



MINUTES

Special Joint Meeting

PLANNING POLICY COMMISSION - ENVIRONMENTAL BOARD - PARK BOARD
6:30 p.m. - Thursday, April 7, 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 6:30 p.m. by Chair Faul.

Planning Policy Commissioners Present:

Chair Faul, Vice Chair Voiss, Commissioners Bader, Milligan, and Zaragoza

Absence: Commissioner Lewis (Excused) and Commissioner Monahan (Excused)

Environmental Board Members Present:

Commissioners Anderson, Davidson, Hintz, McQuilliams, and Newcomb (late)

Absence: Commissioners Finch (Excused), Fisher (Excused), Hazra (Excused), and Labeiko (Excused)

Commissioners Maden (Unexcused), Bollapragada (Unexcused), and Wall (Unexcused)

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Park Board Members Present:

Chair Book, Board Members Githens and Richardson

Absence:

Brenda Spears (Excused), Ruben Nieto (Unexcused),
Linda Whitworth (Unexcused), Chris Kovac (unexcused),
Zac Szablewski, (Unexcused), Marlene Waxse
(Unexcused), Jeremey Noble (Unexcused)

Staff Present:

Millie Dhaliwal, Director, CP&D
Daniel Martinez, Associate Planner
Stacy Vynne McKinstry, Sustainability Manager
Stephen Padua, Long Range Planning Manager
Valerie Porter, Associate Planner
Lucy Sloman, Planning Manager

CHAIR FAUL stated that the Planning Policy Commission would turn cameras off and not participate in topic deliberations. The Planning Policy Commissioners will deliberate at the April 14, 2022 meeting.

2. Public Comments (General)

Chair Faul did not open Public Comments (General).

3. Public Hearing

a) Proposed Amendments to Title 18 (D)

- Community Space
- Green Necklace
- Tree Preservation
- Landscape and Open Space

Presented by Stephen Padua, Long Range Planning Manager

(00:03) Katie Cote, Consultant, presented Community Space and the Green Necklace.

(00:14) CHAIR FAUL opened Questions.

BOARD MEMBER DAVIDSON asked how community assets in place such as landscaping, tree canopies and existing mature trees will be protected. Cote replied that the proposed items would build on the other sections of code. A development proposal would be required to show how tree retention and preservation, landscaping, and community space code is being met in addition to any building standards. This code would be required for all projects of five or more units as well as non-residential and multi-family buildings in Central Issaquah. BOARD MEMBER DAVIDSON asked for clarification that while Central Issaquah was mentioned, the

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proposal would be throughout the city. Cote replied that the chapter applies throughout the city. Existing code does not have natural amenity standards for non-residential buildings except for Central Issaquah and Urban Villages. Natural amenity requirements are not being extended to non-residential and mixed-use developments outside of Central Issaquah. There are currently natural amenity standards for residential uses across the city, remaining the same. BOARD MEMBER DAVIDSON asked how a consistent code could be created if the natural amenity space code is not applied throughout Issaquah and not Central Issaquah only. Cote replied that the aspects being applied are Green Necklace provisions along trails and parks. A retail use outside of Central Issaquah is not required to provide an amenity space at this time. Changing is an option but not changed in the current draft.

BOARD MEMBER ANDERSON asked if there would be an incentive for existing developments to provide improved trail access, in example large multi-family complexes located at the Rainier Trail. Cote replied no, there are not incentives, but could be a program that would be located outside of the Land Use code through the Parks Department or other city program. The only actions of Land Use code are regarding development, re-development, and subdivision activities. A different tool would need to be created for an incentive program.

COMMISSIONER MILLIGAN asked for clarification regarding offset for community space by rooftop amenities. Cote replied that community space is intended for public use and rooftop space would still be required to be opened to the public, in example a restaurant with rooftop area or a view platform. The area would not be private unless being used to fulfill a natural amenity area as part of a residential requirements or by choice. To fulfill the community space obligation, the area would need to be open to the public. All obligations cannot be fulfilled through the rooftop, and some must be at ground level.

VICE CHAIR VOISS asked for clarification regarding short plats. Cote replied that in the current draft not yet presented, the threshold has been kept at five-units based on direction from the Planning Policy Commission. Natural amenity areas are provided through setbacks and other standards. If the short plat level were to increase a discussion would be needed. VICE CHAIR VOISS asked if a development must be oriented to a park or open space at the entrance or an entrance. Cote replied that the intention was an entrance only, avoiding a blank wall or no ground level activity. VICE CHAIR VOISS asked for clarification regarding facilities being appropriate for the target housing market segment, and specifically who would decide. Cote replied that the intent was to recognize different recreational desires of different populations, and a developer in conversation with the city would determine.

