

**CITY OF ISSAQUAH
Planning Policy Commission**

6:30 PM
January 14, 2021

Virtual Meeting

MINUTES

COMMISSION AND ADMINISTRATIVE PERSONNEL PRESENT

Alternate Meeting Format: On March 6, 2020 the Mayor declared a civil emergency due to the outbreak of novel coronavirus (COVID-19). On March 24, 2020 the Governor issued Proclamation 20-28 relating to the COVID-19 emergency and open public meetings. The proclamation has been extended. Due to these factors, the meeting was held using a remote meeting platform.

Commissioners Present:

Joan Probala, Chair
Ron Faul, Vice Chair
Janice Carle
Joy Lewis
Nina Milligan
Matt Monahan
Jason Voiss
Richard Zaragoza, Alternate

Administration/Staff Present:

Christen Leeson, Sr. Planner
Megan Curtis-Murphy, Sr. Sustainability
Coordinator
Andrea Snyder, Deputy City Administrator

CALL TO ORDER

PROBALA, Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:31 PM. She briefly explained guidelines for participating in virtual meetings, including how to give public comment. New PPC members MILLIGAN, MONAHAN, and ZARAGOZA were introduced.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- a) PROBALA asked for objections to approving minutes of the PPC meeting on December 10, 2020, and there were none. Minutes are approved.

REGULAR BUSINESS

- a) **Review and Discuss Proposed Amendments to Issaquah Municipal Code (IMC) 18 for Electric Vehicle Charging Stations, (D)**

Presented by:

Megan Curtis-Murphy, Senior Sustainability Coordinator

Curtis-Murphy made staff's presentation on the proposed Electrical Vehicle (EV) Charging ordinance that would regulate EV charging infrastructure in new multifamily and commercial buildings and substantial retrofits. She described the feedback being requested of PPC on the proposal tonight; the importance of the EV ordinance; additional background on the development of the City's proposal, beginning in 2014; definitions of EV Capable, ES Ready, and EVSE (EV Supply Equipment); EV policies elsewhere in the US and Washington State; and details about the Administration's EV proposal, as outlined in the staff agenda. She concluded with the next steps in reviewing the proposal by PPC, the Environmental Board, and City Council.

ZARAGOZA asked for an explanation of why EV installation costs for single-family homes would be significantly higher than for commercial and/or multi-family buildings, and Curtis-Murphy provided an explanation. LEWIS asked whether developers are limited in the overall number of incentives offered by the City they can use on a given project. Curtis-Murphy replied no. LEWIS asked for clarification of parking requirements for TOD projects, and for data about EV requirements in the City's Development Agreements. Curtis-Murphy gave details about the City's sustainability requirements, and EV requirements specifically, for developers building projects under the City's Development Agreements.

MILLIGAN asked how usage of charging stations in, say, a 100-unit multifamily building, with five EV stations, is managed. Curtis-Murphy replied management occurs in different ways depending on the scenario, and gave examples such as the use of time limits. ZARAGOZA asked is charging time affected by the type of charging port. Curtis-Murphy replied the builder determines what type of charging port to be installed; the proposed ordinance doesn't specify what type of charger to be used. She said the options for electric vehicles and charging stations is evolving; an emerging option is wireless charging, for example.

MILLIGAN noted that users in a building with both commercial and retail would have different time frames; a retail customer might be in the building for 10 minutes and a commercial user for 10 hours. Should the required percentage of chargers be increased in commercial buildings that are job centers, she asked. Curtis-Murphy replied the type of use for a given building matters, but building uses also can change over time. Also, most users charge vehicles at home. She noted the City already has a number of buildings with charging infrastructure in place.

FAUL said the proposed 30-percent EV-ready requirement for new multifamily/townhome residences is probably too low, and gave information about the increasing use of electric vehicles in California and elsewhere. He said the retrofit costs for increasing charging capacity would be very high, much higher than including conduit for charging stations in the first place. He also spoke about the need to ensure charging capacity for TOD and affordable housing. As electric vehicle usage becomes more widespread and cheaper, it will be more affordable for lower-income people to drive them. The City will be limiting those residents' options for access to non-gasoline powered vehicles if the system to charge them is not in place when the buildings are being built. Curtis-Murphy replied some people would agree that the 30 percent requirement is too low; others don't agree. She referred to feedback from the City's recent meeting with stakeholders on this issue. She noted that the proposal exempts affordable housing from any requirements, based in part on feedback that additional requirements could potentially discourage builders from developing those kinds of projects. FAUL noted that a lot of people living in TOD projects will still have vehicles, and not having access to charging stations will effectively prohibit them from owning electric vehicles.

