



MINUTES

PLANNING POLICY COMMISSION
6:30 p.m. - Thursday, July 27, 2023

1. Call to Order

The hybrid meeting was called to order at 6:31 p.m. by CHAIR VOISS.

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

Absence: Commissioner Milligan (Excused), Commissioner Altimore (Excused)

Staff Present: Minnie Dhaliwal, CP&D Director
Stephen Padua, Long Range Planning Manager

2. Public Comments (General)

CHAIR VOISS stated that while no one had signed in to give Public Comment (General), comments have been received from interested parties, some received late today, as well as comments by COMMISSIONER MILLIGAN.

3. Regular Business (00:02)

a) Comprehensive Plan: New Regulations, (D)

*Presented by:
Stephen Padua, Long Range Planning Manager*

Padua presented the draft goals and policies for the Housing Element.

CHAIR VOISS asked if AMI percentages are set by cities, and Padua replied by the county but in coordination with cities.

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COMMISSIONER ESEMUEDE asked how often the AMI is updated, and Padua replied that percentages are new, and discussion will be regarding how best to achieve updates in Comprehensive Plan periodic updates.

Padua continued the presentation with the new legislation.

VICE-CHAIR BADER stated that X-2 should not be limited to housing supply and that a collaborating piece regarding developing regulations should be pulled out and applied to other policies. Padua replied that for the housing element, specifics must be addressed as a county and state requirement. CHAIR VOISS reiterated that some things will not be negotiable, being county and state required. Padua replied that there could be leeway in wording in terms of coordination with other elements.

Padua continued with the Housing Affordability goal.

CHAIR VOISS asked where the *lower than 50% AMI* figure comes from. Padua replied that the figure is a county requirement to address. Most target units are 50% or lower, and by prioritizing, the city shows the figure as a both a priority and a required policy. CHAIR VOISS asked how the city defined the word *prioritize*. Padua replied that much is regarding market forces. Policies and foundational regulations regarding how best to encourage or achieve housing targets can be set, but market forces will drive what occurs. This policy shows how the city is achieving targets as a policy.

COMMISSIONER ESEMUEDE asked how X-4 and Policy E-4 are different. Padua replied that the amendment for E-4 is a clarification of how King County defines very low income. X-4 is the prioritization for the city.

Padua continued the presentation.

VICE-CHAIR BADER asked if there would be an income requirement for purchase or affordability, and Padua replied the latter, affordability of the housing. VICE-CHAIR BADER asked for clarification that a buyer with a higher income could not purchase the home, and Padua replied correct, a buyer must be income restricted to purchase the property.

Padua continued with Results and Accountability.

COMMISSIONER ESEMUEDE asked if the five-year refresh is agile enough if a problem is identified prior to five years. Padua replied that in all plans, updates can occur if there is a problem found prior to the end of the five-year requirement. Plans are being required to be updated at least every five years.

VICE-CHAIR BADER asked for clarification regarding monitoring. Padua replied that there is monitoring in the Housing Report Card, but the Report Card currently does not include all required by the state, however, and this will need updating.

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Padua continued with proposed amended Housing Policies.

VICE-CHAIR BADER asked, regarding B-1, if there will be links in the final draft for a lay person. Padua replied yes, in the next draft of the Housing Elements.

Padua continued the presentation.

COMMISSIONER ESEMUUDE asked for clarification regarding Section C. Padua replied that the proposal is to remove goal C in the existing Comprehensive Plan and to incorporate all C policies into the Housing Affordability section to avoid repetition.

Padua continued the presentation.

COMMISSIONER ESEMUUDE asked for clarification regarding the term *disproportional impacts*. Padua replied that the city will working on the definition, in the Comprehensive Plan document and used further in the Implementation and Functional plans.

