



MINUTES

PLANNING POLICY COMMISSION 6:30 p.m. – Thursday, January 9, 2025

1. Call to Order

The hybrid meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by CHAIR VOISS.

Commissioners Present: Chair Voiss (virtual), Commissioners Kennedy, Krass, Patterson, and Zakharoff

Absent:

Staff Present:

Amanda Jackson, Meeting & Records Assistant
Madelyn Nelson, Planning Intern
Stephen Padua, Assistant Planning Director

2. Approval of Minutes

- a) Minutes of December 12, 2024

There being no corrections or comments, the Minutes were approved.

3. Public Comments (General)

There were no sign-ups for general Public Comments.

4. Regular Business (00:01)

- a) **Vice-Chairperson Election (A)**

Presented by

Stephen Padua, Long Range Planning Manager

CHAIR VOISS explained that the term of the new Vice-Chairperson would end in May 2025 when new leadership for the year is selected. The process was described.

COMMISSIONER KRASS nominated COMMISSIONER PATTERSON for Vice-Chairperson. COMMISSIONER ZAKHAROFF also nominated COMMISSIONER PATTERSON. There were no other nominations. By unanimous consent, COMMISSIONER PATTERSON became VICE-CHAIR.

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CHAIR VOISS asked VICE-CHAIR PATTERSON to facilitate the remainder of the meeting. CHAIR VOISS would continue to participate as a COMMISSIONER virtually.

b) **Code Amendment: Green Necklace Amenity Wayfinding Standard and Heat Pump Noise Code (D)**

Presented by:

Madelyn Nelson, Planning Intern

Nelson presented Heat Pump Noise code.

COMMISSIONER KRASS asked for clarification regarding house generators. Padua replied that generators are regulated by other components of building code, while noise as a nuisance is a broader regulation.

Nelson continued the presentation.

COMMISSIONER KRASS asked for clarification regarding how standard levels were arrived at on a state level, if units being built meet standard levels, and asked what other cities are doing. Padua replied that the state determined a tolerable decibel level for the standards prior to the development of modern mechanical equipment. Other cities are considering an exemption also as the state has not indicated that decibel levels allowed will be changed. COMMISSIONER KRASS asked if other eastside cities could arrive at one number overall, and Padua replied that building officials have regular conversations on the topics, but each separate jurisdiction creates exemptions.

VICE-CHAIR PATTERSON asked if the Noise Mitigation topic should be discussed first followed by Wayfinding. Nelson replied that a discussion on Noise Mitigation could occur at this point.

COMMISSIONER KRASS asked what consequences are for not complying with standards. Nelson replied that consequences have not been put into the code yet, but that if mitigation techniques are explored, found to be feasible, but code is then not complied with, the result would be violating the noise code with fines. Padua replied that as part of the development review process for permits, approval will only occur if mitigation is actually installed.

COMMISSIONER KENNEDY asked what resources are in place to enforce the noise ordinance and mitigation factors and what would occur if still above 73 decibels after mitigation. Padua replied that if over the 73-maximum level, the permit would not be approved, and in terms of resources, a noise complaint would be evaluated with code compliance, also involving the state.

COMMISSIONER ZAKHAROFF asked if equipment with 73 decibels maximum is readily available. Nelson replied that generally it is unusual for mechanical equipment to exceed 70 decibels.

COMMISSIONER KRASS stated that Homeowner Associations (HOA) in Talus and Highlands may have helpful information regarding how noise mitigation has been dealt with.

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CHAIR VOISS asked if both multi and single-family residential are all held to the 73-decibel maximum. Padua replied correct. CHAIR VOISS stated that single-family residential are more spaced out making mitigation easier, Padua replied that there have been incidences regarding dense townhome development and sound impact on neighbors, and the code is being addressed to be easier to work with individuals on mitigating factors and meet state standards. CHAIR VOISS mentioned that renaming the single-family residential zone is on the Docket.

COMMISSIONER ZAKHAROFF stated that currently in multi-family neighborhoods, only simple window A/C units or small condominium A/C units are possible to install as the noise level maximum will be exceeded.

