



MINUTES

PLANNING POLICY COMMISSION 6:30 p.m. – Tuesday, May 23, 2023

1. Call to Order

The hybrid meeting was called to order at 6:32 p.m. by VICE-CHAIR BADER.

Commissioners Present: Vice-Chair Bader, Commissioners Esemuede, Kennedy, Krass (Alt), Milligan, and Patterson

Absence: Chair Voiss (Excused), Commissioner Altimore (Excused)

Staff Present: Tisha Gieser, City Clerk
Christen Leeson, Senior Planner
Stephen Padua, Long Range Planning Manager

2. Public Comments (General) (00:01)

- Victoria Hunt, 352 Wilderness Peak Drive Northwest, Issaquah, stated having served on the Issaquah City Council since 2018, and previously on the Planning Policy Commission. Hunt thanked the Commission for work as volunteers and on Title 18. Hunt stated currently being Chair of the Planning, Development, and Environment Committee. Planning Policy Commission meeting minutes, comments and notes are factored into Council decisions. City Council members are available for questions.

3. Public Hearing (S) (00:04)

a) Recommendation on Amendments to Title 18 Diversity of Housing Types, (A)

Presented by:
Christen Leeson, Senior Planner

VICE-CHAIR BADER opened the Public Hearing.

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Leeson stated agreement with Hunt that all Planning Policy Commission information from minutes to comments are considered by the City Council.

Leeson explained Diversity of Housing details.

COMMISSIONER MILLIGAN asked for clarification regarding standards, permitted uses, and building permit applications. Leeson replied that micro units and courtyard housing are allowed currently in code, but the desire of the city is to make the developments easier to happen. Cottage housing is more difficult and will require research for further description verbiage. COMMISSIONER MILLIGAN asked when adoptions would be effective, and if the process should pause until standards are in place. Leeson replied that adoptions would go into effect five days after Council adopts, and actual development will still take time.

COMMISSIONER KENNEDY asked if, regarding the grammar used in the first definition, a number and subsequently a word for the number could be changed to using numbers only for consistency.

VICE-CHAIR BADER asked for clarification that courtyard and micro units are currently allowed in the code. Leeson replied that micro units and courtyards are allowed but locations are not specified. Cottage units are not allowed in the code.

COMMISSIONER ESEMUUDE asked if micro units are present in Issaquah currently and Leeson replied no. COMMISSIONER ESEMUUDE asked if the route would be clearer with more definition now and Leeson replied correct.

VICE-CHAIR BADER asked if micro units are different than studios. Leeson replied that studios will have a kitchen in the unit and are not limited in size.

Padua stated that there were no requests to speak either virtually or present.

VICE-CHAIR BADER closed the Public Hearing. (00:20)

VICE-CHAIR BADER opened Commissioner deliberation.

COMMISSIONER PATTERSON stated appreciating adjustments made to definitions after the last meeting and being in favor or recommending to Council.

COMMISSIONER MILLIGAN also stated appreciating and that clarification of appropriate zones for micro units is a great addition to the use table.

VICE-CHAIR BADER stated agreement with COMMISSIONERS PATTERSON and MILLIGAN.

COMMISSIONER ESEMUUDE stated agreement with changes, with more options for affordable housing.

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COMMISSIONERS KENNEDY and KRASS acknowledged VICE-CHAIR BADER.

VICE-CHAIR BADER asked for a vote with a show of hands to recommend the definitions as presented and changes to the permitted use table. The vote was unanimously in favor.

4. Regular Business

a) Adoption of Virtual Attendance Policy and Rules & Regulations, (A)

Presented by:

Stephen Padua, Long Range Planning Manager

Tisha Gieser, City Clerk

Padua stated that Gieser would arrive shortly and conclude the presentation. Padua started the presentation with draft Rules & Regulations. (00:24)

