



MINUTES

PLANNING POLICY COMMISSION 6:30 p.m. – Thursday, February 27, 2025

1. Call to Order

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

Commissioners Present: Chair Voiss, Vice-Chair Patterson (Virtual), Commissioners Krass and Zakharoff

Absent: Commissioner Kennedy

Staff Present: Minnie Dhaliwal, Director, Community P & D
Amanda Jackson, Meeting & Records Assistant
Christen Leeson, Principal Planner
Valerie Porter, Associate Planner

2. Approval of Minutes

- a) Minutes of February 13, 2025

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

3. Public Comments (General)

- **Ann Fletcher**, Olde Town resident, addressed issues related to lot density in Title 18 code and asked the Commission to continue to stay with two units per lot as opposed to four. Eclectic quality is appreciated. Removing a sidewalk to door path is a safety issue. Four units on a lot is excessive, encouraging developers to tear down older homes for maximum units for profit, homeowners should repurpose properties rather than demolish, materials add greenhouse gases to landfills, and affordability is not enforceable. New families with children can only afford smaller, older houses that can eventually add an Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU). A healthier environment with pervious surface and parking is also a factor.
- **Brook Lang**, Issaquah resident, regarding ADU size, presented the differences between 1,000 square feet versus 1,200 square feet. A duplex with fire door between should be considered.
- **Mark Bernsten**, 355 Southeast Bush Street, spoke regarding growing up in Issaquah, emphasized the importance of a feeling of community, and being in favor of two units per

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lot. Concerns are starter home opportunities and infrastructure that would need to be addressed.

- **Kim Infinger**, 365 South East Bush, stated support for the maximum two-unit per lot option, allowing Issaquah to grow responsibly while maintaining unique character. Please consider preserving Issaquah character while preserving housing, building on proven success, and collaboration/thoughtful implementation.
- **David Kappler**, 255 Southeast Andrews Street, expressed concern around reasonable ADU sizes in order to allow the community to provide homes for families. Allowing a 4,000 square foot ADU will change the nature of the community.
- **Nancy Davidson**, Olde Town, stated that two units per parcel allows an opportunity for gentle and reasonable densification of neighborhoods. Four units per parcel will result in pencil houses, three-story 2,000 square foot buildings seen now in Bellevue and Redmond, profitable but not affordable. Positive characteristics of current Issaquah neighborhoods were described. Parking, stormwater, sewer capacity, water supply, and tree canopy targets will be negatively affected. Written comments were submitted.
- **Tina Hayes**, 585 Southeast Bush Street, stated that preservation of old character is complicated due to the cost to build up to code during home renovations. Creating space for newcomers is important.
- **Wendy Pickering**, 285 - 2nd Avenue Northeast, stated support for two ADUs units per lot and gentle density while incorporating new housing in Olde Town. A concern is regarding congestion, traffic, and road safety. Walkability is becoming less safe. Four units per lot with only street parking will increase the burden on Issaquah. Young families need more affordable housing than four units per lot with only one being affordable. Environmental impacts are also of concern.
- **Kendra Nordberg**, 440 Bush Street, stated having watched Issaquah grow over 25 years and that while many commercial additions have been welcome, there is concern regarding steadily increasing traffic and limited parking which should be considered when deciding on the number of ADUs allowed on a lot. Issaquah character downtown maintains levels of depth that Kirkland and Redmond have lost. Written comments were submitted.
- **Eric Griffin**, a new Sammamish homeowner, compared development in Sidney, Australia to Issaquah. Development in a balanced way between need and character is needed.
- **Jason Sanduich**, a new homeowner on Juniper Street, stated living in a pencil house and that Issaquah character will change with light rail and time, and that now is the time to plan for the future.
- **Connie Marsh**, Squak Mountain, stated that the Central Issaquah area has been rezoned with high density, the place where pre-planning has determined density will be located, alongside new light rail. Olde Town areas and forested hillsides need to be maintained. There is an existing Olde Town re-development plan. The most affordable housing is the older stock. Code language is contradictory and confusing and should be sent to the Development Commission for recommendations

4. Public Hearing (00:55)

a) Public Hearing: Title 18 Clarifying Amendments (A)

Presented by:

Christen Leeson, Principal Planner

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Leeson gave the presentation.

