



MINUTES

PLANNING POLICY COMMISSION 6:30 p.m. – Thursday, February 26, 2026

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, Commissioners Krass, Matthews, Millender-Irwin, Oliner, and Zakharoff

Absent: Commissioners Adair and Mohl-Barouh (Excused)

Staff Present: Amanda Jackson, Meeting Assistant
Christen Leeson, Planning Manager
Andrew Love, Associate Planner
Stacy Vynne-McKinstry, Sustainability Manager

2. Approval of Minutes

a) Minutes of January 22, 2026

With no changes or comments, the Minutes were approved.

3. Public Comments (General)

There were no requests to speak.

4. Regular Business

a) **Issaquah Climate Action Plan Update (D) (00:02)**
Presented by: Stacy Vynne-McKinstry, Sustainability Manager

Vynne-McKinstry presented the topic.

COMMISSIONER KRASS stated appreciation for a view through a cost-benefit analysis, that a decision to exceed the State requirements will need good rationale, and stated that ideas on paper may have consequences that do not work in reality. Vynne-McKinstry replied with an anecdote where a developer chose to develop more parking than was required because the market demand for renting would be difficult without. COMMISSIONER KRASS asked if the risk should be taken without exceptions and Vynne-McKinstry replied yes. Leeson replied that there are several cities in the region that have eliminated all parking requirements and the result is

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that the market drives the parking, and that some cities are even considering maximums; Issaquah already has parking maximums.

COMMISSIONER MATTHEWS stated that Issaquah currently does not have overflow parking capacity and requiring EV Ready may create community pushback.

COMMISSIONER OLINER stated agreement with COMMISSIONERS KRASS AND MATTHEWS, stated that what the target market is for the development of housing is important, and that affordable housing becomes more affordable if structured parking is not required; transit must be close by if structured parking is in fact required, and the policy needs to be nuanced and not a blanket statement for all development.

CHAIR VOISS stated agreement with other Commissioners and stated that reducing versus eliminating minimums needs to be reconsidered and a feasibility study is needed, different neighborhoods with different needs exist.

VICE-CHAIR PATTERSON stated that there is an opportunity for a phased approach to encourage development while also considering multi-modal transportation.

Vynne-McKinstry stated that concerns heard were regarding an overall removal of minimums, that there could be options for certain neighborhoods or waivers offered, and that further assessment should occur. The Commissioners agreed.

Vynne-McKinstry continued the presentation regarding increasing multi-family Electric Vehicle (EV) charging requirements above state requirements.

COMMISSIONER KRASS stated that further logistics are needed before consideration because of time and cost.

COMMISSIONER ZAKHAROFF stated that housing becomes less affordable when more requirements are put on developers.

COMMISSIONER OLINER stated that offsetting cost savings should be considered to reduce installation and maintenance costs of EV chargers, and that while moving toward EVs in the future is good, flexibility and incentives are needed so that deserts are not created through the city.

COMMISSIONER MILLINDER-IRWIN stated being in support of the policy in regard to new development for medium to large scale Homeowner Associations (HOA), but that older communities are challenged with changing demographics and new needs for EV charging stations.

CHAIR VOISS stated that the situation is where incentives will work, and that while most people charge at home, infrastructure is needed elsewhere, although many charging stations in the city are frequently empty.

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COMMISSIONER KRASS stated that new developments could receive an incentive to provide a housing unit an individual garage and charging metered back to the unit rather than a structure with charging stations available.

VICE-CHAIR PATTERSON stated that the market should drive the demand, and that there may be another way to move forward other than blanket requirements at this time.

CHAIR VOISS stated agreement with COMMISSIONER MILLINDER-IRWIN and VICE-CHAIR PATTERSON, that the situation is still fluid in 2026.

Vynne-McKinstry continued the presentation regarding multi-family development and redevelopment.

COMMISSIONER ZAKHAROFF stated that a secured parking facility for multi-modal transportation such as eScooters should be an incentive only, being an additional cost.

COMMISSIONER OLINER stated that regarding safety, the best fire suppression techniques are not available for eBikes and EVs in general, and a different system may eventually become required in covered areas where bikes are charged, an additional cost to a developer.

CHAIR VOISS asked for clarification regarding the concern over a battery malfunction after an owner walks away from a charging station. Vynne-McKinstry replied that when purchased from an authorized retailer, there is a very low likelihood of any fire issues, but that the concern is regarding purchases online or self-building being more at risk.

