

**APPROVED MARCH 11<sup>TH</sup>**

**CITY OF EDMONDS  
PLANNING BOARD MINUTES**

**February 25, 2009**

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Chair Bowman called the meeting of the Edmonds Planning Board to order at 7:04 p.m. in the Council Chambers, Public Safety Complex, 250 – 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue North.

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT**

Michael Bowman, Chair  
Philip Lovell, Vice Chair  
Judith Works  
John Reed  
Jim Young

**STAFF PRESENT**

Brian McIntosh, Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Director  
Frances Chapin, Cultural Services Manager  
Renee McRae, Recreational Manager  
Karin Noyes, Recorder

**BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT**

Cary Guenther (excused)

**READING/APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**BOARD MEMBER YOUNG MOVED THAT THE MINUTES OF JANUARY 28, 2009 BE APPROVED AS PRESENTED. BOARD MEMBER WORKS SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY, WITH VICE CHAIR LOVELL ABSTAINING.**

**BOARD MEMBER LOVELL MOVED THAT THE MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 11, 2009 BE APPROVED AS PRESENTED. BOARD MEMBER REED SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION CARRIED, WITH BOARD MEMBER YOUNG ABSTAINING.**

**ANNOUNCEMENT OF AGENDA**

No changes were made to the agenda.

**AUDIENCE COMMENTS**

There was no one in the audience to address the Board during this portion of the meeting.

**4<sup>TH</sup> AVENUE CULTURAL CORRIDOR UPDATE**

Ms. Chapin reviewed that the City Council adopted a Streetscape Plan in 2006, which identified 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue, between the Edmonds Center for the Arts (ECA) and the public parking lot ½ block south of Main Street, as a key pedestrian corridor to link the new ECA and the businesses in the core downtown. She explained that the movement of people, visitors and residents between the ECA, which attracts over 50,000 people per year, and the retail and restaurants in the downtown is critical for the economic vitality of Edmonds. A concept plan for the public right-of-way was proposed in the Streetscape Plan after a series of public workshops. She further reviewed that both the 2008 Parks and Openspace Comprehensive Plan and the 2008 Community Cultural Plan recognize the 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue Cultural Corridor development of the public right-of-way as both a critical connection/linear park and as a unique cultural project that contributes to Edmonds' identity as a cultural destination.

Ms. Chapin advised that in 2007 the City received a federal grant of \$50,000 from Preserve America to create an Implementation and Funding Plan for the 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue Cultural Corridor. In the spring of 2008, the City hired SvR Design to develop the plan. A Community Advisory Group (CAG) first met in June, followed by several more CAG meetings and two public open houses. She explained that the scope of work for the Implementation Plan included initial design of the roadway, landscaping and amenities. It also included integration of art elements, planning for possible construction phasing, encouraging adoptive reuse of historic structures, integration of low-impact development, and a plan for way-finding and information signage to highlight historic and art resources on or adjacent to the corridor. She introduced Brice Maryman, from SvR Design, who was present to provide an update on the 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue Cultural Corridor Plan.

**Brice Maryman, SvR Designs**, explained that the public was engaged throughout the project via the Citizens Advisory Group (CAG) and two public meetings where citizens were given a set of ideas to respond to. Lastly, a public meeting was held in which citizens were asked to share their thoughts on a final proposal. He advised that the CAG began their work by identifying bedrock principles for judging the success of the project. They agreed that the 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue Cultural Corridor should:

- Use art at every opportunity.
- Express the uniqueness of Edmonds.
- Connect the EAC with the community.
- Balance the needs of various ages and user groups.
- Encourage economic growth.
- Reflect an authentic and honest community vision.
- Provide moments of charm and joy.
- Be a place of constant discovery and spontaneity.
- Contribute to the health of Puget Sound.