CHAIR VOISS stated that technical issues and not policy were being addressed and asked Commissioners for clarifying questions, and there were none.

CHAIR VOISS opened the Public Hearing.

- **Connie Marsh**, Squak Mountain, stated that regarding sign code, sign definition in the past required the sign owner to be identified on the sign and a time period to be up, in example campaign signs, missing now, and that the requirements should be re-added.

CHAIR VOISS closed the Public Hearing.

MOTION by Vice-Chair Patterson to recommend approval of 2025 Title 18 Clarifying Amendments as presented. MOTION seconded by COMMISSIONER ZAKHAROFF.

CHAIR VOISS asked staff to review the Public Hearing comment regarding sign code. Leeson replied that there are still time limits for signage but contact information or content on signs can no longer be regulated per Federal law.

There were no requests to deliberate.

The MOTION passed unanimously.

5. Regular Business (01:05)
 a) **Middle Housing: Draft Code Amendments Review (D)**
Presented by Valerie Porter, Associate Planner

Questions would be asked after each section. Porter gave the presentation.

Porter asked the first policy question, should residential projects be required to provide a walkway from the front door to the sidewalk or right-of-way, separate from the driveway. A five-foot designated pedestrian walkway separate from the driveway is currently required but more impervious surface being required could be a potential barrier to development.

COMMISSIONER KRASS asked if there is currently flexibility in the requirement for the walkway to be five-feet and if flexibility could be encouraged toward design. Porter replied that the City Attorney had advised against flexibility for design in the past; zoning standards for impervious surface are not proposed to be reduced. Porter replied that there is flexibility in walkway width in certain instances. COMMISSIONER KRASS asked how the figure of five-feet had been decided on and Leeson replied that five-feet previously was the standard width for sidewalks and that the Fire Department requires four-feet.

CHAIR VOISS stated that having design flexibility is important and asked if pavers would count as impervious surface and Porter replied that pavers are counted. CHAIR VOISS asked if a

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requirement is from the front door to the driveway and Porter replied that the connection could be made but not required.

VICE-CHAIR PATTERSON stated appreciating the opportunity for flexibility and that a path to the front door is probably a desired feature.

CHAIR VOISS stated having seen smaller units with no walkway on a previous tour and Porter replied correct. COMMISSIONER KRASS replied that added impervious surface in the small space would be detrimental to driveways.

COMMISSIONER ZAKHAROFF stated support for design flexibility.

Porter asked the second policy question, should massing and façade standards be applied city-wide. Requirements would be regarding modulation details and blank wall treatment options.

COMMISSIONER KRASS asked if what has been built in the last ten years outside of Olde Town have been successful and asked for a sampling to understand if the requirements would be a burden. Porter replied that homes being remodeled are implementing architectural features in alignment with the proposal. COMMISSIONER KRASS asked again if a sampling can be obtained.

COMMISSIONER ZAKHAROFF stated being in favor of keeping architectural standard requirements to preserve character.

VICE-CHAIR PATTERSON asked why the standards that exist in Olde Town are proposed to be applied city-wide. Porter replied that the proposal is being converted from only applying to single-family to applying to both single-family and middle housing in order to achieve design standard goals. VICE-CHAIR PATTERSON asked if the goal is to preserve character and Porter replied yes.

CHAIR VOISS stated agreement that multi-units should not be boxes and being in favor of city-wide standards.

VICE-CHAIR PATTERSON asked how more expensive design may impact value. Porter replied not having data but that requirements as written are not out of the ordinary, such as windows on the front façade and that the question would be researched. Leeson replied that when the architectural standards for single family duplexes in Olde Town were written, cost was considered because housing was affordable and materials and paints were chosen to continue affordability; if transferred to city-wide, there should not be an issue. CHAIR VOISS stated that articulation and not boxes are more desirable despite any potential increase in development costs. COMMISSIONER KRASS stated understanding standards for Olde Town but not wanting Issaquah to be the most difficult place to develop and asked for more information for understanding. CHAIR VOISS stated that there was a reason the moratorium had occurred in the past.

