



MINUTES

PLANNING POLICY COMMISSION 6:30 p.m. - Thursday, September 8, 2022

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:33 p.m. by CHAIR VOISS.

Commissioners Present: Chair Voiss, Commissioners Bader, Lewis, and Milligan

Absence: None

Staff Present: Stacy Vynne McKinstry, Sustainability Manager
Stephen Padua, Long Range Planning

2. Approval of Minutes

- a) CHAIR VOISS asked for corrections or concerns regarding the August 11, 2022 Minutes. There were none and the Minutes were approved.
- b) CHAIR VOISS asked for corrections or concerns regarding the August 25, 2022 Minutes. There were none and the Minutes were approved.

3. Public Comments (General) (00:02)

- Susan Neville (online) stated hope that an email from Connie Marsh regarding the Missing Middle had been read by the Commissioners. Many points warrant future discussion. There are definitions that still need to be determined and included in current code; *Walkable*, *Served by Retail*, *Retail*, *Served by Transit*, and *Cluster Housing*. Neville hoped that the Commission and the public would have longer than four working days to review the Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Map Amendment to be discussed on September 29, 2022.
- Connie Marsh (online) stated having sent an in-depth email to the Commission regarding the ability to speak to complex issues within a five-minute speaking time limit at Public Hearings. The definition of *Missing Middle* is not clear in Issaquah. Marsh

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stated not being able to find an Environmental Board review on the Issaquah Climate Action Plan. The terms *LEED Gold* and *Fish Friendly* have not been identified in Issaquah. The city has used LEED Platinum voluntarily, but checklists stay stagnant. *LEED Gold* and *Fish Friendly* are not necessarily climate-oriented, and the checklist items may not provide climate action improvements. Prior to any opinion, the definitions need to be understood.

- Hossein Khorram (in person) stated that regarding building permits, without a full understanding of definitions consultants can return an insufficient design. Staff then offer definitions, and another round of design is needed and paid for. Consultants are very expensive. COVID-19 has delayed and complicated everything. Option Three, vesting for an additional six-months on existing projects, is requested. Future developers will need to consider whether to build in Issaquah with the knowledge that code has been changed in the middle of developments in the past. Option Three will leave a good impression for future developers toward future housing development in Issaquah.
- David Kappler (online), resident of Old Towne, stated that the amount of parking needed in Old Towne has increased. Old Towne is the one area in the city where the Missing Middle could have an opportunity to expand.

4. Regular Business

- a) **Title 18 Updates and Issaquah Climate Action Plant (ICAP) Implementation, (D)**
(00:15)

Presented by:

Stacy Vynne McKinstry, Sustainability Manager

Stephen Padua, Long Range Planning Manager

Padua delivered the presentation.

COMMISSIONER LEWIS asked for clarification regarding how projects are graded, with a categorized system or ecological score. Padua replied that currently there are two systems, but the proposal could combine the two, tied to each other. COMMISSIONER LEWIS asked if a scorecard could address both hard and easy requirements and stated that framework is needed. Padua replied that the proposal is based on the size of projects typically seen and feedback in earlier discussion was not wanting to burden smaller projects with costs but ensuring that buildings are of adequate size for SEPA. The middle ground is 20,000 square feet but the number may change over time. Most incentives are already required in proposed code. COMMISSIONER LEWIS asked if an overlay in terms of where square footage falls in the city would be helpful. Padua replied there will be bigger impact in the Central area where development is expected, but sustainable building design in other sub-areas of the city is also to be considered in terms of, in example, using eco-materials. Sub-areas need to be treated equally in terms of what is allowed.

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COMMISSIONER MILLIGAN asked what draft is being worked, and if a suggestion shown on screens but not identified for the audio recording is only for certification. Padua replied that regarding the first question, information can be brought back as the answer is unknown at this time. Currently, square footage is optional and not a requirement. Regarding the second question, Padua replied yes. COMMISSIONER MILLIGAN asked if a SEPA checklist of LEED goals is more onerous and Padua replied that certain projects will be more expensive in terms of how requirements are mitigated, but at the same time acquiring what is needed to obtain LEED Gold will be new for the area.

COMMISSIONER BADER asked for clarification regarding new State energy requirements in 2023 and if 20,000 square feet will be above or under the requirement. McKinstry replied that there will be requirements for renewable energy generation or purchase of credits as well as heat pumps for water and energy use. LEED Gold is a placeholder to incorporate more sustainable building aspects addressing climate and energy. LEED Gold will eventually fall behind State code but is also being updated. COMMISSIONER BADEN asked for clarification that the proposal is a stop gap until the 2023 report is released and if LEED Gold will apply to the 20,000 square feet in the proposal and Padua replied yes.