VICE-CHAIR PATTERSON stated that the Planning Policy Commission is tasked with determining if the list of mitigation for mechanical equipment is sufficient for the noise code amendment.

COMMISSIONER KRASS stated that hearing the experiences of Talus and Highlands would be helpful. Padua replied that the proposed code amendment is consistent with the language in place for both HOAs.

VICE-CHAIR PATTERSON stated that a potential addition would be to optimize the direction of fans, away from living spaces to be least impactful; that elevated placement or padding for absorbing vibration could help reduce noise and asked if townhomes with heat pump units in front would be allowed but mitigated. Padua replied that in existing developments there would be allowed installations with mitigation but newer developments would be a part of the new building permit process.

CHAIR VOISS stated a concern that mitigation techniques offered could damage equipment which is a large investment. Padua replied that inspectors work with applicants at installation and installers have recommendations regarding techniques used elsewhere.

Nelson continued the presentation with Wayfinding.

COMMISSIONER KRASS asked if the city builds wayfinding signs and Nelson replied private developers. COMMISSIONER KRASS asked which entity has installed existing signs. Padua asked if the existing signs referred to are on public trails, COMMISSIONER KRASS replied yes, and Padua replied that the city produced and installed public trail signage, and that the code amendment addresses when private development comes adjacent to the Green Necklace to provide similar looking wayfinding signage pointing toward the trail.

CHAIR VOISS asked if all signs in an area should be the same, over time, as opposed to a sign standard that can be chosen from, more uniform. Nelson replied that specific feedback is appreciated.

COMMISSIONER KENNEDY stated noticing new signs in Highlands and that a fairly consistent look would be positive.

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COMMISSIONER KRASS stated that signs close to each other should be similar for visitors to the city that are not aware of different zones or neighborhoods.

VICE-CHAIR PATTERSON asked for clarification that the code would apply to any development adjacent to the trail. Nelson replied yes, but not single-family. VICE-CHAIR PATTERSON asked if individual property owners would be installing own versions or required to use the same design as the city has used. Nelson replied that the detail would depend on standards developed by the Planning Policy Commission, and that standards are currently flexible. Padua replied that what is being focused on is private development, and there is a wayfinding plan for public development with more specific detail; type of signage will be consistent but currently could be different colors or text connected to the brand of the development.

CHAIR VOISS stated that regarding public property, agreement with COMMISSIONER KRASS for cohesive signage throughout the city. Padua asked if the desire is that wayfinding signs are the same color, text, and design as the city has recently installed. COMMISSIONER KRASS replied that if the properties border purple trails on a slide, there is a value to cohesiveness. Padua replied that there are current Development Agreements but what is established in code is deferred to. COMMISSIONER KRASS asked if the signage design would be a non-issue to developers, and Padua replied that developers tend to appreciate being provided a level of required detail.

COMMISSIONER ZAKHAROFF stated that Highlands and possibly Talus have a right to keep current signage, recently installed after research, but the rest of the city should be uniform; a photo of what is required and recommendations to a business to produce could be provided.

COMMISSIONER KENNEDY asked if signs in Central Park are similar in the core of Issaquah. Padua replied that Central Park signage owned by the city are consistent. COMMISSIONER KENNEDY stated that each neighborhood will have a specific feel and could maintain a neighborhood brand if not a part of the city system, but that city-specific consistency is needed for visitors.

VICE-CHAIR PATTERSON stated that the Commission agrees that standards should be taken a step further to align with city signage. Padua asked for clarification that more detail in standards is needed to be consistent but the level of detail is still not clear.

COMMISSIONER KRASS asked if the sign points to city resource or Green Necklace that city way finders should match, but if in a neighborhood and the sign points to a neighborhood owned park, the developer has flexibility. COMMISSIONER KENNEDY replied yes.

COMMISSIONER ZAKHAROFF asked if any Highlands owned parks are part of the Green Necklace, and Padua replied no.

