

APPROVED MAY 13th

**CITY OF EDMONDS
PLANNING BOARD RETREAT MINUTES**

April 8, 2009

Chair Bowman called the meeting of the Edmonds Planning Board to order at 6:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers, Public Safety Complex, 250 – 5th Avenue North.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

Michael Bowman, Chair
Philip Lovell, Vice Chair
Kevin Clarke
Cary Guenther
John Reed
Valerie Stewart
Judith Works
Jim Young

STAFF PRESENT

Rob Chave, Planning Division Manager
Brian McIntosh, Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Director
Bio Park, City Attorney's Office

PROCESS FOR APPROVING PLANNING BOARD MINUTES

Chair Bowman explained that, at times, the Board has had to postpone approval minutes because there was not a quorum of Board Members present who had attended the previous meeting. He noted that most often, the changes are typographical, and the Board would like direction on how they could streamline the approval process.

Mr. Park advised that approval of the minutes must take place in an open session, and absent Board Members can forward any changes to the minutes to staff prior to the meeting for incorporation into the final draft. The minutes must be approved by a quorum of Board Members present, but not necessarily a quorum of the group that was present at the previous meeting. There is no legal prohibition against someone who was not at the meeting from voting on the minutes. He agreed to research further to find out if the minutes must be formally approved, or if they could be approved by consensus.

BOARD POLICY ON HEARINGS FOR LEGISLATIVE MATTERS

Chair Bowman recalled a previous legislative public hearing where the Board closed the public comment portion of the hearing and then continued their deliberations to a future meeting. When the Board continued their deliberations, they received additional written public testimony items relative to the issue. He requested direction from Mr. Park as to whether it would be appropriate for the Board to accept and consider written public testimony after a legislative public hearing has been closed.

Mr. Park said that if the Board wants to accept additional testimony after a public hearing has been closed, they must reopen the public hearing. He suggested that rather than closing the public hearing and stopping comments, another option would be to suspend comments until the end of deliberations. This would allow the Board an opportunity to resume the public hearing and accept additional public comments later on. He emphasized that there is no limitation on the number of public hearings that can be held on legislative items. In general, a legislative body can accept public testimony at its pleasure. If notice was not given specific to the fact that more public testimony would be taken, the Board could amend the agenda during the initial hearing to include resumption of public hearing, etc. He summarized that the Board does not have to accept testimony that comes in after a legislative hearing has been closed. However, if they want to accept additional testimony and consider it as part of their deliberations, they must open the hearing, bring the testimony formally into the record, and then let anyone else respond to the new evidence that was provided.

The Board agreed that at the conclusion of the public testimony portion of a legislative hearing, they could consider a motion to either close or suspend public testimony. If the issue is contentious and the Board would like to retain the ability to reopen the public hearing, they could move to suspend public testimony. If they believe they have heard enough testimony and are ready to make a recommendation, they could move to close the public testimony. Mr. Chave agreed to prepare language the procedures for legislative hearings as per the Board's discussion. Once reviewed and accepted by the Board, the language would be printed on the back of each Planning Board agenda.

TRAINING ON QUASI-JUDICIAL AND LEGISLATIVE PROCESSES

Mr. Park provided training on the quasi-judicial and legislative processes. He briefly reviewed the role of the Planning Board in quasi-judicial and legislative processes. He reviewed the rules and procedures for conducting quasi-judicial hearings and specifically pointed out that the City Council recently adopted Local Ethic Rules (Edmonds Municipal Code Chapter 3.7). While this language does not impact their role as Planning Board Members, it may impact them when they leave the Board. There are certain restrictions on what jobs former officials, officers and employees can accept after they terminate their position with the City.

