CITY OF ISSAQUAH
Planning Policy Commission

6:30 PM Virtual Meeting
August 13, 2020 **MINUTES**

COMMISSION AND ADMINISTRATIVE PERSONNEL PRESENT

Commissioners Present:	*Administration/Staff:*
Joan Probala, Chair	Christen Leeson, Senior Planner
Ron Faul, Vice Chair	Megan Curtis-Murphy, Sustain. Coord.
Joy Lewis	Stephen Padua, Sr. Transp. Planner
Bill Rinehart	Doug Yormick, Assistant Planner
Janice Carle	Keith Niven, Director, Planning &
Jason Voiss	Community Development
Robin Beukers, Alternate (voting)	Wally Bobkiewicz, City Administrator

PROBALA, Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:32 PM. She explained that, due to the Governor's Proclamation 20-28 prohibiting meetings that fall under the Open Public Meetings Act from being conducted in person, tonight's meeting will be held entirely remotely. She provided some guidelines for participants at tonight's virtual public hearing, including Commissioners and members of the public who wish to provide public comment.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a) PROBALA asked for any objections to approval of minutes of the July 9, 2020 PPC meeting and there were none. Minutes are approved.

PUBLIC HEARING(S)

a) **Proposed Amendments Establishing Environmental Board and Repealing IMC 18.03, Regarding the River & Streams Board, (A)**
Presented by:
Megan Curtis-Murphy, Sustainability Coordinator

Staff Presentation

Curtis-Murphy began staff's presentation on establishing a new Environmental Board and sunsetting the River & Streams Board. She referred to information in the agenda package, including:

- Background on the River & Streams Board, including its purpose;
- Changes in the City's conditions since the River & Streams Board was created;
- Community engagement activities and comments received on the creation of a new Environmental Board;
- Council comments on creation of a new Environmental Board;
- The Administration's proposal for the Environmental Board, including its objective, membership, duties, and responsibilities;
- Next steps, leading to a projected first Environmental Board meeting in November 2020.

RINEHART noted that climate change is a broad topic that encompasses the work of multiple boards and commissions. How will the Environmental Board interact with existing commissions on the issue of climate change, he asked. Curtis-Murphy replied issues around climate change will be one part of what the Board will address. She explained how climate change issues have been handled in the past, and said we have heard requests from the community and the Council to add an interim review step on climate change matters. Establishing the Environmental Board is

intended to create additional opportunities for public input on climate change and other environmental issues before proposals, plans, and projects are presented to Council for action.

LEWIS asked how does staff intend to get new Environmental Board members up to speed. Curtis-Murphy replied staff is aware that a certain orientation period will be required. Work plan items for the new Board include the Stormwater Master Plan and climate change, as well as many other issues, and staff would like to have the Board's input before firming up the work plan. Staff will be giving new Board members briefings, background information, and reports, she continued. We are assuming that work on Title 18 will be addressed by the Environmental Board in pieces, and staff will be providing the Board with extra technical information as appropriate. LEWIS asked for an approximate time frame for the Board to get up and running. Curtis-Murphy replied staff anticipates that the first meeting will be in November, with possibly another two meetings before year end. She continued her remarks about the frequency the Board is likely to meet, and concluded although it is not possible to be certain given the holidays, the pandemic, and other factors, staff is anticipating that the new Board will be up and running by the first of 2021.

LEWIS referred to page 12 of 295 in the agenda, which describes the proposed duties and responsibilities for the new Environmental Board. Did the Administration's proposal evolve from this as a set of guiding principles, she asked. Curtis-Murphy replied the duties and responsibilities on page 12 reflect the Administration's current proposal. At the Council meeting last Monday evening, staff heard some comments from the public and received some feedback from the Council that may result in some changes to the language, but what is before you is basically the Administration's proposal at this point.

PROBALA asked Bobkiewicz to comment about how the City will bridge the gap between the dissolution of the River & Streams Board and when the new Environmental Board is up and running. Bobkiewicz replied staff intends to make sure we coordinate the Development Commission and the Planning and Community Development staff to move the City's work forward, such as the Title 18 review. PROBALA asked about any construction projects in the pipeline that will require review before the new Board is assembled. Niven replied there are few projects in the queue; the only major project that comes to mind is the new high school, and the Environmental Board will be up and running for review of that project.

