

CITY OF ISSAQUAH
Planning Policy Commission
MINUTES

6:30 PM
 September 26, 2019

Council Chambers
 135 E. Sunset Way

COMMISSION AND ADMINISTRATIVE PERSONNEL PRESENT

Commissioners Present:

Joan Probala, Chair
 Joy Lewis
 Bill Rinehart
 Janice Carle
 Randy Harrison
 Robin Beukers, Alt.
 Tom Haskins, Alt.

Commissioners Not Present (Excused):

Ron Faul, Vice Chair
 Jason Voiss

Administration/Staff:

Trish Heinonen, Policy Planning Manager
 Christen Leeson, Sr. Planner
 Christopher Wright, Economic Dev. Mgr.

CALL TO ORDER

PROBALA, Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:32 PM.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a) MOVED BY RINEHART, SECONDED BY CARLE that minutes of the meeting on September 5, 2019 be approved as presented. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

a) **OLDE TOWN SUBAREA PLAN IMPLEMENTATION: PROPOSED CODE AMENDMENTS, Continued from September 5, 2019, (A)**

Presented by:

Christen Leeson, Senior Planner

Staff Presentation

Leeson gave some background on work done to update the Olde Town Subarea Plan over the last few years, including the six Immediate Actions included in the adopted Plan regarding land use code amendments under consideration tonight. She described the notification and review process the City has followed, and gave details about the six Immediate Actions, as described in the agenda materials (summarized on page 13 of 107). She concluded with the next steps in the process of reviewing the proposed amendments, leading to anticipated Council action on January 6, 2020.

Public Testimony

PROBALA re- opened the public hearing, continued from the September 5 2019 meeting, for public comment at 6:40 PM.

Ellen Reh, property owner at 470 Sunset Way, explained her interest in developing her property as a mixed-use dentist office, and her concern with the proposed restriction of commercial

properties in Olde Town to 4,000 square feet. She also expressed her concern about the lack of available parking in Olde Town, both now and in the future. She described how she would ideally like to develop her property into a larger practice that would provide services that are needed in the community, particularly for children. She said she would like to see businesses allowed to continue to grow and not be subject to these restrictions. The streets through Olde Town lead to the freeway, she concluded, and are meant for business development, not homes.

Sue Foss, property owner at 120 First Avenue, expressed her concerns with the environmental impacts of the proposal to increase impervious surfaces and eliminate Olde Town parcels as Transfer of Development Rights receiving sites. She spoke in favor of preserving existing open spaces, and gave examples of the environmental degradation she has observed in Olde Town, particularly flooding. She said she was more concerned about the proposed amendments' environmental impacts than potential changes to the value of her property.

Ryan Yee, 245 East Sunset Way, has owned and operated a massage/acupuncture and construction business for the last ten years from his property. He explained he has been considering converting his existing building to an office with a residence above. He gave more specifics about his situation and expressed concern about how the proposed amendments will affect his parking and potential building size situation. He said he would like to see tandem parking be included in the regulations as an option, not as a special revision or waiver, because access to his property is primarily from the alley. He said he would like to consider some kind of rainwater storage management system, but the City's building codes are so restrictive, including the proposed impervious surface requirement, that it would be difficult to do that.

Rob Bensusson, Azones Property Management and property manager of the Downtown Issaquah Plaza in Olde Town, said the City's development regulations are already fairly restrictive. He said he would encourage the City to make no additional changes. Adding more limitations to development will just result in getting more of the same properties and development you are currently seeing, he continued. If you want to see new architecture, interesting tenants, and so on, then limiting development is not the way to do it. He said he hopes the City will leave the current restrictions without adding to them, and let new development opportunities continue as they come along while also keeping downtown a special place.

Hearing no additional requests to speak, PROBALA closed the public hearing at 6:53 PM.

Commission Deliberation/Decision

LEWIS commended the staff on the changes made as result of dialogue with PPC and the public during the review process for these amendments. She said the result looks like a good compromise.

PROBALA said she appreciates the speakers tonight and expressed her hope that the City will find a way to work with them individually about their situations. Leeson suggested concerned parties contact her directly to set up a meeting and discuss their concerns. PROBALA added these amendments, which PPC has spent a lot of time reviewing, will also be discussed by Council before they make their final decision.

MOVED BY RINEHART, SECONDED BY BEUKERS that the Planning Policy Commission recommend that Amendments 1-5 to the Land Use Code regarding Olde Town be submitted to the City Council for approval as presented. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

b) PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO ISSAQUAH COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AND ZONING MAP: Community Facilities Redesignations and Rezones, (A)

Presented by:

Christen Leeson, Senior Planner

Staff Presentation

Leeson made staff's presentation. She introduced the 2019 proposed Community Facilities Redesignation and Rezones, including some background on the purpose of the rezones; the City's notification process to inform the public about the proposed amendments; the Capital Facilities zoning designations (CF-OS, CF-R, and CF-F); the locations and status of the 14 parcels in question; and the next steps in the review process, including a continuation of this public hearing to October 10, 2019.