Mr. Maryman reported that at the first community, citizens were asked to share their vision for the 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue Cultural Corridor. They agreed that the corridor should:

- Visually draw people down both sides of the street.
- There are better choices than curb and gutter streets to provide pedestrian friendly opportunities.
- Provide native plantings.
- Provide equitable design and amenities on both sides of the street.
- Have a narrower street for vehicular access in order to provide more space for pedestrian access.
- Incorporate the concept of one-way traffic along some portions of the street.
- Underground all utilities.

Mr. Maryman summarized that as the public shared their vision and desires for 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue, it became apparent that they wanted the corridor to be less of a street and more of a “garden.” He said he recognized early in the process that the corridor was already unique in that most of the street rights-of-way in Edmonds are 60 feet wide, and 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue is only 50 feet wide. The entire street is raised about 6 inches, which is another signal that it already offers a different kind of pedestrian space. Mr. Maryman referred the Board to the draft Implementation Plan, which divides the corridor into four areas as follows:

- **Market Garden Element** – This area at the south end of the corridor would provide and encourage interaction between both edges of the street. The street in this area would be one-way heading north. The intent is that the more significant vehicular access to the ECA would come from 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue, and 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue would be more pedestrian oriented. Making the south end of the street one-way would encourage the pedestrian concept. The goal of the Market Garden Element is to encourage people to interact and enjoy the active businesses that are located on both sides of the street. There would be an opportunity in the middle of the block to carve a plaza use as part of the streetscape.

Vice Chair Lovell asked how businesses that are currently located along 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue would be impacted. Mr. Maryman suggested that the businesses would thrive as a result of the proposed design. Vice Chair Lovell asked if existing parking

spaces would have to be eliminated to accommodate the proposed design. Mr. Maryman answered that only one parking space would be lost in this area because the plan calls for diagonal instead of perpendicular parking. He noted that, overall, the proposed plan would result in no net loss of parking space.

Mr. Maryman explained that in the Market Garden Element, no curbs or gutters would be used. Instead bollards would be used to separate the pedestrian realm from the vehicular realm. In addition, the plan identifies several stormwater planters, which would help accomplish the goal of contributing to the health of Puget Sound. The planting areas would be designed to treat stormwater, which could also open up more funding options for the City from the Department of Ecology and the Puget Sound Partnership. He also briefly shared ideas about the type and style of artwork that might be considered for the Market Garden Element. He explained that the artwork would be designed to enhance the corridor entry, accentuate underfoot and overhead, and establish temporal and seasonal venues.

- **Allee Element** – This area would include the portion of the corridor that connects the Market Garden Element in the south to the Edmonds Center for the Arts (ECA) in the north. To the south where there is a mixture of uses, the design would have neighborhood feel. As with the Market Garden Element, the Allee Element would provide the same interaction with the edges of the street by focusing people on the various destinations. Trees would be planted close together at first. However, once they are reestablished, the City could move some of them to other locations. The removed trees could then be replaced with art elements that unify the corridor and clarify, punctuate and connect the other elements of the project.
- **Belvedere Element** – In this element, the goal would be to reclaim some of the right-of-way space in the triangle where Edmonds and Sprague Streets intersect with 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue. This area would provide an opportunity to create a community gathering place, and the traffic would be two-way. The goal would be to create a unified experience along this entire section of the street. He briefly shared ideas about what type and style of art might be used for the Belvedere Element. He said the art would be playful in nature and would attempt to capture the views. It would also offer opportunities for people to pause and rest and find shelter.

Chair Bowman inquired if the plan would utilize a different color of concrete or paving material for the gathering places and pathways. Mr. Maryman replied that the design team has not nailed down the materials that would be used, but they were thinking of using a consistent material along the entire corridor rather than highlighting specific intersections or pathways. The goal is to make the corridor a total experience. Rather than asphalt paving, they would likely propose some type of brick or concrete material that would reflect the architecture that currently exists along the corridor. Chair Bowman asked if the design team plans to propose pervious or impervious surface as part of the project. Mr. Maryman answered that they anticipate using impervious modular paving units for the street areas in order to provide stability for truck access, etc. He reminded the Board that the plan calls for using other types of green elements to address stormwater issues. He noted that the walkway may be designed to be pervious.

