

APPROVED MAY 27TH

**CITY OF EDMONDS
PLANNING BOARD MINUTES**

May 13, 2009

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
Valerie Stewart
Jim Young
Judith Works

STAFF PRESENT

Rob Chave, Planning Division Manager
Karin Noyes, Recorder

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT

Cary Guenther (excused)
John Reed (excused)
Kevin Clarke (excused)

READING/APPROVAL OF MINUTES

BOARD MEMBER YOUNG MOVED THAT THE MINUTES OF APRIL 8, 2009 AND APRIL 22, 2009 BE APPROVED AS AMENDED. BOARD MEMBER WORKS SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF AGENDA

The agenda was accepted as presented.

AUDIENCE COMMENTS

George Murray, Edmonds, said he was present to gain a better understanding of the proposed amendments to Title 20, which the City Council is currently reviewing. He asked the Board to provide guidance as to how he could obtain background information to clarify what is being proposed and why it would be good for the citizens of Edmonds. He said he does not feel it would be appropriate for the City Council to give up their power to review quasi-judicial applications, which is what the proposed amendments appear to accomplish.

Mr. Chave suggested Mr. Murray contact the Planning and Development Services Office to find out how he can access previous Planning Board Minutes on line. In addition, he suggested Mr. Murray access the City Council's May 5th agenda packet, which is available on line. All of the Planning Board Minutes that pertain to their discussion on Title 20 were included as part of this agenda packet. He particularly noted that the last page of the City Council's May 5th packet provides a summary of the pros and cons of the proposed amendment.

Mr. Murray asked it would be appropriate for him to email his questions to the Planning Board Members. Chair Bowman suggested that Mr. Murray forward his email questions to the Planning and Development Services Department, and they would forward them to the Planning Board Members.

SUSTAINABILITY DISCUSSION: MAYOR'S CLIMATE PROTECTION COMMITTEE INITIATIVES

Mr. Chave explained that the Mayor of Seattle put together a proposal in conjunction with the United States Council of Mayors to start an initiative for climate protection, and Mayor Haakenson signed off on the initiative, which was supported by a City Council resolution. The Mayor's Climate Protection Committee was formed in the summer of 2006 to advance the City's efforts in this regard. He reported that the Committee created the Green Building Policy for Government Buildings, and they have also reviewed and monitored some of the City's activities related to sustainability. An intern was hired to work with the Committee to develop a Greenhouse Gas Inventory for the entire community, and their next step is to analyze the information and come up with a plan to address emissions, etc. They have also been doing outreach with the local business community to identify educational opportunities, which they will continue to explore.

Board Member Works inquired if the committee would consider incentives to encourage reductions in greenhouse gas, etc. Mr. Chave answered affirmatively. He explained that they would make some recommendations to the City Council, but implementation of some of the concepts may require code amendments that would come before the Planning Board for review. He summarized that implementation of the concepts could take a variety of forms to address all of the aspects.

Mr. Chave reported that the committee recently partnered with the Sustainable Edmonds Group to present the evening climate discussion, which was well attended by members of the community. They also maintain a high presence on the City's website, which provides a lot of information.

Vice Chair Lovell referred to Attachment 9, which is a spreadsheet outlining potential residential and commercial energy measures for making Edmonds sustainable and identifies what the City has done or will do to implement the measures. He suggested this spreadsheet would be a good place to start keeping track of what the City is actually doing. Mr. Chave explained that this spreadsheet was compiled by ICLEA to provide examples of what cities and local governments can do to become more sustainable. The list was compared with what the City has already done and is currently working on to figure out where future opportunities for policies and programs lie.

Vice Chair Lovell suggested the spreadsheet could also be used as a checklist when considering development proposals. For example, when a development is proposed for a given area such as Firdale Village, certain measures could be required to further the City's sustainability program. He noted that low-impact development such as bioswales was not specifically identified in the draft sustainability strategy. Board Member Stewart explained that sustainability has a lot to do with stormwater management, and some municipalities involve their public works departments in low-impact development planning. She announced that the Washington State University Extension offers training sessions related to this topic, and the Puget Sound Partnership will finance attendance for planners, engineers, and others involved in potential low-impact development strategies and technologies. For example, they offer an 8-day training course for engineers who need their expertise. She recently attended a 2-day workshop and was amazed at the opportunities that are available for low-impact development in recent years.

