



MINUTES

PLANNING POLICY COMMISSION
6:30 p.m. - Thursday, March 23, 2023

1. Call to Order

The hybrid meeting was called to order at 6:34 p.m. by CHAIR VOISS.

Commissioners Present: Chair Voiss, Vice-Chair Bader, Commissioners Altimore, Esemuede, Kennedy, Lewis, and Patterson

Absence: Commissioner Milligan (excused)

Staff Present: Christen Leeson, Senior Planner
Stephen Padua, Long Range Planning Manager
Mike Stanger, Senior Planner, ARCH

2. Approval of Minutes

CHAIR VOISS asked for corrections regarding the February 2, 2023 meeting minutes and there were none. The minutes were approved.

CHAIR VOISS asked for corrections regarding the February 23, 2023 meeting minutes and there were none. The minutes were approved.

3. Public Comments (General)

There were no requests to speak.

A technical issue with video was addressed.

4. Regular Business

a) Comprehensive Plan: Housing and Land Use, (D)

*Presented by:
Christen Leeson, Senior Planner*

03-23-23 Planning Policy Commission Meeting Minutes

Mike Stanger, A Regional Coalition for Housing (ARCH)

Leeson and Stanger began the presentation. (00:03)

(00:14) COMMISSIONER LEWIS asked for clarification regarding how units referenced in the presentation are spread across the city. Leeson replied that there will be a map available shortly. Ownership is primarily in Issaquah Highlands with the remainder spread evenly throughout the city. The Highlands has a disproportionate number due to a Development Agreement.

COMMISSIONER ALTIMORE asked if project-based vouchers are included. Stanger replied that in Discovery Heights, there is a Land Use covenant. Tenant-based vouchers are not included but project-based vouchers are included, as well as sources other than city incentives such as Housing Authority and Tax Credit projects, regulated in some form.

Stanger and Leeson continued the presentation. (00:17)

CHAIR VOISS opened Commissioner questions and comments. (00:36)

COMMISSIONER ESEMUUDE asked if what is proposed in HB 1110 is the minimum or maximum regarding three units per lot. Leeson replied minimum.

CHAIR VOISS asked for clarification that the Bills presented will be for what is allowed, but not necessarily what will be built. Leeson replied targets, planning to accommodate for 3,500 units, allowed but not required. CHAIR VOISS asked for clarification regarding single-family residential. Leeson replied that in example, there can be an existing house with two Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU) built behind. In Kirkland, the ADUs can be sold even if on one lot. In another example, a deeper, older lot can have three small houses with a driveway which access all. CHAIR VOISS asked if, with private property, the goal is to entice an owner to utilize the property better for larger profit, creating a better chance for affordable housing. Leeson replied yes, but that the three units do not have to be affordable. If there are four units, one must be affordable.

COMMISSIONER LEWIS stated having a concern regarding Level of Service in varied geography. Leeson replied that the conversation has been discussed internally, and that there is a conclusion that Issaquah topography will not allow, for example, transit and infrastructure on steep roads. COMMISSIONER LEWIS stated that fallout should be measured if building in the proposed manner, such as how wastewater will be accommodated.

VICE-CHAIR BADER asked if questions regarding what can be built will be addressed through Land Use code or Building code, so that the development will only occur on lots that can accommodate. Leeson replied that there would not be lot line adjustments to ensure the lots can accommodate, and code would be amended only to state that the proposed buildings would be allowed.

03-23-23 Planning Policy Commission Meeting Minutes

COMMISSIONER KENNEDY stated that the map of units across the city is anticipated, and asked if there would be a system for encouraging the proposed building as there will not be a requirement. Leeson replied that there will be enticements such as fee waivers for affordable housing. Market Rate Housing can only be allowed but not required.

CHAIR VOISS stated that tools that work are Development Agreements, waivers, city partners such as ARCH, and Land Use. Enticements will be how the city will achieve the building desired.

Leeson displayed and described the map of unit spread initially asked for by COMMISSIONER LEWIS. The link to the map would be sent to Commissioners next week.

COMMISSIONER LEWIS stated that obtaining more affordable housing had been discussed at length several years ago. Tracking results will be interesting moving forward, to ensure attracting and management.

VICE-CHAIR BADER asked if there is a waiting list for affordable housing in Issaquah. Stanger replied that there is not a waiting list but there is a registry of interested people through ARCH programs, contacted as opportunities become available for home ownership or rentals. VICE-CHAIR BADER asked if there is a sense for how many units will be needed to meet the demand for affordable housing. Stanger replied that the County is defining a number. VICE-CHAIR BADER asked if there are targets for how many should be rentals versus ownership. Stanger replied that the two categories are not currently defined but that the city could define. VICE-CHAIR BADER asked for clarification regarding goals and policies around discouraging displacement and encouraging home ownership. Stanger replied that home ownership will be difficult for people making less than 50% of median, regardless if entry price is affordable, limiting the ability to produce affordable units. VICE-CHAIR BADER stated that another good data point would be a breakdown of race and ethnicity across the city.

COMMISSIONER ALTIMORE stated being a member of the Eastside Housing Roundtable. Geographic city lines are difficult to discuss when there is a need conversation. Employees continue to live further away from work. Targets are the floor because the need is excessive for the people who do not make the highest wages in the region.