Board Member Reed inquired if the proposed plan would extend the width of the roadway to 60 feet. Mr. Maryman replied that implementation of the plan would not require taking land from private property owners. He explained that, as proposed, the roadway in the Belvedere Element would provide two 10-foot lanes for vehicular traffic, a 6-foot swale, and a 9-foot sidewalk.

- **Cultural Garden Element (Edmonds Center for the Arts)** – This element would use many of the same concepts that are proposed for the Market Garden Element. The traffic in the driveway area of the ECA would be two-way, but the remaining roadway in this element would be just one-way. A one-way traffic flow would discourage vehicles from crossing the pass-through traffic. It would also allow space to accommodate angle parking that faces towards the ECA.

Ms. Chapin reported that the ECA is contemplating a second phase for their project, as per their approved Master Plan. The EAC Board has displayed a fair amount of interest in providing a type of sculpture art piece near the front of the building. Mr. Maryman agreed that the front of the EAC, near the current parking area, would be an appropriate location for an art piece since that is the direction the eye is drawn when looking north along the corridor. It would be nice to provide some type of iconic art piece in this location to draw people to the area.

Chair Bowman requested an explanation for why the corridor design was divided into four different design elements. Mr. Maryman said the goal was to create spaces that have different characteristics. At the public meetings, the citizens voiced their desire that the design of the public rights-of-way should reflect the different characteristics that exist along the corridor.

Vice Chair Lovell questioned how the existing residential property owners on 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue would be impacted by implementation of the Plan. He said that while the plan calls out a design that is beautiful and inspiration, it is important to keep in mind the condition of the existing development along the corridor. Mr. Maryman recalled that the Board previously recommended approval of a Downtown Plan, which identifies the future of 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue as a vibrant, after theater activity center. Board Member Works agreed that when the Board previously discussed 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue as part of their work on the Downtown Plan, they talked about the potential for bed and breakfast establishments, live/work areas, art galleries, etc. Mr. Maryman pointed out that the Implementation Plan provides some thoughts and framework for the City's future discussion about how to manage the private investment that would likely follow the public investment so the City gets the type of uses they feel are appropriate along the corridor.

Mr. Maryman briefly reviewed the parking study that was completed as part of the project. The study identifies areas where existing parking would be eliminated. He explained that the proposed plan utilizes the strategy of encouraging visitors to park on the side streets. This would actually result in a net parking gain if the existing parking on the side streets is restriped. He added that the design could provide up to 52 additional parking spaces if the perpendicular parking were changed to diagonal parking.

Chair Bowman asked for more information about why one-way traffic was proposed for the north and south ends of the street. Ms. Chapin explained that the existing property owners indicated they would not be in favor of two-way traffic along the entire corridor. On the other hand, they were amenable to having very narrow lanes of two-way traffic, with reduced parking and slower movement of vehicles. It was not possible to designate the entire street as one-way traffic, since this would not allow adequate emergency access. Board Member Reed asked about the current width of the alleys that are located behind the properties on both sides of 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Mr. Maryman answered that the alleys are 20 feet wide and could offer additional opportunities for parking.

Mr. Maryman said that those who attended the public meetings indicated that lighting was a significant concern. He noted that lighting improvements have been identified as part of the Phase I implementation. However, rather than using traditional overhead lighting, the goal is to focus the lighting onto pedestrian areas. Board Member Works pointed out that the City uses a common light fixture throughout their downtown. Ms. Chapin said the CAG expressed their belief that 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue is a unique corridor, and they did not want to use the traditional downtown light standards. They agreed that different lighting would call this individual neighborhood out as different than the rest of the downtown. In addition, there may be opportunities to utilize alternative energies, which would not be possible if the City's standard light fixtures were used. She noted that if lighting improvements are built around alternative energy sources, the City could install the fixtures as part of Phase I and before funding for the majority of the improvements has been secured. The lights could be removed and reintroduced at the completion of the entire project.