Mr. Chave agreed that it would be appropriate to call out low-impact development as a separate item in the sustainability strategy. He noted that a consultant helped the Engineering Department put together the draft ordinance related to programs for low-impact development standards. The ordinance would be included as part of the City's updated Comprehensive Stormwater Plan, which is required to bring the City's stormwater regulations into compliance with the Phase II NPDES Permit requirements. The Engineering Department would bring the draft document before the Board for review, and their target is to have the full program in place by January.

Board Member Stewart inquired if the Greenhouse Gas Inventory is available on line. Mr. Chave answered that the information is available via the Climate Protection Committee's page on the City's website.

Chair Bowman suggested the Board meet with the Mayor's Climate Protection Committee, and the remainder of the Board agreed that would be helpful. However, Board Member Works suggested the Board establish a clear goal and objective for what they want to accomplish at the joint meeting. It was noted that the Board's schedule was full for the next few months.

Board Member Young asked Mr. Chave to refresh their memory as to how the sustainability discussion would fit into the their work program over the next several months. He asked if sustainability was supposed to have been addressed as part of the Board's code re-write project. He recalled that the Board decided they would complete their code re-write work first and then update the language to incorporate the sustainability elements. Mr. Chave replied that the organizational part of the code re-write project (definitions, setbacks, etc.) would continue to proceed on schedule. If it is possible to incorporate fairly obvious sustainability elements into the language, the Board should attempt to do so. However, there are a few sections of the code (stormwater and subdivisions) that will require much more work to incorporate low-impact development and sustainability strategies. These changes would be considered a separate process from the overall code re-write.

Board Member Young said he would like to meet with the Committee so the Board can gain a clear understanding of what their expectations are. Mr. Chave said that, up to this point, the Committee's discussions have focused on programs rather than codes.

Mr. Chave reminded the Board that they would soon begin their work on updating the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) Chapter of the code, which has not been updated for 20 years (before the Growth Management Act). This chapter doesn't recognize some of the changes in the State SEPA laws that have occurred. He noted that one revolving issue related to SEPA is climate change, which is a moving target at this point. Seattle and King County are leaders in figuring out how to address greenhouse gases, emissions, etc. as part of SEPA. While they have been able to identify the associated impacts, they have not been able to figure out ways to mitigate the impacts. The City's approach is to get policy language in place to authorize them to deal with greenhouse gases, emissions, etc. as part of SEPA, but the policy idea is as far as the City can go until there are best practices and guidelines available for addressing mitigation within a legal framework.

Mr. Chave said staff would likely recommend that the subdivision chapter of the code be integrated to include the planned residential development (PRD) regulations, requirements for low-impact development, design, etc. In other words, subdivisions would require low-impact development and certain design standards. Therefore, the stand-alone PRD regulations could be integrated and addressed as part of the standard subdivision approach.

Board Member Young said he would like the Mayor's Climate Protection Committee to provide an overview of their work to the Board at their earliest convenience. Mr. Chave suggested the Board also meet with the Highway 99 Task Force on July 8th, when the focus of the Board's sustainability discussion would be fiber optic activities, which relate to Highway 99. The Board would also meet with representatives from Steven's Hospital at some point in the future. The Board agreed they would like to meet with all three groups sometime in June or July.

Board Member Stewart said she would benefit from a fieldtrip of the downtown/waterfront area to review the vision that was identified in the Downtown Waterfront Plan that was adopted in 1994. This could be a first step in a collective visioning process. She suggested it would be helpful if the fieldtrip were led by someone who has a historical perspective of how the downtown has evolved and what the vision has been and could be. Mr. Chave suggested the Board postpone a fieldtrip until after their June 24th meeting where much of the discussion would focus on a big picture overview of what is going on in the downtown/waterfront area. Depending on what the Board hears at that meeting, they could ask staff to arrange a follow up fieldtrip.

