



MINUTES

Special Joint Meeting

PLANNING POLICY COMMISSION & DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

6:30 p.m. -Thursday, January 20, 2022

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.

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:35 p.m. by Chair Faul.

Planning Policy Commissioners Present:

Chair Faul, Vice-Chair Voiss, Commissioners Bader, Lewis, Milligan, and Zaragoza (Alternate)

Absence: Commissioner Monahan (Excused)

Development Commissioners Present:

Chair Brennan, Vice-Chair Price, Commissioners Dillon, Ikeda, Morgan, Sanford, Schulte, and Shore

Absence: Commissioner Sowa (Unexcused)

Staff Present:

Minnie Dhaliwal, Director, CP&D
Christen Leeson, Senior Planner
Stephen Padua, Public Works
Valerie Porter, CP&D
Lucy Sloman, Land Development Manager

2. Approval of Planning Policy Commission Minutes

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- a) Chair Faul asked if there were any comments or changes to the PPC December 2, 2021 minutes and there were none. The minutes were approved.

3. Public Comments

There were no written comments or requests to speak.

4. Regular Business

- a) **Title 18 Land Use Code Update: Building and Design - Neighborhood Overlay Standards, (D) (00:05)**
Presented by Lucy Sloman, Land Development Manager

Sloman presented the slideshow and described issues to consider. Leeson added that the reason for the location of Standards within a Plan was that Commissioners had been asked to re-vision Central Issaquah during the 2016 Moratorium, to become more specific with each neighborhood, but the exercise was visioning and not creating code.

CHAIR FAUL opened Commissioner questions. (00:26)

COMMISSIONER MILLIGAN asked for clarification regarding developer obligations. Sloman replied that obligations are not proposed to be changed at this point, but tools may be fine-tuned. The obligations would be a part of the neighborhood overlay. COMMISSIONER MILLIGAN asked if this would cover more than central Issaquah and Sloman replied as a component of the central Issaquah neighborhood overlay. COMMISSIONER MILLIGAN asked how public input informs what is being worked on. Sloman replied that one year after Issaquah Highlands replacement regulations were put into place, a neighborhood meeting was held. The pandemic began and little has been done since in terms of implementing concerns raised. Packets are going to Homeowner Associations (HOAs) as well as an interested party email list. Staff is interested in talking with any groups which may have insight into neighborhood obligations.

COMMISSIONER IKEDA asked if, when multiple standards may conflict, the more stringent standard would apply. Sloman replied that a standard would be chosen that clearly and directly convey expectations. COMMISSIONER IKEDA asked for clarification that clear design was the intent, and Sloman replied yes. COMMISSIONER IKEDA asked if art neighborhood spaces refer to an architectural standard. Sloman replied that the spaces could be building designs or other specific standards to neighborhoods. In example, Issaquah Highlands and Talus have trail standards while the city has no actual trail standards; a question is if a standard belongs permanently with a neighborhood or if the standard is a foundation that could be applied city-wide.

COMMISSIONER SHORE asked how some regulations, which do not apply to an area but could apply somewhere new through this change, would be approved. Sloman replied that gap analysis and update memos are phase one of the process and now ending. Draft code

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will be available for several weeks prior to a meeting, open houses held, and expertise gathered from Commissions with a deliberation session. The proposals are being decided on at this time and feedback is sought at each step to ask why or why not a standard is applied city-wide. The process is in early stages and any comments regarding what the correct direction is to move forward are appreciated before time is invested. COMMISSIONER SHORE asked if track changes would be available and Sloman replied not word for word, but in example, *change explainers* such as in sign code are used to describe sources if multiple items are being combined, and what has been removed or retained.

