

Approved March 24th

CITY OF EDMONDS PLANNING BOARD MINUTES

March 10, 2010

Chair Bowman called the meeting of the Edmonds Planning Board to order at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers, Public Safety Complex, 250 – 5th Avenue North.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

Michael Bowman, Chair
Philip Lovell, Vice Chair
Todd Cloutier
Cary Guenther
Kristiana Johnson
John Reed
Valerie Stewart

STAFF PRESENT

Rob Chave, Planning Division Manager
Karin Noyes, Recorder

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT

Kevin Clarke (excused)

READING/APPROVAL OF MINUTES

BOARD MEMBER REED MOVED THAT THE MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 24, 2010 BE APPROVED AS AMENDED. BOARD MEMBER CLOUTIER SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF AGENDA

No changes were made to the agenda.

AUDIENCE COMMENTS

Alvin Rutledge, Edmonds, recalled that he attended the last Board Meeting to suggest that the Planning Board consider putting an additional sign at Hickman Park honoring other people whose names were suggested as potential park names. He said he was upset that Board Member Clarke was not present at the last Board meeting or tonight's meeting since he was present when the City Council indicated their desire for the additional sign. He asked the Board to inform him of the correct process for getting the new sign in place.

Mr. Rutledge recalled the Board's last discussion about new regulations for homeless shelters. He noted that he attended the December 15th City Council meeting at which the issue was discussed, but none of the City Council's discussion was provided as part of the Board's packet of information. He said that at the meeting, people from local food banks and churches were present to speak, and he provided a list of all the churches in Edmonds that offer services to the homeless. He particularly noted that Edmonds Methodist Church serves meals to the homeless when the temperature is below 32 degrees, and other churches in Edmonds do the same. He suggested that the Board request minutes from the City Council's previous discussions regarding the matter. He pointed out that the Lynnwood City Council has offered their meeting room to house the homeless in emergency situations, but when he suggested the idea to the Edmonds City Council, it was ignored. He summarized that homelessness is a big issue.

Board Member Reed inquired if the City Council keeps minutes of their committee meetings. Mr. Chave answered affirmatively.

SUSTAINABILITY MEASUREMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION

Mr. Chave reminded the Board that one of the implementation goals in the Community Sustainability Element is the development of benchmarks and indicators that provide for measurement of progress towards established sustainability goals. He referred the Board to the attachments provided in the Staff Report to provide examples of methods that have been developed by other jurisdictions to measure sustainability. He noted that the examples offer a wide range of options. He reviewed each of the attachments as follows:

- **Attachment 1** – United Kingdom Quality of Life Themes
- **Attachment 2** – Excerpt from United Kingdom Sustainable Development Indicators
- **Attachment 3** – Victoria, B.C. Paper on Developing Sustainable Transport Indicators
- **Attachment 4** – Shoreline Sustainability Draft Indicators
- **Attachment 5** – Mountlake Terrace Sustainability Strategy Indicators
- **Attachment 6** – Environmental Protection Agency Green Communities Indicators

Mr. Chave explained that the document prepared by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is considered a national system. The documents from the United Kingdom are fairly well established and quite elaborate. The information provided in the Staff Report represents only a summary of the documents, which are available on line. He advised that Shoreline and Mountlake Terrace used a consultant to help identify types of indicators that could be used, but he is not sure of the status of these programs. The ideas are presented in the reports as lists of all the things that could be measured. Victoria's document provides an interesting discussion about the pros and cons and how to develop indicators. It is focused on transportation, in particular, but it also covers a broad range of sustainability issues. He noted that related materials can also be found on the Puget Sound Regional Council's (PSRC) website.