CHAIR VOISS asked for clarification regarding *displacement* and the idea of gentrification. Padua replied that in primarily considering existing residents or tenants, that displacement be considered. CHAIR VOISS asked for clarification regarding city property versus privately owned property. Padua replied that if certain neighborhood characteristics are to be retained, different income levels need to be considered. CHAIR VOISS referenced Clyde Hill, and Padua replied that the policy is to be conscious of existing residents. CHAIR VOISS asked if incentives would be taken away, and Padua replied that incentives remain. The Housing Strategy Workplan will address incentivization. CHAIR VOISS asked for clarification regarding prioritizing in C-6. Padua replied that the policy is an attempt to be more actionable, and that previous language was *considered given* priority. CHAIR VOISS referenced Talus and Issaquah Highlands, surplus land at one time, and asked if there is a percentage of affordable housing required. Padua replied that the policy is to show that affordable housing is a priority, but not necessarily to designate a certain percentage of affordable housing in each neighborhood.

COMMISSIONER ESEMUUDE asked how measuring will be achieved, and Padua replied that the Housing Strategy Workplan would be where the discussion would occur, and that the policy is required by the county and state. COMMISSIONER ESEMUUDE asked for clarification regarding discussions with developers to prioritize affordable housing. Padua replied that with any surplus land, how the city wants to develop will be evaluated, and there would be a discussion to benefit city goals. COMMISSIONER ESEMUUDE asked if how much affordable housing is available at the time would be a factor and Padua replied yes, how to achieve city targets. COMMISSIONER ESEMUUDE asked if there is a definition regarding the city targets and surplus land for more guidance and Padua replied that there is guidance, but that specific percentages may not make sense for certain properties due to size or timing. CHAIR VOISS stated that the issue is a City Council and Administrative level, and not for Boards or Commissions other than a Public Hearing. Padua replied that if there is a surplus property to be developed, community feedback would be sought. COMMISSIONER ESEMUUDE stated that achieving goals should be neither too restrictive nor too loose.

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Padua continued with Special Needs Housing.

CHAIR VOISS asked why the word *encourage* is included as the word has been replaced in other parts. Padua replied that Special Needs Housing is addressed within the Human Services element, Human Services Strategic Plan, and ADA Transition Plan, recognizing coordination with these.

Padua continued the presentation.

VICE-CHAIR BADER asked if, regarding H-18, policy can promote overall affordability as market rate caters to high and low income, but the middle group is not represented. Padua stated that H-18 regards strategy but that more policies should address the issue.

COMMISSIONER ESEMUUDE stated that the current inventory of housing may not be affordable at AMI and that the missing middle needs to be addressed. Padua replied that missing middle provides a wider spectrum of housing types and does not necessarily address affordable housing needs.

VICE-CHAIR BADER asked how the cost of homeownership outside of the initial cost of a home is addressed in policy. Dhaliwal stated that a new policy can be created, or items added regarding investing in existing infrastructure to keep cost low for residents, while still meeting county and state requirements. The targets are to plan and accommodate for.

COMMISSIONER ESEMUUDE asked if the target fits Issaquah, and Dhaliwal replied that the projections work at the regional level and that finer numbers for cities are impacted by cost of development, affordability, and environmental factors, in example.

CHAIR VOISS asked for clarification regarding no limiting or excluding, if any development would be allowed if the AMI is met, A-2. Dhaliwal replied that not all state legislation from the last session has been finalized but answers are forthcoming. CHAIR VOISS asked about county versus Issaquah purview regarding determining need. Dhaliwal replied that need is determined based on projected growth and the number of people in income brackets with no place to live. CHAIR VOISS asked for the difference between the purview of Issaquah before and now and Dhaliwal replied by describing how Planning is determined from the state level down. CHAIR VOISS stated being hesitant regarding county policies and asked if H-22 were like rent control. Dhaliwal replied that the policy would be researched and that there is a public process to be involved, and a ratification process even after a county decision.

VICE-CHAIR BADER asked where mention of how existing housing stock will continue to be healthy and maintained will be. Padua replied the Housing Strategy Workplan, and that the policies will continue to be examined.