Mr. Park reviewed the Appearance of Fairness Rules that would only apply when the Board Members are acting as quasi-judicial decision makers. He emphasized that quasi-judicial hearings must not only be fair in fact, but also in appearance. The main test is as follows: *"Would a reasonable person, apprised of the totality of a member's personal interest or involvement, be reasonably justified in thinking that the involvement might affect the member's judgment."* He summarized that there might be a problem when there is personal interest, prejudgment of issues, and/or partiality. He explained that the majority of challenges to the Appearance of Fairness Rules have to do with ex parte contacts (contacts outside the hearing). The rule is that as a quasi-judicial decision maker, you should have no ex-parte contacts with opponents or proponents during the pendency of quasi-judicial actions. Even if there is no application pending, Board Members who attend pre-development informational meetings might end up formulating a prejudgment or become partial to the applicant. He advised that when Board Members receive ex parte contacts, they may still be able to participate in the hearing if they disclose the substance of the contact into the record and allow the opposing party a chance to rebut.

Mr. Park noted the following exceptions to the Appearance of Fairness Rule:

- Regular Business Exception – No member of a local decision making body may be disqualified by the Appearance of Fairness Doctrine for conducting the business of his or her office with any constituents on any matter other than a quasi-judicial action pending before the legislative body. This exception allows Board Members to talk to individual about legislative matters that are not related to quasi-judicial applications.
- Doctrine of Necessity – In order to take action, the Board needs a quorum. If four of the Board Members end up having to recuse themselves because of Appearance of Fairness, they would be left with no quorum. The Doctrine of Necessity would allow everyone to participate as long as they disclose the basis for their disqualification.
- Waiver – A Board Member would be allowed to participate if he/she discloses ex parte contacts and offers the opposing party an opportunity to rebut, but they choose not to challenge participation. Opponents would not have the ability to challenge a Board Member's participation at a later date.
- Campaign – While campaigning for public office, Board Members would be allowed to express their opinions and stand on certain issues, even if the issues may come before the Board as a quasi-judicial action. However, the statements they make must not make the Board Member partial to the applicant or opponent, prejudge the issues, or somehow impose a personal interest on the decision making.

Mr. Park summarized that when there are Appearance of Fairness issues, Board Members are expected to know when to recuse themselves. Fellow Board Members cannot force others to recuse; this decision is up to individual members. He explained that if the Appearance of Fairness Rules are violated, the action taken by the Board would be void. Members who

have to recuse themselves must step down and physically leave the premises. If an Appearance of Fairness issue taints any of the proceedings beforehand, the Board should start the proceedings over at the point where there was no violation.

Mr. Chave recalled that, typically, the chair of the Board would ask members to disclose ex parte communications or Appearance of Fairness issues at the beginning of a public hearing. This allows the Board to take care of all issues up front. Board Member Guenther recalled that, typically, the Board Chair reviews a public hearing checklist that includes questions related to Appearance of Fairness and ex parte issues. Mr. Park summarized that the Board's current process is appropriate. If the Board invites the public to identify ex parte or Appearance of Fairness issues at the onset of a hearing and no issues are raised, the public would not be allowed to raise concerns at a later date.

Chair Bowman inquired if a member of the public would be allowed to challenge a Board Member mid way through a public hearing if an issue related to Appearance of Fairness comes to light. Mr. Park said the public is required to bring the concern to light at the first opportunity. Otherwise, they forfeit their right to bring the issue up at a later date. If a citizen has had an opportunity to bring the Appearance of Fairness challenge during the hearing and they did not, they would not have opportunity to do it at a later date.

Board Member Reed summarized that the only situation in which the Board has to worry about ex parte or Appearance of Fairness issues is when reviewing site-specific rezones. The remaining items that come before the Board are legislative in nature. Mr. Park agreed that the only time the Commission would need to be concerned about the Appearance of Fairness Rules is when reviewing site-specific rezones, which are quasi-judicial. However, the conflict of interest rules would apply to both legislative and quasi-judicial actions. For example, if a Board Member would gain financially from a Planning Board recommendation, they should recuse themselves from participating in the hearing.