Mr. Chave cautioned that as the Board moves forward in their discussion about sustainability measurement and implementation, they should keep the following in mind:

- If they are going to measure sustainability, they need to make a commitment to do it over the long term rather than picking things the City happens to have data on for a particular year with no hope of generating the same type of data going forward. For example, unless the City makes a commitment that a survey would be done again to measure the same things, survey data would not be useful in measuring sustainability. The City should be cautious about the data sources that are used to measure sustainability and specifically identify what they want to measure over time.
- The City should be cautious about using data that is available for the region because it may not be applicable to Edmonds. For example, many of the PSRC's surveys are truly regional in nature and cannot be broken down by jurisdiction. The regional information could be used as a resource to see how Edmonds is doing compared to other jurisdictions in the region and to identify opportunities that are available for the City.

Chair Bowman asked Mr. Chave to share his thoughts on Shoreline's document. Mr. Chave said he likes various elements of all of the examples. He suggested that, as the Board reviews the documents, they should look for commonality. Rather than reviewing the City's Community Sustainability Element to find measures that relate to the examples, they could look through the examples and identify options that specifically relate to the City's document. He suggested that, in some cases, it might be difficult to find ways to measure specific goals identified in the City's document, but some of the ideas might have value even if they do not relate to a specific goal. He suggested a mix-and-match approach would be appropriate.

Mr. Chave referred to Page 9 on Attachment 6 from the United States EPA, which provides information about how to select indicators. It suggests that the first step is for jurisdictions to identify what they want to evaluate and then make sure it is measurable and appropriate. He noted the Board has already made a lot of progress towards defining goals by adopting the Community Sustainability Element, but the EPA's document suggests that jurisdictions go further by identifying the indicators that are important to them. He suggested one approach would be for the Board to identify a list of possible indicators and then presenting them to the public via a public hearing process. However, a better approach might be to conduct a public outreach program with various community groups. For example, there are several groups in the City that

are interested in the environment, and many of them are planning activities that would take place on Earth Day (April 22nd). He suggested it might be possible to hold a public event in association with Earth Day to solicit feedback about what the community feels are important indicators for sustainability. The event could be advertised to the public and information could be posted on the City's website with a request that citizens identify additional indicators they would like the City to consider.

Chair Bowman asked if it would be possible for the City to conduct a random mailing. He expressed concern that not everyone in the City would receive adequate notification of the open house and many would not be able to attend. Mr. Chave cautioned that a survey would be costly. He suggested a better way to make the information assessable to people who cannot attend the open house would be to post it on the City's website. People could be invited to vote on line for the options they prefer.

Mr. Chave summarized that holding an open house in conjunction with Earth Day would be a natural way for the City to solicit feedback from the public without expending a significant amount of money to create an outreach program from scratch. However, he noted that the open house must be put together in a short time frame. Board Member Stewart suggested the Board form a subcommittee to gather ideas for the open house. The Board concurred, and Chair Bowman, Board Member Cloutier, and Board Member Stewart were appointed to serve on the subcommittee. They further agreed that the subcommittee would provide an interim report to the Board on March 24th. It was noted that Board Member Cloutier also serves on the Sustainable Edmonds Committee and the Mayor's Climate Protection Committee. Board Members were invited to forward their questions to Mr. Chave, who would meet with the subcommittee sometime within the next week.

PREVIEW AND DISCUSSION OF COMPREHENSIVE PLAN PURPOSE, EFFECT AND CONTEXT AMENDMENTS

Mr. Chave reminded the Board that the PSRC, adopted Vision 2040 in 2008 (updated in 2009), which provided new guidance and a new framework for planning in the Puget Sound Region. The updated regional goals were incorporated into the Community Sustainability Element, but the references in the Comprehensive Plan to the regional plan need to be updated since much has changed. He noted that the Board's discussion would probably not include the countywide plan because Snohomish County has not completed their work. However it would be worthwhile to recognize the different direction that is emerging in the County's work. At this time, Snohomish County Tomorrow is working to align the countywide planning policies with Vision 2040, which is the same thing the City is talking about for their local plan. Therefore, it is less important to deal with specific policy direction from Snohomish County Tomorrow; as long as they focus their update on the Vision 2040 Plan, they will accomplish both. He cautioned that the City's update should focus on Edmonds while acknowledging that they are trying to be consistent with Vision 2040.

