussed at the next meeting of the Transportation Advisory Board, to which PPC members are invited.

BEUKERS asked for clarification of C-3.a, page 50, "Delay development until such time that programs, facilities or services can be funded." Heinonen explained some of the background with concurrency and development in the City, specifically when the Talus development used all the "trips in the bank" and development had to cease for several years.

PROBALA asked are impact fees based on the size of the project. Heinonen replied it is based on the square footage of the business or development being assessed.

Leeson continued her presentation on Figure T-4, Proposed Nonmotorized Improvements (page 68 of 87) and Figure T-5, Proposed Pedestrian and Bicycle Mitigation Projects (page 70 of 87).

She concluded her presentation with the next steps in the review and approval process for the proposed Comp Plan amendments, leading to Council action scheduled for December 2, 2019.

HARRISON asked whether the City and the Issaquah School District have cooperated in helping students understand how a change in their behavior, specifically not driving private vehicles to school, could contribute to addressing the City's traffic problems. Leeson said the City's Office of Sustainability has started a program to address that, and gave more details. Heinonen said staff can ask the appropriate staff person (Mary Joe de Beck) to give an update on that program to PPC at a future meeting. PROBALA noted once the City creates compact schools, it is expected that changes in parking availability will help create changes in behavior.

AUDIENCE COMMENTS

None.

OTHER BUSINESS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

Heinonen reviewed the projected PPC schedule for July and August.

ADJOURNMENT

With no other business to conduct, PROBALA adjourned the meeting at 7:43 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Lowe
Recording Secretary