Board Member Young pointed out that sometimes there is no clear distinction between quasi-judicial and legislative issues. He referred to a situation in which the Board was asked to evaluate the policy implications of restricting a particular piece of property to a certain height no matter what the use of the property was. It was interesting to note that no application was filed by the property owner, but someone who lived across the alley from the subject property wanted the restriction legal in order to enrich him by keeping his neighbor below a certain height. The City Council directed the Board to evaluate the issue as a policy matter. It was not until the hearing was in process that the Board learned that the applicant did not know anything about the proposal until he came to the public hearing. The entire Board felt it was inappropriate for them to consider the proposal, and they informed the City Council of their position. The proposal was presented again to the Board at a later date in the form of a Comprehensive Plan amendment.

Mr. Park said that regardless of whether or not an application was pending, the proposal had the characteristics of being quasi-judicial. When there's a hybrid between quasi-judicial and legislative, quasi-judicial should always be used to protect everyone's interest.

Board Member Young questioned if the Board has the ability to refuse to hear something that is forwarded to them by the City Council. Mr. Park responded that the Board could send the matter back to the City Council and refuse to hear it, but they should list their reasons why. However, it is important to keep in mind that the Planning Board is a sub body of the City Council and the City Council can delegate certain duties to the Planning Board on a case-by-case basis. If the Board still refuses to hear a matter that is forwarded to them by the City Council, the City council could request everyone's resignation or appoint different members.

DISCUSSION REGARDING SOURCES AND TRENDS OF RETAIL SALES IN EDMONDS

Mr. Chave reviewed data and information staff acquired regarding retail sales trends in Edmonds, Snohomish County, the Puget Sound Region and Washington State. He highlighted the following:

- Approximately 60% of retail sales in Edmonds is locked up in the auto sector, compared to 26% for the State and 28% for Snohomish County. Obviously, Edmonds has a very heavy reliance on auto sales in its local retail sales economy.
- The City's restaurant and bars sector is in line with the County and State, but they are lacking in the general merchandise and building material sectors.

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- Most other jurisdictions in the County and region have a lower emphasis on auto sales. While Kirkland is heavily dominated by automobile sales and service, they also have a lot of other commercial services.
- When comparing the individual jurisdictions to the County statistics, Edmonds is probably the most different.
- Sales growth in Edmonds is almost universally smaller compared to the rest of Snohomish County with the exception of drug and health and home furnishings.

Mr. Chave summarized that growth figures for the County and State indicate that auto sales growth over a five year period from 2002 to 2007 lagged behind other commercial sectors. Edmonds has a strong concentration of auto sales, which lags behind the average for the retail sector. He pointed out that the characteristics of any particular sector will be different in how it responds to a downturn or economic slide, and in recent years, auto sales have been crunched worse than most other sectors. Having most of their eggs in one basket will make the City prone to significant turns in the economy. This brings to question some of the conventional wisdom of whether or not another auto sales business would be good for Edmonds.

Chair Bowman agreed that the City's retail core needs to grow and be more diverse. He expressed his belief that the statistics for restaurants, bars and auto sales do not necessarily indicate the City has a plethora of these types of uses, but that they have a whole lot less of other retail uses. He pointed out that Lynnwood's sales tax revenue is 300% more than their property tax revenue. On the other hand, Edmonds only collects 50% less sales tax revenue than property tax revenue.

Board Member Clark expressed his belief that Edmonds does not have the geographic linkages that sustain large retail businesses. He questioned why would someone going to come off of I-5 to downtown Edmonds to buy something that could be purchased at the mall or any convenient strip center on a major arterial. He summarized that the City has never zoned itself to grow the retail sector.

Board Member Young questioned how the Planning Board would use this information in their future discussions. Mr. Chave suggested that as the Board gets into their discussions regarding economic sustainability, they should ask the question of where they want the City to go economically, not only in terms of sustaining the needs of the residents, but funding City government and other services the citizens need. Board Member Lovell suggested the Board should play a stronger role in helping the City shape a vision or direction for development that makes sense of the City and has a mixture that's appropriate for revenue generation based on the type of City it is. Mixed-use development would provide services to the public, as well as a tax base that is beyond residential. He further suggested the Board look at key areas in town where mixed-use development would be a potential option. He expressed his belief that the Board should focus their efforts on the waterfront and play some role in creating a more workable platform such as a master plan. This would allow the City to attract good developers to construct something that goes beyond just nice open space and views and public walking areas.

