

PLANNING BOARD MINUTES March 9, 2005

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

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

James Young, Chair
Janice Freeman, Vice Chair
Jim Crim
Virginia Cassutt
John Dewhirst
Judith Works
Don Henderson

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT

Cary Guenther

STAFF PRESENT

Rob Chave, Planning Division Manager
Dave Gebert, City Engineer
Don Fiene, Assistant City Engineer
Brian McIntosh, Parks, Recreation and Cultural
Services Director
Karin Noyes, Recorder

READING/APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Board postponed approval of the February 23, 2005 minutes.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF AGENDA

There were no changes made to the proposed agenda.

AUDIENCE COMMENTS

Jim Underhill, 7410 – 215th Street, said his home is located north of Stevens Hospital and across the street from the High School. Their neighborhood is located in the middle of the Highway 99 Activity Center. He advised that on October 19, 2004, the residents of his neighborhood submitted a letter and petition to the City requesting a change in the zoning of their lots to single-family small lot. He pointed out that this same request has been presented over and over to the City for the past 50 years. They are adamant about getting the City to recognize their properties as a single-family residential neighborhood. He reported that over the past year, six families with children have moved into their neighborhood, and others have invested significant funds to improve their homes. He said that when he moved into his home several years ago, the zoning designation was mixed-use. However, no mixed-use development has occurred, and the properties remain single-family residential.

Mr. Underhill expressed his concern that the proposed new Comprehensive Plan gets even further away from the desires of the neighborhood by designating the properties in their neighborhood as mixed-use commercial. This makes their neighborhood a prime target for a developer to purchase land and construct a commercial facility. He asked the Board to provide direction to the neighborhood as to how they can go through the necessary process to ensure that their properties remain single-family. They would like the properties to be rezoned to single-family so they could be granted the same extension of privacy that the City grants to other single-family neighborhoods.

Chair Young summarized that while single-family development is an allowed use in the existing zoning designation, the property owners do not feel that the current zoning is compatible with what the neighborhood has been and will continued to

be used for. Again, Mr. Underhill pointed out that anyone who wanted to take advantage of the current zoning would have done so by now, and they would like the zoning designation to comply with that fact.

Mr. Chave reminded the Board that, at some point later in the year, they would be reviewing the mixed-use zoning around the hospital. He said he relayed to Mr. Underhill that, absent the neighborhood submitting their own application for a Comprehensive Plan amendment and rezone, the other avenue would be to present their request at the same time the Board is reviewing the entire mixed-use area. He noted that this review process would include public hearings, and the property owners would have ample opportunity to make their desires known.

PUBLIC HEARING ON EDMONDS SKATE PARK GROUP PROPOSAL TO LOCATE A SKATE PARK AT THE CIVIC CENTER PLAYFIELDS (FILE NUMBER CDC-05-29)

Because the Board received a high volume of written correspondence regarding the Skate Park Proposal, they took a 10-minute recess to read through the information prior to starting the public hearing.

Brian McIntosh, Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Director, said he has had the pleasure to work with the Skate Park Group since it was formed in the Spring of 2004 to investigate and come up with ideas for locating a skate park in the downtown Edmonds area. He reminded the Board that the Skate Park Group provided their initial report to the Board in January and requested that they be allowed to move to the next step in the process, which is a public hearing on the proposal. He said he has spoken with numerous citizens over the past few weeks regarding the project, and he appreciates their comments and ideas, as well. He reiterated that the project is still just a proposal, and no final decisions have been made.

Mr. McIntosh explained that the skate park proposal came about through impetus from the Edmonds Police Foundation, who donated funding to the City after the Lynndale Skate Park had been constructed and it became apparent that many of the beginning skaters were being squeezed out. He met with the Foundation on March 3, 2004 to discuss the possibility of developing a skate park in the downtown area. Shortly after, an ad hoc group of youth skaters, parents, members of the Police Foundation, police officers and other citizens was formed. They held their first meeting on May 17th. He turned the time over to the Skate Park Group to present their proposed project.

Kal Taylor said she is a mother of skateboarders. She said there are many benefits to having a skate park in Edmonds. In addition to skateboarding being a popular and healthy sport, skate parks are a safe place for kids to play. However, at this time there is a lack of facilities in the immediate area, with Lynndale being the closest.

Ben Pruitt pointed out that the growth of skateboarding continues to increase at an exponential rate. About 11.6 million people between the ages of 6 and 18 were skateboarding in the year 2000, and by 2003 the number grew to 13 million. Researchers expect 15 million skateboarders by 2005. As the number of skateboarders increases, so does the need for facilities to accommodate the sport. He advised that the Skate Park Association of the USA has stated that skateboarding is the third most popular sport in the nation for 6 to 18 year olds, behind only basketball and soccer. The fact is that the sport of skateboarding is growing, and at the core of this popular sport are energetic young kids who now surpass the number of Little League Baseball players.

Aaron Taylor continued the presentation by pointing out that aspiring young riders are usually drawn more to the excitement than the fitness benefits, but experts say that skateboarding does provide a great workout. It is cardiovascular and many trainers say it's better than running. In addition, balancing and timing is key, and the sport develops one's sense of direction and agility. He said that while learning to skateboard requires patience and perseverance, the rewards are many. For example, kids are always progressing, and they are always learning something new. The sport is goal oriented, and is a no-cut sport. Kids see tricks and they want to replicate them. The closer they get to performing the tricks, the more the mystery is solved and the more excited they get. It is a great thing for kids to do. The trend also means that kids spend a lot less time in front of the television and on video games and more time being active. Skateboarding actually gets them outside doing something physical, and that is good.