Public Testimony

PROBALA opened the public hearing for public comment at 7:08 PM. She noted the Commission did receive copies of comments provided to City staff prior to tonight's meeting. Leeson noted that only land use designations and zoning are being addressed tonight, and not any potential site plans.

Karen Stevens, Providence Point resident, distributed written comments. Her presentation outlined her concerns in three areas: location, traffic issues, and environmental issues. She spoke about the impacts of locating two proposed schools in the midst of more than 2,000 senior citizen residents, as described in her letter.

Susan Forbes, Providence Point resident, described her experience viewing the potential school sites from the top floor of the Highlander Village building. She said the noise and visual impact will greatly affect people in that building, and explained her concerns about noise and traffic for both people in that building and those who live on the edge of the property. She invited Commissioners to contact her and take a look at the site from the Highlander Village building for themselves.

Roberta Brown, Providence Point resident, said many of the students destined for these new schools will be coming from the valley near I-90 and will need to be bused. That will be a disaster in terms of traffic and adding to climate change. She suggested considering building schools nearer to the freeway, which would be much more practical. She also suggested considering zoning that would allow parcels to stay as open space for recreational purposes instead of just siting facilities. She noted football is a dying sport, and the proposed school site shows that 50 percent of the site will be used for a football stadium. The trees on the site are a sponge for carbon from miles around, and need to be preserved or at the very least offset. She said she has concerns about where a thorough environmental review process fits into this scenario.

Francie Peto, Providence Point resident, said many of us are long-time Issaquah residents who have paid our taxes and paid our dues over the years. It feels kind of punitive, she continued, to propose leap-frogging over two or more possible Community Facilities designations for parcels 1, 2 and 3, from the least impactful to the most invasive kind of designation. She said the parcel could be used for a community center, which could be great, but don't site a new high school there in addition to the five other schools on SE 228th. She said PPC has the responsibility to

assist our City in planning for the future, not just five to ten years out. Providence Point doesn't generate any kids, she noted, and when the City plans for new homes and residences, it has to plan for schools at the same time. She said she would like to see this land used for a community center, open space, trails, and places for restful environmental time.

Russ Miller, Providence Point resident, said he agrees with earlier comments about potential noise, traffic, trees, runoff, and pollution issues. He continued it seems insane to put a new elementary school as well as a new high school in the same area. He said a better use of the property would be to use at least some of it for open space.

Margaret Warner, Providence Point resident, said a lot of housing is being built up in the Highlands, and asked why schools can't be built there. She added the City appears to be adding too much housing and not enough schools, and locating schools needs to be addressed before continuing to build more new homes.

Mary Deraitus, Washington Village resident, said about 1,300 residents live at Providence Point, about 500 of whom live on the border of the proposed school property. She spoke in favor of needing a smaller footprint for schools, and said the Council, PPC, and school district need to keep existing residents in mind as this goes forward.

Sue Martins, Providence Point resident, described her experience picking up her grandchildren every afternoon from school in Sammamish, and the traffic problems involved. She questioned why two schools would be sited so near each other, and noted high school students will also be driving their own cars to schools. She spoke of the increasing traffic problems this would create, and noted that a new apartment complex on 228th will likely double the traffic that now exists. She also spoke of her love for living at Providence Point, and her concern about potential development on the quality of life for Providence Point residents, including wildlife.

Harry Stoffer, Providence Point resident, questioned why the school district doesn't look to locating new schools outside the City, particularly given that the Issaquah School District covers broad areas that are not inside City limits. Heinonen replied the state requires that new schools be built inside the urban growth area boundaries, which means within the boundaries of city limits or a potential annexation area, and not in a rural area. Mr. Stoffer said some good points have been made tonight with which he agrees. Another concern, he continued, is that the decision on where to site schools appears to be "greased" to move forward. He spoke in favor of getting the zoning right as the first step in the process. He said the site being considered for two new public schools is a poor choice, given that it will require a parking garage, facilities for football and baseball, and all the rest of the necessary infrastructure.

Rick Aramburu, attorney for Providence Point, said he would like to correct two misunderstandings he has heard tonight. First, in considering changes to the Comp Plan and zoning, you can't avoid thinking through the ramification that zoning and environmental changes will bring, or what could potentially be built on a parcel. Second, the Issaquah School District doesn't warrant any particular credit or credence because they are the school district, but rather should be subject to the same review criteria as any other applicant. This property doesn't qualify for use as a school, let alone two schools, he continued. It shares a 3,100-foot boundary with residential areas and poses severe limitations as to access, and is located at 228th SE and 43rd SE, one of the worst traffic situations in western Washington. He said he will be attending the October 10, 2019 public hearing with additional comments.

