

**CITY OF ISSAQUAH  
Planning Policy Commission**

6:30 PM  
April 22, 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:*

Ron Faul, Vice Chair  
Joy Lewis  
Nina Milligan  
Matt Monahan  
Jason Voiss  
Richard Zaragoza, Alternate (voting)

*Administration/Staff/Others:*

Christen Leeson, Senior Planner  
Lucy Sloman, Land Dev. Manager  
Minnie Dhaliwal, CP&D Director  
Daniel Kenny, Ogden Murphy Wallace  
Chris Grabowski, Code Enforcement Officer

*Commissioners Not Present:*

Joan Probala, Chair (Excused)  
Janice Carle (Excused)

**CALL TO ORDER**

FAUL, Vice Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM. He gave some information about the virtual format for tonight's meeting, and noted that ZARAGOZA, Alternate, is serving as a regular, voting member tonight.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

a) FAUL asked for any corrections or objections to approving minutes of March 11, 2021, and there were none. Minutes are approved.

b) FAUL asked for any corrections or objections to approving minutes of March 25, 2021, and there were none. Minutes are approved.

**PUBLIC HEARING(S)**

- a) Sign Code Amendments, (A)

*Presented by:*

*Lucy Sloman, Land Development Manager*

**Staff Presentation**

Sloman noted that PPC is being asked to make a recommendation to Council on the proposed sign code tonight. She also explained how members of the public can submit written comments to be submitted along with PPC's recommendation to the Council. She gave background on the work done on the sign code update, including the *Reed vs. Gilbert* court case that requires the City to comply with legal requirements in its sign code. She explained the goals for updating the sign code, including streamlining and making it easier to use. She explained the notable changes since PPC last discussed the proposed amendments on March 25, 2021 (draft dated March 18), numbers 1 to 6, outlined in the agenda, as follows:

1. Temporary Sign Agreements and Adjacent Property Owner Permission
2. Front Street Banner
3. Exceptions from Permit Requirements
4. Permanent Commercial Signs
5. Temporary Commercial Signs
6. Variances

Sloman continued her presentation on the discussion topics at PPC's March 25 meeting and the Administration's recommendation, as outlined in the agenda.

- *1a. Temporary Non-Commercial Signs:*

VOISS asked for clarification about the Administration's recommendation of a "total of 32 square feet." Sloman gave examples. VOISS said he has problems with this because it seems like it is restricting freedom of speech on private property, and questioned why a bigger property should have the same cap as a smaller property. FAUL asked about holiday decorations and whether they would be considered needing to be within the 32 square feet. Daniel Kenny, attorney for the City, referred to the definitions that would apply to that question. He said just decorations would not be considered a sign, but an application of, say, light bulbs to convey a message such as "Merry Christmas" on a roof would be considered a sign. FAUL said he can foresee problems with that approach. Sloman added the code also says signs cannot be above the roofline. She spoke to VOISS's comments about restricting the number of signs based on property size, and said the goal is to be even-handed in dealing with all signs for all residents, regardless of the size of their property.

MILLIGAN spoke to regulating whether a sign is commercial or noncommercial, and asked for more clarification. Sloman gave examples of commercial signs and noncommercial, nonprofit signs. Kenny referred to the definition of noncommercial entities in the code. MONAHAN spoke to the proposed code as likely being the best compromise, given the Supreme Court's ruling. LEWIS agreed. She asked about the monument signs; specifically, does restricting messages to two faces place any limitations on the actual nature of the sign; could it be a different shape, such as a sphere. Sloman replied the sign could be three dimensional, but it would be limited to having a message on two faces, and could have art on the other sides, for example. ZARAGOZA asked would this place a limitation on a monument sign that was meant to be seen from all entry points in a roundabout or traffic circle, for example. Sloman replied the City's wayfinding plan will not be subject to these regulations, and would address that kind of situation, but it is unlikely that commercial signs would be allowed in those spaces.

- *1b. Temporary Non-Commercial Signs in the Right-of-Way*
- *2. Olde Town Design Standards for Sign Design*
- *3. Directional & Informational Signs (Business Directional Kiosks)*

MILLIGAN asked for clarification about the requirement for two kiosks as a minimum and six slots per kiosk. Sloman referred to page 52 of the agenda packet and explained the thinking that went into establishing those minimums. MILLIGAN asked about the replacement provision for kiosks. Sloman replied if over time businesses do not continue to participate in the signage, the kiosk should be removed. She said another concern was to provide fairness and an opportunity for anyone in the district who wants to participate.