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Kal Taylor advised that the City adopted the 40 Developmental Assets Model in their Comprehensive Plan as a goal for youth. She pointed out that a skate park would address the following assets:

- **Caring Neighborhood:**
- **Community Values Youth:** The development of a skate park would send the message that adults in the community value youth.
- **Safety:** By enhancing support for something kids enjoy, the City can help young people feel safe at home, at school and in the neighborhood.
- **Neighborhood Boundaries:** Neighbors can take responsibility for monitoring young people's behavior by identifying a place for kids.
- **Adult Role Models:** Parents and other adults would be present at the park to provide a model for positive, responsible behavior.
- **Youth Programs:** A skate park would provide a safe place for kids to spend their time.
- **Interpersonal Competence:** A skate park would provide a place for young people to develop friendship skills.
- **Self Esteem**
- **Sense of Purpose**
- **Positive View of Personal Future**

David Boubel explained that safety risk is another issue to touch upon while discussing the skate park. He said that according to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, there are fewer skateboarding injuries per capita than other popular sports such as baseball, soccer or snowboarding. In comparison, kids under the age of 15 are three times more likely to suffer a bicycle injury and twice as likely to be injured on playground equipment. In addition, he pointed out that active skate park use yields more positive activities in all areas of the park. With such a young population utilizing skate facilities, it makes sense that by providing additional facilities, communities can provide safe places for kids to go and take part in constructive activities. Also, by encouraging the use of helmets and other safety equipment, the City can send a message that they care and that they want kids to be safe. As other communities have done, the City can develop programs that reward kids who wear helmets. A good example of this is in Poulsbo where police officers patrol the skate park and give kids who are wearing helmets a coupon for a free sandwich courtesy of Subway. He further pointed out that this would not only encourage the use of helmets, but it would also create a bond between skateboarders and police officers, and this foundation could go a long way towards kids making the right choices in life. He concluded his remarks by pointing out that the Recreation Immunity Act protects cities from liability for skateboarding accidents.

Dylan Packard advised that according to skate park industry statistics, in 2002 there were approximately 1,000 skate parks in the United States, and there are as many as 2,000 more parks projected to be built by the end of 2004. According to the Skate Park Association, 168 communities in the United States have currently posted a want, need or urgency for skate park development in their area. This is just one good example of the popularity of skate parks. He further stated that as the popularity of skateboarding continues to increase, the need for skate parks in neighborhood where kids live also increases. At this time, kids living in or around the downtown Edmonds area have to be driven or ride a bus or ferry to get to a skate park. For this reason, the likelihood of kids skating on the streets of Edmonds has increased. He emphasized that a lot of kids are looking for alternative forms of recreation, and skateboarding is a way for them to express their creativity. He suggested that Edmonds could best support its kids and families by providing a skate park right here in the community.

Mr. Packard reviewed slides of nearby skateboard parks that have been constructed in neighboring communities such as Bothell, Everett, Lynnwood/Edmonds, Marysville, Mill Creek, Monroe, Shoreline, Tukwila and Woodinville.

Alex Witenberg explained that when the group first started meeting, they asked the City's crime prevention officer to email other cities in order to learn more about the positive and negative impacts of skate parks based on location. These responses were used to develop the following site selection criteria:

- Natural visibility
- Easily accessible by sidewalk or bus lines
- Good neighborhood response and the proximity to residents

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- Adequate parking or drop off areas
- Minimal impact to the active uses already located in the area
- Natural buffers for noise
- Close proximity to services such as food and drink, restrooms and telephone
- Easy access for skaters to get in and out.
- Easy access for police and fire

Mr. Witenberg advised that after reviewing each of the potential sites based on the above criteria, the work group identified the Edmonds Civic Center as the preferred location for the skate park. He pointed out that this site would be easy to get to, and it is located close to fire and police services. The visibility of the site is good, and a sanican and the facilities at the Boys and Girls Club could provide restroom facilities. It is located close to businesses that provide food and beverages, and because of its location near the Boys and Girls Club, it could attract new skaters. The site provides an open and wide area, and because it is visible to people passing by, it is an attractive location from a parent's standpoint.

Ms. Taylor concluded the presentation by pointing out that the Civic Center location would encourage further development of this popular and healthy sport, provide a safe place for kids to skate and address the lack of facilities in the area

Board Member Dewhirst said he is perplexed at to why the skate park proposal is before the Board as a public hearing when no conditional use permit or grading permit would be required. He questioned what type of action the Board is expected to take on the proposal after the public hearing. Mr. McIntosh pointed out that no design has been put forth for the skate park. The public hearing is regarding the location of the proposed facility. They would not complete any design or permit work until after the location has been selected. Board Member Dewhirst pointed out that the Board would not typically hold a location hearing for any other type of recreational facility that is proposed for one of the City's park spaces. He suggested that the public hearing falls outside of any of the Board's procedures or rules. If public hearings on park facilities are going to occur on a regular basis, the Board should have a better understanding of the process.

Mr. McIntosh explained that because a skate facility would be a unique use in a park, it is important that everyone have an opportunity to voice comments and concerns. Board Member Dewhirst questioned if the Board held the same type of review and public hearing for the Yost Park Pool. Again, he expressed his concern that the public hearing process could end up setting a very bad precedent.

Board Member Works asked if the skate park would be supervised and if there would be set hours of operation. Mr. McIntosh answered that, generally, skate parks are not supervised. They are the same type of amenity as a drop-in basketball court at a neighborhood park. He explained that, in the State of Washington, the Recreational Immunity Act includes skateboard parks, so this provides protection for cities and other government agencies. If the site were supervised or if the City were to charge a fee to use the facility, the Act would not provide the same level of protection. Therefore, skate parks in most communities are self-policed. The City would maintain the facility and check on it to make sure there are no problems. He noted that the proposed location is close to the police station, and the police officers would make their presence known at the park. He said the hours of operation for the park would likely be from 9 a.m. until sunset.

Board Member Young inquired if the facility would have lighting. Mr. McIntosh answered that there could be security lights installed around the site, but no lighting would be provided to allow the facility to be used after dark.

Board Member Cassutt questioned if the City would be responsible for keeping the skate park clean. Mr. McIntosh said the City has a policy to take care of issues such as graffiti within a 24-hour time period.

Board Member Freeman inquired if the City has plans to monitor the park to ensure no one is using it after the posted hours. Mr. McIntosh answered that anyone found in the skate park beyond the posted hours would be considered a trespasser. He said the area would be fenced off for security, but because the facility would be open seven days per week, there would not be a park employee available to lock and unlock the gate each day. Signs would be posted around the facility to make sure everyone understands the hours of operation.