(00:27) CHAIR FAUL opened Public Comment.

- Connie Marsh, Squak Mountain, stated that the natural context zone could address concerns with critical area connections. Language is not clear in code. Private parks such as Rowley Park, deed restricted to be a park but with re-development surrounding, will be harmed if blank walls go up around the park. Private, dedicated green space and how surrounding redevelopment will occur is not being addressed. The Green Necklace map in the Parks Strategic Plan is not the map used for the valley,

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which is confusing and conflicting, hard to implement and enforce. A different term could be used than *city-wide* and the Central Issaquah plan area could be called the Green Necklace. The Parks Strategic Plan would then not need to be changed and there would still be consistency. Natural amenity space is allowed to be private balconies, but there is no sociable context.

- Mary Lynch stated disappointment that the meeting is not being shown live on channel 21 or live streaming as advertised.

CHAIR FAUL stated that Public Comment would remain open until the end of the meeting.

(00:33) CHAIR FAUL opened Deliberations and stated that the Park Board would chair. The Planning Policy Commissioners were asked to mute microphones and turn off cameras.

CHAIR BOOK asked for comments from both the Park Board and Environmental Board.

BOARD MEMBER DAVIDSON stated that having an environment saturated with an array of green elements should be focused on, outside of Central Issaquah and including the entire community.

BOARD MEMBER GITHENS stated not seeing any references to active recreation or fields for community use. Fields on top of schools could be a solution due to a deficit of flat, open land. General amenity requirements should be modified for areas with children and families so that options are not limited due to code language. Plaza code language regarding maintenance such as snow removal and ice should be included. BOARD MEMBER GITHENS asked for the contact to provide questions regarding inconsistencies and missing language to. CHAIR BOOK replied that additional comments and questions could be submitted to staff or the Planning Policy Commission for further follow-up.

(00:39) Daniel Martinez, Associate Planner, continued the presentation with Tree Preservation.

(00:58) CHAIR FAUL opened Questions.

CHAIR FAUL asked how canopy coverage is calculated, per lot or region. Martinez replied that the canopy coverage goal would be applied on a per lot basis. Goals apply evenly to commercial, multi-family and single-family lots. A goal of 45% would be met with a combination of existing and replanted trees. Concessions can be made for wildfire safety. CHAIR FAUL asked for clarification that on Squak Mountain, 45% is the goal while the current standard is 65%. Martinez replied correct, in certain areas canopy coverage is hoped to increase while in other areas such as Squak Mountain, canopy coverage is reduced for multiple land uses and wildfire risk. CHAIR FAUL asked for clarification regarding fully treed lots, and Martinez replied that there are tree retention requirements and if a developer proposed to build residential units, 35% of total caliper of inches at diameter, breast height,

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would be required to be retained. CHAIR FAUL stated having been concerned regarding the carbon sync of a Douglas Fir versus fruit trees.

BOARD MEMBER HINTZ asked for clarification regarding how possible planting areas have been determined and in-lieu tree funds. Martinez replied not being able to speak to possible planting areas but being aware that possible planting areas account for current green spaces with no trees but not impervious surfaces. The in-lieu fund is not proposed to be used solely for replanting, rather for acquiring, maintaining, and preserving existing wooded areas. Staff is aware that receiving and establishing sites will be important for replanting efforts, but commitments cannot be made in code for private landowners.

COMMISSIONER MILLIGAN asked for more information regarding the expansion of the fee-in-lieu program and why below 35% tree canopy would be approved in a hypothetical situation. Martinez replied that in-lieu would not be used entirely for replanting efforts. In current code, the establishment of the tree fund is brief and including more information in code is purposeful. COMMISSIONER MILLIGAN clarified the question, who could participate in the tree-in-lieu fund, or who is qualified to pay to cut down trees. Martinez replied that the first step is to plant on-site but a right-tree-right-place approach is being considered. Off-site planting may need to occur, a second option. Anyone would qualify for tree-in-lieu provided planting cannot occur on-site or off-site. Previously, tree-in-lieu was only applied to development and redevelopment projects but is now expanded to already developed lots. The 35% is for tree retention requirements, applying to development and redevelopment. COMMISSIONER MILLIGAN asked if offsite tree planting within the sub area is for those going below 35% and Martinez replied no, for landowners who cannot meet tree canopy goals on-site.

