

**CITY OF EDMONDS**  
**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION**  
**May 15, 2013**

The Citizens Economic Development Committee meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Chair Evan Pierce in the Brackett Room, 121 5th Avenue North, Edmonds.

**COMMISSIONERS PRESENT**

Evan Pierce, Chair  
Bruce Witenberg, Vice Chair  
John Dewhirst  
John Eckert  
Kevin Garrett  
Darrol Haug  
Roger Hertrich  
Nathan Proudfoot  
Doug Purcell  
John Rubenkonig  
Gail Sarvis  
Rich Senderoff  
Darlene Stern  
Evelyn Wellington  
Teresa Wippel (arrived 6:15 p.m.)

**COMMISSIONERS ABSENT**

Marc Knauss  
Debbie Matteson

**PLANNING BOARD LIAISON**

Phil Lovell

**ELECTED OFFICIALS PRESENT**

Councilmember Joan Bloom

**STAFF PRESENT**

Stephen Clifton, Community Services/Economic  
Development Director  
Cindi Cruz, Executive Assistant  
Frances Chapin, Cultural Services Manager  
Jeannie Dines, Recorder

**PUBLIC PRESENT**

Council President Lora Petso  
Sally Merck

**1. OPENING REMARKS**

Chair Pierce reported Commissioners Matteson and Wippel have excused absences. He encouraged subgroups to use and submit the reporting forms to him or Vice Chair Bruce Witenberg so they can compile them in a report for distribution.

**2. AMENDMENTS TO AGENDA**

Commissioner Haug requested a discussion regarding the City's email system and other communication issues be added under Miscellaneous.

**3. APPROVAL OF APRIL 17, 2013 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION MINUTES**

**COMMISSIONER PURCELL MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF APRIL 17, 2013.  
COMMISSIONER STERN SECONDED THE MOTION. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**DISCUSSION**

#### **4. SUB-GROUP UPDATES & STATUS**

##### **a. Technology Update**

Commissioner Haug advised of a fiber connection with Averetek, a business application software company, that is very supportive of the community and as well as interested in bringing other tech companies to the City. Bids are going out to connect two additional customers, one in the Walnut area and the other on 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue. Mr. Clifton explained Averetek moved to Edmonds over a year ago from Bothell because they liked Edmonds; they were unaware of the availability of fiber.

Commissioner Senderoff suggested keeping track of the number of new jobs that new businesses or expansions create which may help attract other businesses. Mr. Clifton advised City staff does that and businesses indicate the number of employees on their business license application.

Commissioner Haug reported a second meeting was held with several businesses in the City interested in creating incubator space for start-up, entrepreneurial businesses.

##### **b. Tourism Update**

Commissioner Garrett referred to the Tourism Subcommittee Update form attached to the packet, explaining the subcommittee discussed opportunities to expand marine tourism. These include Port activities and the Port providing information/outreach via their website to Port stakeholders (property owners and businesses within the Port District), boaters, and dry-landers. The subcommittee is seeking the EDC's endorsement to move forward with talking to the Port about the subgroup's findings and suggestions.

Discussion followed regarding informational conversations with the Port to-date, encouraging the Port to utilize social media, adding a festival near Labor Day, the Rotary's Waterfront Festival, intent to make an informal presentation to the Port, the Port's Destination Edmonds program, other incentive programs the Port can offer, attracting food trucks to the Port and/or designating a space at the Port for food trucks.

It was the consensus of the Commission for the Tourism Subcommittee to pursue the matter further and discuss it with the Port.

Commissioner Dewhirst reported the Washington State Travel Alliance's mobile app, Visit WA, has potential for Edmonds. Edmonds is a member of the Alliance but there is no one at the City to create the mobile app. The Alliance suggested utilizing a college intern. Mr. Clifton has provided contact information for interns at Edmonds Community College. There are two primary target markets for Visit WA, 1) those under 45 who are looking for something to do, who use social media on average 120/day, and 2) visitors to Seattle and Boeing tours - Edmonds is strategically located between the two; visitors need to be given a reason to come to Edmonds such as the waterfront, sandy beaches, free parking, dog park, incredible views, trains, ferries, and walkable downtown with restaurants, shopping, etc.

Commissioner Wippel reported on her research regarding Bed & Breakfasts; there are two in Edmonds, one has existed for some time and there is a newer one that has one room. The owner of the newer one indicated the biggest disincentive to opening a B&B was in the past the City's regulations were not friendly toward B&Bs; the regulations were recently changed but word has not gotten out that it is easier now to meet the requirements to open a B&B in Edmonds. The subcommittee discussed the importance of getting the word out that the City welcomes B&Bs. She offered to write a story for My Edmonds News

about existing B&Bs and that the City welcomes B&Bs. She reported the one B&B has been in business 20 years and is very successful; the new one indicated they are booked solid.

Another suggestion was made for a My Edmonds News article; free things to do in Edmonds or doing Edmonds on less than \$20/day.