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Chair Young asked why the Skate Park Group feels it is so important to have a facility in the downtown area as opposed to somewhere else in the City. Mr. McIntosh said the City made a commitment to the youth to provide a facility in the downtown area. Right now, the kids living in the bowl area have to travel quite a distance to get to any other skate park in the area. The skate park in downtown Edmonds would be designed for kids who do not drive. The more experienced skaters would not be interested in the park since it would be designed for beginners between the ages of 6 and 14. The older kids would travel to the other facilities that provide more challenging features. He pointed out that as soon as the Lynndale Skate Park opened, the younger and less experienced skaters were squeezed out.

Chair Young asked if an evaluation of the noise impacts associated with the skate park had been completed. He noted that several of the written comments were related to noise. He questioned how the noise level of the proposed skate park would compare to the noise associated with a soccer or baseball game or a tennis court. Mr. McIntosh said the Skate Park Group reviewed literature that supports the level of noise as being comparable to that of a soccer or basketball game. Because the facility would be located in a high activity area, the noise would blend in at the same level as the other activities that take place in the park throughout the day.

Board Member Dewhirst inquired if any measurements have been done from the proposed location to the peripheral boundaries of the park. Mr. McIntosh answered that they have not taken these measurements.

Board Member Freeman inquired if the Skate Park Group has discussed the option of installing a sound barrier. Mr. McIntosh said a number of methods could be used to mitigate noise such as berms, landscaping, acoustical fencing, etc. He also pointed out that the type of pieces that would be placed in the facility are now being designed to be less noisy. While the features, themselves, would not be constructed of concrete, the pad that they are placed on would be made of smooth concrete. There would be a certain level of sound as the skaters transfer from the pieces to the concrete surface.

Chair Young asked if the City contemplates that the facility would be used for skateboard competitions that draw youth from throughout the region. Mr. McIntosh said the modulated park that is being proposed would have a section set aside for real beginner skaters. The idea would be to progress to the higher and more challenging ramps. But once the skaters get to a certain level (intermediate and beyond), they would likely move to a facility that provides more challenging opportunities. The proposed park would not likely be a site for competitions. However, there could be opportunities to provide instruction opportunities.

Chair Young inquired about the anticipated peak usage at the facility at any given time. Mr. McIntosh said the Skate Park Group has not investigated these numbers, but the usage would depend on how many features are put in the facility. There are usually about eight to ten skaters at the Lynndale park at any given time, and about eight to ten spectators or people waiting to skate

To address Board Member Dewhirst's concerns, Chair Young pointed out that this situation is similar to the traffic circulation proposal for City Park. Since the Planning Board is also the City's acting Parks Board, they have a responsibility to gather information and advise the City Council and staff on the matter.

Chair Young opened the public hearing. He pointed out that the Board received written comment letters from David Thiele, Carol Green, Brian Berry, Elizabeth Lundstrom, Berry Ehrlich, Emily Ehrlick, Tracy Zickuhr, Lorna Dunsdon and Phillip Butler.

David Thiele, 610 Daley Street, said his condominium looks out onto the Civic Center Playfield, and he is opposed to the City's proposal to construct a skate park in this location. He said that much of the Skate Park Group's presentation was related to the benefits of skateboarding as a recreational activity, but that is not the issue before the Board at this time. The issue is whether the proposed location for the skate park is appropriate, given the fact that it would become a noise polluter in a park that is surrounded by a densely populated residential area. He suggested the facility should be located in another area of the City, which has the natural features necessary to absorb the sound associated with the skateboarding use.

Mr. Thiele said his perception of the facts is much different than that of the Skate Park Group. He said he recently visited the Lynndale Park on a warm Sunday afternoon and found that the majority of the skaters appear to be in the same age group

as those who spoke in favor of the Civic Center location. They were not being squeezed out of the existing City skate park. There were very few older youth in attendance. Therefore, he questioned the rationale of opening a skate park at the Civic Center Playfield on the basis that the younger kids have been squeezed out of the Lynndale facility.

With regard to the issue of noise pollution, Mr. Thiele said he has several years of experience listening to the sounds of soccer, baseball, basketball and tennis at the Civic Center Playfield, and those sounds are tolerable and do not constitute a noise nuisance. However a skate park would be a particularly harsh noise polluter. The whole purpose of the park would be for the kids to go up the ramps, into the air, and then come crashing down onto the concrete pad. This activity produces a harsh, sharp sound that carries quite far and is very different in kind to the other sports that take place at the playfield. He concluded that a skate park facility would significantly multiply the noise pollution problem in the park.

Mr. Thiele pointed out that a long-established high-density residential area surrounds the Civic Center Playfield. Along the four streets that border the playfield, there are 56 homes (42 condos and apartment units and 14 single-family units). There are also two churches, one on the corner of Sixth and Bell Street and one on the corner of 7th and Daley Street. He expressed his belief that the harsh noise impacts of the proposed skate park facility would adversely impact the well-established neighborhood. In fact, he suggested that noise pollution should disqualify the Civic Center Playfield as a potential site for the skate park.

Mr. Thiele explained that the Civic Center Playfield is located at the bottom of the bowl, with hills rising around it on three sides. It would be very enticing for the skaters to ride their boards down the streets in order to get to the new skate park since it would be all downhill. Some of the City's busiest streets (5th Avenue and Main Street) would only be 1½ blocks away from the skate park, and he would expect that skaters would use these heavily traveled arterials, which would create a traffic hazard in the downtown. As is common for youth bicyclists, many of the skaters would blow through the stop signs, thus creating the possibility of a real tragedy occurring in the downtown.

Next, Mr. Thiele referred to the methodology that was used by the Skate Park Group to select a site for the new facility. He suggested that their locational analysis was flawed, and a two-step procedure should have been used. The first step should have been to recognize that the facility would be noise producing. Selection should have been limited to only those sites where the noise would not be a nuisance to the surrounding properties. The next step in the selection process should have been to apply the other criteria to the remaining sites. However, the methodology used by the Skate Park Group gave one point, either pro or con, for each of the factors identified on their list. The fundamental factor of noise impact was not given any greater consideration than any of the other less relevant factors such as restrooms, places to eat, etc.