LEWIS spoke to the possibility of walkable spaces that could be less than 1300 feet long, and how the proposed kiosk regulations would apply, noting that the pedestrian experience is quite different from that from a vehicle. She asked would the City be able to step in and keep the kiosk opportunities equitable, even though they are not being maintained by the City. Sloman explained the thinking that went into the proposal, specifically the public benefit. LEWIS said it is a nice idea to think about allowing each neighborhood to maintain a local kiosk for signs about barbecues, garage sales, missing pets, and so on, as suggested by Connie Marsh, and said she recognizes that some limitations would be needed but it is worth a future discussion. Sloman said these regulations would apply to commercial communications; noncommercial messages would be a separate discussion and might not be considered signs.

VOISS said kiosks in the right-of-way would be useful in serving multi-modal transportation. Could these be a triangular kiosk, he asked. Sloman described the commercial kiosks and signs that exist in the Highlands. She said there was an attempt to limit the number of faces a commercial sign could have, but not the number of faces for kiosks. FAUL referred to a triangular kiosk that now exists in the City and asked would it be out of compliance with these regulations, as well as other signs on that property (Stan's Barbeque). Sloman said the kiosk is on private property and appears to be more like informational posters than commercial signage and would not fall under these regulations. She also explained how existing signs could be legally nonconforming under these new regulations but would not require immediate removal or change.

LEWIS questioned the stipulation that kiosks must have two sides and gave examples. Sloman said no shape is specified; if a kiosk is round, there is a limitation on how many sponsorships are allowed. The intent is to limit the number of sides with commercial messages; maps and other information are welcome on the other sides. LEWIS said her concern is not putting too many limitations and requirements for conformance on kiosks in the code.

- 4. *Flags*
- 5. *Landmark Signs*
- 6. *Organization of Sign Code*

### **Public Comment**

FAUL opened the public hearing at 7:54 PM.

Randy Bannecker, Seattle King County Realtors, said the realtor community generally supports the package of code amendments; it meets its objectives, is practical and understandable, and conforms to *Reed vs. Gilbert*. He spoke about the importance of signage to the real estate business and noted that real estate signage ensures fairness and nondiscrimination in the selling process. He added technology has not yet rendered signage obsolete, and many people looking for a new home rely on physical signage. He also spoke about the importance of consistent standards for real estate signage across the region, and asked PPC to consider an amendment that would increase the height allowance for real estate signs to accommodate typical yard arms used for real estate signs. He also requested that the allowance for on-premises open house signs be increased to four.

FAUL read an email received from Connie Marsh to PPC, dated April 17, 2021.

Hearing no additional requests to speak, FAUL closed the public hearing at 8:05 PM.

### **Commissioner Deliberation**

VOISS spoke to the idea of placing a cap on the number of signs that can be displayed on private property based on size of the property. He said he can support the other changes proposed but this one is troubling. LEWIS gave her perception of how placing a limitation on the number of signs allowed per property could perpetuate the kind of community we want to be, that is, ensuring equity in speech vs. “more money (property) equals more speech.” She also asked for clarification from staff about when a sign crosses over into being art. Sloman provided an answer and examples.

ZARAGOZA spoke to the point about equity, and said he thinks paying more in property taxes should not give someone a “louder” voice. He also spoke to the adequacy of 32 square feet per property for someone to get their point across. FAUL said he would like to see the limit on garage sale signs struck from the code, or at least increased. He asked Sloman to clarify the illustration submitted by Mr. Bannecker as to the size of real estate signs allowed. He also asked whether a limitation on lumens for LED signs was discussed, and voiced concern about light pollution from signs. Sloman said no specific lighting level has been set in the code; staff intends to get something more specific in the code when lighting is addressed in the Title 18 update later this year.

Sloman gave information about next steps in the adoption process of these amendments. Chris Grabowski addressed FAUL’s comment about lumens. From an enforcement standpoint, he said, the City does not currently have anyone on staff who is qualified or trained to measure lumens.