Board Member Works observed that the data could be used to help educate the public and help them understand that businesses play a significant role in the City, and certainly a tax base role. She noted that, in the past, citizens have typically expressed opposition to changes that would allow retail development to grow. Mr. Chave said the Board would have an opportunity to reevaluate this direction as part of their discussion related to sustainability.

Chair Bowman expressed frustration that citizens are now concerned about the proposed tax levy, when there has been opposition in the past to any attempt to improve the situation. If the City wants a better balance, they need to change their policies to accommodate and encourage boutiques, world class restaurants, etc. However, right now the citizens of Edmonds must pay for earlier decisions that were made by their elected officials.

Board Member Young said his tax levy committee group has indicated they are tired of hearing about how to tweak the admission rates for Yost Pool or eliminate a director because none of these options would address the \$4.5 million dollar deficit the City is faced with. The charts make it clear that Edmonds has a very narrow economic based, 75% of which is in the tank. They are going to have to support the levy whether they like it or not because of previous choices that were made. The Board needs to make it clear that the current economic situation is a result of previous community sentiment and public testimony, and now it is time to pay the bill.

Mr. Chave emphasized that the City does have an opportunity to continue to encourage mixed-use develop in strategic locations. The City has successfully used the mixed-use development concept to recapture some of the businesses that have

been lost over the years. He suggested the City continue the successful things they are already doing. Another approach would be to encourage people to buy local. If they have a choice of driving further to save money, maybe it would be smarter to stay closer to home and spend the increment at local businesses instead of on gas.

Board Member Stewart said the City has a unique potential for becoming a community where people can walk places to get what they need, gather with friends, etc, and she chose Edmonds for that very reason. The City must capitalize on this opportunity. They have a wonderful waterfront, and they must be careful how it is developed. There are wonderful opportunities for public/private partnerships that will enhance the attributes the City has to offer, which is what the sustainability element is challenging cities in the Puget Sound Region to do. They should focus on providing programs and services that attract a cross section of people. Edmonds could become the jewel of the area, and it could be done in a careful and sustainable way. For example, perhaps they could try to attract car dealers that sell electric and hybrid cars. In addition, people would be attracted to Edmonds if they were to become a destination where green products could be purchased.

Board Member Reed reminded the Board that the City Council adopted a Downtown Waterfront Plan in 1994, and much of the document was incorporated into the Comprehensive Plan. However, much of the Comprehensive Plan language references the Edmonds Crossing or Multimodal Projects, which are no longer near-term projects. He suggested that now is a good time to come up with a new plan for the downtown waterfront area. Chair Bowman pointed out that, at this time, there is no consensus or vision of what the City should be in 20 years.

EDMONDS CROSSING PROJECT: STATUS AND ALTERNATIVES

Mr. Clifton was not able to attend the meeting to provide a status report. Mr. Chave referred the Board to the written report that was provided prior to the meeting.

Board Member Young recalled that this item was scheduled on the agenda to consider the best use for the federal funding that has not been obligated and/or spent. After reviewing the plans, he suggested that nothing would happen on the Edmonds Crossing Project until at least 2030. Therefore, the Board should consider whether there are projects that have enough reasonable nexus to the Edmonds Cross Project that would allow the City to utilize the available Edmonds Crossing funding. Otherwise, the money would be lost.

Vice Chair Lovell expressed his view that the City should proceed with planning and development of the waterfront as if the Edmonds Crossing Project would never happen. This would allow the City to be in the driver's seat to proceed with development of the waterfront in the best interest of the citizenry. He suggested the Board look at the concept of establishing a master plan for the waterfront area.

