



## MINUTES

### PLANNING POLICY COMMISSION 6:30 p.m. – Wednesday, October 18, 2023

---

#### 1. Call to Order

The hybrid meeting was called to order at 6:36 p.m. by CHAIR VOISS.

Commissioners Present: Chair Voiss, Commissioners Esemuede, Kennedy, Milligan, and Patterson

Absent: Vice-Chair Bader and Commissioner Altimore

Staff Present: Christen Leeson, Senior Planner  
Stephen Padua, Long Range Planning Manager  
Valerie Porter, Associate Planner

#### 2. Approval of Minutes

There were no changes to the May 31, 2023 and September 14, 2023 Meeting Minutes and CHAIR VOISS stated that the Minutes were approved.

#### 3. Public Comments (General)

There were no requests to speak.

#### 4. Regular Business (00:02)

##### a) Comprehensive Plan: Housing Element Follow-Up, (D)

*Presented by:*

*Christen Leeson, Senior Planner*

Leeson relayed questions from the City Council.

COMMISSIONER KENNEDY, in response to the first question, stated that the language *consider projects* may need different verbiage, such as *support projects*, as projects are always considered; and asked for

## 10-18-23 Planning Policy Commission Meeting Minutes

clarification regarding Anti-Displacement. Leeson replied that surplus property will be considered to house displaced people. COMMISSIONER KENNEDY asked if solving displacement was the goal and Leeson replied yes. COMMISSIONER KENNEDY stated that the passage does not read clearly.

COMMISSIONER ESEMUEDE stated that the passage reads well but agreed that the word *consider* should be more actionable. Leeson replied that the word *consider* has been taken out, but CHAIR VOISS replied that the word is in the second sentence. COMMISSIONER ESEMUEDE stated being fine with the Anti-Displacement piece.

CHAIR VOISS stated agreement with COMMISSIONER KENNEDY that the word *support, provide, or promote* could be better, and asked if the piece should stop after *residential use*, because affordable housing has not been achieved and yet another stipulation is being added. COMMISSIONER ESEMUEDE stated that policy implementation needs to be fixed but asked if additional verbiage may help, more areas to reference and for clarification on different policies. CHAIR VOISS replied that the issue may not be implementation.

Leeson asked hypothetically how a decision would be made to either build affordable housing or a park on residential zoned use land. COMMISSIONER ESEMUEDE replied that affordable housing should be prioritized due to the lack of supply. COMMISSIONER MILLIGAN stated support for using the word *promote* before *projects*, and that the policy may be trying to do too much. *Wealth building* implies that affordable housing needs to be home ownership, unclear. CHAIR VOISS stated liking the word *promote* and the idea of striking verbiage after *residential use*. COMMISSIONER KENNEDY stated support for simplification. COMMISSIONER PATTERSON stated that the policy is unduly expanded, but that County and State requirements also need to be met; if issues are addressed in other policies, this policy should be simplified. Verbiage could be struck following *extremely low-income households* to add a layer of support for affordable housing. CHAIR VOISS stated that there are different kinds of affordable housing, and none have succeeded. COMMISSIONER ESEMUEDE stated that the word *prioritize* is numerical and therefore more actionable than *support* or *promote*, and asked if the policy is directly related to surplus land anywhere. Leeson replied that Parks is in the process of updating goals and policies and could be. COMMISSIONER ESEMUEDE stated that the policy should remain as presented with modification to some words. CHAIR VOISS asked for a show of hands regarding changing the word *prioritize* to *promote*, and there was a consensus in support. CHAIR VOISS asked for a show of hands regarding support for striking verbiage after *extremely low income* and there was a consensus in support.

COMMISSIONER MILLIGAN asked if the verbiage *promote home ownership* rather than *promote affordable housing* should be examined. CHAIR VOISS replied that modifiers are being added to things Issaquah is not succeeding at, but if there is movement in a positive direction the issue should be re-addressed later. Leeson stated that the County uses the word *prioritize*, and while the word *promote* will be substituted in Issaquah, the County may reject it.