Mr. Thiele asked that the Planning Board find the Civic Center Playfield to be an unsuitable site for the new skate park. The Board should review the other sites that would be more suitable for the use because of natural sound barriers, etc. He also suggested that the City expand their search for a site to include areas with the City that are outside of the bowl area. No matter where the facility is located, kids would have to travel from other parts of the City to use it. Therefore, he concluded that there would be no reason to tie the site to the downtown.

Berry Ehrlich, 628 Daley Street, said his condominium overlooks the Civic Center Playfield, also. He said that although he wrote a letter to the Board regarding his concerns, he also wanted to bring up a few additional points. He pointed out that the Edmonds bowl has the lowest elevation in the City. He would suspect that if the skate park were located at the Civic Center Playfield, youth would skateboard down the major streets to get to the park. People currently living on these streets have indicated that the skateboarders that go past their homes are loud. If a skate park were constructed at the Civic Center Playfield, it would act as a magnet to draw kids to the downtown. He said that while he is a firm supporter of youth activities, he is concerned about the proposed location. When the kids leave the park to go and get snacks, they will likely use their skateboards for transportation, and this would create a nuisance in the downtown, as well. He also noted that since the Boys and Girls Club closes at 3 p.m. each day and all day on Sunday, their restroom facilities would not be available for the skate park users a great deal of the time. The only restroom facility would be the sanican. He summarized that he felt the City could find a better location for the skate park such as the Meadowdale Athletic Complex or a second park at the Lynndale location.

Emily Ehrlich, 628 Daley Street, referred to the chart that was prepared by the Skate Park Group to rank the nine potential sites. She suggested that the Board reject many of the arguments the group offered regarding the alternative sites. For example, the Skate Park Group cited that the Edmonds Elementary site would be unsuitable because there are kids in school during the day. However, she felt this would be a positive factor since the park would be designed to serve that age level of kids. While the group also indicated that there would be no natural visibility at the Edmonds Elementary School site, there is a wide area of open fields in which the skate park could be located. She questioned the validity of the group's statement that there would be no police or fire access at this site. Since it is used for a school, there must be adequate emergency access opportunities. She concluded that the group's reasons for not supporting the Edmonds Elementary School location are fluff.

Ms. Ehrlich said the Skate Park Group also indicated several negative aspects associated with the treatment plant site. One of their major reservations was that there was no concrete pad available for the facility. However, she noted that a pad would also have to be constructed at the Civic Center Playfield to accommodate the new facility. The group indicated that City Park would not be a good location because of poor visibility. Since the berms in City Park could act as a sound barrier, they should be considered a positive rather than a negative. Ms. Ehrlich pointed out that the group indicated that the 7th and Elm Street site would be unsuitable because it is surrounded by too many residential homes. But as pointed out by Mr. Thiele, there are numerous residential homes surrounding the Civic Center Playfield, as well. The group also purports that no parking would be available at the 7th and Elm Street site, but this is not the only City block where there is no parking available on the street. The youth could either walk to the park or find a parking space further away. In addition, there is a major bus stop at 5th and Elm Street that could serve this site. She concluded that many of the group's conclusions on each of the nine potential sites are inaccurate.

Ms. Ehrlich pointed out that the 40 Development Assets document referenced by Mr. McIntosh and Ms. Taylor indicates that a caring neighborhood is the key to developing projects for young people. She said she felt she could safely say from the letters and testimony presented by the citizens, that a caring neighborhood would not be among the attributes the skateboarders would enjoy at the Civic Center Playfield.

Jim Underhill, 7410 – 215th Street, suggested that if one were to read the history of Edmonds, they would find that, decade after decade, the youth have approached City leadership with the request for youth facilities and opportunities. It is clear that the City has tried to respond, but has been pushed back by the adults of the community. He said he is surprised at the selective views that have been expressed about the impacts skateboarding would have on the community, while people have neglected to talk about the Saturday Market or the Taste of Edmonds that take place at or near the Civic Center Playfield during the summer months. It appears that people have learned to deal with the noise and other impacts associated with these two events. He pointed out that other communities have learned to accommodate skate parks.

Mr. Underhill congratulated the youth for doing a good job of coming up with appropriate plans. He asked that the Board give consideration to the research the youth completed and their willingness to prepare and present their best consideration of a site that would best serve the community. As they went through the entire process, they tried to be very sensitive to the needs of the community of which they are a part.

Kendall Berry, 610 Daley Street, said the proposed skate park would be located below her window. She thanked the youth for all of their hard work and said she was impressed with their presentation. She said she believes skateboarding is a good activity that promotes good health, but she asked that the Board not just consider the best interest of this one group over the interest of the community. While the youth are the future of Edmonds, the Board should keep in mind that not everyone would choose skateboarding as an activity at all times of the day or night. She agreed that residents living around the Civic Center Playfield have learned to accommodate the noise from the Taste of Edmonds, sporting events and other community events. However, they have significant concerns about the proposed skate park. She suggested that the City find another place that would work for everyone in the community.

M. J. Griffeth, 610 Daley Street, said that when he heard about the proposal to construct a skate park at the Civic Center Playfield, he took the opportunity to visit skate park facilities in Woodinville and in Wenatchee. He pointed out that the Woodinville Skate Park is located between the freeway and a park-and-ride lot, and there are no negative impacts to residential property owners. In Wenatchee the skate park is located between a middle school and a baseball field. Again, the

negative impact to residential neighborhoods would be minimized. The location being proposed by the City of Edmonds is close to a residential neighborhood. He also pointed out that the Civic Center Playfield property has drainage problems during heavy rains. He concluded by suggesting the City find another location for the skate park by conducting a correct impact analysis that considers the impacts to the nearby neighborhoods.

Brian Berry, 610 Daley Street, said that although the Skate Park Group's presentation extolled the many benefits the project would have on the youth of the community, it is important to consider the impacts the proposal would have on the people who live around the park. He said he does not believe the Civic Center Playfield is the correct location for a skate park. He asked if the City has completed a study of the impacts the proposal would have on the surrounding neighborhood. The City cannot just address the needs of the youth while ignoring the community that would be impacted by the skate park. He said he is supportive of the City's desire to construct a skate park in Edmonds, but it should be built in a location that would have fewer negative impacts to the surrounding residential properties.