VOISS asked for clarification of how the Environmental Board and the Development Commission will work in tandem. Curtis-Murphy replied the concept is that the Environmental Board will provide recommendations on policy pertaining to the environment, and the Development Commission will continue to perform project review, which the Environmental Board will not. She continued it is anticipated that the Environmental Board will develop an environmental checklist for the Development Commission's use when reviewing projects.

BEUKERS said in reviewing the summary of the various boards' and commissions' responsibilities provided in the agenda packet, he is concerned about the gap between what the River & Streams Board did and what the Environmental Board will do. He asked staff to clarify. Curtis-Murphy used examples of planning documents and projects that would have been addressed by the River & Streams Board and how those would be reviewed by the Environmental Board. She also gave more details about the kinds of members that will be sought for the Environmental Board. BEUKERS asked will the technical aspects of any work previously performed by the River & Streams Board and that won't be within the Environmental Board's purview be picked up by staff, such as the Shoreline Management Plan. Curtis-Murphy replied since the River & Streams Board was created, the City has a higher level of technical resources available, both on staff and with consultants, and is able to perform a higher level of review. Niven added the City has migrated away from using volunteer expertise for some time. If the City does not have the appropriate

technical expertise on staff, then consultants are hired. He added the River & Streams Board has been more of a community voice on environmental issues than a technical resource in past years.

BEUKERS noted environmental issues extend beyond jurisdictional boundaries, and asked will the new board be reaching out to appropriate boards in adjacent jurisdictions, such as Sammamish and Bellevue. Curtis-Murphy replied yes. City staff regularly works with staff from our adjacent jurisdictions, other cities, and the County, so we will be able to bring the results of that work forward to the Board as appropriate.

CARLE asked when staff expects the Environmental Board's checklist to be on its work plan. Curtis-Murphy replied staff has started some scoping work on the checklist so we will have something to present to the Board early on and get their feedback. By working on it right away, it is staff's intention to get it in place as soon as possible.

LEWIS referred to the phrase "substantial weight" in the proposal, including its use in the duties and responsibilities of the Environmental Board ("The recommendations of the Environmental Board shall be given *substantial weight* by the decision maker…"). She said the language implies that some board's or commission's recommendations are *not* given "substantial weight" by the decision maker, which is the Council. She questioned whether that language is the most appropriate to use. Bobkiewicz replied staff was concerned that the recommendations of the Environmental Board would have enough "teeth," a concern that was also shared by the public, and we went to the City Attorney with that concern. We were advised that the "substantial weight" language is used by other jurisdictions and would be appropriate here. The language has standing in Washington State law. He continued boards and commissions are all different; some are just advisory, for example. He added a clarification that the River & Streams Board did not perform citizen review of all projects in the City.

FAUL said some of the public comment we have received prior to tonight's meeting commented on a substantial gap before the Environmental Board is up and running, but Niven's comments indicated that the gap isn't critical because there aren't many projects in the pipeline. He asked how would the Environmental Board's functions differ from the Development Commission and PPC in terms of structure; would the Board hold public hearings, for example. Niven replied staff doesn't envision that a gap will exist. The River & Streams Board's work will be transitioned to the Development Commission, and staff anticipates helping the Development Commission understand its new role if this proposal is approved by Council. We don't see much that will need to be reviewed in the next six months or so, and don't foresee any problem with a gap. Bobkiewicz added we don't envision that the Environmental Board will hold formal public hearings on specific projects, but could chose to hold community meetings on, say, proposed changes to Title 18.

RINEHART said he applauds the City's move to create an Environmental Board, and encourages appointing scientists and environmental specialists to the Board. VOISS agreed that members should be knowledgeable about environmental issues, but not ideologues who would diminish projects because of their extreme and/or narrow views on environmentalism. He said having the right background should be an important criteria for membership, and with that in mind, he questions the value of having youth membership on the Board.

BEUKERS said he would like to see more precise language on the expertise needed when selecting membership for the Board. He said establishing the Board is a work in progress, and will change as time goes on. Are there any legal impediments to making future changes pertaining to the Board's responsibilities, membership, and so on, he asked. Curtis-Murphy said changes would be implemented in a process similar to the one before you right now. She added Council and the public have indicated interest in having youth positions on the Board, as well as having a couple of

positions open to community members who may lack specific credentials, but who, through training or experience or both, have indicated a special interest in environmental issues. BEUKERS asked who would initiate any changes. Bobkiewicz explained how the City Council and Mayor would initiate any changes, with feedback from other commissions and the public. The Mayor would take the lead on initiating any changes, he stated.

