

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

6:30 PM  
March 11, 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 (nonvoting)

*Administration/Staff:*

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

**CALL TO ORDER**

PROBALA, Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:33 PM.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

- a) PROBALA asked for any corrections or objections to approving minutes of January 28, 2021, and there were none. Minutes are approved.

**PUBLIC HEARING(S)**

- a) Proposed Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging Infrastructure, (A)  
*Presented by:*  
*Megan Curtis-Murphy, Senior Sustainability Coordinator*

Curtis-Murphy presented background on the Electric Vehicle (EV) charging ordinance, including the purpose of tonight's meeting; what feedback is being sought from PPC tonight; some of the reasons the ordinance is being proposed; details about the proposed ordinance; feedback from Council, PPC, and the Environmental Board to date; changes to the ordinance made as a result of the Council's study session on February 9; affordable housing options, including the Administration's recommendation; and single-family requirement options, including the Administration's recommendation. She gave more details about the Environmental Board's feedback and recommendation made at its March 10 meeting.

She concluded with a summary of the timing and next steps in the process, leading to Council action on April 5. She reiterated that PPC is being asked tonight to deliberate two key parts of the proposed ordinance:

- a) Meet EV infrastructure requirements in affordable housing, but through a cost neutral approach;
- b) No requirements for single-family and townhomes.

**Public Comments**

PROBALA opened the public hearing for public comment at 6:47 PM. Hearing none, she closed the public hearing at 6:48 PM.

**Commission Discussion**

MILLIGAN asked about the use of “shall” in *“the provision of EVSE and EV-Ready in the project associated with defined affordable housing shall be cost-neutral.”* She also asked for clarification of why reducing landscaping was proposed as a way to achieve cost-neutrality. Curtis-Murphy replied the thinking was that, particularly if reductions in parking requirements did not achieve cost neutrality, then other options, such as reducing landscaping, might be used. It was intended as a way of offering cost savings for developers in exchange for the costs to developers of providing EV facilities. Several Commissioners spoke about the desirability of landscaping requirements for affordable housing in terms of environmental impacts, equity, and aesthetics.

LEWIS asked whether anything was considered to incentivize residents to own or have access to electric vehicles, rather than incentivizing developers. Curtis-Murphy said she expects that to be part of a larger discussion about incentives when the City does its Title 18 update later this year.

FAUL gave details about three electric vehicles expected to come on the market soon, including their range of miles. He continued that, particularly with an increase in range, owning and operating electric vehicles will become much more affordable than gas-powered vehicles. He spoke in favor of increasing the required number of EV-ready stalls in the proposal to something like 25 percent, and not consider cost neutrality. VOISS said he’s also not in favor of a cost neutrality focus and spoke against waiving landscaping requirements in order to achieve cost neutrality. He also said the percentages of EV-equipped and EV-ready stalls can always be retooled later when more data is available about electric vehicle usage. ZARAGOZA asked how cost neutrality would be assessed. Curtis-Murphy explained that staff would ask the applicant to show how cost neutrality had been calculated and gave examples.

FAUL noted that as EV vehicles become more widespread, the technology and methodology to charge them will change. Stations may become outdated, and third-party companies may emerge to put in charging equipment and provide services. Ensuring that EV-ready stalls are accommodated is key because that is where the highest cost will be. He clarified that EV-ready includes both wiring and conduit. Curtis-Murphy replied yes.

MILLIGAN spoke about not taking away amenities such as landscaping from affordable housing projects and asked whether the costs of including EV-ready stalls is really prohibitive for developers. Rental prices are largely determined by the market, and not what it cost the developer to build, she noted. PROBALA agreed and said the cost of providing EV-ready stalls is not that significant in the overall cost of development.

LEWIS asked how the numbers proposed for EV stalls were calculated in the proposed ordinance. Curtis-Murphy replied we worked with a King County group called Regional Code Collaboration, which included a large stakeholder process. A wide range of opinions was discussed, and it was a negotiated process to get to the numbers you see here. PROBALA said so under the proposal, 40 percent of new multifamily parking spaces must be EVSE or EV-ready. Curtis-Murphy replied correct.

CARLE spoke in favor of not taking the cost-neutral approach. A very small number of parking spaces would be needed to meet the ordinance requirements, she said. The big costs are in retrofitting or building new EV spaces in the future. She said requiring a higher percentage of EV-capable spaces, like 50 percent, might be a more practical approach in the long run.

MONAGHAN spoke in favor of not making cost-neutrality a requirement. He said he is comfortable with the percentages in the proposal, at least initially, but going forward he would favor monitoring the utilization of EV in the City. He referred to a recent [New York Times](#) article yesterday that estimated electric vehicles won't be the majority of cars on the road until after 2050. Others agreed that revisiting the numbers in a year is recommended.

