

**CITY OF ISSAQUAH**  
**Planning Policy Commission**  
**MINUTES**

6:30 PM  
 October 24, 2019

Council Chambers  
 135 E. Sunset Way

**COMMISSION AND ADMINISTRATIVE PERSONNEL PRESENT**

*Commissioners Present:*

Joan Probala, Chair  
 Janice Carle  
 Joy Lewis  
 Bill Rinehart  
 Jason Voiss  
 Robin Beukers, Alt. (non-voting)

*Commissioners Not Present (Excused):*

Ron Faul, Vice Chair  
 Randy Harrison  
 Tom Haskins, Alt.

*Administration/Staff:*

Trish Heinonen, Policy Planning Manager  
 Christen Leeson, Sr. Planner  
 Lucy Sloman, Land Dev. Manager  
 Keith Niven, Dev. Svcs. & Econ. Dev. Dir.

**CALL TO ORDER**

PROBALA, Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM. She explained tonight's public hearings.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

a) MOVED BY RINEHART, SECONDED BY VOISS that minutes of the meeting on October 10, 2019 be approved as presented. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY, 5-0.

**PUBLIC HEARING**

- a) **Proposed Amendments to Issaquah Municipal Code Regarding Reassignment of the Urban Village Development Commission (UVDC) to Development Commission (DC) and Planning Policy Commission (PPC), (A)**
- Staff Presentation
  - Conduct Public Hearing
  - Commission Deliberation

*Presented by:*

*Lucy Sloman, Land Development Manager*

**Staff Presentation**

Sloman made staff's presentation on proposed amendments that would reassign duties of the Urban Village Development Commission (UVDC) to the Development Commission (DC) and Planning Policy Commission (PPC). She explained the review processes that have been followed for the last 20 years for development in urban villages and development outside urban villages. She gave more background on the urban village review process that was in place until 2018, when the Council approved replacement regulations following expiration of development agreements for Highlands and Talus. Those replacement regulations specified that future urban village development permits would go to the DC for review. She continued with an overview of the UVDC's review workload, both in the past and projected. She referred to a letter from IHIF Commercial (Shelter Holdings) received today about this proposed reassignment. She concluded that the Administration recommends reassigning the duties of the UVDC to DC and PPC.

**Public Comment**

PROBALA opened the public hearing for comment at 6:35 PM.

Kristi Tripple, Rowley Properties, 1595 NW Gilman Blvd., said she supports the Administration's recommendation to reassign the UVDC's duties. She expressed appreciation for the UVDC's review expertise over the years.

Hearing no additional requests to speak, PROBALA closed the public hearing at 6:37 PM.

**Commission Deliberation/Decision**

VOISS asked how is the City addressing the concerns expressed in the Shelter Holdings letter. Sloman replied with an explanation of where the City disagrees with statements in the letter, and said we have a different perspective than the letter's author.

BEUKERS asked what are the practical implications of such a reassignment; would the review process for the Shelter application be slowed down, for example. Sloman replied Shelter's land use permits were reviewed by the DC and they made a decision; so from the City's perspective, that body of work has been completed. Shelter has a preliminary plat before staff now, and the decision maker on that is the Hearing Examiner. BEUKERS said so essentially there are no serious practical implications for this developer if this amendment is approved. Sloman replied we believe there is a commission and a process in place to review Shelter's land use permits with this amendment.

MOVED BY CARLE, SECONDED BY VOISS that Amendment 1 to reassign duties of the UVDC to the DC and PPC be forwarded to the Council with a recommendation for approval. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY, 5-0.

b) **Proposed Amendments to Issaquah Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Map: Including Redesignations and Rezones, (A)--continued from Sep. 26 and Oct. 10, 2019**

- Staff Presentation
- Conduct Public Hearing
- Commission Deliberation

*Presented by:*

*Christen Leeson, Senior Planner*

*Trish Heinonen, Policy Planning Manager*

**Staff Presentation**

Heinonen began staff's presentation. She explained that since the October 10 public hearing, an appeal on the final SEPA determination has been received. The Council is the decision maker for the appeal, and has 90 days to make a decision. An appeal date has not yet been set, she continued, and staff will keep interested parties notified.

She continued with an explanation of the role of PPC in reviewing the proposed amendments for Community Facilities redesignations and rezones, and outlined PPC's options in making a recommendation to Council. She clarified the two separate processes (Step 1 and Step 2) in the process to redesignate/rezone Community Facilities parcels and noted that Council is the decision maker on both processes. She gave more information about the two-step SEPA review, the first being the non-project SEPA review that was performed for this amendment package; and the second being a detailed SEPA review that would be done on an actual site plan/land use permit.