COMMISSIONER SANFORD asked if external documents such as performance standards and recommendations would continue to exist under the plan, and if there will be a hierarchy of precedence in determining what information developers needs to see to understand the full set of requirements. Sloman replied that big policy changes are not being made, but rather that policies that the city has worked hard on are being carried forward into a format which is clear and easy to use, pulling multiple standards into one clear and coherent standard. COMMISSIONER SANFORD asked if external documents will still exist after the Title 18 revision. Sloman replied that the Comprehensive Plan and Central Issaquah Plan will not be a part of Title 18 but are authorized, adopted and effective in establishing vision. Standards in Title 18 are needed to implement and achieve the vision. COMMISSIONER SANFORD asked if Safety in Design (SiD) would continue to exist with the Title 18 Architecture Design Manual. Sloman replied that the Design Manual is proposed to be pulled apart, with the urban design component becoming the foundation for city-wide urban design standards and the architectural component becoming part of the neighborhood overlay for central Issaquah. COMMISSIONER SANFORD asked how the code machine would be able to handle illustrations and photos. Sloman replied that conversations have occurred between staff and entity code publishing which hosts Issaquah code. The current version has difficulty achieving a level of visual graphic necessary and why these have existed outside of code publishing. Confidence is high that images can be integrated now. Sign code is an example.

CHAIR BRENNAN stated that administrative corrections and managing redundancies should be separated out from substantive standard changes for better understanding for engagement. Updates to design requirements are substantive changes. Pulling developer obligations and putting into code as a more enforceable element may not be specific enough for code language.

COMMISSIONER LEWIS stated that how consolidation will be constructed and tested prior to a roll-out will be important; the walk-through is appreciated, and deeper information is desired. Digital tools may be more useful than paper and ink. A hypothetical user experience moving through land use tools would be helpful. Gap analysis should not end but evolve. COMMISSIONER LEWIS asked for an example of a design manual threshold. Sloman first replied appreciating the first comments and explained that the presentation was the product of a lot of staff time and thought from different perspectives. Staff has been meeting with affinity groups through the process, developers and other users, for the user experiences mentioned. Working through the code process will produce policy questions. Staff across different departments such as Parks and Public Works will have several weeks to evaluate. An

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external draft will then go out and an open house will be held for questions. Staff is in the process of obtaining many different perspectives. Dhaliwal replied that the architectural style threshold for re-development is 50% value but does not distinguish around what is being done to the outside or inside of the building. Costs may need to be broken down into exterior and interior. Options can be brought back for consideration regarding how to establish a threshold that makes sense for smaller building renovations and additions. COMMISSIONER LEWIS stated that threshold would be a separate conversation. The participation of other stakeholders is appreciated. Code must be user-friendly for small builders and business owners. Sloman stated being aware that monitoring of the design manual needs to be a part of the process and that the deadline had passed due to the pandemic. The Friends of Youth building was used in an example of how lack of clarity regarding thresholds could be a problem.

COMMISSIONER MILLIGAN asked how guiding principles and urban design guidelines will not be lost when migrated into other documentation. Sloman replied that they are attachments used as a part of the review. The piece is still in initial conversations.

COMMISSIONER SANFORD stated that the issue is an information architecture challenge, a website and documentation project. There is expertise that will be required to accomplish. Usability testing is a prime component. COMMISSIONER SANFORD asked for the definition of city-wide. Sloman replied commercial, mixed-use and multi-family only. COMMISSIONER SANFORD asked if the definition would be applicable anywhere in the city with the uses mentioned and Sloman stated that the issue would be up to the Commissioners.

CHAIR FAUL opened the topic to public comment. (01:05)

- Connie Marsh stated that a lot of time has been spent creating character areas in Issaquah and these need to remain consistent despite new tools. Residents may not be aware that they are within a neighborhood overlay, and the ideas and proposed tools should be introduced to residents. A map may be helpful to illustrate what the term *city-wide* really means. There are areas with no current character overlay, and Marsh asked if those neighborhoods would be consulted or told what they will become. Enforceable standards within the Central Issaquah area are good to ensure that intended character is achieved, but the city should engage in a project to envision what neighborhood characters should be. If standards must be established because the intention is not being met is another question. There has been no data given to demonstrate that there is a problem now. The definition of success is unclear; if the goal is to reduce that amount of negotiating by half, how much flexibility to be allowed, and a percentage of administrative adjustments of standards. A goal of simplicity and how the issue will be fixed needs further explanation. The sweet spot between prescriptive and flexible needs to be identified. Maps will be helpful. Regarding thresholds, in a burning or natural disaster, architectural standards could be switched to.