VICE-CHAIR PATTERSON asked if there would be a catalog of designs for developers to choose from. Padua replied that bollard signage is what would be required but no menu of signage choices. VICE-CHAIR PATTERSON asked if the bollard signage would have flexibility in color, and Padua replied that flexibility was in the proposal but the Commissioners are expressing that signage should be the same as the city design.

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COMMISSIONER KRASS stated that if a sign points to city resources, the sign should be the same as other city signs, and asked if a bollard would ever have both a sign to a city resource pointing one way and a sign to a development owned resource on it. Padua replied that the scenario would be likely.

VICE-CHAIR PATTERSON stated that a consideration in standards could be placement, city signs within distance of a trailhead or entry but flexible neighborhood brand signs within a development.

COMMISSIONER KRASS asked for clarification regarding hybrid signage, and Padua replied that design can be regulated but not content to manage context.

COMMISSIONER KENNEDY asked if scenarios are too restrictive as consistent signage helps avoid confusion by the user.

COMMISSIONER ZAKHAROFF stated doubt that city and community signage would be joined together, serving different purposes. A proposal was that If the sign mentions anything that belongs to the city, the sign should be a city sign design. If any other community amenities are to be on the same sign in a rare case, the sign should be uniform with city signage, uniformed if on the same bollard. A separate sign can be installed by a developer to maintain code if desired.

Padua summarized that if a sign is pointing to a city facility it should be city signage, and that any other amenities can be separate.

Padua asked if a noise code exemption should apply to generators. COMMISSIONER KRASS replied that an exemption could be applied for single-family homes. Padua replied that more developments are considering more generators particularly where power outages are frequent, and that there are different standards for installations. COMMISSIONER KENNEDY asked what the volume of a generator is. Padua replied that the intent of the presentation was regarding A/C units and heat pumps, not having researched generators, but if a concern the information will be brought back. COMMISSIONER KENNEDY replied that if the code will apply to generators, the volume will need to be known. COMMISSIONER KRASS stated that A/C units and heat pumps are used year-round, but that a generator usually comes on infrequently and short-term, and that more flexibility could be afforded. COMMISSIONER KENNEDY replied that while for emergency use during power outages, discussing parameters would be helpful. Padua replied for clarification that the amendment proposed is primarily A/C units and heat pump equipment and not generators. Generator noise complaints have not been raised to the city. COMMISSIONER KRASS stated being okay with keeping the proposal as is sans generators. CHAIR VOISS stated agreement with COMMISSIONER KRASS and Padua as generators are not used unless there is an emergency and there has not been a problem. VICE-CHAIR PATTERSON stated that verbiage *and similar equipment* implies generators. Padua replied that similar heating and cooling equipment is what is meant and not any other mechanical unit.

c) **2025 Docket Review (D)**

Presented by:

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Stephen Padua, Assistant Planning Director

Padua presented the 2025 Docket.

COMMISSIONER KRASS asked if the city owns the land with a food bank on it. Padua replied that normally, an agreement for the food bank to purchase the land would be in place as they currently operate on the site and the property not put for sale on the open market.

COMMISSIONER KRASS stated having believed that for transparency, land for sale would be put on the open market for the best value. Padua replied that there is a community benefit from the surplus that should be maintained. COMMISSIONER KRASS asked for clarification that once land is redesignated retail, the food bank could then sell the land to another retailer at a higher value. Padua replied with a typical purchase, yes, but the agreement can be researched for restrictions or covenants. VICE-CHAIR PATTERSON asked for a map of other community facilities that would be changing and Padua replied that a map will be brought back to the Commission meeting.

Padua concluded the presentation.

VICE-CHAIR PATTERSON asked for clarification that the Commission should agree that the Docket will be discussed through the year but that details are not needed at this meeting and Padua replied correct.

5. Reports

a) Council Update (01:19)

Padua stated that on January 8, 2025, the Planning, Development and Environment Council Committee met regarding middle housing for context for discussions in February.

6. Other Business/Announcements

Padua stated that the project schedule is being worked on and that there should be changes to items coming to the commission this year.

7. Adjournment

VICE-CHAIR PATTERSON adjourned the meeting at 7:51 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Carolyn Garza, LLC
Recording Secretary