She described the proposed Community Facilities designations; displayed a chart of approval criteria (Table 18.07.480, Community Facilities Standards for Public Schools and Public Buildings); and explained the proposed changes in the amendments, as summarized on pages 13-14 of 213. She also explained items from the docket that will be carried forward to future years or are no longer necessary (page 14 of 231). She concluded with the next steps in the review process, including a Council study session on November 12 and, potentially, Council action on December 2. She added that the appeal process may impact the anticipated schedule.

PROBALA asked for clarification of Parcels 12 and 13 at SE 62nd. Leeson replied Parcel 12 is a mitigation site that was partially used by Costco, and Parcel 13 includes a public roadway. Heinonen added the proposal is to re-designate Parcel 13 as CF because of the roadway. Leeson added that the parcel already includes a roadway. A building will not be constructed on it, and the City's agreement with Costco says that the rest of Parcel 12 will be mitigation for the roadway. So the redesignation to Community Facilities would recognize it as a public use, she added.

BEUKERS asked whether PPC can consider all eight parcels as a group in its recommendation, or separate them and make individual recommendations. Heinonen said PPC can elect to do either. BEUKERS asked who filed the appeal. Heinonen replied the appeal was filed by the attorney representing the Providence Point Umbrella Association.

CARLE asked about the non-project SEPA review, is it correct that the potential rezone is not being reviewed for any resulting impacts on any potential projects. Heinonen replied yes, the SEPA review done on the proposed redesignations and rezones is the step 1, the non-project review, and if the project moves forward, the step two SEPA review would be a detailed review of the proposed site plans/land use permit proposal. Ecology's regulations suggest that foreseeable impacts should not be included in a non-project SEPA, and explained how SEPA fits into the City's two-step review process.

### **Public Comment**

PROBALA re-opened the public hearing, continued from September 26 and October 10, 2019, for public comment at 7:10 PM.

Tom Mullins, Issaquah School District (ISD), Director of Capital Projects, explained the community's needs for additional schools and the ISD's search to identify school sites near the student population that also meet the County's and City's regulations. He described how Parcels 1-3, which represent about 40 acres total, would fit the community's need for a future high school and elementary school.

Denise Stiffarm, Pacifica Law Group, 1191 2nd Ave., legal counsel for ISD, emphasized that the action before the Commission tonight is a very narrow focus on whether or not to redesignate certain publically owned parcels as Community Facilities. She spoke about the difficulty ISD has encountered in finding appropriate land to site schools. She added that ISD has followed the City's regulatory framework in identifying a suitable site, and that the work is only beginning. There will be many opportunities for public involvement, she added.

Leo Graham, Providence Point resident, spoke in favor of not rezoning Parcels 1-3. He described the history of Providence Point, its unique character, amenities, and facilities. He noted that Parcels 1-3 are bordered on three sides by Providence Point residents. He said the roads in the area are already highly congested and construction of two schools will require removal of nearly all the trees on the site.

Daphne Ghan, Providence Point resident, described the Providence Point site, including its open spaces, trees, walking paths, large retention ponds, p-patch, landscaped berms, and a stream. She said residents will be impacted 24 hours a day by school activities, which she said was an intrusive and inappropriate use of the property.

Paul Claypool, Providence Point resident, said he opposes the proposed rezone, and described the negative impacts that a school would have on Providence Point residents and the surrounding community, including noise, exhaust, bus and increased car traffic, stray baseballs, and possibly trespassing by students. He spoke about his concern with the apparent lack of an adequate buffer and about the lack of interaction between ISD and Providence Point residents. He said he thinks the City needs to do an analysis of ISD's plans before any rezoning is approved.

Mary Fay Helmon, Providence Point resident, spoke about the potential adverse impacts of constructing new schools on Providence Point residents and adjacent communities, particularly the loss of trees. She also expressed concern about bus traffic; noise from school activities, public address systems, and football fields; and lights. She spoke in favor of keeping the beauty, tranquility, and peacefulness of Providence Point, and said the addition of two schools would permanently impact the quality of life residents now have.

Ron Imhoff, Providence Point resident, expressed his concern about access to the property, especially the traffic a school would generate. He compared access to the property with access at other ISD properties. He noted that few students will be able to walk or bike to a school on this property because of its location. He also described potential worsening of traffic problems on SE 228th and SE 43rd.

Irene Rice, Providence Point resident, discussed the inadequate buffer in ISD's proposed site plan between the schools and Providence Point. She described the setting and the distances between the proposed school buildings and Providence Point property lines. She also said the ISD arborist's plans indicate all trees would be removed on the northwest side of the site, and said residents would have views of a concrete wall. She said that residents bought homes in Providence Point for the park-like setting and spoke in favor of designating Parcel 3 as Community Facilities-Open Space (CF-OS).