In response to the second question, COMMISSIONER ESEMUEDE asked if the policy is for new development or changes to existing lots and Leeson replied both. COMMISSIONER ESEMUEDE asked if the policy could be driven by either a homeowner or developer and Leeson replied correct.

## 10-18-23 Planning Policy Commission Meeting Minutes

COMMISSIONER MILLIGAN stated that the conflict is not with housing density. While neighborhood character is to be maintained, the scale of a large building on a lot could cause conflict with current regulations. CHAIR VOISS stated that an illustration in the packet showed no trees, more impervious surface, and two large driveways, scale and not density, and a confliction policy could be necessary. COMMISSIONER MILLIGAN asked where regulation is now, and Leeson replied in Title 18. COMMISSIONER MILLIGAN asked if the opportunity to fix has then been missed and Leeson replied no, the subject was being discussed but had not been adopted. A grant has been received to implement HB 11-10 and amend regulations. COMMISSIONER MILLIGAN asked what allows larger structures with no setbacks to neighboring properties, and that this can be changed. Leeson replied that the current code does not allow and has setbacks all around as well as impervious surface restrictions. COMMISSIONER MILLIGAN asked if Issaquah code is similar to an example given of Colorado and Leeson replied yes. COMMISSIONER ESEMUEDE asked for further clarification and Leeson replied. COMMISSIONER ESEMUEDE asked if setbacks set in Title 18 must be complied with. Leeson replied correct, and that the staff is researching what can and cannot be changed in Title 18. COMMISSIONER ESEMUEDE asked for clarification regarding natural characteristics versus regulations on paper and Leeson replied with examples. COMMISSIONER ESEMUEDE stated that allowing more density may change characteristics, and Leeson replied that density must be provided.

CHAIR VOISS stated that increased density will inevitably change character. Leeson replied that higher density unit regulations cannot be more stringent than single-family. CHAIR VOISS stated that legislation in 2023 has changed how cities will plan and prioritize.

COMMISSIONER MILLIGAN stated that increased density is not what will change neighborhood character, but that different setbacks and scale will. Leeson replied that Land Use code will be worked in June 2024. Rules will go into effect in June 2025.

COMMISSIONER PATTERSON asked for clarification regarding code applied to all types of housing. Leeson replied that in Old Town, a single-family house or duplex can be built within parameters of lots, but a tri-plex or four-plex cannot be built in a single-family zone. COMMISSIONER PATTERSON asked for clarification that this will be allowed with the new mandate and Leeson replied yes, but that anything built still must be within the existing code.

COMMISSIONER MILLIGAN stated not having any issue with the policy, but that A-1 includes the word *scale*.

COMMISSIONER ESEMUEDE asked if A-1 refers to city-wide or Old Town only, and Leeson replied city-wide. COMMISSIONER ESEMUEDE asked if A-1 could be applied to the rest of Issaquah leaving Old Town out.

CHAIR VOISS stated that there is approximately one year to work on the policy.

Leeson asked if there was a consensus that policy is good as-is. CHAIR VOISS replied support for the verbiage *retain the character of the city*, and that more density is needed regardless. Leeson stated having sufficient feedback.

10-18-23 Planning Policy Commission Meeting Minutes

COMMISSIONER KENNEDY stated that there were further verbiage issues, but Leeson replied that the presentation only focused on what the Council asked staff to bring back to the Planning Policy Commission. Leeson asked COMMISSIONER KENNEDY to email further questions.

b) **Comprehensive Plan: Human Services Element, (D) (00:44)**

*Presented by:*

*Valerie Porter, Associate Planner*

Porter presented the topic and asked if there are any additional topics to be considered.

COMMISSIONER MILLIGAN asked for clarification regarding policy 1.1 under Revised. Padua replied that identifying need but also resources was researched, and that needs overlap between those living in Issaquah and those who work in Issaquah but live elsewhere. There are regional partners offering support within Issaquah, but resources are required to also support outside of Issaquah.

