

CITY OF ISSAQUAH
Planning Policy Commission

6:30 PM
 August 27, 2020

Virtual Meeting

MINUTES

COMMISSION AND ADMINISTRATIVE PERSONNEL PRESENT

Commissioners Present:

Joan Probala, Chair
 Ron Faul, Vice Chair
 Joy Lewis
 Janice Carle
 Jason Voiss

Commissioners Not Present:

Bill Rinehart
 Robin Beukers, Alternate (excused)

Administration/Staff:

Christen Leeson, Senior Planner
 Doug Yormick, Asst. Planner
 Keith Niven, Director, Planning &
 Community Development
 Jen Davis Hayes, Economic Dev. Mgr.

CALL TO ORDER

PROBALA, Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:38 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.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- a) PROBALA asked whether there were any objections to approving minutes of the meeting on August 13, 2020, and there were none. Minutes are approved.

REGULAR BUSINESS

- a) **Comprehensive Plan: Proposed Redesignations/Rezoning Review and Discussion, (I)**

Presented by:

Christen Leeson, Senior Planner

Leeson made staff's presentation of three proposed redesignations/rezoning, as outlined on pages 13-14 of page 41 in the agenda. She explained why rezone requests occur and gave details about the three requests: Legacy Landscaping, Trailhead TOD, and Vanama Property.

Legacy Landscaping. Leeson explained the existing and proposed land use designation and zoning designation for this property. She referred to the permitted uses for commercial and mixed use in the urban core, and the pros and cons for approving a rezone of the property. The Administration recommends approval of the proposed rezone to mixed use.

FAUL expressed a concern about the single-family parcel to the southeast of the property. Leeson explained that a shared driveway agreement exists between the current Legacy Landscaping property owner and the adjacent property; other than that arrangement, she said she isn't aware of any reaction from the adjacent property owner to the proposed rezone. Public notification of the proposed rezone was provided to the public by the City, she added.

FAUL asked whether it is correct that this property would be unable to reach the 90-percent impervious surface threshold, either currently or under any redevelopment scenario. Leeson replied that is correct. Niven explained the physical characteristics of the site would make it impossible to get much more impervious surface than what is there now, including under any redevelopment proposal.

LEWIS asked about the potential for a possible wave of mixed-use expansion over time that would reach into the urban core. Leeson described the adjacent parcels to this property, noting that the two adjacent properties (Bergsma and Harvey Manning Park) are permanent open space/recreation. Niven gave additional details about the topography, which would make potential sprawl of commercial activity down SR 900 unlikely.

VOISS asked whether it would be advisable to just grant this parcel a special permit or to pursue a rezone. Leeson replied a rezone request is the best option.

Trailhead TOD (Century Link). Leeson explained the existing and proposed land use designation and zoning designation for this property, and clarified that the City is making this proposed rezone request. She referred to the permitted uses for commercial and intensive commercial, and the pros and cons for approving a rezone of the property. The Administration recommends approval of the proposed rezone of the Trailhead TOD to intensive commercial.

PROBALA asked is this the TOD project that PPC has discussed in the past. Leeson replied yes. Davis Hayes added the actual amount of acreage in the rezone request may be smaller than the four acres specified in this document. We are working with Century Link now, and the final acreage may be more like 2.5 acres. Staff will have the exact number when PPC sees this again, she noted.

PROBALA asked for details about the RV park that will be affected. Davis Hayes replied there are 56 spaces on the site. Two are mobile homes, not RVs; about 20 are RV sites that are rented monthly and occupied year-round; and the rest are rented out on a daily, weekly, and/or temporary basis, often to people working temporarily in the area. So the RV park is occupied by a variety of users.

VOISS asked is the concept to move Century Link from its current location to the property shown on the map, and use the property where Century Link is now for new housing units. Davis Hayes replied yes, and explained why it is a better use of both properties.