Mr. Chave said the Board should think of the Edmonds Crossing Project as some type of multimodal facility, which involves the ferries. Going forward, it may be possible to reconfigure the project so it is no longer wholly at Point Edwards, but a combination of enhancing the other transit facilities at the central waterfront with some other aspect that is to the south. Although Washington State Ferries may scale back their plans for ferries, other transportation projects would continue, such as Sound Transit commuter rail and Amtrak improvements and improved bus service. There may be enough momentum behind these projects that the City could work with Washington State Ferries to reorient towards a different project that is still Edmonds Crossing, but scaled back and relocated.

Mr. Chave reviewed that Washington State Ferries' original plan was to expand the ferry terminal to add slips and construct a ramp over the railroad tracks. The City actually took the step to get everyone to the table to talk about alternatives and force the issue of ferry terminal relocation. If the City hadn't been there to force the issue, there could have been a ferry terminal ramp expansion crossing over the railroad and into the heart of downtown. Even though it is doubtful that a multi-modal center would be developed at Point Edwards in the near future, and different form and scale of the Edmonds Project could still move forward.

Board Member Young pointed out that the Regional Transportation Investment District has indicated there is several hundred thousand dollars in enhancement and congestion management money available for Edmonds. He suggested the Board recommend the City Council use this money to hire a consultant to look at what elements could be implemented

within the next two to five years, and renovation of the train station would seem like a logical place to start. Mr. Chave reported that Sound Transit would move forward with station improvement in the near future. The City has insisted that because Washington State Ferries is pulling back their timeline, Sound Transit must do the necessary improvements to create a permanent station. Again, he cautioned that there are discussions in the works that would push the multimodal concept forward in a different configuration and scale. Board Member Young emphasized that he would like the City to consider other types of waterfront development that is related to the multimodal center concept so the City does not lose the available funding. Mr. Chave indicated Mr. Clifton is currently working in that direction.

Board Member Clarke expressed his belief that a multimodal transportation facility would not generate revenue for the City; it would be a cost and a drain. Edmonds is not a destination; it is a cross through place for people wanting to go somewhere else. He suggested the City needs to consider opportunities for making the downtown bowl area a destination that is unique and different than anywhere else. He observed that the plans that were presented last summer resulted from developers trying to maximize the development of their land. A better approach would be for the City to identify land use goals that would result in the City becoming a seaside destination community with specialty retail shops and hotels. He questioned how the Board could encourage this approach. Mr. Chave pointed out that the actors and opportunities are in place to allow this to occur. However, he suggested the City must provide a leadership role to pull the parties together to come up with something that will work. He suggested, and the Board concurred, that it is time for the City to change the direction of their long-range planning efforts.

The Board agreed to invite Mr. Clifton to a future meeting to discuss this issue further. Mr. Clifton could also provide information about the level of clean up that was done on the lower yard of the Unocal site.

Board Member Clarke recommended the Board consider opportunities to consider alternatives for redeveloping the downtown waterfront properties as part of the 2011 Comprehensive Plan Update. Mr. Chave suggested the Board could recommend to the City Council that this is something the City should take the lead on. He reported that the groups he participated in as part of the levy committee expressed an interest in creating a long-term vision for Edmonds, and the downtown waterfront area is one of the few areas in the City where something significant could be done. This effort would not cost a significant amount of money because all it would take is a good strong public participation process with some design skills. He felt it would be money well spent, and the Board concurred.