COMMISSIONER MILLIGAN stated understanding, but that the policy changes Issaquah being a regional service provider. Padua replied yes, but that where the resources come from and the partnerships which need to be built for the need inside and outside of Issaquah tailors the policy to what needs to be done on the ground. COMMISSIONER ESEMUEDE stated that the policy may be changing, but things have changed since the policy was set. Funding for services and resources are shared between different cities, a shared approach for a regional problem. Padua replied correct, and that Human Services is multiple different levels of service, not one-size-fits-all. A city the size of Issaquah may not be able to provide a regional center approach for everything. CHAIR VOISS stated a concern that if the public is aware that Issaquah is offering services to people in other cities in wording, pushback could occur. COMMISSIONER ESEMUEDE stated that Issaquah needs to have the infrastructure to support the city but also support from other cities.

CHAIR VOISS stated that regarding policy G-1, a city the size of Issaquah may not be able to handle a day center or temporary housing but can help with transitional or permanent. Seattle, with a larger budget and grants, has not been successful with day centers. *Day centers* and *temporary* should be stricken, leaving *transitional* and *permanent*. CHAIR VOISS asked, regarding 4.2, what the cost to the city is for translation materials. Padua replied that cost depends on the type of material, and words versus graphics. CHAIR VOISS stated that less assimilation has occurred in Issaquah in the last several years, and asked if everything including Meeting Minutes would be translated or only specific materials such as Voting. Padua replied that translating materials are on request, and that there are now online translating resources utilized.

COMMISSIONER KENNEDY stated that *non-English community members* should say *non-English speaking community members* in 4.2

COMMISSIONER MILLIGAN stated disagreement with goal M on page 45. Porter replied that there was a copy and paste issue and that the goal would be modified.

Porter stated having received the input needed.

## 10-18-23 Planning Policy Commission Meeting Minutes

b) **Comprehensive Plan: Economic Vitality Element, (D) (01:04)***Presented by:**Stephen Padua, Long Range Planning Manager*

Padua presented the topic.

CHAIR VOISS stated that there is very little that is objectionable but asked why the word *competitive* had been removed in A-7 as taxes and fees should be competitive.

COMMISSIONER KENNEDY asked why the words *the city should* is at the beginning of A-1. Padua replied that the point was good, and that the verbiage would be examined. COMMISSIONER KENNEDY stated that there should be an action verb in front of a statement of a policy inaudible on the audio recording. Padua replied that the policy consolidated other policies for simplicity and that the verbiage would be examined.

COMMISSIONER MILLIGAN stated agreement with CHAIR VOISS that fee structures should be competitive with neighboring cities. Padua replied that a discussion with the Economic Vitality Commission identified that a concern was not about being competitive with neighboring cities but rather the equity side, such as if fees impact some businesses inequitably, why the word *competitive* was removed. CHAIR VOISS asked if the fee structure is Best Practices and Padua replied yes. COMMISSIONER MILLIGAN stated that using both words *competitive* and *equitable* would help keep the practice on track. CHAIR VOISS agreed with COMMISSIONER MILLIGAN.

Padua stated having received the input needed.

5. **Reports (01:17)**a) **Council Update***Presented by:**Stephen Padua, Long Range Planning Manager*

Padua stated that Metro Flex, an on-demand King County provided metro service, began this week serving the southern Sammamish area, Squak Mountain, Talus, and Central Issaquah Valley. Advertising is currently on the city website, but broader engagement will occur shortly.

6. **Other Business/Announcements**a) **Upcoming Schedule**

Padua stated that there would be a joint meeting with the Economic Vitality Commission on Thursday, October 26, 2023.

Padua asked that Commissioners communicate travel plans to staff around the two remaining meetings in November and December.

10-18-23 Planning Policy Commission Meeting Minutes

COMMISSIONER MILLIGAN stated that a Candidate Forum for City Council candidates would be held at Blakely Hall in Issaquah Highlands on Thursday, October 19, 2023.

**7. Adjournment**

With no further business to conduct, CHAIR VOISS adjourned the meeting at 7:54 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Carolyn Garza, LLC  
Recording Secretary