FAUL spoke about the culture of Issaquah, and what the City wants to be. We could become a market leader, an EV-City, and that would be in keeping with our values. It's possible that Issaquah residents might be early adopters of EV, he said, and he would favor moving the percentage of EV-ready spaces to more like 60 or 70 percent. LEWIS said another option is to swap the percentages in Table A-1 and Table A-2 in the proposal for EVSE and EV-ready.

VOISS agreed that the affordable housing waiver and cost-neutrality approach should be struck. He said he agrees with MONAGHAN that we do not have enough historical data on EV usage here to know whether these percentages are exactly right, and they should be revisited in a year or two. He said his concern is that the City already has a reputation as being a difficult place for developers. ZARAGOZA agreed, and said technology will change and third parties may play a role as well, which would create jobs. PROBALA said developers know that making their projects EV ready will make them more desirable properties, and they might be willing to do so without incentives. FAUL noted wireless technology is also an emerging possibility.

LEWIS spoke in favor of including a sunset clause in PPC's recommendation to Council, specifically that the Environmental Board and PPC revisit the EV ordinance in one year. Other Commissioners agreed with this approach. CARLE noted that the Environmental Board's recommendation to revisit the EV ordinance was in two years. LEWIS asked for details about the state's new building code. [Snyder](#) and [Curtis-Murphy](#) explained the newly adopted state code provisions on EV charging stations. LEWIS clarified so the state's approach in its building code is to be silent on EV requirements for single-family developments. [Snyder](#) replied that is correct.

VOISS said he agrees with the City Attorney's position (pages 25-28) and said this is another area where the City is already battling a reputation as a difficult place for development. [Snyder](#) said staff is seeking feedback and recommendations from PPC tonight, so if PPC feels strongly about lobbying for a change in the state building code, they can make that recommendation to Council.

### **Commission Decision**

MOVED BY VOISS, SECONDED BY LEWIS that PPC recommend approval of the proposed amendments regarding electric vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure, items 1-3, to the Council.

MOVED BY MILLIGAN, SECONDED BY FAUL to amend the motion to strike the section that gives affordable housing a waiver for EV infrastructure, specifically IMC 18.09.140-A.10.  
MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY (7-0).

MAIN MOTION to recommend approval of the proposed amendments regarding EV charging infrastructure, items 1-3, as amended, to the Council. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY (7-0).

The Commissioners discussed recommendations to accompany the motion. Snyder and Leeson confirmed that recommendations from PPC can be included in the agenda bill that will be forwarded to the Council with PPC's motion. LEWIS proposed the following recommendation, and it was the consensus of PPC members present that the recommendation be forwarded to Council:

It is the recommendation of this Commission that the code changes to the Electric Vehicle ordinance be revisited by the Environmental Board and the Planning Policy Commission in one year (or on the docket calendar 2022). Further it is recommended that if the Council would like to have a specific incentive for Affordable Housing, that tool would be the swap of EVSE to EV-Ready. However this Commission is split as to whether the ratio should be 1:1 or a greater percentage of EV-ready stalls given. Thirdly, it is the recommendation of this Commission that the Administration use its lobbying efforts and amendment power to request changes to the single family/townhome EV requirements to the State Building Code Commission.

## REGULAR BUSINESS

- a) County-wide Planning Policies and Growth Targets, (I)

*Presented by:*

*Christen Leeson, Senior Planner*

Leeson reviewed the Countywide Planning Policies (CPPs) and growth targets, including background as to their purpose and how they are established, as described in the agenda packet (pages 45 to 52). She explained how the City has accommodated those targets and noted that targets are not numbers that the City is necessarily trying to achieve. She also noted that the City's new targets were established beginning in 2019, and that the City does not receive "credit" for having met or exceeded targets in the past. She also explained factors that are influencing targets, including uncertainty about the future of ST-3 and market influences.

FAUL asked clarifying questions about the City's capacity to accommodate growth, specifically water and sewer services. Snyder explained that the City embarked on a new approach to managing its water supply last July, both for present needs and to accommodate future growth. She said she's not aware of any indications that the City is approaching its maximum capacity for either water or sewer services. She also gave an explanation of the GMA's approach that "growth pays for growth," including how the City assesses impact fees on new development and seeks grant funding for infrastructure expansion.

## REPORTS

- a) City Council Updates

*Presented by:*

*Christen Leeson, Senior Planner*

Leeson gave a brief update on recent Council actions. Snyder announced that Minnie Dhalisal will be joining the City on March 22 as the new Community Planning and Development Director.

## PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

**OTHER BUSINESS/ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- a) Leeson reviewed PPC's upcoming meeting schedule (page 57). The next PPC meeting is a joint meeting with the Economic Vitality Commission on proposed sign code changes, on March 25, 2021 at 6:30 PM.

**ADJOURNMENT**

With no additional business to conduct, the meeting was adjourned at 9:16 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Lowe  
Recording Secretary