Mr. Chave reported that specific issues were raised before the City Council that the introductory sections (scope, purpose, etc.) were out of date. He explained that the City's Comprehensive Plan used to be contained in Chapter 15 of the Development Code and was a much shorter document. However, as a result of the Growth Management Act (GMA), the City adopted a stand-alone Comprehensive Plan, using many of the policies contained in Chapter 15. Unfortunately, they forgot there were a few unique statements in the old Comprehensive Plan that were no longer applicable. For example, having the Hearing Examiner rule on the consistency of projects to the Comprehensive Plan is no longer appropriate because the City Council makes these decisions as part of the budget and capital planning processes. When a new Transportation Element is adopted into the Comprehensive Plan, it identifies all of the projects that are part of the plan. Therefore, individual projects would automatically be consistent with the plan. Having the Hearing Examiner rule separately on projects that are identified in the Comprehensive Plan would be redundant. Staff's goal is to recommend amendments that would make the Comprehensive Plan language consistent with the City's current processes.

Board Member Cloutier referred to Item B on Page 3 of the Staff Report, which states "growth management policies should insure that as a residential community Edmonds continues to be heralded as "The Gem of Puget Sound, . . ." He noted that this concept has not been discussed by any of the City's current committees or commissions. Mr. Chave noted that the language has been part of the Comprehensive Plan for 20 years.

Board Member Johnson asked the significance of italicizing certain language in the Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Chave did not have an answer. He summarized that he does not anticipate the proposed amendments would change the purpose and intent of the Comprehensive Plan. Instead, the changes would make the document consistent with the City's current practices.

Board Member Reed said there are references to the "Downtown/Waterfront Activity Center" and "Edmonds Crossing" throughout the Comprehensive Plan. He noted that the current focus of the activity center and the Edmonds Crossing Project has changed. He questioned if it would be appropriate to update the Comprehensive Plan accordingly. If so, he asked who would be responsible for initiating the changes. Mr. Chave explained that Comprehensive Plan amendments can be initiated by the staff, the City Council, the Board or a private citizen. However, amendments must be submitted by the end of the year in order to be considered as part of the docket of amendments for the following year.

Board Member Guenther recalled that when the Board previously reviewed a series of Comprehensive Plan amendments, they divided into subcommittees to work on specific areas such as the 4th Avenue Cultural Corridor and the Downtown/Waterfront Activity Center. He asked if this would be an appropriate approach for addressing amendments related to Edmonds Crossing. Mr. Chave said there have been no formal changes that would warrant the City announcing that it would reexamine the Comprehensive Plan relative to Edmonds Crossing. He said there has been a lot of discussion and potential work may surface in the near future, but until the City actually receives a proposal, it would be difficult for the Board to consider unilateral changes to the Comprehensive Plan. He also cautioned that it would not be appropriate for the Board to initiate a Comprehensive Plan change related to the Edmonds Crossing Project without direction from the City Council. He summarized that if there are significant changes, perhaps they could be addressed as part of the City's required update of the Comprehensive Plan in 2011. He noted that even if the Legislature decides to push back the deadline until 2014, the City would not be precluded from updating their Comprehensive Plan in 2011 or 2012 to address this issue. Board Member Reed agreed it would make sense to postpone the City's review of the Comprehensive Plan related to Edmonds Crossing until the 2011 update.

Board Member Guenther said he had a telephone conversation with a local developer regarding the process for changing the Comprehensive Plan as it relates to the Hospital/Medical Activity Center. He observed that Swedish Medical has taken over management of Steven's Hospital, and they are planning to spend a significant amount of money to improve the facility. The developer suggested the City should consider the potential of expanding the hospital area at some point in the future. Board Member Guenther said he suggested the developer approach the City Council with his idea and first gain their support.