CURRENT FINANCIAL SITUATION FOR PARKS AND RECREATION: STATUS AND ALTERNATIVES

Mr. McIntosh advised that the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Department is extremely vulnerable in poor economic situations because the services provided are not considered mandatory. While parks provide a quality of life, they can be done without if necessary. However, he cautioned that a weak park system sends a tremendously bad message to anyone who wants to move to the area. He does not want Edmonds to have a bad reputation, and he pointed out that real estate ads for properties in Edmonds typically include some comment about the great parks, recreation and cultural services programs that are available. Mr. McIntosh reported that as a result of the current budget crunch, the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Department was asked to reduce their budget. This resulted in possible reductions or elimination of the following programs and services:

- **Close Yost Pool.** Previously, the City has subsidized Yost Pool with approximately \$100,000 per year, so it is not considered a revenue generating program. Staff is doing everything they can to come up with an acceptable plan to keep the pool open. As of today, a citizen's group has raised \$23,000, and the goal is \$30,000.
- **Drop 8 seasonal employees** (about half). While reducing the seasonal staff would have a significant impact, the remaining staff is dedicated and would make every effort to make the situation palatable and reduce the impacts to the public. For example, it is not likely the public would notice that maintenance has been deferred for one year, as long as they pick up this missed work next year.
- **Eliminate the Discovery Program.** This program has helped save the Edmonds waterfront from destruction and make it a gem for people to visit. Environmental programs are extremely important, and more than 150,000 school children have participated in the Discovery Program over the years. Many of these people have grown and have passed down their values to their children.

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Mr. McIntosh pointed out that the parks maintenance budget is \$1.3 million, and includes 11 full-time employees, supplies and equipment. None of this activity generates direct revenue, but Edmonds is proud of its parks and he suggested that at least \$1.3 million comes into the City in one shape or form as a result of the City's strong park maintenance program. If Edmonds reputation goes away, real estate prices would fall, as well. If this were spread over 18,000 homes in Edmonds, the value would be worth a lot. While some folks look at parks as a drain and something that should be cut, it is not that simple. It is important to keep in mind that they have cut back, and they think they do a great job with a minimum number of people. In comparison, he noted that Lynnwood's parks, recreation and cultural services budget is triple that of Edmonds, yet Edmonds' programs are fairly equal with the exception of a year round pool.

With the exception of the pool and discovery programs, all of the other programs in the department make money. They run these programs as a business, and they brought in \$1.2 million last year, which is a new high. This year they are working even harder and their revenues are actually up as compared to 2008. This tells them that people like their product. In addition, the trend during economic downturns is for people to stay closer to home to recreate. Because they expect more visitors to their parks and programs in 2009, it will be difficult for the reduced staff to keep up.

Chair Bowman asked if the Parks Department has considered the option of soliciting volunteer help. Mr. McIntosh reported that an astonishing number of people and groups have come forward to volunteer. However, volunteers can only be used so much because of the Labor and Industries requirements. For example, volunteers cannot use mechanical equipment, and the City has to set up and supervise the projects on weekends, which is difficult to do with a limited staff. Over the last year, a number of groups have pulled ivy and garbage from Yost Park and down by the hatchery where the new native garden is going in. A group formed by Council Member Bernheim will work on the Pioneer Way connection to Main Street. He summarized that there is a great spirit of volunteerism in the community, but the City cannot just turn people loose.

Board Member Works asked if the City has considered closing some parks in order to free up staff time to maintain other parks. Mr. McIntosh explained that in order to close an active park, the City would be required to fence and sign it and not let anybody in. The current plan is to cut back on the level of service in all of the parks.

Board Member Stewart commended McIntosh for his great service running the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Department. She reported that last year she had the pleasure of working as a park ranger and participating in the Discovery Program. She saw firsthand the value of connecting kids with nature and teaching them to be the future stewards of the earth. She said she has also been a docent at Discovery Park as a volunteer in their Naturalist Program. She offered the City her services in getting a volunteer program going in Edmonds, perhaps using the Discovery Park program as a model. She expressed her belief that closing parks and cutting off physical options for families with kids could become a health issue.

Board Member Stewart suggested the City also consider other alternatives for supporting parks in the future, such as an Edmonds Parks Foundation that allows members of the community to donate money specifically for trail maintenance, planting trees, etc. She noted that, at this time, the City's only program allows people to donate to the flower program, the Beach Ranger program, and Yost Pool, but only the interest is used to support the programs, and none of the principle.