COMMISSIONER MILLIGAN stated being in support of maintaining a virtual hybrid format particularly for public comment and asked for clarification regarding the rule that public commenters state name and association with the city. Padua replied that there can be a strict policy, but State regulation is not specific regarding information to be provided to Commission meetings. The City Council have different rules. The Commission has discretion regarding public comment rules. COMMISSIONER KRASS asked if there is a rule that comments must be made by Issaquah residents only, and if the address is necessary. Padua replied that the information requested is only for identification and that there is not a rule that a commenter must reside in Issaquah. COMMISSIONER MILLIGAN stated that giving home addresses can be a privacy concern, and what is more important is the relation to the city around material benefit; if there will not be Quasi-Judicial decisions by the Commission going forward, however, the relation to the city may not be important. Padua replied that people can be asked to provide certain information regarding the relationship to the city but what is requested is not consistent throughout all Boards and Commissions. COMMISSIONER KENNEDY stated agreement with COMMISSIONER MILLIGAN that a home address should not be asked for, but name and relationship to the city is more important. Padua replied that not everyone understands the general request of relationship to the city and a wide variety of responses can be received such as resident, live nearby, or related to a resident. Broad requests will result in broad answers. COMMISSIONER MILLIGAN asked if commenters could be asked to state their name and relationship to the matter before the Commission. COMMISSIONER KENNEDY suggested that commenters could be specifically asked about the relationship to the matter that would be commented on. COMMISSIONER KRASS asked if an area of the city rather than an address should be asked for, for transparency of connection. COMMISSIONER ESEMUEDE stated that asking for a home address might keep some public from commenting and that a neighborhood could be substituted. COMMISSIONER KENNEDY stated that knowing that there is a requirement to state information could intimidate a commenter. COMMISSIONER PATTERSON asked for section 7D 2 to be displayed and stated being content with draft verbiage. COMMISSIONER MILLIGAN stated that the Commission will need to do a better job of following through with the word *must* in requirement verbiage during Public Hearings.

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Gieser presented the draft Virtual Attendance Policy. (00:35)

COMMISSIONER KRASS stated that the idea of encouraging in-person participation is good, that lack of a quorum would cause momentum to be lost and asked for reasons other Boards and Commissions have chosen different requirements such as a quorum to be in person.

Gieser replied that if there are two or more vacancies on a Commission, a requirement for a quorum in person would not apply. Most Commissioners have Alternate Members ensuring that quorums can be achieved. A reason to ease requirements was for more flexibility.

COMMISSIONER MILLIGAN asked for clarification regarding the outcome of a lack of quorum.

Gieser replied that the Office of the Clerk would recommend that the meeting not occur, and if there is not a quorum, the Commission does not exist. COMMISSIONER MILLIGAN asked how notice is to be given, and Gieser replied that rules state five days prior, but that emergencies are understood.

MOTION by COMMISSIONER MILLIGAN to amend the Planning Policy Commission Rules & Regulations by adopting amendments throughout to correct the Issaquah Municipal Code references and to adopt amendments to Article Four, Section One, Regular Meetings; Section Seven, Participation, and to add a new Section Six, Virtual Attendance, as proposed. MOTION seconded by COMMISSIONER KENNEDY. (00:45)

VICE-CHAIR BADER opened Commissioner discussion.

COMMISSIONER KENNEDY stated support for the amendments as drafted. Flexibility is good but to conduct business, Commissioners need to be encouraged to be present as much as possible with some exceptions.

COMMISSIONER ESEMUUDE asked how often quorums have been in person in the past.

Padua replied that there have only been a couple of instances in the past few years where a quorum was almost not achieved, despite COVID, and the job of staff is to monitor what attendance will be. A Planning Policy Commission meeting has not been cancelled due to a lack of quorum while Padua has worked with the Commission. Current flexibility should be sufficient.

VICE-CHAIR BADER stated appreciating the virtual option due to personal reasons, and a concern as a new parent is that someone who is feeling under the weather but who can still participate should attend virtually. Language should encourage but not require an in-person quorum.

COMMISSIONER MILLIGAN agreed with COMMISSIONER KENNEDY that a quorum should be in-person, stating that when there are one or two Commissioners attending virtually, participation and presence is not felt, and it is hard to incorporate virtual Commissioners into the dynamic of the group working together. COMMISSIONER MILLIGAN asked how many members are to be on the Commission and what a number for a quorum is. Geiser replied that there are seven regular members and two alternate members. There is currently one

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vacancy for a total of eight, and four Commissioners are required for a quorum under policy. COMMISSIONER MILLIGAN restated that an in-person quorum is important.

