

**CITY OF ISSAQUAH
Planning Policy Commission**

6:30 PM
October 8, 2020

Virtual Hearing

MINUTES

COMMISSION AND ADMINISTRATIVE PERSONNEL PRESENT

Commissioners Present:

Joan Probala, Chair
Ron Faul, Vice Chair
Joy Lewis
Janice Carle
Bill Rinehart
Jason Voiss
Robin Beukers, Alternate

Administration/Staff:

Christen Leeson, Senior Planner
Keith Niven, CP&D Director
Stephen Padua, Sr. Transp. Planner
Andrea Snyder, Deputy City Administrator
Doug Yormick, Assistant Planner

CALL TO ORDER

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 public hearing will be held entirely remotely. She referred to the guidelines for virtual meetings the City has been following and explained how members of the public can provide public comment.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- a) PROBALA asked for any objections to approving the minutes of the September 24, 2020 meeting, and there were none. Minutes are approved.

PUBLIC HEARING

- a) **Proposed Amendments to Issaquah Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Map: Land Use Element, Transportation Element, Capital Facilities Element, Olde Town Subarea Plan, (A)--continued from September 24, 2020**

Presented by:

Christen Leeson, Senior Planner

Leeson began staff's presentation. She reviewed the proposed 2020 docket of Comprehensive Plan amendments, including the Land Use Element (housing targets, job targets, population, and household projections); the Capital Facilities Element; Olde Town Implementation (immediate actions, 2019-2020); the Transportation Element (to be replaced with the Mobility Master Plan goals and policies); zoning map; and three proposed redesignations and rezones (Legacy Landscaping, Century Link/TOD; and Vanama Property). She concluded her presentation with a description of next steps, leading to anticipated action by the City Council on December 7, 2020.

PROBALA said it appears that the City needs to add only 70 housing units to meet its 2031 housing target, and asked is the City planning to go beyond that number. Leeson replied yes, the City will keep growing.

CARLE noted the sections in pink on the zoning map on page 108 appear to contain some errors. Staff made a note of it and will make corrections.

LEWIS asked staff to comment on how the City plans to ensure that services keep pace with housing growth. Leeson referred to the City's planning efforts, including the Central Issaquah Plan. This growth is not unanticipated, she continued, and said the City, like all its neighboring jurisdictions, has been taking steps to accommodate the growth that is coming. She referred to upcoming negotiations with the County to determine a new housing target. LEWIS said her concern is that services be able to keep up with the growth, and gave examples, such as needing portables at schools due to crowded conditions. Leeson referred to the Report Card distributed with the last PPC meeting agenda.

Niven said he is hearing two questions; is infrastructure keeping up with growth, and why are we growing so fast. He described projects around the City now under way on infrastructure projects, including how to accommodate additional impervious surface as development continues. He said new development pays impact fees that go toward infrastructure projects, but the City also has to move forward with some system improvements to expand capacity. The second question, he continued, seems to be can we just stop if we meet our housing target, and the answer is no. We are negotiating with the County, state, and Puget Sound Regional Council now to determine the next set of our targets. The City has successfully accommodated growth in housing so far, and that could be part of our negotiating position, he added. PROBALA asked when will the City be built out. Niven replied the community is moving from green field, or raw land, development to brown field, or redevelopment, and gave examples. He said it's a difficult question to answer, but he is not anticipating that the City will reach capacity build-out in our lifetime.

FAUL asked about the population chart (Table L-2, page 17 of 115). He noted it would be useful to document what the old target was as well as the new target on this chart, which could be useful as a benchmark. Staff made a note of it. He continued he's not sure the public really understands how significant the changes in population projections shown here really are. He also expressed concern about whether the level of service (LOS) for first-responders, police, and so on can keep pace with growth. He also noted that LOS updates should be done every two or three years. Leeson clarified the targets given to the City are not numbers we are trying to reach, but rather are numbers we are being asked to accommodate. Niven said police and fire chiefs analyze response times and determine LOS equivalents, which are reported to Council. He said we can do more research and get you more information on that.

FAUL asked how the sewer system, and sewer bills, are affected by growth. Leeson noted the City is undertaking a sewer plan update now. Niven explained the City is not a sewer manager or treatment provider. The City contracts with the County to transport its sewage to the Brightwater Treatment Plant, and explained how the City's flow joins the overall system. Sewer bills are issued from the County; they include some small local charges but basically represent a payment to the County for conveying and treating sewage before it is released.

BEUKERS asked how do the goals and objectives on pages 21-28 of the document we are reviewing tonight fit into the duties of the new Environmental Board. Are they linked, he asked. Leeson replied establishment of the Environmental Board would be in line with the goals and policies of the City's Comprehensive Plan. Snyder clarified the Environmental Board is not part of tonight's discussion.