Don Stay, 715 Sprague Street, said he has been reasonably active in the community over the years. He served on the Planning and Parks Board, as well as the Edmonds Port Commission. He pointed out that there is a lot of activity on the playfield now, and he encourages this use. However, he said he is opposed to the proposed plan to enhance the use by creating a skate park. He said he finds no fault with the team sporting events that take place at the Civic Center Playfield because they are both healthy and necessary for the community. While skateboarding is a good recreational sport, the Civic Center Playfield is the wrong location despite the value it would have for the youth.

Nancy McDonald, President of the Edmonds Police Foundation, said the Foundation has had an interest in helping the City create an additional skate park for quite some time. It was six years ago this spring that the Foundation agreed that there was a need in the community for a skate park, and they donated \$4,500 as seed money. She said the Foundation is concerned about the youth of the area, as well as the safety of the entire community. She said she has heard from citizens about encounters they have had on the streets and parking lots with skateboarders who are going very fast. The Foundation's hope is that a skate park would provide a safe place for the youth so they no longer have to use the sidewalks and parking lots. This would, in turn, improve safety for the entire community.

Ms. McDonald explained that the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Department and the Skate Park Group have worked hard to keep the Foundation up to date on their progress, and the Foundation would continue to support their efforts on behalf of the youth and the entire community. She reported that she recently spoke with a representative from the United States Skateboarding Association. According to a recent poll, there are about 12.5 million skateboarders now, which is an increase of more than 100 percent since 1995. They expect the sport to continue to grow at a rapid pace in future years. She congratulated the youth for doing such a great job to prepare and present their plan to the community.

Don Krieman, 24006 – 95th Place West, said he was impressed by both the youth presentation and the community comments. He suggested that when reviewing the site alternatives, one of the most important aspects should be the site's proximity to police service. The Civic Center Playfield is located very close to the Police Department, which would help to ensure safety. He pointed out that the playfield has been a park for longer than most of the residential property owners have owned their homes. The residents knew the location of the park when they purchased their homes. He said he supports the proposed location because the kids would be safe. If the noise is too great, the police who are right next door could take care of the problem. He took exception to citizen comments that the youth would skateboard down the streets and sidewalks to get to the new skate park. Skateboarding is not allowed on the streets and sidewalks in the downtown area. He said he bicycles five days a week, and often in the downtown area. He has never seen more than three or four skateboards in a single day. He said the citizens should not assume the youth would break the law. He concluded by stating that if the kids who participated in the presentation or indicative of the type of youth who would use the park, the neighbors should be pleased. The kids worked hard on the project. He said he understands that adults like to enjoy nice quiet neighborhoods, but he questioned if they should ask the kids to do the same. He pointed out that there are not very many recreational opportunities in downtown Edmonds for the youth, and a skate park would provide a place for them to get their energy out.

Bruce Witenberg, 8725 Madronna Lane, pointed out that what sets this project apart from the many others the Board has reviewed is that it has been planned and presented primarily by the youth of the community. During his two terms on the Planning Board, he cannot recall a time when the youth of the community worked so hard on a project and made a

presentation to the Board, and they deserve credit for their hard work. He said many citizens are aware of the problem of kids skating in downtown Edmonds because there is no skate park. During the last ten months, he said he has had the pleasure of working with the Skate Park Group as a liaison from the Edmonds Police Foundation, with support from the Police Department, the Parks Department and other citizens in the community. Throughout this process, the youth have learned how an idea can develop into what they hope will become a reality for them. They have also received a hands-on lesson about how a project winds its way through City government.

Mr. Witenberg said that while the kids are likely disappointed with many of the comments that were received, he is confident they will approach the comments with the same resolve and enthusiasm they have demonstrated over the past ten months. He is confident that the kids will attempt to mitigate resolutions for the issues that have been raised. He thanked the citizens who provided constructive comments and suggestions. But he suggested that those who condemned the concept using innuendo and generalities about skateboarders did a disservice to the youth of the community. He asked that the Board and community support the dedication and commitment of the youth and work with them in a positive and constructive manner to make the skate park a reality.

THE PUBLIC PORTION OF THE HEARING WAS CLOSED.

Board Member Henderson pointed out that sound seems to be a major issue with the surrounding property owners. He inquired if the Parks Department Staff had ever visited the Lynndale Skate Park with a decibel reader to record the noise level. This type of recording could be played back at the proposed site to determine the noise impacts the new skate park would have on the surrounding properties. He suggested that this would be a logical next step. Mr. McIntosh said staff has not taken a sound reading at the Lynndale Skate Park. He suggested that a better choice would be to measure the decibel readings at a modular skate park that is similar to the one being proposed.

Board Member Crim pointed out that, according to data collected from the National Skateboarding Association, the noise level of a skate park would be fundamentally the same as the noise created by other recreational activities such as soccer, basketball and tennis. He emphasized that national organizations such as this one are typically very careful about making these statements, and they likely have the data to support their claim. He applauded the youth who worked so hard to put together a well thought out plan and proposal. He suggested that the community does them a disservice when they criticize their proposal without hard facts to support their claims.

Chair Young agreed that the youth did a great job of putting their proposal together. They have shown the need for the skate park and that it is a great idea for the community. The question is whether or not the Civic Center Playfield is the appropriate site for the facility. He suggested that the next step in the process would likely involve another public hearing. He said it would be interesting to hear how the other communities referenced in the group's presentation have reacted to their skate parks. In addition, he agreed with Board Member Henderson's suggestion that decibel readings be taken and played back on the proposed site to determine if the noise impact would be significant. He also agreed with Board Member Crim that the Board and community should deal with the facts and not what they think might happen. If it can be demonstrated that noise would not be an issue, they need facts and experiences from other communities to support that claim.

Board Member Dewhirst said he would like to see a site plan for the Civic Center Playfield that identifies the proposed location of the skate park and the distance between the proposed skate park and the various edges of the park. Personally, he felt the issue boils down to whether or not the noise would be significant or if it could be mitigated. He said the Civic Center Playfield could be a good location for the skate park because it is across the street from the Police Department and is centrally located to serve a wider area of youth. The ambient noise level that currently exists at the Civic Center Playfield is probably no different than any other park in the area, given the location of the Police and Fire Departments and the team sports that take place on the site. The existing noise level would probably act as a good buffer, itself. However, he agreed that further research on noise impacts should be conducted.