VOISS noted passages on pages 10 and 12 of 29 seem to contradict each other about enabling lower-income residents the opportunity to own and operate EVs. He continued with his perceptions of how widespread the use of EVs is likely to be in the coming years, noting that EVs only represent about four percent of vehicles operating in Washington State. He also asked about a popular program operated by Puget Sound Energy to provide charging stations, and whether it was possible to revive it. Curtis-Murphy explained that the program was well used but eventually the funding ran out. She continued her understanding is that a newer program is being tested now that would focus on pilots programs. VOISS asked what would the cost be to the City to provide public charging stations. Curtis-Murphy replied the City owns four charging

stations that serve a total of eight vehicles. It operates under Public Works Operations, and the costs are built into PWO's budget.

LEWIS spoke in favor of the City having a long-term strategy to ensure that all residents have access to new technology, including a public projects plan that allowed any resident to access EV charging equipment. She said she understands why the proposal is being made to exempt affordable housing, but that effectively leaves out a subset of the population that is disproportionately being affected by climate change. Snyder noted the City does offer some EV charging stations at City Hall Northwest that are available to the public, and gave details.

Curtis-Murphy said in community outreach and at the Council's study session, staff heard concerns about making affordable housing more expensive for developers as well as equity concerns. We expect to do some additional analysis, she added. Snyder agreed, and said the concern is that affordable housing developers are already up against financial requirements for financing, and have less flexibility than market-rate developers. By increasing requirements for affordable housing, does that hinder another of the City's goals, which is to increase supply of affordable housing.

Curtis-Murphy continued TOD is not called out in the current proposal, and staff is seeking feedback from PPC on whether TOD should be handled differently from affordable housing. MILLIGAN asked is there an assumption that TOD is affordable housing. Curtis-Murphy replied affordable housing is often included in TOD projects, but it doesn't have to be.

Monahan clarified that the incentives proposed for single-family and townhomes are one-time, per unit, incentives. Curtis-Murphy replied correct; staff is still working on the necessary administrative procedures, but the intent is that the incentives would be allowed one time, one incentive per unit.

FAUL spoke about the long-term benefits to both residents and the community of encouraging the use of EVs, and asked whether the City could pursue grants to offset some of the upfront costs of providing infrastructure to accommodate them. ZARAGOZA noted that the price of EVs and gas-powered vehicles is expected to achieve parity as soon as 2023, according to the information in the staff report. That number could reach 50 percent within ten years.

VOISS said the City is known for being a tough market for developers, regulation-wise. The concern is whether additional requirements for affordable housing projects will scare developers off. As for price parity, we aren't there yet, and the electric vehicle companies have some work to do before people will really want to buy them. He said we don't want to create a situation where developers don't want to build in our City. This proposal is a good starting point, and can be revisited in five or 10 years as the EV situation evolves.

CARLE said she would like clarification of the table on page 13 of why cost estimates for EV-ready spaces vary so greatly, from \$375 per single family/duplex to \$3,600 per townhome. Curtis-Murphy replied those are maximum estimates. Townhomes with parking underneath could mean additional costs would be incurred, and if a single-family residence is being replaced with a townhome, a transformer update might be required. CARLE said additional costs that would fall on developers and that could negatively impact the City's ability to get more affordable housing is a substantive concern. She said it would be hard to convince her that having EV capability for low-income populations is going to be as big an issue as getting affordable housing over the next five years. The City can't pursue all things equally, she

continued, and the availability of affordable housing is a more pressing need right now than ensuring that residents have access to EV infrastructure. FAUL also spoke in favor of EV-capable requirements for new construction, noting that the upfront costs are not that great to developers and that EV usage and demand will increase over time.

LEWIS said she would like to ask the Environmental Board to focus on the issue of incentives vs. code regulations. It would be useful for them to have the data that PPC has asked for tonight for their discussions, she added. She continued over time it will be cheaper to use and maintain electric vehicles, and having that availability for economically vulnerable populations needs to be addressed. She also asked if restrictions on affordable housing need to be prioritized in order to get the affordable housing the City desperately needs, what is the City's strategy or plan to address economic disparity. She said she is inclined to consider affordable housing and TOD projects the same and not differently, but she would like to hear from the Environmental Board on that, too. PROBALA agreed a better understanding of the costs is needed before we can feel confident we understand the impact of imposing this regulation on affordable housing.