CHAIR VOISS asked how Issaquah compares to other cities in disparities in Area Median Income (AMI). Stanger replied that data can be brought for comparison. Based on presentations, Issaquah compares favorably to cities of similar size. Every city has large disparities in relation to County-wide planning policies. CHAIR VOISS asked how the effort of the city has been, and Stanger replied that Issaquah compares strongly with other ARCH communities. CHAIR VOISS stated that while there are things that can be improved on, knowing what Issaquah is doing well will be helpful. Stanger replied that there are voluntary programs, mandatory programs, and Development Agreements (DA). Issaquah has been very productive with DAs. Leeson replied that most units in Issaquah have come from Issaquah Highlands DAs, but the city is trying to move away from DAs. There are other ways to get

03-23-23 Planning Policy Commission Meeting Minutes

affordable housing such as multi-family tax exemptions in conjunction with inclusionary zoning.

COMMISSIONER LEWIS stated that there has been discussion but not movement in how to accommodate live-work-play in the mission of Issaquah. Being able to have vital role players such as teachers and firefighters living in the community is important. A teaching salary will not allow for purchasing in Issaquah. Equity and building true assets for a family is important and needs to not be forgotten in the discussion.

Stanger asked the Commission what further information can be brought back. CHAIR VOISS asked for more information regarding emergency housing and the Anti-Displacement policy. Leeson replied that the Emergency Housing related Bill, HB 1220, has passed. Leeson replied that the State asked for Emergency Shelter requirements in 2021, but many cities postponed for various reasons. At this time, Issaquah defaults to the State draft ordinance meaning that shelters can be located anywhere hotels can be located. CHAIR VOISS asked for clarification regarding transitional, mental health and addiction programs. COMMISSIONER LEWIS asked for age differences within the population, and families versus singles and aging in place. COMMISSIONER PATTERSON asked if there are specifics regarding where light rail will be located as well as the development surrounding. Padua replied that there is an ongoing transit study to determine State, Sound Transit, and King County Metro requirements to incorporate around walkability, in example. More information will be available in the coming months. CHAIR VOISS asked if there is data showing people utilizing affordable housing but are now able to move on to purchase a home. Stanger replied that an attempt has been made for the information, but not being property managers limits the results to voluntary responses. CHAIR VOISS stated that knowing how successful the program is, and benchmarks, will be helpful. COMMISSIONER ALTIMORE stated that capital sources differ and engagement with the community is how to know that success can be achieved. COMMISSIONER ESEMUEDE asked if a developer or Homeowners Association (HOA) must provide a home moved out of to another affordable housing candidate. Stanger replied that when the homeowner wants to sell, ARCH is contacted and the process of setting a maximum price, determining eligibility of next buyers, marketing the home, and qualifying the potential buyer begins. The new buyer signs a covenant with the city, perpetuating. COMMISSIONER ESEMUEDE asked if market value plays a large role. Stanger replied only if the market is going down in price. There is a formula attached to resale pricing.

CHAIR VOISS asked for any Commissioner questions regarding Vision. COMMISSIONER ALTIMORE asked to see aspirational wording, that Issaquah is prepared for future changes coming within the community or regionally. COMMISSIONER PATTERSON stated that the Vision statement appears to capture the intent of the housing element by focusing on the preservation and enhancement of neighborhoods and improving opportunities for diverse populations. The Vision is good overall and in concert with the housing element. VICE-CHAIR BADER stated that the word *preserve*, as in status quo, could be replaced with *enhance*. Nuance regarding affordability could be added. COMMISSIONER LEWIS stated that the word *growth* should be addressed. CHAIR VOISS stated that ideas can be emailed to staff.

03-23-23 Planning Policy Commission Meeting Minutes

Leeson asked if there are any other topics or policies that the Commissioners would like to discuss and potentially include. CHAIR VOISS stated being interested in transportation facilities and how to not change the charm of the city in planning. COMMISSIONER ALTIMORE asked if there has been an assessment of racially disparate policies that need to be historically addressed, and Leeson replied that there is not an assessment. Stanger replied that there is guidance, however. CHAIR VOISS asked if a historical assessment would apply to Issaquah as a smaller township than Seattle, looking to the future versus looking backward at a town turning into a city. Leeson replied that the size of a city is not a factor, but the issue is rather how governance has occurred in the past. Compared to other cities, a historical assessment may not be as prevalent but still should be examined. COMMISSIONER LEWIS asked if there is a boundary as far as anything off the table for Issaquah defined. A LID such as on Mercer Island would solve many problems surrounding I-90. Allowing Sound Transit to make location decisions could be a boundary. Where Issaquah is *not* willing to locate certain facilities could be included. VICE-CHAIR BADER stated that structural racism exists everywhere, and the requirements are worthwhile.

5. Reports (01:19)

a) Council Update

Padua stated that Council will hold a Public Hearing on Title 18 on April 17, 2023. The planned adoption is May 1, 2023.

Leeson stated that there will be a discussion on the Comprehensive Plan with the Planning, Development and Environmental Committee on May 28, 2023.

6. Other Business/Announcements

a) Upcoming Schedule

CHAIR VOISS stated that the meeting would be the last with COMMISSIONER LEWIS and praised invaluable historical knowledge. COMMISSIONER LEWIS stated gratitude for amazing support. Leeson praised COMMISSIONER LEWIS, as well.

7. Adjournment

With no further business to conduct, CHAIR VOISS adjourned the meeting at 7:56 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Carolyn Garza, LLC
Recording Secretary