Leeson stated that there were no further requests to speak. (01:13)

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COMMISSIONER MILLIGAN stated that developer obligations are worth researching for city-wide use. On page 23 of the packet, a statement is that deviations would be allowed based on the use inside; rules are in place for a reason, however, such as for active uses that interact with the sidewalk on the first floor. Store window displays are another area to discuss. Guiding principle and design guidelines have encouraging, soft language but there is an expectation that the guidelines are standards; stronger language may need to be examined.

COMMISSIONER MILLIGAN praised cities that have not allowed franchises to ignore design standards, and while development is allowed, community character is preserved. Applying standards city-wide could become an issue if a community requests a change, in example, fence height, that had been initiated by and works for another community. COMMISSIONER MILLIGAN thanked staff and the Development Commission.

COMMISSIONER MORGAN thanked staff for the presentation and packet. Consolidation of documents is an excellent idea. Standards from a developer perspective can be considered hard or easy but understanding should always be the goal. COMMISSIONER MORGAN stated agreeing with applying urban design city-wide for commercial and single-family; as the city has evolved and grown rapidly, there should be some design standards that can be applied city-wide. Retaining neighborhood specific standards should continue. Areas that have evolved should be respected and maintained in neighborhood overlays going forward. COMMISSIONER MORGAN agreed with moving developer obligations into Title 18 to simplify finding what needs to be accomplished. Green sheets used by the Development Commission in the past were an excellent tool for developers and Commissioners.

CHAIR FAUL stated agreeing with the comments of Commissioner Morgan.

COMMISSIONER BADER asked if all documents are streamlined and later a set of design standards needs to be added, if the city will then be in the same position as today with code; what would be the path for sustainability of the document. Sloman replied that Title 18 with parts and chapters will provide a more sustainable structure but will need to be revisited regularly. Dhaliwal added that the hope is to provide a broad framework that is linked for simplicity. City-wide standards will not be considered for neighborhoods where not wanted; circulation and parking are examples of what should be different in urban contexts that will be presented in February. The discussion at this meeting is regarding building and site design aspects. Links to the design manual have been provided. Green sheet structure, a clear and detailed document to determine criteria and guidelines, is good feedback.

COMMISSIONER LEWIS stated appreciating the comments of Dhaliwal. The intent is to strengthen code with clear and strong language as well as about framework to align with community values and policies.

COMMISSIONER SANFORD stated that as content is migrated, distinguishing between guidelines and requirements will be critical, to be readily understandable.

5. Reports

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- a) **Council Update (01:36)**
Presented by Christen Leeson, Senior Planner

Leeson did not have a Council Update.

Dhaliwal stated that Council is examining shopping cart regulations regarding abandoned carts throughout the city. Considerable public comment had been received and an ordinance was put into place to address the issue. Feedback and suggestions would be appreciated.

- b) **Title 18 Code Update: Public Comments Received**
Presented by Minnie Dhaliwal, Director, CP&D

Dhaliwal stated that briefings for council are being set up and a status update is scheduled for February 7, 2022.

6. **Other Business/Announcements (1:34)**

- a) **Upcoming Schedule**

Leeson stated that the calendar is currently in flux with potential changes. An additional meeting was included on the last calendar for March 9, 2022 where the Planning Policy Commission will be visitors to the Environmental Board regarding the Stormwater Master Plan, and Leeson polled Commissioners to determine if there would be a quorum. Leeson determined that the meeting could remain on the calendar.

Leeson asked that any further questions or suggestions be emailed during the week.

Leeson stated that on January 27, 2022 a Public Hearing, approximately 30 minutes in length, would be held prior to the start of the joint meeting.

7 **Adjournment**

With no further business to conduct, CHAIR FAUL adjourned the meeting at 8:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Carolyn Garza, LLC
Recording Secretary