PARKING STANDARDS REVIEW FOR HIGHWAY 99

Mr. Chave advised that the City Council has adopted a few ordinances related to extending application time frames, giving people a bit of a break during the economic downturn. As part of their discussions along this line, the City Council's Community Services/Development Services Committee asked the Board to consider the concept of adopting a new parking standard for the Highway 99 Corridor, which would implement a consistent minimum standard for all commercial and residential development instead of the parking-by-specific-use method that is currently applied. He noted that this concept could be patterned after the general downtown parking rules. He recalled that the intent of the new downtown parking

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standard was to make it much easier and predictable for businesses moving in and out. He explained that the previous use-related parking standards tended to encourage developers to spec buildings at minimum cost without thinking about who the ultimate tenants would be. They often applied the lowest parking standard possible (usually office with no customer service), but then rented the space to tenants who required much more parking. The initial tenants were taking up all the available parking spaces, and the other tenants had to search for parking elsewhere in the downtown. New developments were not adding to the parking supply or solving any parking problems. In fact, new problems were created when new businesses located in the downtown.

Mr. Chave suggested that this same parking standard concept could be applied to the Highway 99 area. If the City wants to encourage development, it does not make sense to continue with a use-based parking standard. He suggested the Board consider what would be the best parking standard for Highway 99 and move away from individual parking standards that are based on use. This would create an opportunity to consider the new bus rapid transit program that would soon be put in place by Community Transit. It would also reduce the amount of impervious surface required for each development. Highway 99 is an excellent location to consider this concept because there is already good transit service available, and current plans would further improve the service in the future. He suggested that applying a new parking standard on Highway 99 would encourage development along the corridor.

Chair Bowman referred to the TOP Foods development, which provides a huge parking lot that is underutilized. Mr. Chave pointed out that the owner of the TOP Foods property approached the City about the option of redeveloping a portion of their parking area to generate additional revenue. He agreed that TOP Foods currently provides much more parking than is required by the City. He explained that, historically, developers tied their parking requirements to times of highest demand, but this resulted in parking areas that were seldom fully used. The typical demand for parking is usually much lower than peak demand.

Board Member Young recalled that when the Board discussed Highway 99 parking standards previously, they questioned what would happen if the City did away with parking standards altogether. This would allow developers of property on Highway 99 to build as little or as much parking as they felt they needed to support their project. However, that was as far as the Board's discussion went. Chair Bowman recalled that the Board specifically talked about the TOP Foods parking lot and how the land could be better utilized.

Mr. Chave pointed out that some jurisdictions actually specify maximum parking standards rather than minimum parking standards, which is consistent with the concept of sustainability. Board Member Young questioned why the City should set minimum parking standards based on information that is really not useable. The demand for parking changes, based on available parking and the availability of alternative modes of transportation. He noted that the City of Seattle has done a good job of creating grocery stores with small parking lots. Because they occupy a smaller footprint, the amount of impervious surface is less. People are encouraged to come to the store via other modes of transportation. He reminded the Board that the bus rapid transit program would soon be available on Highway 99. He suggested the City eliminate their parking standard for Highway 99 and let developers figure out what they need based on how people will get to their business. Chair Bowman asked staff to provide examples of where this type of parking standard has been implemented in other cities in the area. Mr. Chave said this is a pretty standard approach in larger cities.

Vice Chair Lovell referred to the staff's cover memorandum, which suggests a parking standard of 1 space per 500 square feet for commercial uses, and 1 space per dwelling unit. Mr. Chave said these were provided as examples of the downtown parking standards. He said that in his experience, as often as not, mandates are generous and require too much parking. On the other hand, demand would provide sufficient parking, but typically less than the historic mandates. The end result would be more feasible projects that provide enough parking to meet the true need rather than a specific number of parking spaces as mandated by the City.

Mr. Chave said the Highway 99 Task Force has discussed the concept of requiring less parking for projects along Highway 99. Because this is a transit-oriented area, people living in residential units would likely have fewer vehicles and need fewer parking spaces. If there is only a certain amount of parking available, people who want more would have to choose to live elsewhere. Board Member Works said she would like to meet with the Highway 99 Task Force to learn more about this concept. She said she would also like staff to contact other jurisdictions in the region that have eliminated their parking

requirements in transit-oriented areas to find out how well the concept is working. Mr. Chave said he would contact Redmond, Bellevue, Seattle and other jurisdictions who are working to implement the concept. He also agreed it would be appropriate for the Board to discuss the idea when they meet with the Highway 99 Task Force. Chair Bowman said he would like staff to provide examples of how the concept was successfully applied in other jurisdictions, as well as some of the mistakes that have been made.