VICE-CHAIR PATTERSON asked what the current code for charging is that is being updated. Leeson replied that there is no current code for eBikes and eScooters. VICE-CHAIR PATTERSON asked if not having code at this time means these are not allowed, and Leeson replied that they can be done now, but incentivization would be the update.

CHAIR VOISS asked for clarification that storage is a requirement but that the charging component is not a requirement. Leeson clarified that there are requirements for storage in multi-family developments, but the charging component is not required in any development at this time.

COMMISSIONER KRASS asked if a builder can decide whether to install charging in bike storage, or if there are other building codes that come into play. Leeson replied that regarding land use, yes.

Vynne-McKinstry stated that charging is done at a normal outlet and that building code can be examined to be sure there would be no restrictions on an eBike storage unit.

Vynne-McKinstry stated that the Sustainability Fair at Pickering Barn on April 25, 2026 will offer eBike test rides from two local eBike stores, and that there is a Grant available for eBike rebates that will be launched in summer 2026.

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COMMISSIONER OLINER stated that before promoting eBikes fully, traffic regulations should keep pace. Vynne-McKinstry replied that a city focus this year will be on eBike safety. COMMISSIONER OLINER stated that public outreach should be emphasized.

Vynne-McKinstry continued the presentation regarding fueling stations being required to include charging stations.

COMMISSIONER MATTHEWS asked if implementation would be at new only or also all existing stations. Vynne-McKinstry replied that in Vancouver, B.C. the policy initially passed but then pulled back was for all stations to install charging stations or be charged a higher B & O tax. COMMISSIONER MATTHEWS stated that the concept does not make sense for Issaquah, and that some fueling stations are too small.

COMMISSIONER ZAKHAROFF stated that if there is higher tax or required installation, the cost of gas in Issaquah will become more expensive as the costs are passed on.

CHAIR VOISS asked for clarification regarding what Vancouver, B.C. has hesitated on, and Vynne-McKinstry replied that Vancouver, B.C. did not move forward to the phase of implementing the policy because of a lack of infrastructure for gas stations to be able to comply.

COMMISSIONER KRASS asked if there is data on utilization of existing charging stations at retail locations as well as reasons for use or non-use. CHAIR VOISS stated agreement that data is needed to make the decisions. Vynne-McKinstry replied that data would be explored.

COMMISSIONER MILLINDER-IRWIN stated that where stations are located and which will be utilized, data and intention, need to be examined.

Vynne-McKinstry continued the presentation with Transit First.

COMMISSIONER ZAKHAROFF stated that Transit First should only be considered when Issaquah has all reliable transit, both local and light rail.

COMMISSIONER OLINER stated having positive experiences with the bus system.

COMMISSIONER MATTHEWS stated that transit will be used more when light rail is in place.

VICE-CHAIR PATTERSON stated that Transit First is very broad but agreed with the concept. CHAIR VOISS stated agreement with VICE-CHAIR PATTERSON and that the Mobility Action Plan is being examined.

Vynne-McKinstry continued the presentation with buildings reporting on energy use.

CHAIR VOISS asked for clarification regarding square footage and exemptions, and Vynne-McKinstry replied that the requirement would be for commercial, non-profit, publicly owned buildings.

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COMMISSIONER OLINER asked if data collected would be for city information only or if there would be incentives or penalties. Vynne-McKinstry replied that at the state level, buildings 50,000 Square Feet (SF) and above have energy targets to be met with penalties, and that for 20,000 to 50,000 SF there are not yet targets or penalties and only reporting is required; at this time for Issaquah, what is being asked of the Commission is if there is support for the concept. COMMISSIONER OLINER asked if an older building would be forced to upgrade, and Vynne-McKinstry replied that the issue would depend on how a city-program is designed.

COMMISSIONER ZAKHAROFF stated that property and consulting costs are expensive and additional requirements will create less affordability.

COMMISSIONER KRASS stated that exceeding what the State requires is a high bar and that the burden could be put on Puget Sound Energy (PSE) which is already tracking, rather than on property owners.

COMMISSIONER ZAKHAROFF stated support for COMMISSIONER KRASS, that PSE currently has several incentive programs, and that better information may be obtained through a partnership.