COMMISSIONER KRASS asked how many meetings have been cancelled for lack of quorum prior to COVID. Padua replied not having been involved with the Commission pre-COVID and believed that possibly one meeting had been cancelled, but unsure of a date. Consistently, the Commission has done a good job of achieving quorums. COMMISSIONER KRASS asked if *discretion of the Chair* could be added regarding deciding on exceptions. Gieser replied that every Commission is trying to determine the new normal, and changes are expected to be needed over time. Rules can be amended by the Commission at any time with advanced notice to staff.

COMMISSIONER PATTERSON stated being in support of the draft and understanding that the virtual option allows for flexibility in certain circumstances but still encourages in-person attendance, and asked if virtual attendees could still be looked to if a quorum would not be achieved. Gieser replied that the intention is that if there are two or more vacancies on the Commission the in-person quorum requirement can be waived to conduct business. With one vacancy, rules would need to be amended, however.

VICE-CHAIR BADER stated having had issues at times with audio when attending virtually but being satisfied with an ability to comment. The preference is for in-person quorum, but some flexibility needs to be available.

COMMISSIONER ESEMUEDE stated that technology is here and can be used, but the preference to meet in-person will not change. Instituting a restriction is not needed because Commissioners traditionally are present.

VICE-CHAIR BADER asked for language by the Commissions that have softened restrictions. Gieser replied that precise wording could be brought back, but in general, *Request permission* and *exception* language is the focus with reformatting of the sentence and stated that the sentence could be mocked up now or brought back with changes.

MOTION by VICE-CHAIR BADER to amend the Motion on the table removing formal permission verbiage and to and an exception available to an in-person quorum, two or more vacancies, and virtual attendance. MOTION seconded by COMMISSIONER KENNEDY. (01:00)

COMMISSIONER KENNEDY stated that the Commission appears to be in consensus to encourage in-person quorums, but also in flexibility when needed. Very minor changes to options and permission can be made.

COMMISSIONER MILLIGAN stated that discretion with flexibility is good, but if absences become an issue that view would change. Padua replied that if an issue arises, the issue can be amended again.

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VICE-CHAIR BADER stated that the intention is that when being home is needed it will be possible, allowing the meeting to continue.

COMMISSIONER MILLIGAN stated that there are expectations regarding virtual attendance such as full attention.

COMMISSIONER PATTERSON stated that A3 regarding permissions could need wordsmithing also. COMMISSIONER KENNEDY stated a concern regarding the line, *no equipment needs to be set up*. Gieser replied that changes requested by other Commissions have involved removing *Request permission*, substituting with *Advance notice will be provided*, and a statement *encouraging* a quorum in attendance but not mandating. Gieser stated understanding the intention.

VICE-CHAIR BADER asked for a vote on the amendment to remove the verbiage *Permission* and adding verbiage *Encouraging* an in-person quorum with exceptions available if needed to continue. The MOTION passed unanimously.

VICE-CHAIR BADER asked for a vote on the original MOTION as amended. There were no further requests for discussion. The MOTION passed unanimously.

Gieser stated that the changes would be made, circulated for signature and the website updated.

b) **Open Government Training, (D) (01:07)**

*Presented by:
Tisha Gieser, City Clerk*

Gieser presented annual training for Commissioners.

There were no questions.

5. **Reports (01:18)**

a) **Council Update**

Padua stated that the City Council adopted the Title 18 Update on May 1, 2023. The new virtual version will be online June 1, 2023, and once available will be sent to the Commissioners. Changes online are the addition of direct link references in code and simpler navigation.

Padua asked Commissioners to indicate if not attending the Title 18 celebration party. Food and drinks will be provided, and recognition will be given at all levels.

6. **Other Business/Announcements**

a) **Upcoming Schedule**

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All regular meetings in June 2023 have been cancelled for housing tours. July 2023 meetings will begin policy discussions following the tours.

7. Adjournment

With no further business to conduct, VICE-CHAIR BADER adjourned the meeting at 7:53 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Carolyn Garza, LLC
Recording Secretary