Mr. McIntosh explained that these funds are intended to be trust funds, and only the interest that is accrued can be used for projects. The reality is there is never going to be enough money in these funds to create enough interest to support any on-going operations. Board Member Stewart agreed that using only the interest would never result in sufficient money to support a program. She explained that her husband is a very good fundraiser, and he recommends that citizens be invited to donate money that can be used to directly support a specific project, such as keeping Yost Pool open.

Mr. McIntosh reported that, at this time, the flower fund has about \$80,000, the environmental fund has \$60,000, and the Yost Pool fund has \$1,500. To get the City through the end of the year, both the flower fund and the environmental fund would be used to pay full-time salary. He explained that the City Council has the prerogative to deplete the funds down to zero if and when they choose, and they are choosing to do so now. These funds will be used to keep the Discovery Program and half of the flower program going for the remainder of the year. If a levy is approved, these programs would be funded in 2010. If not, both of the programs would disappear.

Board Member Clarke suggested that in the next 20 years they will see the greatest transfer of wealth that has happened in the history of the country. He questioned if the City is prepared to offer citizens opportunity to programs and services of their choice. He said he was not aware that the three funds were even available. He felt that many people would be responsive and support park programs if they are given an ongoing opportunity. McIntosh said he has a bare bone staff that is barely getting through the administrative part every day. It would be great if they had a professional fundraiser on staff, and they have previously considered the option of funding a grant writer and endowment person position. Board Member Stewart said her husband has volunteered to help the City in their fundraising efforts. Mr. McIntosh that is good, but they also have to have some staying power to keep the programs going. She said that while grants are good, the City would get the biggest bang for their buck by fundraising.

Board Member Young cautioned that while the Board has discussed some wonderful ideas, they must first consider how to save the Parks Department between now and November. None of the options discussed would resolve the City's current dilemma of having a \$4.5 million budget deficit. The remainder of the Board agreed, but they felt it would also be a good time to start some of these other ideas. Board Member Young suggested a better approach would be for the Board to make a commitment to follow up with these other ideas after the City has solved the more imminent budget deficit problem. Chair Bowman suggested that now is also an appropriate time to consider opportunities to build up a bit more of a cushion. He reminded the Board that the City is in a position of running out of money again in 2016, and these other ideas offer a way to be proactive for the next several years.

Board Member Young observed that there has been some sentiment that a tax levy would be unlikely to pass unless it has some kind of targeted purpose, and his tax levy group has indicated that the Parks Department and Police Department would be excellent programs for the tax levy to support. For example, devoting \$3 million of the tax levy to the Police or Parks Department would free up money in the general fund for other purposes. He expressed his belief that there is currently a lack of confidence in City government, and if the public could see something substantive on how the money would be used, the levy would likely receive more support. He summarized that a parks and/or public safety levy would have a better chance than just a general purpose levy. Mr. McIntosh said they have talked about a parks levy or a combination parks/public safety levy, and he agreed that stand alone levies typically do better than general levies. On the other hand, it is not just the Parks Department that is hurting; it is the whole city. The idea that saving the Parks Department would free up other general fund money for other uses would put the burden on the shoulders of the Parks Department if the levy fails. Mr. Chave advised that the proposed levy would be used to fund existing services. He questioned how the City would structure a levy that implies that somehow the public would receive additional park or police services. If not additional services would be provided, a levy targeting parks and/or police services would amount to playing a shell game.

Vice Chair Lovell reported that his tax levy group is attempting to identify mandatory costs in all departments, as well as the costs the mayor wants to restore. They may recommend some cuts from each group to come up with a total levy package that may be less than \$4.5 million. He suggested the City's biggest job between now and November is to create the ability and resources so that every single person in the City understands that if they don't support the levy, the City would fail. He advised that many of the tax levy groups will recommend that the City Council accept their report unanimously, with no more wishy-washy political junk. It is anticipated the tax levy group would present a series of potential proposals of revenue generating ideas for the City broken into three categories: what can be done now, what can be done in one to two years, and what can be done in the next three to five years.