### **c. Land Use Update – Incentive Zoning, Train Mitigation**

Commissioner Rubenkönig reported the subcommittee continues to collect articles about the train issue. As Port Commissioner Faires mentioned at the last meeting, the issue is not just coal trains but the continued increase in train traffic. He referred to two recent articles:

1. A UW Bothell professor is launching a study regarding the difference between diesel and coal particulates. If sufficient funding can be obtained, the professor plans to install a monitoring station on the Columbia River. Several coal producing states have expressed interest in the study results.
2. A Texas company that was interested in a coal export site in Oregon has abandoned the idea; there now may be more pressure on a new or expanded facility in Washington. (May 9, 2013 Seattle PI)

Commissioner Purcell reported on business incentives that the subcommittee is discussing:

1. Hotel/motel tax waiver – this incentive has deleted as another city indicated it is not effective
2. Qualified Small Bond Issue Sponsorship
3. Multi-unit housing development tax credit
4. Single source limited tax source general obligation bonds

Other concepts the subcommittee is exploring include: a temporary property waiver for a business development zone (used by Andrews, Texas, and Forest Grove, Oregon), historic preservation property tax waiver, and changing the timing of permitting and impact fees. He reported the City has several existing development incentives; a list needs to be developed and distributed to the development community. The next step is forwarding the business incentives to the Planning Board and/or Council.

Mr. Clifton reported Mayor Earling asked the City Clerk, Parks & Recreation, Public Works and Engineering to prepare a matrix comparing Edmonds' fees to other cities' fees. It was suggested the timing of the fees also be investigated. Mr. Stephen reported he met with a Master Builders Association representative who reported developers like working with Edmonds staff but do not like the City's regulations. Discussion followed regarding a "feel-good" newspaper article in the Sunday newspaper about what Edmonds has to offer, marketing Edmonds via social media, and the media's interest in something that is fresh and vibrant.

### **d. Strategic Plan Update**

Commissioner Proudfoot reported the subcommittee discussed who will oversee the Strategic Plan, the EDC next steps, how to assess the best of the 88 Strategic Action Plan topics to show that something is being done, and the EDC being the guides and cheerleaders for Plan.

Mr. Clifton reported any work done by staff will identify the plan action it is related to and how it implements the action. For example, the Council packet for the two ordinances regarding the public market will include reference the plan actions related to public markets. There are many activities already underway that implement strategic plan actions. It has only been one month since the City Council

approved the Strategic Plan; efforts are focused on creating a framework to best implement the plan. Some EDC members have created spreadsheets to track progress on plan actions.

Commissioner Senderoff added the subcommittee also had a lively discussion regarding, 1) plan actions the EDC was specifically identified as a participant, and 2) how the EDC or Strategic Plan Subcommittee will monitor and move plan actions forward. There are more plan actions than the EDC can handle at any one time, and the subcommittee will need to prioritize them based on complexity, time, etc.

Discussion followed regarding a bulletin board/public communication point to illustrate progress on the Strategic Plan, identifying what plan actions the EDC will pursue and who will monitor/measure the overall progress on the Strategic Plan, a governmental body not being the best group to oversee progress on the Strategic Plan, a group of businesses and community members in Chehalis that oversees and continually updates their Strategic Plan, holding a Town Hall meeting to improve communication, the EDC's role in oversight/monitoring/championing the Strategic Plan, including a scoreboard regarding progress on the Strategic Plan in the City's quarterly email newsletter, use of project management software such as Basecamp to monitor progress, the EDC offering input to the Council on the 14 plan actions that the Council is the lead on, the EDC playing a facilitator/encouragement role in moving progress forward, having an independent body with no involvement in implementation monitor and provide a report card on progress, and inviting the people who provided input to the Strategic Plan to be involved in a group to oversee progress.

Vice Chair Witenberg suggest the Strategic Plan subcommittee provide a list of the plan action items that each subgroup needs to discuss and/or rank to Ms. Cruz by the deadline for the next EDC meeting. Commissioner Senderoff suggested Commissioners review the list of plan actions and inform the Strategic Plan subcommittee of specific actions their subcommittee should pursue.

#### **e. Communications & Community Outreach Update**

#### **5. DISCUSSION OF STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN ITEMS TO BE REVIEWED BY EDC FOR DIRECTION AND IMPLEMENTATION**

This item was discussed under 4b.

#### **6. UPDATE ON ROGER BROOKS MEETING (5/13/13) LIMITING OFFICE USE BD1 ZONE**

Mr. Clifton reported on a meeting with the property owners in the BD1. Invitations were sent to over 50 property owners in the zone; 7-8 attended the meeting. He gave a presentation and Roger Brooks discussed the benefits of limiting office uses on the ground floor in the BD1 zone. There has been discussion by EDC and Planning Board members about expanding beyond the BD1 zone; Mr. Brooks agreed it was preferable to start with a demonstration project. None of the property owners objected to the proposal, some were supportive, and others wanted to continue the conversation but seemed to be in favor. Mr. Brooks provided examples such as Ashville, North Carolina, Jackson, Wyoming, and Walnut Creek, and benefits such as increased property values, increased rents, and adding more retail and restaurants.

Chair Pierce recalled one property owners wanted more height in exchange. The intent of the proposal is to incentivize business development to create a vibrant, lively downtown and has little to do with building heights. Mr. Clifton commented if the Council approves the proposal, it will assist him and leasing agents in targeting specific businesses types.

Vice Chair Witenberg relayed the owner of Revelations Yogurt indicated their business is open late and has a considerable amount of traffic. Although the City cannot legislate hours, the property owners can make a coordinated effort to extend hours.

**7. MISCELLANEOUS**

City Email

Commissioner Haug commented use of the City's email is cumbersome and using a separate system makes it difficult to check frequently. He contacted staff with a list of issues and staff is developing an instruction sheet. When he served on another governmental entity, he was told as long as information on personal computers was kept in a separate folder, only those folders were subject to the Public Records Act. Mr. Clifton offered to confer with the City Clerk and City Attorney about folders.

Discussion followed regarding public records requests, purpose of City-issued email addresses to protect EDC members, and concern with the accessibility of City email.

**8. AUDIENCE COMMENTS – None**

**9. ADJOURN**

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:13 p.m.