Board Member Works asked that the Skate Park Group offer ideas for mitigating the noise impacts associated with the proposed skate park.

The Board took a ten-minute recess at 8:50 p.m.

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BRIEFING OF EDMONDS SCHOOL DISTRICT #15 CAPITAL FACILITIES PLAN (CFP) UPDATE

Mark Johnson, Edmonds School District Planning and Property Management Specialist, 9003 Olympic View Drive, provided a brief overview of the Edmonds School District's Capital Facilities Plan (CFP). He said that very few changes have been made to the document since the City approved it two years ago. He advised that the district is the largest in Snohomish County, which covers 36 square miles of land and serves a student population of 20,175. He explained that the CFP is a planning document that is required by the Growth Management Act. Its objective is to forecast future capacity and facility needs and articulate a facility and financial plan to address the future needs.

Mr. Johnson said the Edmonds School District does not qualify for funding from mitigation fees because they are experiencing a downward trend in their student enrollment, and they have adequate capacity in their existing facilities. However, the district is still recommending that cities within their boundaries adopt a school mitigation ordinance in the event that it would become necessary in the future.

Mr. Johnson provided a graph depicting the downward trend of enrollment for the Edmonds School District. He noted that although Snohomish County projects an increase in student enrollment in the next six years, the Edmonds School District's enrollment has and will continue to move downward. He pointed out that while Snohomish County projects that the Edmonds School District would have a student population of 23,085 by the year 2014, the District believes the actual number of students would be about 17,000. The District's forecast is similar to that of the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction. He concluded that the projected student enrollment demonstrates enough capacity for the next several years to come since enrollment is turning downward.

Board Member Dewhirst asked if the District has any plans to surplus or sell any of their school properties given the significant downward trend in enrollment. He said he has always felt schools were underutilized as a community asset, and he questioned how the City and the District could come up with a plan to utilize the schools, particularly those that are not needed by the District, as community facilities. He said he has been part of a regional design effort in Puget Sound, and the role of schools in the future has entered into the discussions. While he doesn't expect an answer right now, the concept is definitely something the District and City should work to encourage. He felt this effort could provide interesting opportunities in the future. Mr. Johnson advised that the Edmonds School District has interlocal agreements with various jurisdictions regarding the community's use of existing school facilities. He said the District is aware of the opportunities for interacting with the local cities to more effectively use the community assets.

Chair Young noted that the District encourages municipalities in which they operate to establish a mitigation ordinance, even though they cannot utilize the concept this time. He questioned how this type of ordinance would benefit the District right now since enrollment in the Edmonds area is static. Mr. Johnson said the District would like cities to adopt an ordinance to address long-standing issue in areas where infrastructures need to be improved. They would like to receive funding for these projects from new development.

Chair Young said that even though the District does not have a need for additional facilities at this time, perhaps it would be possible for the City to implement a mitigation ordinance to help them improve and update the existing facilities. Mr. Johnson said he does not have expertise regarding mitigation ordinances. He asked that the Board's questions regarding this concept be postponed until the District presents their CFP at a future public hearing. Chair Young pointed out that most of the schools in Edmonds have been remodeled and appear to be operating at or slightly below capacity, so there is room for growth in student enrollment. If the Board decides to make a mitigation ordinance to the City Council, he would like more information to support the concept. He asked that the District representatives be prepared to address their intentions behind asking cities to adopt mitigation ordinances. Since no new facilities are needed, perhaps the mitigation fees could be used for sidewalk improvements or other amenities that support the school or the community. He pointed out that, generally, mitigation fees are associated with rapidly growing communities.

Mr. Chave explained that the City's position has been that impact fees cannot be used to take care of existing deficiencies. So using impact fees to build sidewalks in areas where they have not been adequately constructed in the past would not be

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appropriate. Since Edmonds is built out, there would be significant limitations on what mitigation fees could be collected and used for. Chair Young agreed with Mr. Chave's explanation. However, he suggested that it would still be a good idea for the City to work with the District to determine if there is a way to make impact fees work in the future. He asked the District to present their ideas, as well.

BRIEFING OF CITY OF EDMONDS CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN (CIP) UPDATE FOR 2005-2010

Mr. Fiene explained that the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) is intended to be the City's long-range planning tool and spending blueprint. It outlines the City's resources and how future funds would be spent. He advised that the CIP includes 11 different funds, and a spreadsheet was prepared for each one showing the projects and cash balances on a year-by-year basis. In addition, the City staff has developed a CIP Project Description Book, which provides a description for each of the major projects and funds. He briefly reviewed each of the following funds:

- **Fund 112 – Combined Street Construction Improvements:** Sources for this fund come from the motor vehicle tax, federal and state transportation grants and traffic impact fees. He pointed out that passage of Initiative I-776 eliminated the State's ability to collect vehicle registration fees. Without these fees, the City's overlay program has been changed from a 38-year program to a 70-year program. The City lost about 46 percent of their resources in this fund, and heavy cuts have had to be made. He noted that although other cities in the State have faced this same type of problem, their dilemma is not so serious, and they are able to provide an overlay cycle of 20 to 30 years.

Mr. Fiene explained that at the 2004 City Council Retreat, staff approached the City Council with the dilemma and presented their assumption of what would be needed for roadway stabilization projects, walkway needs, signal light and intersection improvements, roadway capacity improvements, traffic calming, and an overlay cycle of between 20 and 40 years. The identified program need was compared to the available funds, and it was determined that \$750,000 would be required to make up the difference. He said the staff also developed a local financial plan that was offered as a decision packet in the 2005 budget, but it was not adopted by the City Council.

Mr. Fiene noted that the City of Edmonds gets zero funds from their general fund budget, while the State average is about 69 percent. That is why the City of Edmonds has a bigger problem than most other cities in the State. He reported that the State is looking at several options to aid cities. Street utilities are one option being considered but would likely be determined unconstitutional. Other options include increasing the interlocal gas tax, implementing new registration fees, and voter initiatives.

Mr. Fiene said one of the significant projects being funded by the 112 Fund and largely by State grants is the 220th Street Project, which will involve walkways, bicycle pathways, turn pockets, etc. This project is scheduled to occur in 2005.