BOARD MEMBER ANDERSON asked if municipalities are taking aligned approaches to tree canopies. Martinez replied not being aware of efforts or model ordinance and that a consulting Arborist had been worked with in Issaquah who made recommendations to examine Lake Forest Park and Snohomish County. BOARD MEMBER ANDERSON asked if there is envisioned code to provide incentives and education to homeowners in developments not being developed to meet the goal. Martinez replied that incentives are not currently contemplated, but a proposed education program is for staff or an outside consultant to provide urban forestry education to the community.

BOARD MEMBER NEWCOMB asked if there is a timeframe for replacing a tree. Martinez replied that there is currently not a firm deadline for replanting, but the proposal is for six months, replanting coinciding with permit approval. Draft code includes language allowing staff to extend the deadline to ensure replanting is under the most optimal conditions. BOARD MEMBER NEWCOMB asked if Lidar would be added. Martinez replied that Lidar has not been considered but that tools are still being explored.

BOARD MEMBER MCQUILLIAMS asked who determines heritage trees, and what prohibits property owners from removing trees over time. Martinez replied that there are no heritage tree regulations. A resident can nominate a tree to become a heritage tree based on certain

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factors. Regarding removing trees over time, a tree removal permit is required. The city relies on notification from the public and there is not an active patrol.

(01:21) CHAIR FAUL opened Public Comment.

- David Kappler stated having fought for trees since 1973, but also a user of solar energy and a having a large garden from which produce is donated to non-profit groups. Tree canopy impacts both. The ability for people to have solar energy should not be eliminated. Community solar could be an option.
- Connie Marsh stated that there is a solar exemption. Heritage trees are a responsibility of the Park Board but have not been a priority. The Public Works department is exempt from replanting. Trees that are more than standard need to be recognized and a map or list should be created. The trees may eventually need to be removed, but there should be a public process to identify the important trees. If the code goes forward without the protections, important trees will be removed within projects the city is developing. The city needs to determine how to protect important trees. A mechanism to track trees is important as a canopy is to be mature in 30 years but trees may have been removed.
- Mary Lynch stated support for the comments of Marsh and cited the widening of Newport Way; because mature trees were in the right of way, the trees were not accounted for, significant to both canopy and shade. There was no mitigation for the homes that formerly were in shade. There is nothing in code for mitigation. Street trees do not count toward canopy and street tree lifespan is short. There is no accountability for trees replanted at streams. A parking lot area next to Anti-Aircraft Creek was supposed to have trees within the buffer zone but there are none. The city needs to be held accountable for tracking Public Works projects to protect, mitigate and account for trees. The city needs to fund the process.
- Ann Fletcher, People for Climate Action, Issaquah Chapter, stated that the code needs to be strong enough to meet crucial environmental and climate goals of the city within the next decade. The code should help the system, which needs to improve, with oversight and tracking, Requirements for measurement, monitoring and adjustment are often left to various city department plans but plans and staff come and go. Plans need to be able to be modified as current information becomes available. Code is a common thread over time that should include Best Practices. The code could require reallocation or additional resources. What is at stake is not amenities but real consequences to basic health and safety. Best available science says what is done in the next eight years could be crucial. Code should be presented to Council as a plausible way to meet needs and budget can be determined at the Council level.
- Steve Pereira or stated that more verbiage is needed in code as well as additional constraints placed on fee-in-lieu. [Majority of comments were inaudible due to audio issue]

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(01:38) CHAIR FAUL opened deliberations.

CHAIR BOOK stated that comments would be from the Park Board and Environmental Board members.

BOARD MEMBER GITHENS stated that the Park Board serves as a Tree Board once per year, Issaquah being a Tree City, USA city. The heritage trees are nominated and designated. Currently, the designation is not permanent and does not mean the tree cannot be removed later.

BOARD MEMBER MCQUILLIAMS stated that staff should look for Arborist Certification for any Arborist hired to sign off on plans such as in the city of Kirkland where a training course to learn city code is required before working for the city or as a representative of a developer. The fact that Issaquah is a Tree City since the early 1990s but there is no Arborist or City Forester on staff is of concern and the issue of who is managing trees should be addressed. An Arborist should be hired in the next budget cycle.

BOARD MEMBER HINTZ stated agreement with BOARD MEMBER MCQUILLIAMS regarding having an Arborist on staff. Lidar is a useful tool. The Master Tree List contains trees that should not be on the preferred list; in example, Norway Maple is on both the preferred and non-preferred list. More strength to the non-preferred list, not allowed versus recommended to not be used, should occur. The trunk method for valuation of trees does not include the temporal loss of a tree removed now and replaced. Reaping benefits of replanted trees from trees lost will take longer than 30 years.

BOARD MEMBER ANDERSON stated that there must be a public education component regarding the importance of trees and canopy coverage as part of the overall strategy.