Mr. Maryman announced that LMN Designs was hired to address urban design issues. He explained that the CAG did not want to hold up the 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue Cultural Corridor design work while they wait for the City to address various issues related to urban design such as building height, etc. He explained that the report looks at three different levels of design intervention for the market area: modest, moderate and extreme. For example, application of a modest intervention could allow for mother-in-law apartments off the alleys with parking below, but the appearance from the street would remain unchanged. A moderate intervention would allow for moderate expansion within certain parameters, and would not result in a shocking change. The extreme intervention could involve a slight increase in the current height limit to accommodate live-in units above the retail spaces. He cautioned that because the City knows that change will eventually occur along 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue, it is important to have urban design standards in place to guide future private development.

Mr. Maryman advised that the estimated cost for total build out of the project is between \$5.2 and \$5.6 million. This includes the transportation element, site furnishings and art, vegetation and storm drainage, power and lighting and sewer and water. He explained that there are various funding mechanisms available to the City. Because the project focuses on

providing cultural opportunities and includes stormwater management improvements, the City would be eligible for a number of grant opportunities.

Because of the economic crisis that local, state and federal governments are experiencing at this time, Chair Bowman questioned how realistic it is to anticipate funding for this project in the near future. Mr. Maryman expressed his belief that he is very optimistic the City would be able to secure funding for the project. He shared an example of a project he was involved with on Bainbridge Island. Although the project cost significantly more than the proposed 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue Cultural Corridor Project, they were able to secure funding from the Washington State Transportation Improvement Board. Many of the features the Transportation Improvement Board found favorable with the Bainbridge Island project are also part of the 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue Cultural Corridor Project. However, he said the City would certainly have to do their due diligence to submit grant applications and engage in the process. Ms. Chapin pointed out that replacement of the water and sewer lines on 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue have been identified as part of the City's Capital Improvement Program (CIP) for a few years. The project has been postponed in anticipation of the 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue Cultural Corridor Project. Therefore, there is already some money available to complete the utility portion of the project.

Board Member Works asked how the property owners on 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue have reacted to the proposed plan. Mr. Maryman advised that a number of property owners were invited to participate in the public meetings. At the last meeting, he asked for a show of hands of those who wanted the City to move forward with the proposed project, and the vote was unanimous in support of the proposal. He said the ECA is very supportive of the proposed design, as well. Ms. Chapin explained that one of the ECA's goals is to become an economic generator for the community, and improving the corridor would help move people between Main Street and the ECA. She summarized that the level of support from property owners on 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue is very high.

Vice Chair Lovell questioned whether the proposed plan would add or detract from the City's proposed goals for the downtown retail area. Mr. Maryman suggested it would actually add to the vibrancy of the downtown retail area by adding more capacity. Ms. Chapin noted that a number of downtown business owners see the proposed project as an opportunity to connect the people who are going to the ECA to their businesses. People already move down 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue on art walk nights, and most believe that building on the inventory of things for people to see and do could end up attracting more people to the area. Vice Chair Lovell expressed his belief that the proposed design could be unbelievably beautiful during the holidays with lights on the trees, etc. Mr. Maryman agreed, and he suggested that once the project is finished, there could be opportunities for some of the summer events, such as the Saturday Market, to relocate to 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue. This would also add to the vibrancy of the downtown.

Ms. Chapin noted that the next step in the process would be for Mr. Maryman to present the proposed design to the City Council for final approval. She advised that, to date, the City Council has been extremely supportive of the project.