John Baschen, Providence Point resident, described his concern about the potentially negative effect of schools on drainage for Laughing Jacob's Creek. He said the creek is one of only three creeks that flow into Lake Sammamish, and constructing a school would have a negative impact on the ability of the creek to provide habitat for salmon to spawn. He noted the ISD's site plan also showed a high percentage of impervious surfaces, which would hinder drainage from that area.

Ross Tilghman, 4618 44th Ave. S., Seattle, transportation consultant, referred to written comments he submitted prior to the October 10, 2019 public hearing. He said contemplating a school on this site would mean facing systemic deficiencies that are beyond mitigation. The site is too isolated from students, doesn't comply with the City's own Comp Plan policies on compact schools, and has a single arterial that makes it unsuitable for a large school. He said the City should avoid creating problems that can't be fixed.

Dave Wechner, Coupeville, WA, land use consultant, said he has reviewed the City's policies, and the ISD project doesn't satisfy the City's criteria for a rezone. He referred to five policies on schools in the City's Comp Plan. He said he recommends denying the amendment to rezone Parcels 1-3, or reduce the size of the site planned for development so that the predictable impacts can be controlled.

Richard Aramburu, 720 Third Ave., Seattle, attorney for the Providence Point Umbrella Association, said this is a unique situation because no one is directly discussing the actual property itself. He continued there is nothing in the record, or the staff report, about the nature of the property or its surroundings, nor are there any findings to show consistency of the proposed use with the City's Comp Plan. The question is whether or not this property is suitable and acceptable for Community Facilities uses, and a significant amount of information has been provided by the community to indicate "no." It doesn't become suitable just because someone buys it and wants to use it, he continued. He referred to the conditions he submitted in his letter to the City. He asked the Commission to consider assigning Parcel 3 as open space (CF-OS) and spreading it out along the entire area to provide and enhance the buffer, and to approve only one school and no football stadium.

Francie Greth-Peto, Providence Point resident, gave her objections to the proposed rezone, stating it is premature. She also expressed her concern with the environmental impacts of construction in the area, particularly potential asbestos issues from dismantling the cement dormitories that are present on the site. She explained what took place when other dormitories were removed, and spoke about the health concerns with concrete, cement, dust, and asbestos.

Pat Martin, Providence Point, expressed her disappointment with communications between ISD and Providence Point residents. She said she had initially thought that siting an elementary school could be mutually beneficial for ISD and Providence Point, and was disappointed to see what ISD is now proposing.

Karen Stevens, Providence Point, said her question is what are the County, state, and City regulations about the amount of land required for an elementary school and a high school. How can two schools be shoehorned into the site, which is only 40 acres, she asked.

Russ Miller, Providence Point, said we residents love Issaquah and want the best for those who will come after us. He spoke about growth and change, and said he understands there are pressures and limitations, but fears this is moving too fast. He spoke in favor of being a model for the larger community, utilizing green building, solar power, more trees, and so on, and asked ISD to work with the community about its concerns.

Connie Marsh, Squak Mountain resident, said the City's Comp Plan speaks to new schools sharing facilities and using the smallest amount of land possible, and ISD's proposal for Parcels 1-3 doesn't address that. She said the City and ISD need to mutually read the Comp Plan and create a legitimate plan for new schools. She also spoke in favor of designating the old Costco parcel used for mitigation to CF-OS, instead of CF-F.

Tina Conforti, 1220 Oakwood Place NW, Issaquah, said she supports the people who have come to speak tonight, and said in retirement they deserve safety, peace, and tranquility after working all their lives.

Hearing no additional requests to speak, PROBALA closed the public hearing at 8:07 PM.

### **Commission Deliberation/Decision**

PROBALA suggested the Commission first discuss the proposed redesignation and rezone of Parcels 1-3.

BEUKERS asked whether the City's compact schools regulations would apply to the two schools that ISD is proposing for Parcels 1-3. Niven replied yes, the compact standards would apply to this property if it were rezoned to CF-F. He explained the two gradations of compactness for compact schools and urban schools, and said that compact school regulations would apply here. BEUKERS asked questions about how the 2016 bond issue, which voters approved, applies. Mr. Mullins replied the compact school regulations were not in place when the 2016 bond issue was before the voters, and ISD's estimates were based on suburban school design, not compact school design. Niven added staff has not reviewed a plan for a school or schools on this property, which is only conceptual at this point. Mr. Mullins noted the current thinking is that the site is large enough to build a new high school comprehensive enough to be equitable with other ISD high schools. Ms. Stiffarm added ISD intends to work with the City to provide the public infrastructure, including schools, that will support the growth that the City is permitting. That is why two schools are being put forward for this site, consistent with the intent of compact schools.