FAUL asked what would be the maximum building height if the property was rezoned as commercial industrial. Leeson replied it would default to the most restrictive adjacent use, which is 65 feet. FAUL asked how do cell phone towers fit into this. Niven replied cell towers are allowed in every zone, so the property owner has the ability to negotiate with carriers for a cell phone tower at that location.

LEWIS referred to questions she sent staff earlier about this project. She said she would like to see a lot more transparency about this project; a lot of details are missing in the information included in the agenda. It is important for the community to see what the City is giving and what it is getting, for example. She added she would also like to see the actual acreage number, more details about the loss of spaces in the RV park, why that particular developer was chosen, why the number of housing units was set at 175, and so on. Leeson noted the rezone will only take place if the project moves forward; without the project, the rezone won't happen. After more discussion about affordable housing needs in the City, and this project in particular, Davis Hayes said this is a complex project with a long history. She briefly explained the review process moving forward to Council approval. PROBALA asked Hayes to prepare a short presentation including some background on this project for a future PPC meeting. Staff made a note of it. Niven added staff intends to make a presentation on September 21, 2020 on affordable housing at a Council work session, and will share that document with PPC.

Vanama Property. Leeson explained the existing and proposed land use designation and zoning designation for this property. She referred to the permitted uses for retail/mixed use and professional office/mixed use, and the pros and cons for approving a rezone of the property. She said the intent is to put a dental or other professional office on the site. The Administration does not recommend approval of the proposed rezone, primarily because it would create an illegal “spot zone.”

FAUL said he supports the Administration’s recommendation. If the property was allowed to be used for mixed use or retail, egress would be very difficult. He explained more about his thinking. PROBALA added the Sunrise Senior Living facility very close to this property has a similar problem.

Public Comment

Chris Holecek, owner of Legacy Landscaping, said he heard questions raised during PPC’s discussion of the proposed rezone for the Legacy Landscaping property about whether adjacent neighbors were aware of the proposal. He clarified he has spoken with all adjacent neighbors and he has their support for the proposed rezone.

Discussion

LEWIS referred to page 18, “*Issaquah is expected to meet its housing targets by 2021 with projects currently in the pipeline. However, targets are scheduled to be negotiated again in 2021 and housing target numbers will likely increase.*” She said her understanding is that the job situation in the City is not that great without Costco, and increasing housing targets gives her pause. She said she would like to see more information about that. PROBALA asked about any more plans for housing near the Transit Center. Niven gave an overview of housing plans in the City, including job and housing uncertainties caused by the pandemic.

Leeson noted staff does a buildable land study every eight years. For the upcoming study, King County and the State are requiring that all jurisdictions renegotiate their growth targets to take a share of the expected growth. So the City’s housing targets will likely increase. She explained the status of work on the study and said it will be brought forward to PPC and the Council. Niven noted the pandemic has forced employers to rethink their office space needs as well as cities to rethink predictions for growth in both housing and office space needs.

PROBALA asked about the status of 5G in the City. Niven replied generally speaking, the pandemic has resulted in more internet usage as more and more people are working remotely and relying on technology. To date not much has been done to improve bandwidth in the City, he continued, and noted that there have been some discussions with T-Mobile about a pilot project for 5G in Issaquah. FAUL commented on the importance of increased bandwidth to the community, and noted that it could be a strategic tool to help reduce traffic.

OTHER BUSINESS / ANNOUNCEMENTS

a) Upcoming Schedule Discussion

Presented by Christen Leeson, Senior Planner

Leeson reviewed the projected PPC schedule (page 41 of 41). PROBALA suggested that PPC’s review of the Master Mobility Plan, which is likely to be lengthy, be split between two meetings. Staff made a note of it. LEWIS commented it would be helpful for staff to include a section that lays out “here’s what’s different in this version of the MMP from when you saw it last time.” Staff made a note of it.

AUDIENCE COMMENTS

None.

ADJOURNMENT

With no additional business to conduct, PROBALA adjourned the meeting at 7:51 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.