MILLIGAN spoke in favor of the first Table of Contents option; it is simpler to use. She also spoke about the business directional signs, and suggested renaming them “business district kiosks.” She voiced her concern that advertising or promoting a commercial event for a commercial district should be allowed, and gave examples. Kenny said his understanding is that the non-message sides of kiosks are not meant to be for the benefit of a noncommercial entity, but rather for the community at large, such as maps. He read the proposed language, and said the kiosks are not intended to be an additional place for posters and banners, and be limited in scope. MILLIGAN spoke in favor of allowing additional information promoting business-related activities on kiosks in the right-of-way. Kenny said if it is considered to be a non-commercial message, then it has to be treated as a content neutral message, and gave examples. MILLIGAN also gave comments about garage sale and homemade signs.

MILLIGAN said she is sensing that the Commission is close to making a recommendation with areas of concern called out for additional discussion. LEWIS spoke to FAUL’s concern about light pollution from signs. She also expressed support for the original organization and doubling the number of garage sale signs allowed from two to four.

### **Commissioner Decision**

MOVED BY MONAGHAN, SECONDED BY VOISS that PPC recommend approval of the proposed Sign Code amendments as noted in the Findings of Fact to the City Council.

MOVED BY MILLIGAN, SECONDED BY MONAGHAN that the proposed sign code amendments for on-premises real estate signs be revised to (1) allow yard arm signs up to 6.5 feet in height and (2) allow two riders of 1.5 square feet each. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY, 6-0.

MOVED BY LEWIS, SECONDED BY MONAGHAN that the proposed sign code amendments be revised to rename “business directional signs” to “business district kiosks,” and to increase

the allowable number of garage sale signs from two to four. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY, 6-0.

MOVED BY VOISS that PPC direct staff to prepare two additional options for Council consideration for establishing the number of temporary noncommercial signage allowed on private property. NO SECOND.

MOVED BY FAUL, SECONDED BY MILLIGAN that staff include a recommendation in the agenda bill transmitting PPC's recommendation that the issue of lumens from signage be further evaluated and researched by staff and presented to Council at a future Council work session. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY, 6-0.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY to recommend approval of the proposed Sign Code amendments as noted in the Findings of Fact, and as amended by PPC tonight, to the City Council, 6-0.

## REGULAR BUSINESS

### a) Capital Facilities Plan/Transportation Improvement Program Discussion, (D)

*Presented by:*

*Christen Leeson, Senior Planner*

Leeson gave an outline of the next steps in providing the Council with feedback they requested from PPC on the Capital Facilities Plan and Transportation Improvement Plan. She explained what the Capital Facilities Plan is; categories within the CIP; selection criteria for projects; and considerations set out by the Council for prioritizing projects.

The Commissioners offered comments on last Monday night's discussion with the Council, including whether asking PPC to participate and give feedback was valuable. LEWIS and VOISS expressed appreciation for the invitation to participate. MILLIGAN agreed. She commented that the explanation of criteria selection, how it is used, and how projects are prioritized was not entirely clear. VOISS said the projects selected in the CIP appear to line up fairly well with the selection criteria. LEWIS asked why the projected revenue for the school safety fund remains the same, year to year, and why the revenue collected in 2020 did not change despite changes in school occupancy because of the pandemic. VOISS said he also has questions about how cameras are used in the school safety program.

MONAGHAN said the dog park completion year is listed in the CIP as 2023, and noted the park seems to be a long time coming. Leeson noted potential dog park sites have been tested, and now a final site has been selected.

LEWIS said it is confusing why the list has so many items for stormwater management without the Stormwater Management Master Plan having been completed. She spoke in favor of moving up the Laughing Jacob's Creek project. She said she would also like to ensure that the City puts its budget where its values are, and gave examples, such as purchasing clean-running vehicles for the City and retrofitting City buildings to incorporate green building techniques. She said her interest is in how the City can make these projects align more closely with the pressing deadlines associated with climate change.

## REPORTS

a) Council Updates, (I): Leeson reported on recent Council actions, including Council's recent approval of the electric vehicle charging stations legislation.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

None.

**OTHER BUSINESS/ANNOUNCEMENTS**

a) Upcoming Schedule: Leeson noted a new member will be joining PPC at the next meeting, on May 13, 2021. Elections for Chair and Vice Chair, as well as training for PPC members and a presentation of the Stormwater Management Plan, are also scheduled for the next meeting.

**ADJOURNMENT**

With no additional business to conduct, the meeting was adjourned at 9:40 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Lowe  
Recording Secretary