REVIEW OF EXTENDED AGENDA

Mr. Chave agreed to meet with Chair Bowman and Vice Chair Lovell to complete an extended agenda for the first half of 2010. It would be presented to the Board at their next meeting.

PLANNING BOARD CHAIR COMMENTS

Chair Bowman apologized for missing meetings because of work-related responsibilities. He noted that he should be available for future meetings.

PLANNING BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Board Member Lovell said it appears from the minutes of the City Council's retreat that there has been a formalized suggestion or recommendation to place the aquatics center on the November ballot. Board Member Cloutier indicated that he attended the City Council retreat. While the suggestion was made to place the aquatics center on the ballot, the City Council did not take action to do so. There was discussion that if they did have an election in 2010 it would be on lifting the levy lid. The City Council agreed it would be inappropriate to place both items on the ballot at the same time.

Board Member Lovell noted that at the retreat, Council President Bernheim once again presented a proposal for redevelopment of the waterfront. Board Member Cloutier agreed that a few presentations were made about different ways to redevelop the waterfront property to maximize revenue without raising the height limit. No commitment was made on the

part of the City Council. Mr. Chave summarized that a lot of ideas were presented and discussed at the retreat, but no formal action was taken.

Mr. Chave encouraged the Board to review the City Council's extended agenda. He noted that Council President Bernheim is attempting to schedule out an entire year, highlighting issues that will likely come up in 2010. Some are related to issues discussed at the City Council's retreat.

Board Member Cloutier announced that the Citizens Economic Development Commission would meet on March 11th at 6:00 p.m. He said he would not be able to attend the meeting, but he asked staff to email him applicable information.

Board Member Stewart announced that she would attend a panel discussion titled "Building, Remodeling, and Historic Preservation Using Sustainable Building Practices" on March 23rd at 7:00 p.m. at the Renton Technical College. She advised that a number of reputable people would participate on the panel, and she would be happy to carpool to the event with other interested Board Members. The discussion is sponsored by the Construction Center of Excellence. She noted she attended a previous panel discussion about building codes and how to make them greener. She said she would share the information she learns with the Board.

Board Member Stewart announced that Edmonds Backyard Wildlife Habitat is currently sponsoring a community-wide certification project that involves schools, businesses, churches, and residential properties. The process is lengthy and involves accumulating enough points to become certified by the National Wildlife Federation. She provided copies of the certification application for residents. She explained that owners of residential properties with native plants, a water source, a place for wildlife to raise their young, and food for wildlife are eligible to apply for certification. There is a nominal fee for becoming certified. She further announced that a celebration has been scheduled on April 24th at Yost Park, but they still need more points before the community can qualify for certification.

Board Member Reed said he attended the City Council's special meeting on March 9th at 6:00 p.m. where the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) talked about a Request for Proposals they issued on January 15th asking for developers to submit proposals for public/private partnerships to construct a pedestrian bridge across the tracks from the ferry landing to property owned by WSDOT adjacent to Main Street. In exchange, WSDOT would give the developer the property just south of the old Skippers property. He noted that proposals must be submitted by April 15th. He said WSDOT noted that the property they are offering in exchange is not as valuable as it could be if the zoning were changed. The current BC zoning limits the height to 25 feet.

Mr. Chave said WSDOT is in the process of doing a formal appraisal to identify the value of the parking lot property. They are asking for proposals where WSDOT would turn over the right to develop the property to another entity in exchange for a public benefit (a pedestrian crossing over or under the tracks). He explained that public/private partnerships are popular right now in Olympia as a way to get the State out of its current budget situation by divesting of properties they do not have a need for. They are seeking opportunities to provide public benefits in exchange for giving up the properties. He pointed out that the process is on a fast track. While the property is not under the City's control, WSDOT has indicated they would like them to be involved in the process. Board Member Reed announced that he has a link to the WSDOT website where additional information can be obtained.

ADJOURNMENT

The Board meeting was adjourned at 8:07 p.m.