PUBLIC HEARING
PROBALA opened the public hearing at 7:32 PM.

Connie Marsh, Squak Mountain resident, referred to written comments she submitted prior to the meeting. She gave her views on what the River & Streams Board reviewed, i.e., not just development projects but also park, road, and public works projects that had impacts on the environment. She gave examples of current projects that are not on any board or commission's "radar," such as the road project along SR 900. She continued the River & Streams Board provided a balance. She said she disagrees that a gap will not exist while the Environmental Board is being formed. She asked the Commission to not take action on a proposal that doesn't include the actual language until both the Commission and the public can see what is actually being recommended. She also referred to the points in Ann Fletcher's letter and spoke in support of them.

Ann Fletcher, Olde Town resident, said she is excited about the new Environmental Board and wants it to succeed. She spoke to her involvement in developing the proposal for the Environmental Board, and said she realizes that the document is evolving. She referred to four points she expressed in an email to Commissioners prior to tonight's meeting (code requirements should be clearly designated to another board or commission; required review duties should be added to the land use code and illustrative flow charts; the environmental checklist to be developed by the Environmental Board should apply to all public and private projects; and suggestions for specific new wording to be used in the Environmental Board's objectives). She concluded she doesn't think the proposal as written is ready for the Commission's recommendation.

Hearing no additional requests to speak, PROBALA closed the public hearing at 7:48 PM. [NOTE: The public hearing was subsequently reopened and continued to September 10, 2020 at 6:30 PM.]

Discussion
VOISS said he agrees with comments made tonight that clarification is needed on how the Environmental Board's duties and responsibilities will overlap with other boards and commissions.

LEWIS said she has many comments and concerns about the proposal, and sees additional areas that should be addressed, such as environmental security and the pandemic. She said she also has significant concerns with the eight duties and responsibilities proposed on page 12 of 295.

FAUL asked whether the River & Streams Board weighed in on the proposal, and whether the Board could continue while the Environmental Board is getting established. Bobkiewicz explained that the existing River & Streams Board has been unable to get a quorum of members for some time, and spoke to the difficulty of recruitment for the Board. He said the Mayor's view was to assemble a citizen group to look at environmental policies for the City, rather than at individual projects. PROBALA asked whether the two remaining River & Streams Board members could be incorporated into the Development Commission as members. Niven explained the 2020 recruitment process and laid out some formal options for how two new members could be brought onto the Commission, including expanding the number of Development Commission members by two. PROBALA asked could the two members be advisory only. Niven replied yes, the Commission could decide to informally invite those two members as advisory.

BEUKERS said he would like to see the City directly respond, in writing, to the comments received by the public. He said he is also troubled that the Commission is not seeing the actual wording of the proposal, and said he's not sure he can make an informed decision without seeing exactly what he is being asked to recommend.

VOISS said if getting a quorum of River & Streams Board members has been difficult, and recruitment for boards and commissions has been suspended in 2020, why is the City trying to start a new board right now. Bobkiewicz replied this is a long-time issue for the Mayor and Council, and staff has been looking for a solution. What you see tonight is the Administration's proposal. We heard from many members of the community that a new Environmental Board is needed not to look at every project, but rather to take a large-scale, broad look at environmental issues facing the City. It has been a challenge to find people to serve on the River & Streams Board during the last few years, he continued, and we do not believe continuing the River & Streams Board in the future is sustainable.

CARLE noted it sounds like specific projects that were reviewed by the River & Streams Board will not end up going onto the Development Commission's agenda. Where in the project review process would those projects receive attention from staff and other resources, she asked. Niven replied the River & Streams Board was not a decision maker; the Board provided feedback and recommendations to the Development Commission, Council, and staff. The Board's review was an opportunity to get a review that went beyond code. Some projects that went to the River & Streams Board for review and comments, for example, didn't go to the Development Commission. He gave examples of projects that the River & Streams Board reviewed and the Board's role in the review process.