CARLE said she agrees that TOD projects should not be subject to any special considerations. TOD projects are by definition located near transit facilities, and if they include affordable housing, then they can take advantage of those incentives. She also spoke to considering requirements for EV conduit-supplied parking, not EV-equipped, as discussed in the staff memo. In that case, percentage requirements could be much larger. ZARAGOZA agreed with CARLE's comments on looking more closely at requiring and incentivizing EV-capable parking spaces as opposed to more costly EV-ready spaces. FAUL also agreed, and said he would like more information about requiring EV-capable infrastructure that includes conduit and the appropriate panel for future hook-up. MILLIGAN agreed, and said she would also like to hear more discussion about increasing the requirements for commercial buildings. She said affordable housing projects and TOD projects weave in and out of each other, but affordable housing projects should not be exempt because those residents need EV capacity as much as anyone else. Other forces will have a larger influence over how much affordable housing the City is able to receive.

VOISS suggested that more data be made available on the costs of requiring just EV-capable parking rather than EV-ready parking, as suggested by CARLE, for both affordable housing and TOD projects. He noted that affordable housing developers are already working with smaller margins, and more data would help us understand the impact of requiring or waiving EV-ready and EV-capable parking. He also noted more information is needed about how a shared charging station between affordable housing/TOD and a nearby transit station could work.

PROBALA said she disagrees with giving incentives for installing EV charging for single-family housing. She continued although it is not presently possible to require EV capability for new single-family homes under state building code regulations, other jurisdictions such as Bellevue are working to change that. She explained that a medium-range single-family residence in the City is priced from the high \$700,000s to the \$800,000s, and putting in another \$350 to run a cable to a garage is not a big expense for the developer. The cost is minimal, and when the home is sold, it will be an added feature that could be worth \$12,000 to \$15,000. So essentially the incentive would save builders a relatively minor cost, but would also give homeowners a valuable asset. She continued she doesn't think TOD should be exempt from the proposed requirements. The widespread use of electric vehicles will also mean less tax revenue from gasoline sales for jurisdictions and the state to make transportation improvements, she noted, which is another issue that needs more discussion. She also noted that decreasing the amount

of parking required for buildings that include charging stations will result in less overall parking available, but electric vehicles require places to park as well as be charged.

Curtis-Murphy gave a short summary of the primary comments she heard from PPC tonight, as follows:

Summary of Comments

Use of incentives for single family and townhomes.

- Turn into requirement in some way, interested in that.
- Overall thought are they really needed, sold for high cost, need this incentive?

The use of a waiver for affordable housing units.

- Equity and wanting to make sure those residents have access to EVs.
- AH is already expensive to build.
- AH already required in City, so do they need to be waived or not.
- More information about what costs are, especially about EV capable.
- More information about public plan for charging by public.

Whether TOD projects should be handled differently in the ordinance.

- Shouldn't be handled differently.
- Some include AH, some don't, don't need special consideration.
- More information about EV capable for TOD projects.

LEWIS suggested adding asking the Environmental Board for its recommendation to the summary, and providing them with the data that PPC has asked for tonight in advance of their discussion. Staff made a note of it.

FAUL commented that he doesn't favor offering incentives for single-family and townhomes. He said he does agree with CARLE's point that upgrade panels that would make affordable housing capable for EV should be required, given the expense of retrofitting. He also said he favors exploring sharing EV capacity between TOD projects and transit centers, which would mean that long-term, needed parking spaces would not have to be removed from TOD buildings to accommodate EV charging. PROBALA added that requiring transit centers to have very fast charging capability is worth exploring.

VOISS noted that it is his understanding that requiring new single-family residences to include EV charging is a moot point, at least for now, since it is covered by state building codes. He spoke in favor of having more information about how TOD and transit centers function together. He said a requirement for 10 and 30 percent of parking for EV, as proposed, seems reasonable, but requiring 50 percent represents huge costs. He also spoke in favor of looking more closely at the costs requiring of EV-capable rather than EV-ready parking spaces.

PROBALA suggested that PPC members watch upcoming Council work sessions and Environmental Board discussions on the EV proposal if possible. Leeson will email the dates and times of those discussions.

OTHER BUSINESS / ANNOUNCEMENTS

(a) Upcoming Schedule: Leeson noted the next PPC meeting, on January 28, is a public hearing on the 2021 docket of proposed Comp Plan and zoning map amendments. The sign amendments discussion will be rescheduled. LEWIS suggested including some training at the next PPC meeting on the Comp Plan, particularly the amendment process.

REPORTS

Leeson reported on feedback from Council's recent work session on the proposed Olde Town Architectural Standards, which will be before Council on February 1 for action.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

ADJOURNMENT

With no additional business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 8:37 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Lowe
Recording Secretary