Mr. McIntosh observed that there is a silver lining to the whole economic situation. The Boards ideas and enthusiasm to push a philanthropic approach will cause people to think about things more, which is something the City has not done a good job of in the past. The vehicles are available, but the idea has not been promoted. Now is a golden opportunity to do just that. Board Member Stewart agreed to research the option of forming an Edmonds Parks Foundation and report back to the Board and staff in the near future.

SUSTAINABILITY AND OTHER LONG-RANGE PLANNING

Board Member Clarke questioned why the City Council feels it necessary to pass a law to outlaw plastic bags in Edmonds when it has been reported that people are voluntarily switching to cloth bags anyway. He questioned if this is really one of

the most important items on the City Council's agenda. Chair Bowman and Board Member Stewart suggested that this effort makes a statement that the City Council supports positive changes to improve the environment.

Chair Bowman said that while people often complain about what the City Council and/or Mayor have not done over the past several years, the voters must realize they got exactly what they wanted. He suggested the City's goal should be to encourage people to visit Edmonds and spend money to help pay for everything the citizens enjoy, just as other communities enjoy Edmonds citizens spending their money elsewhere. The majority of Edmonds citizens have not made this connection.

Board Member Stewart reported that she attended the April 6th City Council Meeting, where the Algalita Marine Research Foundation shared the results of their Junkride Project. The purpose of the presentation was to show how discarded plastics have impacted sea life. This is a public issue, and Edmonds must take a stand if they want to be sustainable. The resolution that was approved by the City Council to ban plastic bags is a step in the right direction. Chair Bowman pointed out that all but one of the merchants who participate in the Downtown Merchant's Association were in support of the resolution. Board Member Clarke cautioned that it is more appropriate to lead the City in the right direction rather than cramming policies down people's throats.

The Commission agreed to table further discussion on the issue of sustainability until a future meeting, recognizing that most of their previous discussions have centered on sustainability.

REVIEW OF EXTENDED AGENDA

Mr. Chave explained that sustainability is a City Council priority for 2009 and would keep the Board busy throughout the year. Perhaps the Board's next discussion should center on how best to approach the issue. For example, subcommittees of the Board could be formed to tackle different issues in preparation for a combined Board effort.

Mr. Chave reported that by the end of 2009, the Board would begin their work on the 2010-2011 Comprehensive Plan Update, which is required every seven years by State Law to make sure the document is consistent with regional plans and State law. He reminded the Board that the Vision 2040 Plan, which was adopted in 2008, moved the planning horizon much further out and provided a different configuration for how the region is supposed to grow. There is a difference of opinion within Snohomish County about what the means and how quickly jurisdictions must address the changes in their plan. He explained that the City is not legally required to revisit the growth target in their 2011 Comprehensive Plan Update, but they are required to update all the countywide policies through Snohomish County Tomorrow to be consistent with the regional vision. Logically, if the City must make their plan consistent with the countywide policies by 2010, they should at least take a look at what the Vision 2040 Plan says about Edmonds, as well. That means potentially looking at the current targets for 2025 and considering the impacts of the new growth targets would have on the City's Comprehensive Plan. It would be to the City's benefit to not wait too long to make these decisions. He noted that the next formal countywide process would be conducted sometime between 2012 and 2015. However, the City would likely take the opportunity in 2010 and 2011 to do the work ahead of time. This would put the City in the position of knowing where they stand when the countywide effort gets underway.

Mr. Chave reminded the Board that they would also be working on the Development Code Re-Write Project in 2009. A fair amount of this work has been accomplished, but there are some items remaining.

Chair Bowman invited the Board Members to review the list of extended agenda topics and forward him a list of their top three or four priorities. He agreed to compile the list and present it to the Board for discussion and finalization. The Board agreed that perhaps a joint meeting with the City Council would be helpful to prioritize the issues once the list of extended agenda items has been finalized.

ADJOURNMENT

The Commission meeting was adjourned at 9:05 p.m.

APPROVED