CHAIR VOISS stated that state requirements are very good, and reporting is the first step. Vynne-McKinstry replied that having standards for a city the size of Issaquah that exceed state standards is a huge undertaking considering the number of staff needed, and working with PSE regarding data and incentive promotion, possibly voluntary reporting, could be a variation.

Vynne-McKinstry continued the presentation with Home Energy Scores.

COMMISSIONER KRASS asked if Energy Scores indicate usage or a set of metrics. Vynne-McKinstry replied that there is a weatherization assessment performed. COMMISSIONER KRASS stated that Issaquah requirements should not be beyond state requirements, there should not be a score assessment required before selling a house and asked how a regular home inspection is different than the proposed assessment.

Vynne-McKinstry replied that the score would be information for the buyer only and asked if the subject should be explored.

COMMISSIONER MILLINDER-IRWIN stated that the score would have far reaching equity implications in terms of older homes, and ratings will influence the ability of a homeowner to sell unless there is a counterbalance, a program to address equity implications.

COMMISSIONER MATTHEWS stated that there would be significant consequences in regard to being forced to replace, for example, windows, before being able to sell, as well as to first-time buyers during an economic downturn.

COMMISSIONER ZAKHAROFF stated that people want to live green, but most cannot afford to, so incentives are needed to make living green easier but not as a requirement.

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VICE-CHAIR PATTERSON stated being interested in the idea of a score but for information purposes only, which could then tie to education regarding the benefit of upgrades.

COMMISSIONER KRASS asked if PSE already can provide an energy audit. Vynne-McKinstry replied no, PSE no longer does. COMMISSIONER KRASS asked if there is a reason energy auditing stopped and Vynne-McKinstry replied that timing was during the Pandemic, and that now a consultation with an energy advisor can be requested but is not the service offered previously.

VICE-CHAIR PATTERSON stated having questions such as who would conduct evaluations and about the administrative burdens.

CHAIR VOISS stated agreement with the Commissioners and that anything that hinders home buying at this time should not be considered.

Vynne-McKinstry stated that staff will track the City of Tumwater as they evaluate the program.

Vynne-McKinstry continued the presentation with requiring alternative heat pump quotes.

COMMISSIONER OLINER stated that not all buildings are conducive to heat pump installation and other efficient alternatives need to be considered.

COMMISSIONER ZAKHAROFF stated agreement with COMMISSIONER OLINER.

COMMISSIONER MATTHEWS stated that many contractors already provide alternate quotes, a requirement may be redundant, and that education by the city may be helpful.

CHAIR VOISS stated agreement with COMMISSIONER MATTHEWS and that requirements that add burdens and cost are not helpful in the current economic situation, but that knowledge is power and suggested reaching out to Contractors regarding what they are providing.

COMMISSIONER KRASS stated that if a heat pump could be beneficial, contractors will already provide an alternate quote and agreed with reaching out to Contractors.

VICE-CHAIR PATTERSON stated that the difference in scenarios such as new development, emergency replacements, and repairs should be considered.

Vynne-McKinstry concluded the presentation with the dark sky ordinance.

COMMISSIONER ZAKHAROFF stated that changing lighting should be incentivized at the time of replacement but not required immediately.

COMMISSIONER MATTHEWS stated that safety is a factor when kelvin is changed to a warm, low light, and that lighting on streets and walkways will be safer to change than gas stations or parking lots. Public comments can be examined from other cities for ideas.

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COMMISSIONER OLINER stated that older commercial buildings may not be able to retrofit the entire floors that light when turned on.

CHAIR VOISS stated that dark sky had been reviewed in part by the Commission in the past, that using less energy should be in the cost-saving interest of commercial building owners and agreement with COMMISSIONER MATTHEWS.

VICE-CHAIR PATTERSON stated that parts of a dark sky ordinance had been reviewed during Title 18, Outdoor Lighting Standards, and asked what was being asked for that is new. Vynne-McKinstry replied that there are specific current concerns raised by the Environmental Board and that the Snoqualmie Tribe has also expressed interest in opportunities. COMMISSIONER KRASS asked if the owners of the specific buildings of concern can be approached without a new policy.

Vynne-McKinstry stated having received the input needed for the Environmental Board.