- **Fund 113 – Multimodal Transportation:** This project includes the relocation of the ferry terminal to the Point Edwards site to link ferries, busses and trains in the same location.
- **Fund 116 – Buildings and Maintenance:** This fund was heavily impacted by the passage of I-697 and I-747. The funds for projects in this account come from the General Fund and have been cut by about 44 percent. This shortfall was also discussed at the City Council's 2004 retreat, but no resolution was reached.
- **Fund 125 – Parks, Open Space, Recreation, Beautification:** The major sources of funding for this account include the real estate excise tax, State grants, and contributions from developers.
- **Fund 126 – Special Capital Purchase and Acquisition:** Funds for these projects come from the real estate excise tax.
- **Fund 412 – Combined Utility Construction Improvement (water projects, drainage projects, sewer projects, treatment plant):** The utility funds are doing much better than most of the other City funds. He noted that the projects found in the drainage fund are all identified in the 2003 Stormwater Maintenance Master Plan. The sewer projects are identified in the 2000 Stormwater Master Plan that will be updated in 2006. Mr. Fiene reported that utility rates were

closely reviewed in a recent study. Staff anticipates a slight increase in stormwater rates, but the other utility rates should remain as they currently are.

In conclusion, Mr. Fiene summarized that many of the City's transportation projects had to be cancelled or delayed as a result of I-776. The building maintenance fund has also suffered. But the other funds appear to be meeting the City's minimum needs at this time. He advised that a public hearing on the proposed CIP is scheduled for the March 23rd Planning Board Meeting. The City Council would hold the final hearing and take action at their April 5th meeting.

Board Member Works inquired if the City has any plans to work on downtown parking improvements. Mr. Fiene answered that the City Council initiated this item, and staff has recently developed a capital project description that could be presented to the Board at their next meeting.

Board Member Works noted that the CIP includes plans to acquire property in the Meadowdale Heights area. Mr. Fiene clarified that this would be acquisition of park area in the Meadowdale area. He recalled that this acquisition has been identified in the Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan for a number of years. Mr. McIntosh further explained that no specific site has been selected for the acquisition, but a need has been identified for a park to serve the population living in the area. Mr. McIntosh added that the City also has a long-standing policy to purchase tideland properties when they become available.

Board Member Dewhirst recalled that a few meetings ago, there was a plea from citizens for the City to consider the option of purchasing the old Woodway Elementary School Site. He noted that the proposed CIP would set aside \$1.2 for this purpose, and he questioned where this funding would come from. Mr. McIntosh replied that the money has been identified in the CIP for several years for this specific purchase, but the District has still not decided the future of the site. It is currently one of the ten sites the District is considering for surplus with the intent of selling. He said that, at this time, the City hasn't had the opportunity to review an appraisal of the property, and the District does not have a completed plan as to what they are going to do. However, the District's intent is to raise money to build a new Lynnwood High School. He emphasized that the \$1.2 million identified in the budget could be used as seed money for the purchase of this site, but grant funding would also be necessary since the cost of the property would likely be quite high.

Board Member Dewhirst pointed out that the 125 Fund includes a new park in the Esperance area and improvements to the Chase Lake neighborhood park. He noted that both of these sites are currently located outside the boundaries of the City. Therefore, he questioned why the City is identifying funds in the CIP for these projects when there are dire needs within the City. Mr. McIntosh explained that the City anticipates these two areas would be annexed into the City in the near future. However, no money would be spent on either of the two sites unless there was an interlocal agreement for the properties to be used by both jurisdictions.

Board Member Dewhirst pointed out that the 125 Fund identifies money for comprehensive planning. If the City is short of money, he suggested that perhaps the funds could be better used somewhere else. Mr. McIntosh said the City is required to update their Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan in 2006 as mandated by the State. There are also a few other parks that will require a master plan so they can be developed in the future.

Board Member Freeman requested clarification about the money identified in the 125 Fund for an aquatic recreational complex. Mr. McIntosh explained that members of the community have frequently expressed their interest in the City constructing an indoor aquatics facility. If there were a movement to pursue this project, it would have to be funded by a general obligation bond, which would require a vote of the public.

Chair Young inquired regarding the improvements that are contemplated for Olympic View Drive. Mr. Fiene replied that the TIP Grant opportunity suggested a partnership between the City of Edmonds and the City of Lynnwood to make improvements to Olympic View Drive. He pointed out that, even though the right-of-way is located in Lynnwood, the one side of the street is part of Edmonds. It is anticipated that a combined effort would enable them to obtain State grant funding for the project. Staff believes these improvements would result in a great benefit to the citizens of Edmonds and they have committed a share of funding for the sidewalk improvements. However, Lynnwood is having a difficult time getting the project going.

Chair Young recalled that there has been a significant amount of public testimony regarding the desire for the City to be more pedestrian friendly. However, he does not see any projects in the CIP related to streetlights, sidewalks, etc. that would enable the City to accomplish this goal. He inquired if the Engineering Department has a database to identify the backlog of projects that could be done if funding were available. Mr. Fiene answered that these projects have been laid out, but the City does not have the local funds to complete them. Chair Young said it would be helpful for Mr. Fiene to point out this fact at the public hearings on March 23rd and April 5th. It is important that the Board, the public and the City Council have a clear understanding of the projects that are not getting done because of funding deficiencies. It is also important that the City consider some of the options the legislature is reviewing to help local jurisdictions resolve their funding issue such as vehicle registration fees, and vehicle excise taxes. Because the general City population does not feel that City Departments are top heavy and can cut salaries at this time, there would be very little political risk associated with the City getting ready to move forward with whatever options are made available by the State to replace the funding lost as a result of I-776.

Mr. Fiene explained that one option that is identified in the City's local financial plan is an increase in the local utility tax to the maximum amount possible and this would not have even required a public hearing. However, the City Council turned down the option. They did not want to increase taxes for any reason. He said staff developed a rationale for each of the funds to point out the needs to the City Council at their 2004 retreat.

