



MINUTES

PLANNING POLICY COMMISSION 7:00 p.m. – Thursday, May 14, 2026

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 Patterson, Commissioners Adair, Holstrom, Krass, Matthews, and Zakharoff

Absent: Commissioners Millender-Irwin (Unexcused) and Oliner (Excused)

Staff Present: Amanda Jackson, Meeting Assistant
Kate Kaehny, Principal Planner
Christen Leeson, Planning Manager
Emily Medina, Senior Planner

CHAIR VOISS stated that in the absence of two Commissioners, alternate Commissioners Adair and Holstrom would be voting members.

2. Approval of Minutes

- a) Minutes of April 23, 2026 (Special Joint Meeting with Economic Vitality Commission)

With no changes or comments, the Minutes were approved.

Minutes of April 23, 2026 (Special Meeting)

With no changes or comments, the Minutes were approved.

3. Public Comments (General)

There were no requests to speak.

4. Public Hearing

- a) **Proposed Title 18 Clarifying Amendments and Update to Stepback and Amenity Space Requirements (A) (00:04)**

Presented by:

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*Kate Kaehny, Principal Planner
Christen Leeson, Planning Manager
Emily Medina, Senior Planner*

Kaehny, Leeson, and Medina gave the presentation.

COMMISSIONER ADAIR asked for clarification regarding 148 square feet of amenity space on a presentation slide. Leeson replied that the number was in error on the slide but is correct, 100 square feet, in the amendment.

COMMISSIONER ZAKHAROFF asked if developers have been heard from regarding the new proposal. Leeson replied that a letter was received today, in front of Commissioners.

CHAIR VOISS opened the Public Hearing.

- **Carl Shorett**, AvalonBay Communities and developer of the Trailhead market rate component, thanked the Commission and staff for collaboration with the development community, and stated being in support of the draft code amendments.

CHAIR VOISS closed the Public Hearing.

MOTION by VICE-CHAIR PATTERSON to recommend approval of the Title 18 amendments as presented. MOTION seconded by COMMISSIONER KRASS.

VICE-CHAIR PATTERSON stated that the topics have been discussed thoroughly, thanked staff for visuals and diagrams, and not having any further comments.

COMMISSIONER ADAIR stated agreement but asked to revisit the six story stepback to possibly reduce to five story after personally observing shadows from existing buildings. VICE-CHAIR PATTERSON stated having a similar concern but being supportive of the proposal due to the amount of analysis that has occurred. COMMISSIONER ZAKHAROFF stated that the policy created will need to be workable for both developers and the city, the balance being most important. COMMISSIONER HOLSTROM stated hesitancy to create more challenges to get buildings built. COMMISSIONER MATTHEWS stated agreement with the other Commissioners and asked if more visual interest or a more comfortable environment is a goal.

COMMISSIONER KRASS stated that there is flexibility, reported on a recent trip to Charlotte, North Carolina where stepbacks were seen, and that the proposal is good. CHAIR VOISS stated being happy with the collaborative involvement and that there will be opportunities to address situations that arise over the next year. COMMISSIONER ADAIR asked why six stories specifically was the ideal, if there had been a project that would have been cancelled because of the floor allowed, and asked if there would be a substantial delay if five stories instead of six stories were proposed. Leeson stated that an amendment could be voted on at this time.

MOTION by COMMISSIONER ADAIR to amend the stepback starting at the base of the sixth floor to start at the base of the fifth floor. There was not a second and the MOTION failed.

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VICE-CHAIR PATTERSON stated that even neighboring cities do not have a perfect number of stories and a sixth floor is a comfortable medium to help increase development.

CHAIR VOISS repeated the original MOTION. The MOTION passed unanimously.

5. Regular Business

a) Introduction to Comprehensive Plan Amendment Proposals (D) (00:42)

1) Land Use Designation Descriptions

2) Residential Designation/Zone Name Clarifications

Presented by:

Kate Kaehny, Principal Planner

Emily Medina, Senior Planner

Kaehny and Medina gave the presentation.

COMMISSIONER KRASS asked for clarification regarding new designations and Medina replied that names are being changed only, no rezoning at this time.

COMMISSIONER ADAIR asked if office space would fall under mixed zone. Medina replied Professional Office (PO) is in mixed use medium. COMMISSIONER ADAIR stated that high to low designations are confusing and Medina replied that the reason for the term mixed use residential was because the implementing zones for multi-family medium and high are heavily residential with limited commercial uses; the land use name is representative of what the area actually is and a clearer idea. Leeson replied that the Urban Core zone contains Costco but also allows for Trailhead, residential and office as well as Target, Vale, and Atlas, commercial but lower density. Kaehny replied that in other cities, similar designations are used.

COMMISSIONER MATTHEWS asked if a developer would understand the designations. Leeson replied that if the Commission agrees with the zones the descriptions will be developed next. Medina replied that the levels such as medium are not heights but intensities.

COMMISSIONER KRASS asked for clarification regarding the difference between medium and high. Medina replied that having either two or three categories had been specifically explored. Medina gave an example of Costco in high and Target in medium. COMMISSIONER KRASS stated that the two properties appear similar. Kaehny replied with a further detailed explanation of the differentiation.

CHAIR VOISS stated that the goal is to simplify and COMMISSIONERS HOLSTROM and ZAKHAROFF stated agreement.

VICE-CHAIR PATTERSON asked if there is any risk in removing the term *retail* and Kaehny replied that new descriptions are being developed. Leeson replied that there is no longer a retail zone in Issaquah.

COMMISSIONER KRASS asked what Gilman Village would be considered in land use and Leeson replied mixed land use, Central Issaquah zone.

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Kaehny concluded the presentation and stated next steps.

6. Reports

a) **Council Update (01:23)**

Leeson stated that on Tuesday, May 19, 2026 Dhaliwal and Leeson will bring all 17 proposed amendments to the Committee of the Whole Council and goals will be brought back to the Commission.

7. Other Business/Announcements

a) **Upcoming Schedule**

Leeson stated that there were none.

8. Adjournment

CHAIR VOISS adjourned the meeting at 7:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Carolyn Garza, LLC
Recording Secretary