Board Member Young said he really likes the proposed plan, and he encouraged staff to keep the Board up to date on the implementation program. He noted there are several funding sources that would be applicable to the proposed plan, and he would like to be kept apprised of grant opportunities the City is pursuing. He urged staff not to let the project lose momentum. He emphasized that there is funding available for projects of this type if the City looks hard enough. He said he is very encouraged by the knowledge Mr. Maryman has provided regarding potential grant opportunities.

Vice Chair Lovell inquired if the City would have to finalize the design before it project would be eligible for grant funding. Mr. Maryman answered that the proposed preliminary design, along with the cost estimates, would be sufficient information for most grant applications. While the City may receive request for more refined information or additional details, the project is at the stage where most agencies are comfortable offering funding.

Board Member Reed inquired if Parks staff would be responsible for pursuing grant opportunities to fund the project. Mr. McIntosh explained that pursuing grant applications for the project could be a full-time job. With the declining staff, the City may not be able to do the work in house. He noted that staff is already in the process of pursuing grant funding for other City projects. There would have to be some commitment by the City Council to dedicate funds to hire a consultant to pursue grant opportunities for this additional project. The money for the consultant would likely come from the 125 fund.

**APPROVED**

Board Member Reed asked if the City's Comprehensive Plan would have to be amended in order to implement the proposed 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue Cultural Corridor Plan. Ms. Chapin answered that the proposed design would be consistent with the recently adopted Parks and Openspace Comprehensive Plan and Community Cultural Plan.

Board Member Young expressed his belief that the proposed project appears to be a very viable economic development project and there should already be some staff time budgeted for economic development efforts. Mr. McIntosh pointed out that the City no longer has a full-time Economic Development Director. Instead, the City's Community Services Director has assumed this role in addition to his other responsibilities. Ms. Chapin reminded the Board that although the Parks Department has been the lead on this project, they worked with other departments within the City such as engineering, public works, economic development, community services, and planning and development.

Board Member Young suggested it would be in the Parks Department's best interest to gain the support of the City Council to move the project forward as soon as possible. Again, he asked the Parks staff to keep the Board updated on what grants they are pursuing and who is responsible for pursuing them.

Board Member Reed inquired if there is currently funding in the CIP to support the project. Mr. McIntosh explained that the CIP is updated every year, and projects are reprioritized based on input from the staff and City Council. Board Member Reed suggested staff approach the City Council with a request that the 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue Cultural Corridor Project be moved up on the list of priorities.

Chair Bowman summarized that while the project is ready to move forward, the City lacks the manpower to apply for grant funding. He suggested the Parks Department consider the option of spreading this responsibility throughout the various City departments. If the project becomes a high priority for the City Council, they can certainly direct staff to move forward and some other projects would become less important.

Ms. Chapin announced that the draft 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue Cultural Corridor Implementation Plan would be presented to the City Council on March 24<sup>th</sup>. At that time, staff would ask the City Council to accept the plan and prioritize the project.

#### **PARK NAMING POLICY – CONTINUED DISCUSSION**

Mr. McIntosh recalled that the Board reviewed the initial draft of the Park Naming Policy on January 28<sup>th</sup>. At that time, they directed staff to edit, simplify and condense the document into two separate sections: one for the policies and one for the process. He explained that two new City parks would be completed in the near future, so it is important to have a clear policy in place for selecting names. He referred the Board to the draft language and advised that the first two pages outline the park naming policy, and the last page describes the process that would be followed. He explained that, as proposed, the policy would leave it open for the Board to decide whether they wanted to serve as the Naming Committee or if they wanted to designate a Naming Committee that would consist of two Board Members, a representative from the Parks Department and at least two citizens.

Vice Chair Lovell asked how the public would be involved in the process if the Planning Board were to serve as the Naming Committee. Mr. McIntosh explained that, as proposed, the Parks staff would solicit name suggestions from the public. They would review the proposals and identify those that are consistent with the adopted Park Naming Policy. The eligible names would be presented to the Naming Committee for review, and the Naming Committee would hold a public hearing and invite public testimony prior to forwarding a recommendation to the City Council.