BOARD MEMBER DAVIDSON stated that mature trees cannot be replaced with trees that will not supply the same coverage until 30 or more years later. Tracking trees that are removed and planted is needed to achieve goals.

CHAIR BOOK read a comment from Jeff Watling, Parks & Recreation Director. Lidar was used during recent tree canopy studies and was very instructive.

CHAIR BOOK suggested that the discussion continue until concluded at this meeting. Code is meaningless without tracking and accountability. CHAIR BOOK returned the meeting to CHAIR FAUL.

CHAIR FAUL stated having had a direct experience with a tree contractor regarding lack of accountability in Issaquah.

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(01:49) Cote continued with the last topic, Landscape and Open Space code. Comments received have been regarding difficulty understanding the chapter and internal inconsistencies. Staff has identified drafting errors that will be addressed, and readability and usability will be prioritized.

(01:54) CHAIR FAUL opened Questions.

VICE CHAIR VOISS asked for clarification regarding page 3 of 25, provisions applying to all existing zoned property. Cote replied that provisions apply to development and redevelopment, not required retrospectively. Zoned properties means all properties. VICE CHAIR VOISS asked who enforces tree and shrub diversity. Cote replied that a landscape plan is required with applications for certain types of development. The landscape plan will show a plant list, locations, and planting plan. The Planner reviews for diversity as well as meeting planting separation and soil standards in the landscape code in new applications or substantial re-development but not retroactively. VICE CHAIR VOISS asked for clarification, from page 8 of 25, if there is a city concern regarding allowing lawns to brown in summer in respect to vegetation dying and being removed. Cote replied that the intent is water conservation; lawns are hardy and come back over the winter. The proposal contributes to sustainability goals and has been successful in other cities. VICE CHAIR VOISS stated concern regarding aesthetics and possible extreme action by residents in response to the code.

BOARD MEMBER GITHENS asked if the brown lawn in code would mean that new development with lawn would not be required to install irrigation. Cote replied that the question would be researched. BOARD MEMBER GITHENS stated understanding water conservation in the summer but preferring to not give future developments the option to not install irrigation on grass. A water shortage or other circumstance could be specifically identified as the restriction to watering, particularly in common and gathering areas in neighborhoods.

CHAIR FAUL stated agreement with BOARD MEMBER GITHENS that the brown lawn in code could be based on community impact. An area with a necessity for environmental community space could be irrigated versus an area with only an aesthetic purpose.

(02:02) CHAIR FAUL opened Public Comment.

- Connie Marsh stated that the old landscape code was not working, not usable for small businesses and not successfully scalable for large businesses. The code was a disincentive for people with existing landscaping to maintain. The issues need to be fixed.

CHAIR FAUL closed Public Comment.

(02:04) CHAIR FAUL opened deliberations and turned the meeting over to CHAIR BOOK.

BOARD MEMBER MCQUILLIAMS encouraged a nexus between landscaping and stormwater.

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BOARD MEMBER DAVIDSON stated agreement with BOARD MEMBER MCQUILLIAMS and stated that code that requires a permanent, efficient irrigation system be installed in all landscapes except for existing single-family lots may need to be examined. What kinds of landscape areas in addition to trees the city hopes to retain in existing developments has not been addressed.

BOARD MEMBER NEWCOMB stated organic gardening practices should be included. Rainwater will be discussed in the Climate Action Plan.

CHAIR FAUL stated that the presentation had concluded and allowed Park Board and Environmental Board members to leave the meeting as the next agenda items would concern the Planning Policy Commission only.

4. Reports

a) Council Update (02:08)

Presented by Minnie Dhaliwal, Director, CP&D

Dhaliwal stated that an additional Council meeting is being scheduled regarding Natural Environment and Critical Areas and a briefing will be given following.

5. Other Business/Announcements

Padua stated that the next meeting would be April 14, 2022.

Dhaliwal stated that in packets for this meeting, comments had been incorporated which informed the writing of the draft. All comments will be consolidated and delivered for the deliberation on April 14, 2022. The public can email comments to the Planning Policy Commission and clarifying questions can be answered by staff.

CHAIR FAUL will not be present at the meeting on April 14, 2022 and VICE CHAIR VOISS will chair the meeting.

CHAIR FAUL stated that the three topics on the meeting agenda had contained more content than could be discussed efficiently without rushing within the meeting timeframe. Comments are important and Commissioners and Board Members need ample time to move through topics. The city should reduce the amount of content presented during meetings so the focus can remain on important topics.

6. Adjournment

With no further business to conduct, CHAIR FAUL adjourned the meeting at 8:43 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Carolyn Garza, LLC
Recording Secretary