Porter asked the third policy question, does the Commission agree with proposed Open Space requirements for Cottage and Courtyard housing.

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COMMISSIONER KRASS asked how much space roughly would be required to build for 11 Cottage units. Porter replied that for 11 units at 850 square feet per unit, the equivalent would be two basketball courts. COMMISSIONER KRASS asked how much space would be needed for the entire development and not only for Open Space compared to other cities, and Porter replied that a percentage rather than square feet will be researched.

COMMISSIONER ZAKHAROFF stated living in 114-unit Courtyard housing and asked for clarification regarding Open Space proposed size requirements. Porter replied that the question would be researched.

VICE-CHAIR PATTERSON stated that Open Spaces seen on a previous tour were an appealing characteristic and stated agreement with the idea for the change, but considerations are development cost increases and physical constraints on lots, making development less likely; lot size limitations could require a contribution to a connecting local park or trail. Porter asked if other exemptions to reduce the Open Space amount as long as there is community benefit and interactions with surroundings is supported, and VICE-CHAIR PATTERSON replied yes, ensuring feasibility. Porter replied that the issue would be researched.

CHAIR VOISS asked for illustrated examples for all three questions and trade-off options at the next presentation.

Porter stated that there will be a Public Hearing on March 13, 2025, a Partial Differential Equation (PDE) review on April 1, 2025, and City Council adoption on May 19, 2025 to achieve the deadline of June 30, 2025.

CHAIR VOISS asked if the term *Major Transit Stop* has been addressed by Olympia, and Porter replied that staff continues to obtain an answer.

Porter asked the fourth policy question, are there additional changes to the amendments that should be considered.

VICE-CHAIR PATTERSON stated that a definition was added for *Major Transit Stops*, transit running every 15-minutes or less but that the 554 and 556 Express buses run every half-hour and asked if ADUs can be a duplex or connected by a door in between. Porter replied that there can be a detached single-family home and two attached ADUs as long as size requirement is met, but door requirements will be researched. VICE-CHAIR PATTERSON asked for clarification regarding parking requirements and Porter replied with current language. VICE-CHAIR PATTERSON asked for clarification that parking cannot be required but can be allowed and Porter replied correct, within half-mile of a major transit stop; parking requirements associated with middle housing have been removed and Valdriz will be providing parking amendments at a later date. VICE-CHAIR PATTERSON asked for clarification regarding the requirement for an ADU to be 25% smaller than the principal house size. Porter replied that the state is allowing all types of units to be constructed on one lot, and a concern was that there have been no size requirements that would distinguish a primary house from an ADU. VICE-CHAIR PATTERSON asked for clarification that if the primary house is 1,250 square feet, the ADU could be a maximum of 1,000 square feet and Porter replied yes.

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COMMISSIONER ZAKHAROFF asked if the ADUs in the example would need to be 1,000 square feet in total or each, and Porter replied each.

COMMISSIONER KRASS asked how a driveway meshed with grass could count toward impervious surface. Porter replied that a portion of Grasscrete is considered impervious. COMMISSIONER KRASS asked if the percentage would be 50% and Porter replied yes. CHAIR VOISS stated seeing pavers with peat gravel in between.

6. Reportsa) **Council Update (01:57)**

Leeson stated that the ARCH Trust Fund allocations for funding new affordable housing have been approved by the Issaquah City Council, one being another Life Enrichment Options (LEO) or Emily's House.

7. Other Business/Announcements

Leeson stated that five more policy issues will be brought to the Commission over the next few meetings with a Public Hearing on April 24, 2025.

8. Adjournment

CHAIR VOISS adjourned the meeting at 8:29 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Carolyn Garza, LLC
Recording Secretary