Tom Mullins, Capital Projects Director for the Issaquah School District, said the proposed rezoning of parcels to CF-F represents the first step in the process of locating public schools, and this action applies only to the underlying zoning and not any site plans. He said the information on the City's website about potential school projects is conceptual only, and explained the process for review and decision-making in approving school construction projects. He noted the Issaquah School District will be available at PPC's October 10 public hearing.

Hearing no additional requests to speak, PROBALA continued the public hearing to October 10, 2019 at Pickering Room, City Hall Northwest, at 6:30 PM.

Commission Deliberation

HARRISON expressed appreciation to audience members for coming to the meeting and voicing their concerns, and encouraged them to continue their involvement in the review process.

BEUKERS asked how is this rezoning process intertwined with the necessary environmental studies, traffic analysis, tree retention, and so on that would accompany a proposed project. Heinonen replied the policy is the overarching piece. In this case, the parcels are owned by a public entity and are to be used for a public benefit. The Council will ultimately approve or not approve a proposed redesignation and rezone. Then when a project is proposed for the parcel, the site plan goes to the Development Commission. So the environmental review is on a proposed project, not on the policy. The Development Commission is the body that reviews the actual site plan and building, not PPC. BEUKERS asked so in looking at changes to the Comp Plan, PPC doesn't consider the EIS considerations. Heinonen replied correct; they are separate issues. Staff does a non-project SEPA review for Community Facilities redesignation and rezoning proposals, and SEPA analysis would be done in conjunction to a project being proposed.

CARLE asked what factors should we be taking into consideration in thinking of recommending changing a parcel's uses from one set of uses to another. Heinonen replied there are two kinds of redesignations and rezones, and gave examples. A publicly owned parcel to be used for public purpose that is proposed for a redesignation/rezone has a narrow focus of providing a public benefit, she continued. She agreed with CARLE that considering the economic benefit of rezoning a Capital Facilities parcel is not part of PPC's purview.

LEWIS said she didn't see anything in the agenda materials about why the Issaquah School District is considering parcels 1, 2, and 3 for development. She also said she would like PPC to consider not doing a rezone on parcel 3, and designating it as open space. She suggested that PPC look at splitting up the three parcels, and said she would like to hear more from the Issaquah School District about their thinking. HASKINS agreed. He said he would like to know if Issaquah School District looked at other locations as well, and if so, why they ruled them out.

LEWIS asked why parcel 5 is being addressed now, when considering rezones of the adjacent parcels is on hold. Heinonen replied King County owns parcel 5, and they have decided to keep it as open space. The City concurs, and wants to do more site planning on the other adjacent sites that are owned by the City. LEWIS also asked why parcel 12 is being proposed for rezoning. Leeson replied that parcel is part of required mitigation, and said she will provide more details at the October 10 meeting.

BEUKERS asked why parcel 14 is being proposed for rezoning. Leeson explained that the City

is seeking a future grant from King County for development there and the grant will come with some restrictions. The City's Parks Department did not want to limit what they could do with that parcel while the grant is pending.

REGULAR BUSINESS

a) PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO UTILITIES AND PUBLIC SERVICES ELEMENT, CAPITAL FACILITIES ELEMENT, (I)

Presented by:

Trish Heinonen, Planning Manager

Heinonen made staff's presentation, including some history about the proposed amendments to the Utilities and Public Services Element—Capital Facilities Element and the review work done by PPC so far. She noted these amendments will be included in the full set of amendments that will be the subject of PPC's public hearing on October 10, 2019. She also noted that several items on the original Comp Plan amendment docket have been moved to future years or are no longer necessary.

She said the purpose of tonight's presentation is to get public comment and Commissioner's questions in advance of the October 10 meeting. She explained the proposed amendments on pages 75 through 105 of the agenda. As a result of the resulting discussion, staff was directed to provide Commissioners with the criteria that they should refer to in considering rezoning and other designation changes. Heinonen noted the Council is tentatively scheduled to take action on these amendments on December 2.

HARRISON asked what affect the Mayor's anticipated announcement next week about a significant City budget shortfall could have on PPC's deliberations. Heinonen explained the Capital Facilities Element doesn't rely on the City's budget, only the capital improvement program and adopted rate studies.

BEUKERS and CARLE contributed additional thoughts about criteria that could help PPC think about property that is being contemplated for rezoning, especially what constitutes a "public good." Heinonen said she will send additional information to PPC in advance of the October 10 public hearing. HARRISON said he has heard that the City may look at shifting from increasing its housing stock to focusing on increasing jobs. Heinonen agreed that some people think that the City should jump-start the job creation market since the City is currently meeting its State mandated housing targets sooner than its State mandated job targets. HARRISON said that is the kind of shift that PPC should be thinking about in deliberating potential zoning changes. CARLE and others agreed.

OTHER BUSINESS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

- a) Staff reviewed the upcoming meeting schedule in the agenda packet.

AUDIENCE COMMENTS

None.

ADJOURNMENT

With no additional business to conduct, PROBALA adjourned the meeting at 8:55 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Lowe
Recording Secretary