COMMISSIONER LEWIS stated that of the three options presented by staff, while staff prefers Option Two, that market rates versus affordable housing adds another dimension. Having standards when building at the market rate is desired but also another category if helping the housing supply in another manner. Padua replied yes, balancing incentives for sustainable building design and affordable housing to obtain both has been discussed for revisions to code.

CHAIR VOISS opened Commissioner deliberation.

COMMISSIONER LEWIS stated being impressed with the accomplishments of Mercer Island regarding community goals. Stricter requirements until a scorecard tool is in place should be considered. Option One will be preferred although Option Two could be agreed to when there is more of a framework in place.

COMMISSIONER MILLIGAN stated agreement with COMMISSIONER LEWIS. The SEPA checklist is effective and useful, and the exemption level should not go up. LEED Gold is a better standard than an internally generated city checklist.

COMMISSIONER BADER stated preferring Option One as a stop gap until State requirements arrive and stated agreement with COMMISSIONER MILLIGAN regarding the LEED Gold standard.

CHAIR VOISS stated appreciating the comment of COMMISSIONER MILLIGAN regarding using LEED Gold as one checklist. Option Two is preferred, a call to developers that Issaquah is open for business and that movement can occur. Local developers and not National developers are preferable in Issaquah. Option Two is a modest increase and shows good faith to developers, a stop gap.

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Padua asked if the Commission would be more comfortable with 20,000 square feet if staff does a comparison in current development in terms of requirements for SEPA or LEED Gold, or if 10,000 square feet is desired. COMMISSIONER LEWIS replied that the Chase Bank on Northwest Gilman Boulevard at approximately 13,000 square feet is a good benchmark. An overlay will make sense of a differentiation of space.

COMMISSIONER MILLIGAN asked if the proposal is that under 10,000 feet there would be no requirements, above 10,000 square feet would require a LEED certified building, and that above 20,000 square feet would require both SEPA and LEED. An eight-unit townhome with no SEPA review should have an environmental review.

CHAIR VOISS stated that with perspective, the Chase Bank on Northwest Gilman Boulevard is not the large development being looked for.

Padua stated that buildings under 10,000 square feet will still receive environmental review as recognized through code but not the SEPA checklist.

COMMISSIONER LEWIS stated that in planning for the community a balance is needed, and that the State standard for SEPA is far above the current threshold and sister cities have been successful in raising standards. There are sustainable goals for the community that need to be moved toward. COMMISSIONER LEWIS asked if, as a part of the values of the city, certification could be researched as a checklist or something else, but that in the meanwhile all buildings regardless of size will have the same LEED requirements, with SEPA threshold raised to 20,000 square feet to be in line with modern uses.

COMMISSIONER MILLIGAN asked for clarification that COMMISSIONER LEWIS was suggesting that all buildings be LEED certified and COMMISSIONER LEWIS replied yes. COMMISSIONER MILLIGAN asked if Built Green certification for residential buildings had been discussed and Padua replied not at the current meeting.

CHAIR VOISS stated support for the latter part of the suggestion by COMMISSIONER LEWIS.

COMMISSIONER BADER stated support for an Option One.

b) **Title 18 Future Updates, (D)** (00:49)

Presented by:

Stephen Padua, Long Range Planning Manager

CHAIR VOISS stated that Future Updates refers to the White Board.

Padua delivered the presentation. Questions were taken after each Bucket.

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COMMISSIONER MILLIGAN asked if a standard such as that of King County or King Conservation District was to be developed. Padua replied that the Urban Forestry Program will be coordinated with the King County system. COMMISSIONER MILLIGAN asked if a tall hedge planted on a property line has been considered. Padua replied that the issue would most likely fall under the Prohibited Plant list, recognizing different development in different areas.

COMMISSIONER LEWIS asked about community comments regarding a need for dedicated staff to do the work of code enforcement, and that an administrative side is missing. Padua replied that for the purpose of the list, administrative operations were not included but the subject is in discussion at staff and administration levels with consideration of budget.

COMMISSIONER BADER asked for clarification that Community Space and Green Necklace spaces have no white board items and Padua replied correct, that areas with no issues raised are not recognized on the list, but any questions can be answered.