COMMISSIONER ESEMUUDE asked for clarification that the issue mentioned by VICE-CHAIR BADER would be examined later, and Padua replied yes, that the presentation at this meeting

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is not the only time the Commission will be addressing policies, and that there will be new and revised policies based on comments at upcoming meetings.

VICE-CHAIR BADER asked for clarification regarding land use code allowances in heights and multiple zones. Padua replied that what is presented is recognizing the requirement from HB-1110, and that a next step in the process will be to propose development code updates.

COMMISSIONER KENNEDY asked about the list of protected classes in A-7 as lists may eventually need the flexibility to include more. Padua replied that the issue would be examined.

CHAIR VOISS asked for clarification regarding emergency shelters and Padua replied that the requirement is that emergency shelter only must be allowed, and Human Services goals provide services and opportunities.

Padua stated next steps will include staff reviewing the goals and policies based on Commissioner feedback received as well as public comment. Another draft will be brought to the Commission, a state review of the draft, a final review of elements, a Public Hearing and adoption process by mid-2024. Padua asked for any further questions or comments, and if there is specific information that could be helpful for understanding of goals and policies.

CHAIR VOISS asked for clarification regarding incentives specifically in Issaquah. Padua replied that in development regulations, there must be compliance with standards but there is always negotiation in certain areas for affordable housing. Dhaliwal replied that for critical areas there are no incentives but that extra height, less parking can incentivize what is needed. CHAIR VOISS stated that words from the county such as *must* and *prioritize* may become in conflict at some point with a certain area and Dhaliwal replied that city language will address different developments.

There were no further comments on Issaquah specific issues.

Dhaliwal stated that new state bills will include discussion and debate. Issaquah is ahead of neighboring cities in that 50% of Issaquah residential zones already allow for multi-family. CHAIR VOISS stated being aware of potential competition between current Old Town residents and developers, that Issaquah should develop thoughtfully, and that the 20-year plan is an opportunity to be sure a positive outcome occurs. Dhaliwal added that the positive outcome should not only be aesthetic but for infrastructure that serves the area.

COMMISSIONER PATTERSON asked for clarification regarding the 2022 Housing Report Card and the Comprehensive Plan. Padua replied that there is a policy specifically regarding *prioritizing* investment, rather than *encouraging*, and that what is wanted for Central Issaquah will be examined from several areas. COMMISSIONER PATTERSON stated that the Results and Accountability section is important and asked if there could be baseline metrics to measure from in several years, and where data could be found. Padua replied there will be a five-year report to the state in addition to Housing Report Cards.

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COMMISSIONER ESEMUUDE asked if the Housing Report Card is currently developed and Padua replied yes, and that the new state required five-year report will be developed. The same template will be utilized.

VICE-CHAIR BADER stated that information regarding specific target templates would be helpful. Padua replied that achievement goals will be in the Housing Strategy Workplan, and that the information would be examined.

4. Reports (01:15)
a) Council Update

*Presented by:
Minnie Dhaliwal, CP&D Director*

Dhaliwal stated that Issaquah has won the LEED Gold Award, the only city in the state of Washington and one of only five that are LEED certified in Washington State and gave credit to the Sustainability Manager for application work. Planning Commissioners have played a large part as well in guidance. The Community Survey highlighted Police, Transportation, Planning and Permitting. Issaquah received good points for customer service, online permitting, but has work to do on process improvements and timeliness of permit reviews. Council has approved funding for current evaluations of the Comprehensive Plan and EIS, parking studies, and housing diversity options. There had been one position for an Affordable Planning Planner budgeted but the Economic Development Manager will be focusing on the capital side of affordable housing instead.

5. Other Business/Announcements
a) Upcoming Schedule

There were no announcements.

6.. Adjournment

With no further business to conduct, CHAIR VOISS adjourned the meeting at 7:48 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Carolyn Garza, LLC
Recording Secretary