BEUKERS said he has concerns about the Century Link/TOD project, and asked whether any updated information is available since PPC last discussed this. He continued he would like additional details about why the City is asking for this rezone, how many people will be impacted

by removing space from the existing RV park, how the City will benefit from this project, and what the land values are for the parcels involved. He said he is looking at this from a business point of view, and wants to understand the business deal the City is making. Leeson explained that Century Link is working with the City to move Century Link's existing use, which is located in the urban core, to more appropriate, City-owned property. To accomplish that, the City is requesting a rezone of its property from CF-F (Community Facilities-Facilities) to IC (Intensive Commercial). Rezoning the property to IC would allow Century Link to move its operations center from its existing site in the urban core to a City-owned site, and would allow the City to pursue a transit-oriented development (TOD) project within the urban core at the site Century Link now occupies.

Snyder continued a portion of an existing RV park will be displaced as a result of the rezone. How big that remnant portion would be, and how many RV spots would be retained, are not known at this point because the City is still in negotiations with Century Link about the final site plan. She explained that a RV park is not a mobile home park, and is considered temporary housing, so removing some RV capacity does not affect the City's housing target. She continued our best guess is that there will be adequate space to allow about 20 to 25 occupants to remain; the others will be relocated. If the proposal moves forward, she said, about four acres will be freed up for community-serving commercial space, including 360 new housing units, 175 of which will be affordable housing units and the remainder at market rate. The proposal helps the City achieve its affordable housing goals, using a site that is City owned and located within the urban core. She explained other community benefits that would come with gaining this housing capacity. Niven clarified whether or not to approve the deal the City makes with Century Link is a Council decision; PPC's role is to determine whether or not the proposal meets the criteria for a rezone.

VOISS asked what is the process the City and County follow to set housing targets. Leeson briefly described the negotiating process and said staff's current thinking is we will have a new target by the end of the first quarter in 2021.

LEWIS said she thinks BEUKERS has raised some legitimate concerns about the Century Link/TOD project. It might be worth having a discussion after public comment so the Commission can pass along any concerns and comments to Council for its work-study session on this issue.

FAUL suggested the City consider exploring space in Preston for relocating the RV park. He also commented that the new housing target represents about a 25-percent increase in the City's population between 2031 and 2045, resulting in needing about 7,200 more housing units. These are significant numbers, he added.

In response to a question raised at the last PPC meeting, Leeson said Costco's new buildings will accommodate 3,500 employees; about 2,000 are existing Costco employees who will transfer to the new building and about 2,500 of the jobs will be new. PROBALA asked how many of the 2,000 existing employees already work in Issaquah. Leeson replied Costco now rents office space on NW Sammamish, and her understanding is that most of the 2,000 employees being transferred to the new building will be coming from that rented space.

Public Comment

PROBALA re-opened the public hearing, continued from September 24, 2020, at 7:28 PM.

Geraldine Carey, 955 17th Ave. NW, Issaquah, said she has been a resident for 42-plus years. She continued she is baffled when she listens to staff talk about improvements to the City's infrastructure. She said it seems to her that no real roadway improvements other than Highlands Drive have been made for traveling east, west, or south out of Issaquah. She noted the City's population in 1978 was about 6,000, and the upcoming target is more than 54,000. Where are the improvements to accommodate that growth, she asked. She said she has not seen any money put toward widening of roads, and said she thinks roadways will become gridlocked. She gave more details about her observations of how the City is not accommodating the current and predicted increases in population.

Hearing no additional requests to speak, PROBALA closed the public hearing at 7:33 PM.

Commissioner Deliberations/Decision

LEWIS said she feels pretty confident about forwarding the amendment package to Council with a recommendation for approval, but also shares some of BEUKERS' concerns about the redesignation/rezone request for the Century Link/TOD project. She suggested that, while the project does seem to meet the criteria for a rezone, notes from tonight's discussion should be forwarded to the Council for their upcoming work-study session on this issue. She continued her concerns are that this project needs more transparency, particularly for the public so they can really understand what is taking place, including more exact details about the land value in the proposed exchange. She also said while she understands that some of the RV park will remain in place, she would like to see a commitment from the City that any loss of RV space will be relocated elsewhere. BEUKERS agreed that notes should be prepared from tonight's discussion and shared with the Council work-study group. He said his reservations include a desire for more information about the business transaction being proposed, including the valuation of the land parcels involved. He said he also has concerns about not having more information about how many RV spaces will be retained, how many occupants will be displaced, and so on. Staff made a note of these concerns.

MOVED BY FAUL, SECONDED BY VOISS to recommend that the proposed 2020 Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Map amendments be forwarded as written and presented tonight to the Council for approval. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY, 7-0.

OTHER BUSINESS / ANNOUNCEMENTS

Leeson reviewed the upcoming schedule of PPC meetings (page 15 of 115). LEWIS, PROBALA, and VOISS expressed appreciation to staff for last night's joint meeting with the Development Commission on proposed Olde Town Single Family Duplex Architectural Standards. LEWIS noted that staff will present a refined draft for a public hearing at PPC in December, and suggested that the Development Commission be given the opportunity to comment on that draft as well. PROBALA agreed.

Leeson noted RINEHART and CARLE will not be continuing as members of the Commission. She continued staff will be conducting interim recruitment activities for new Commission members, and applications will be accepted through October. The Chair, Commissioners, and staff thanked RINEHART and CARLE for their participation on PPC.

AUDIENCE COMMENTS

None.

ADJOURNMENT

With no additional business to conduct, PROBALA adjourned the meeting at 7:47 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