- b) **Title 18 Clarifying Amendments: Introduction (D) (01:38)**
Presented by: Christen Leeson, Planning Manager and Andrew Love, Associate Planner

Leeson stated that Kate Kaehny, Principal Planner, had been scheduled to present but was required at a separate event.

Leeson introduced the topic.

Love gave the presentation and asked for feedback regarding balloons.

COMMISSIONER KRASS asked if balloons other than mylar have caused issues to warrant a code. Love replied that balloons as a problem is subjective and that some cities have exceptions such as in residential areas.

COMMISSIONER ZAKHAROFF asked if balloons close to roads only or all balloons are the focus and Love replied that any balloons that interfere with the line of sight as a vision disturbance. CHAIR VOISS asked if the location is only in the Right of Way and Love replied not necessarily. COMMISSIONER ZAKHAROFF asked if there is data on accidents occurring because of balloons and Love replied no. COMMISSIONER ZAKHAROFF stated that a specific distance would need to be established away from the road.

CHAIR VOISS asked Leeson for clarification that the balloons in question would be closer to the Right of Way and not, in example, at a party in the park. Leeson replied that the balloons in question would be something that could distract or interfere with a bicyclist, in example, and that the Code Enforcement Officer will be consulted for details of incidents or complaints.

COMMISSIONER MILLINDER-IRWIN stated that any well-intentioned amendment should be supported by metrics.

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COMMISSIONER KRASS stated that for code enforcement, the point would be not only balloons but anything that is distracting.

VICE-CHAIR PATTERSON stated that balloons are already in code, Prohibited Signs, reported as a nuisance, and that expanding the definition of balloons in general may be needed.

CHAIR VOISS stated agreement with Leeson that the Code Enforcement Officer should be consulted regarding the summary of VICE-CHAIR PATTERSON.

Love continued the presentation with monument signs and interior illumination.

COMMISSIONER MATTHEWS asked for the definition of replacement. Love replied either the face or reconstruction.

COMMISSIONER ZAKHAROFF stated that signs are very expensive and if a landlord is required to refresh an entire sign, tenants will absorb the cost, and that the grandfather rule should remain in place.

Leeson replied that the amendment would not require existing illumination to change.

COMMISSIONER KRASS asked for clarification regarding a new tenant and new information placed on signage. CHAIR VOISS replied that the sign is compliant as long as the monument sign structure is not being changed.

COMMISSIONER MATTHEWS stated that language could be modified regarding replacement, simplifying language. Love replied hearing a need for greater specificity regarding maintaining conformity.

Love continued the presentation with temporary business signs associated with construction.

COMMISSIONER ZAKHAROFF stated agreement with the amendment.

CHAIR VOISS stated that the only restriction should be that signs be professional, which would need to be defined.

Love asked if methods of obscuring construction such as paper in windows are acceptable. CHAIR VOISS stated yes. COMMISSIONER ZAKHAROFF stated that during construction, equipment is sometimes in the building that should be concealed and being in the best interest of a business to present well during construction. COMMISSIONER MATTHEWS suggested that a window could be obscured with paper, as long as the paper is neat and presentable during the duration of construction. COMMISSIONER OLINER stated that paper should be durable and replaced if damaged.

5. Reports
 a) **Council Update (02:12)**

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Leeson stated that the Planning, Development, and Environment Committee has recommended both 80% and 100% Traffic Fee Waivers for Early Learning Facilities with requirements.

Leeson stated that staff will be at Council March 9, 2026 with Investing in Building Development.

6. Other Business/Announcements

a) Upcoming Schedule

CHAIR VOISS stated that a Light Rail event had been well attended.

Leeson reminded the Commissioners to notify staff of an anticipated absence a week prior to ensure a quorum.

COMMISSIONER ZAKHAROFF stated that Public Testimony regarding light rail is being collected now to confirm interest and to be sure that Issaquah is not eliminated from further consideration. Leeson stated that the Mayor and Council Members wrote an article for The Urbanist regarding light rail. COMMISSIONER OLINER encouraged messages to be sent to the Sound Transit Board. CHAIR VOISS stated that personalized messages rather than form letters are more effective.

VICE-CHAIR PATTERSON asked for an update on the Pioneer Plan and Leeson replied that there are no updates.

Leeson stated that the Commission schedule will be filling shortly.

7. Adjournment

CHAIR VOISS adjourned the meeting at 8:49 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Carolyn Garza, LLC
Recording Secretary