LEWIS asked is it correct that an elementary school and a middle school would be allowed under the current zoning designation, and that the only change if the property was rezoned to CF-F is that a high school would be possible. Heinonen replied yes. LEWIS said ISD's hypothetical site plan has understandably alarmed and upset a lot of people, and she hopes that ISD can learn from this situation that this is not the way to engage with the community when siting new schools.

RINEHART asked what are the current enforceable setbacks for a school on this site. Leeson referred to Issaquah Municipal Code Table 18.07.480, Community Facilities Standards for Public Schools and Public Buildings.

PROBALA asked if the code allowed a high school, and ISD submitted a plan for one, would the City have to approve it. Niven replied the City would review the site plan as to whether it met all applicable regulations for wetlands, buffers, and so on, and weigh the plan against the code requirements, incorporate public comment, submit it for review by the Development Commission, have a community conference, and so on. The City would have to review the plan, he continued, subject to all code and other applicable regulations.

LEWIS asked, in the past, has ISD generally asked for exemptions on a site plan. Niven replied historically speaking, yes. This was a major reason the City and ISD worked on the compact school regulations. He explained the process by which ISD could use the legislative process in its siting efforts.

RINEHART asked were design standards for new schools part of the 2016 bond issue, or was it more generic. Mullins replied he would have to research the exact language, but it does refer to "comprehensive" schools. He said he can supply that information for the Commission. VOISS asked would a middle school and elementary school require a soccer and/or track field as well. Mr. Mullins replied yes, and said it would not be a stadium, but more like what exists at Pine Lake Middle School.

BEUKERS referred to page 80 of 213, policies G-6 and G-7 about schools, and asked since these are the City's land use policies, shouldn't we be encouraging shared facilities. Heinonen replied, yes, these are the policies that underpin and support the actual code language, but policies themselves can't force something to happen. Niven added "sharing" does not only mean shared facilities between schools, but also with, for example, the City's Parks Department.

PROBALA asked what would happen if this rezone was approved and ISD was not able to build on the property. Heinonen replied if ISD was forced to sell the property, it could be used for another

community purpose, say by King County, or be rezoned from CF-F to another designation so it could be developed for another use that was not specifically for public benefit.

LEWIS spoke in favor of achieving a compromise. She said our community desperately needs new schools to accommodate our growth, and said she hopes the site can be used for a school, although she's not sure about siting two schools there. She said she's not comfortable with designating all three parcels, but would like to encourage the use of some portion of it for a new school. VOISS agreed. He said he would prefer to see a school built on the property, but both a high school and an elementary school seems excessive. He said the parcels would better serve the community by being used by ISD for an elementary school than for another plat of small homes. He said he also heard some support tonight during public comment for an elementary school. The problem is in thinking about trying to squeeze two schools onto this property without having more information about ISD's plans.

LEWIS said about the best outcome we can hope for is to allow a single school on the site, and not rezone it and allow that school to be a high school. She said she would be comfortable with recommending Community Facilities-Open Space for Parcel 3 and using it as a kind of buffer zone, and keeping the current zoning for Parcels 1 and 2, which would mean that a high school could not be built. BEUKERS said he would favor taking all three parcels out of the package under consideration. He continued his recommendation would be to rezone the property contingent on full approval of ISD's plans. VOISS said he tends to agree with LEWIS. He said he understands and agrees that Providence Point is a unique community and also recognizes that the community needs more school capacity. He said he is more in agreement with keeping Parcel 3 as a buffer.

MOVED BY LEWIS, SECONDED BY VOISS that Parcel 3 be designated and rezoned as Community Facilities-Open Space and keep the current designation of Single Family-Small Lot on Parcels 1 and 2, with the intent that the open space on Parcel 3 be protected and plans for a new elementary school on Parcels 1 and 2 move forward. MOTION CARRIED, 3-2 (LEWIS, VOISS, and RINEHART voted for; PROBALA and CARLE voted against).

MOVED BY RINEHART, SECONDED BY LEWIS to recommend approval of amendments to rezone the remaining five parcels (Parcels 5, 11, 12-13, and 14) as presented. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY, 5-0.

BEUKERS noted a correction is needed on page 20 of 213 ("...starting at 8,441 trips..."). Staff made a note of it.

MOVED BY LEWIS, SECONDED BY RINEHART that PPC approve the Findings of Fact, as amended tonight, to the amendments to the Issaquah Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Map, Redesignations and Rezones, and to forward the proposed amendments to the Council with a recommendation for approval. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY, 5-0.

### **OTHER BUSINESS/ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Heinonen noted next Tuesday, October 29, is a joint meeting of PPC and the Human Services Commission to discuss the Health Community Strategy Project at 6:30 PM in the Pickering Room, City Hall NW.

### **AUDIENCE COMMENTS**

None.

**ADJOURNMENT**

With no additional business to conduct, PROBALA adjourned the meeting at 9:06 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Lowe  
Recording Secretary