LEWIS said she would like to see a white paper on expanding the River & Streams Board, and said she's not hearing from fellow PPC members that it is appropriate to disband the River & Streams Board completely at this point. She said she also thinks the youth involvement piece is problematic. She concluded she does not feel the proposal was presented in such a way that she is comfortable moving it forward as is. FAUL made some suggestions for other ways to involve youth in the City's environmental issues rather than as members of the Environmental Board. He said he agrees with LEWIS that he doesn't feel ready to make a recommendation on the proposal tonight.

Bobkiewicz asked what additional information would be helpful for staff to prepare if the PPC elects to schedule another discussion of this issue. He recapped the direction staff has been given by the Mayor and City Council, especially what the Council has indicated they are in favor of having included in the proposal. PROBALA said she is hearing that PPC members would like the final wording in the proposal to be clarified, and a better description given of "what boards/commissions will do what." She added she is disappointed that the proposal presented tonight is not a final document. At this point, she stated, it should be a finished product and not one in which language will later be changed.

VOISS said he is in favor of establishing an Environmental Board, but as others have expressed, he has concerns about overlap among boards and commissions and would like to see a more defined scope of the work the Board will be doing.

The Commission asked clarifying questions about when this issue will be addressed again by Council. Several Commissioners indicated they are not ready tonight to make a recommendation. CARLE said her biggest concern is the lack of specificity in the proposal's wording. PROBALA suggested that staff schedule another discussion of this item for PPC's September 10 meeting. That way, PPC can have the benefit of hearing the Council's discussion at its September 8

meeting. RINEHART said he agrees with PROBALA's approach. PROBALA said we recognize that the proposal won't be perfect, but she is hearing PPC members saying they want more clear details about how the Environmental Board will interact with other boards and commissions, as well as an opportunity to see the final wording of the proposal.

It was the consensus of all PPC members present that the further action on the proposed amendments be tabled and that discussion continue at PPC's meeting on September 10, 2020.

MOVED BY FAUL, SECONDED BY RINEHART that tonight's public hearing on Proposed Amendments Establishing the Environmental Board and Repealing IMC 18.03, Regarding the River & Streams Board, be reopened and continued to PPC's meeting scheduled for September 10, 2020 at 6:30 PM. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

REGULAR BUSINESS

a) **Mobility Master Plan Review and Update, (I)**
Presented by:
Stephen Padua, Senior Transportation Planner

PROBALA suggested that staff make a short presentation tonight, and that PPC members email any questions or comments directly to Leeson. Leeson clarified this issue will be presented to Council on September 8, and PPC will have the benefit of Council's comments when PPC discusses this again at its October 8 meeting.

Padua presented information on the Mobility Master Plan (MMP) draft, as included in the agenda packet. His presentation included the MMP purpose; the Transportation Advisory Board's participation in development of the MMP; the primary changes in policy direction reflected in the MMP; proposed implementation of the MMP through 2022; evolving items; ongoing edits for the MMP; and timing and next steps. He asked for a letter of support from PPC. PROBALA asked will the Council adopt the plan on September 8. PADUA replied no, it is anticipated that Council will endorse moving the plan forward and including it in the Comp Plan amendments. PROBALA suggested dividing up topics within the MMP and discussing them at PPC's September and October meetings. Leeson will work on the schedule.

REPORTS

a) **2020 Comprehensive Plan Docket**
Presented by:
Christen Leeson, Senior Planner

Additional presentation on this issue was deferred to a future meeting.

OTHER BUSINESS / ANNOUNCEMENTS

a) Upcoming Schedule (in agenda package and as discussed tonight)

AUDIENCE COMMENTS

Connie Marsh said in reading the MMP document, it does not mesh well. She said the Transportation Advisory Board spent a lot of time on developing the guiding principles for the MMP, and their discussion of "community engagement" isn't reflected in this document. She said the document doesn't clearly state "these are the new policies," and doesn't speak to important concerns like congestion. The document does not define terms like "quality of life," she continued, and doesn't have a definition section. She concluded there is no real hurry to approve this plan, and the document would be improved if its approval is delayed while improvements are sought.

ADJOURNMENT

With no additional business to conduct, PROBALA adjourned the meeting at 8:56 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Lowe
Recording Secretary

NOTE: Due to the Governor's Proclamation 20-28 related to the COVID-19 emergency and open public meetings, this meeting was held remotely. Participation and listening options were provided in the meeting agenda.