COMMISSIONER LEWIS asked if an issue such as allowing cafes in residential zones should be included in the 2023 Comprehensive Plan. Padua replied that the Comprehensive Plan addresses a general level and specifying cafes would be addressed in code. COMMISSIONER LEWIS asked if some items on the white board would be put onto the docket, and Padua replied that several items on the list have been identified for discussion as a part of the Comprehensive Plan. The table that staff is working from is much larger than the table presented to the Commission.

COMMISSIONER MILLIGAN asked how cluster housing differs in code for Critical Areas. Padua replied that Critical Areas cluster housing code is primarily for hillside development, where cluster housing on the white board is looking at the issue in general as offered as affordable housing or other housing options within the city. COMMISSIONER MILLIGAN asked if there would be an overlay or if Central Issaquah specific and Padua replied the proposal is to look in general for changes to better align with housing goals.

COMMISSIONER MILLIGAN asked how the Urban Village Commercial Retail zone had been elevated to the white board. Padua replied that the issue had been suggested in public comments.

COMMISSIONER LEWIS asked that work on an update to Washington State Building code which becomes effective in July 2023 be delayed, so that the community can decide in a process regarding adaptation. Padua replied that staff will not know what the final State code will look like until July 2023 and the discussion will begin at that time.

COMMISSIONER MILLIGAN asked for clarification regarding where focusing growth in Central Issaquah and preserving single-family neighborhoods would be categorized. Padua replied Overlays, but that the answer would be verified.

COMMISSIONER LEWIS stated that a new Neighborhood Board might be formed around better consolidating community involvement, including a collapse or joining of some existing

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Boards, for people in the neighborhoods to be involved in overlay discussions. COMMISSIONER LEWIS stated that community comments over time demonstrate that keeping code broad is important, and how code will be narrowed needs to be discussed.

COMMISSIONER MILLIGAN stated that a report is needed to know percentages of Missing Middle housing diversity, and not having heard public support for using single-family housing zones for dense housing. COMMISSIONER MILLIGAN complimented staff and asked for clarification regarding evaluation of the value of on-street parking. Padua replied that agreements with Property Managers regarding FLEX programs, shared parking, and identifying access to transit encourage a move away from cars located on the property. COMMISSIONER MILLIGAN stated that controls on on-street parking near major transit centers will be needed. Padua asked for clarification that the issue was managing on-street parking and COMMISSIONER MILLIGAN replied yes.

COMMISSIONER LEWIS stated that regarding parking, code is designed for a live-work balance with retail on the ground floor. Requirements had not been lowered due to parking study results. New studies and data to provide information on how realignment is working are needed. The way parking is divided in the work plan may not be synonymous with Issaquah goals. Padua replied agreement, and that conversations with Commissioners as well as Gaps Analysis comments need to be incorporated. COMMISSIONER LEWIS stated that code is for current needs but also needs into the future and a gap had been created on purpose.

[Five-Minute Break]

CHAIR VOISS opened Commissioner deliberation.

COMMISSIONER LEWIS stated that the Commission had commented during Questions and that further comments will be more forthcoming at the next iteration of the White Board. SEPA rules and Wireless will require a closer look quickly.

CHAIR VOISS stated that code is to be accessible, living, and returnable and that there will be further discussion in the future.

COMMISSIONER LEWIS stated that the community had indicated that there are multiple areas to interject in code, and building was occurring that the community did not support. Additional places for the public to engage in the process were to be included but are not currently represented on the white board and the issue needs to continue to be looked at.

CHAIR VOISS stated that growth in Issaquah has been exponential, and code needs to be revised to meet needs regularly.

5. Reports (01:29)
 - a) Council Update

Presented by:

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Stephen Padua, Long Range Planning Manager

Padua stated that follow-up items from Buckets Three, Four and Five have been discussed with the Council Committee and materials are available to share. On September 22, 2022, the Council Committee will review Bucket Six.

6. Other Business/Announcements (01:30)
a) **Upcoming Schedule**

CHAIR VOISS stated that the recruitment period for the Commission has ended and there are a group of applicants being interviewed, the last round of interviews to occur September 9, 2022. The next meetings may include new members. Padua stated that after final interviews, recommendations and discussion will occur with the mayor. Confirmations from City Council will occur on September 19, 2022.

COMMISSIONER MILLIGAN asked if there will be something to refer to prior to receiving the packet for Docket Amendments and asked for clarification regarding the process. Padua replied that a list of approved items for the docket from Council is available. The first meeting will be a review followed by a Public Hearing in October.

7. Adjournment

With no further business to conduct, CHAIR VOISS adjourned the meeting at 8:06 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Carolyn Garza, LLC
Recording Secretary