Rather than recommending only one potential name to the City Council, Chair Bowman suggested the Board could forward a pool of four or five names for the City Council to consider. He cautioned that he does not want the Board to spend a significant amount of time deliberating on the matter prior to sending a recommendation to the City Council. Board Member Works asked if the City Council would hold a public hearing, as well, before making a final decision. Mr. McIntosh answered that would be one option. He further explained that anyone who suggests a potential name would be provided a copy of the Park Naming Policy so that the criteria is clear to everyone. He pointed out that only those names that meet the adopted criteria would be forwarded to the Naming Committee for consideration. The Naming Committee would review the viable names and recommend their preferred choice to the City Council.

**APPROVED**

Board Member Reed said that while he supports the use of public hearings on most issues, he questioned the need for a public hearing as part of the parking naming process. He noted that the City of Seattle has an extensive procedure for naming parks, but the process does not involve a public hearing. Board Member Young suggested that because park naming happens so rarely in the City of Edmonds, it would be a nice gesture to hold a public hearing as long as the ground rules are established upfront. Board Member Works cautioned that if the Board were to make a recommendation to the City Council without holding a public hearing, someone may complain that the process was unfair. She would support a public hearing process, as long as the parameters are clearly spelled out.

Board Member Reed explained that, as currently proposed, the City would publicize the process for naming a park and citizens would be invited to submit their ideas and comments. He suggested that this process, by itself, could be considered a public process. Therefore, he questioned why a public hearing would be necessary. Again, Board Members Works and Young suggested that a public hearing opportunity should be offered as a courtesy to the community.

The Board had a brief discussion about whether it would be appropriate for them to serve as the naming committee rather than appointing a separate committee each time a park needs to be named. They agreed it would be appropriate for the Board to serve as the Naming Committee. Therefore, they asked that the policy language be changed to read, "The naming of City parks, park areas and park facilities shall be the function of the City of Edmonds Planning Board with assistance from the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Department. The Planning Board shall constitute the "Naming Committee." The rest of the language would be eliminated.

The Board agreed the process should be as follows: The Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Director would solicit suggested names from the public. The Director would review the names and forward those that meet the adopted criteria to the Planning Board for further review. The Planning Board would hold a public hearing to allow the citizens to address the Board, and then they would deliberate and forward a recommendation to the City Council.

**BOARD MEMBER YOUNG MOVED THE BOARD FORWARD THE DRAFT PARK NAMING POLICY AND PROCESS DOCUMENTS TO THE CITY COUNCIL AS AMENDED, WITH THE RECOMMENDED CHANGE THAT THE PLANNING BOARD WOULD SERVE AS THE "NAMING COMMITTEE." BOARD MEMBER WORKS SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

#### **REVIEW OF EXTENDED AGENDA**

Chair Bowman noted that the Planning Board Retreat was scheduled on the extended agenda for April 8<sup>th</sup>. He agreed to contact staff to finalize this date. He reviewed that the March 11<sup>th</sup> meeting agenda would include a discussion regarding the Code Re-Write Project, continued deliberations on proposed regulations dealing with short-term rentals in single-family zones, an update on Firdale Village, and an update on the Transportation Plan.

#### **PLANNING BOARD CHAIR COMMENTS**

Chair Bowman reported that he and Vice Chair Lovell met with Mayor Haakenson and expressed concern that while the Board spends a significant amount of time conducting public hearings and deliberating issues with the entire City's interest in mind, many of their recommendations are reversed because a small group of people come to a City Council Meeting and voice opposition. They suggested to the Mayor that the current system is not working, and many on the Board Members believe that some recent City Council decisions have been inappropriate.

#### **PLANNING BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS**

None of the Commissioners provided comments during this portion of the meeting.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

The Commission meeting was adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

**APPROVED**