Board Member Dewhirst pointed out that many other jurisdictions use utility taxes to repave roadways, build shoulders, construct bicycle lanes, etc. However, there has been no change in the City's approach, and he would not support a plan that continues in this same direction. He suggested that there is a lot of room to move some of the transportation projects around to other funds that are making money at this time. For instance, stabilization projects could be moved to the drainage fund (Fund 412-200). Mr. Fiene explained that the City's rationale in the past has been that since the roads have to be overlaid anyway, both funds should be used to pay for overlays when utility improvements are done that require a road to be torn up. He agreed with Board Member Dewhirst that utility payers should provide funding for the utility services as well as the impacts they have to the roads.

Mr. Gebert pointed out that money from the various utility funds would be transferred into Fund 112 to pay for the overlay projects. He concluded that over the next few years, the utility funds would pay for all of the overlays that are done in the City because the City only has money to overlay the streets where utility work will be done. He said this fact has been pointed out to the City Council.

Chair Young said it would be helpful for the staff to develop three different funding scenarios, using the various options that are currently being considered by the legislature and showing how each one could impact the CIP. Mr. Fiene said that staff already provided these options to the City Council at their 2004 retreat. However, none of the possible options were considered acceptable. He said he recently spoke with a consultant who provides ideas on how Cities can deal with the overall transportation funding issue. The approach the consultant outlined is the exact approach that staff used at the 2004 City Council Retreat. The only new idea the consultant provided was the concept of creating a transportation committee, and staff will likely follow upon this suggestion.

Mr. Gebert said that as the City Council directed, staff evaluated the basic assumptions for various levels of service. They came up with alternatives for additional funding, as well. The elected officials decided to wait and see what relief the State would provide before finding local funding sources or implementing new taxes, etc. Again, Mr. Fiene reminded the Board that, while transportation funding is a statewide issue, Edmonds is doing a lot less than other cities. The City of Edmonds does not allocate any of their general funds for transportation improvements, while the statewide average for general funds that are used for transportation projects is 69 percent. He said the City Council has hired a lobbyist to work on behalf of the City to find a statewide solution. Apparently, the legislature is paying more attention to the issue now.

Chair Young pointed out that preservation of the existing infrastructure is one of the goals of the Comprehensive Plan. He suggested that the City's CIP is inconsistent with this goal. Mr. Fiene agreed that this would be a good point to make before the City Council. Chair Young summarized that the amount of general fund money that is devoted to street overlay projects does not allow the City to meet the Growth Management Act requirements, either. The City should have a goal of maintaining the existing infrastructure. Mr. Chave explained the CIP includes many items that are not capital items. The

Board should remember that maintenance items are not usually considered to be capital items even though they are part of the CIP. Chair Young agreed but pointed out that street overlay projects would not be part of that category and would be considered major capital projects.

Board Member Henderson inquired if any progress has been made regarding the proposed change in sales tax allocation. Mr. Chave said that is one item being discussed by the legislature this year. Mr. Fiene said the proposed change would provide a benefit to the City of Edmonds, but it would not be beneficial to some of the other jurisdictions in the State, such as Lynnwood. Mr. Chave said there are several ideas being considered to mitigate the loss for the cities that would potentially take a hit in their sales tax revenue.

Chair Young reminded the Board that one of the goals of the Growth Management Act is to make the community pedestrian friendly, but the City is not allocating any funding for pedestrian walkway improvements. He also pointed out that the Comprehensive Plan identifies walking as the number one recreational activity.

REVIEW OF EXTENDED AGENDA

Mr. Chave briefly reviewed the updated extended agenda. He noted that public hearings are scheduled on March 23rd for the City's Capital Improvement Program and the School District's Capital Facilities Program. Also, a public hearing is scheduled on the proposed amendments to Chapter 16.20 of the Edmonds Community Development Code adding a new Single-Family Residential – 10,000 square foot minimum lot size zoning classification and a new Single-Family Master Plan zoning classification.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

Mr. Chave provided a brief report on the City Council's review and approval of the proposed Comprehensive Plan amendments. He provided a copy of the proposed Downtown Waterfront Activity Center Plan and noted that the items identified in blue, green and red represent the changes made by the City Council. He explained that the City Council Members who voted to approve the amended document decided that specific numbers such as height limits should be placed in the design guidelines rather than in the Comprehensive Plan. They did not want to set a number in concrete without having design guidelines in place to see how the concept would be implemented. Board Member Dewhirst pointed out that the City Council has been sitting on the draft Design Guidelines for more than a year and a half.

Mr. Chave explained that the City Council voted to retain all of the district boundaries and concepts found in the proposed Downtown Waterfront Activity Center Plan, but they moved the discussion regarding heights into the design guidelines. The City Council discussed the concept of having a height incentive program that would allow developers to go higher in exchange for a number of different things. But they did not feel comfortable setting a specific number in the Comprehensive Plan. He further advised that the City Council agreed to form a committee consisting of two City Council Members, two Planning Board Members, two Architectural Design Board Members, and two citizens, to review the design guidelines and code possibilities for the downtown area.

Mr. Chave advised that the red language at the bottom of the Page 40 was drafted by the staff and the City Attorney to explain the City Council's intent. He explained that in order to make the Comprehensive Plan consistent with the City's Development Code, this language was necessary to clearly indicate that the City would be working to resolve the inconsistencies. The proposed language would allow the City time to get the necessary design guidelines and code elements in place. Board Member Crim reminded the Board that until the height issue in the downtown has been resolved, the City is not accepting any applications for buildings over 25 feet in height.

Mr. Chave reported that the City Council approved the Comprehensive Plan amendments as amended, and they will come back as an ordinance to be adopted at their next meeting.

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PLANNING BOARD CHAIR COMMENTS

Chair Young provided no additional comments during this portion of the meeting.

PLANNING BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Board Member Freeman requested clarification about Senate Bill 5907, which would require cities to accommodate growth without mandating a minimum density. Mr. Chave explained that as proposed, cities that can meet the growth target would not be required to have all their properties zoned at the urban density level. However, the average density across the entire city would still have to be at the urban density level. Board Member Freeman pointed out that this legislation could have an impact on the City of Edmonds.

Board Member Henderson expressed his belief that the City Council's decision to take out specifics from the Comprehensive Plan was a horrible mistake.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 10:25 p.m.

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