Vice Chair Lovell referred to the memorandum that was prepared by Duane Bowman, which provided a list of possible economic stimulus initiatives for the City Council Development Services/Community Services (DS/CS) Committee to consider to help the local building and development community cope in these difficult economic times. He asked Mr. Chave to share a status report of which items the City Council has considered. Mr. Chave reported that the City Council adopted ordinances to implement the first two initiatives on the list, which extend the effective period for design review approvals and remove the code requirement for a two-year landscape maintenance bonds, relying instead on code enforcement to assure compliance. The third initiative involves implementing new parking standards for the Highway 99 Corridor. The DS/CS Committee referred the parking proposal to the Planning Board for review and a recommendation.

Vice Chair Lovell said he believes the economic downturn may be long term. Therefore, it is important for the City to discuss the merits of the remaining initiatives on the memorandum to determine if they would effectively promote reasonable development in the City and address the issue of sustainability. Mr. Chave advised that the list was generated by the Master Builders Association, and staff agrees that a number of the action items would be appropriate for the City to seriously consider. For example, Item 8 would create flexible standards for low-impact development, which is something the Board would talk about as part of their review of the subdivision regulations. The issue should also be addressed for multi-family zones.

Vice Chair Lovell questioned when the Board should consider the merits of the action items on the list. Mr. Chave suggested the Board keep the action items in mind and bring them up as they discuss other related items. Another option would be for the Board to schedule time on a future agenda to talk through the merits of each item on the list. The Board agreed to address the ideas in conjunction with other related issues.

The Board agreed to discuss the concept of modifying the parking standards when they meet with the Highway 99 Task Force. After this initial discussion, the Board could further discuss the details of a potential code amendment to implement the concept.

REVIEW OF EXTENDED AGENDA

Chair Bowman referred to the extended agenda, and emphasized that many more additions would be added in the coming weeks. He advised that he and Vice Chair Lovell met with Mr. Chave to discuss topics for the economic sustainability effort the Board has been tasked with. He noted their schedule would be busy, and he inquired if the Board Members would support extra meetings if necessary. The Board asked staff to try and fit all of their agenda items onto regular meetings agendas, but they indicated they would be willing to attend some extra meetings if needed.

Mr. Chave reviewed that the May 27th meeting agenda would include a briefing on the Transportation Plan, an update on the Interurban Trail, and an update on the Aquatic Feasibility Study. A public hearing on the Transportation Plan has tentatively been scheduled for June 10th, and staff anticipates it will take the entire meeting. The June 24th meeting agenda would include a report by Jennifer Gerend, former Edmonds Economic Development Director, regarding business and economic development opportunities and challenges. In addition, Stephen Clifton, Community Services Director, would provide an update and overview of how transportation and land use opportunities in the downtown/waterfront interface.

PLANNING BOARD CHAIR COMMENTS

Chair Bowman did not provide any comments during this portion of the meeting.

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PLANNING BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Board Member Young said he spoke with a representative from Community Transit regarding development that is supposed to take place in the near future to accommodate their bus rapid transit program (SWIFT). He said they are in the process of constructing platforms and such to accommodate the new Program. The representative indicated that the buses would be very nice and reminiscent of the Seattle Street Cars. He said he believes the SWIFT program's availability should be considered by the Board as they discuss the Highway 99 area. The program would provide quicker bus service going both directions. Mr. Chave said Community Transit regularly updates the City on their progress. They have received design review approval for their station locations in Edmonds, and the property lease arrangements have been completed, as well.

Board Member Stewart said she attended Community Transit's presentation on the SWIFT Program and learned that the doors on the busses would open sideways and very close to the curb level so that bikes could be easily loaded and unloaded. The program would also provide an electronic method of checking onto the bus so it is quicker. The length of time from Everett to Aurora Village is supposed to be 20% faster or better. Mr. Chave said Community Transit estimates the program would be operational sometime this fall.

Board Member Works requested an update on the City Council's progress in appointing members to the new Economic Development Commission. Chair Bowman reported that nothing has been done to date to form the commission. He recalled the commission was Council Member Wilson's idea, and he has been out of town since the resolution was approved.

Vice Chair Lovell reported that the Aquatics Center Study has been completed, and a final public meeting was conducted with about 30 people in attendance. The Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Director would present the report to the Board at their next meeting, and the consultant team would present the report to the City Council.

ADJOURNMENT

The Board meeting was adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

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