

APPROVED FEBRUARY 13TH

**CITY OF EDMONDS
MINUTES OF JOINT MEETING
PLANNING BOARD/ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION**

January 23, 2013

Chair Reed called the meeting of the Edmonds Planning Board to order at 7:03 p.m. in the Council Chambers, Public Safety Complex, 250 – 5th Avenue North.

PLANNING BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

John Reed, Chair
Valerie Stewart, Vice Chair
Bill Ellis
Neil Tibbott

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT

Kevin Clarke (excused)
Ian Duncan (excused)
Philip Lovell (excused)
Todd Cloutier

STAFF PRESENT

Dave Earling, Mayor
Rob Chave, Development Services Director
Stephen Clifton, Community Svc./Economic Dev. Director
Francis Chapin, Cultural Services Manager
Carrie Hite, Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Director
Cindi Cruz, Administrative Assistant
Phil Williams, Public Works Director
Jim Lawless, Assistant Police Chief
Sandy Chase, City Clerk
Shawn Hunstock, Finance Director
Karin Noyes, Recorder

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSIONERS

PRESENT

Doug Purcell
Debbie Matteson
Bruce Witenberg
Evan Pierce
Darrol Haug
Darlene Stern
Nathan Proudfoot
Rich Senderoff
Evelyn Wellington
John Rubenkonig

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSIONERS

ABSENT

Teresa Wippel
Marc Knauss
John Dewhirst
Don Hall
Gail Sarvis
John Eckert
Kevin Garrett

CITY COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT

Joan Bloom
Kristiana Johnson

READING/APPROVAL OF MINUTES

BOARD MEMBER TIBBOTT MOVED THAT PLANNING BOARD THE MINUTES OF JANUARY 9, 2013 BE APPROVED AS AMENDED. BOARD MEMBER ELLIS SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF AGENDA

The agenda was accepted as presented. However, Chair Reed pointed out that after the consultant's presentation of the Edmonds Strategic Action Plan, the Board, Commission and audience would have an opportunity to ask questions.

PRESENTATION OF DRAFT EDMONDS STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN

Mr. Clifton pointed out that the meeting would be recorded and played on the government channel. However, due to technical difficulties, part of the meeting will be filmed in black and white and part in color, depending on which camera is used.

Mr. Clifton advised that under the guidance of Beckwith Consulting Group (BCG), Edmonds citizens and representatives from businesses and landowners, community organizations and elected officials have been working together over the past year to help generate a list of priorities and set a course for the City over the next few years. This set of priorities and actions is encompassed in the draft Strategic Action Plan currently before the Commission and Board. The document was prepared by BCG and contains community-identified priorities and possible actions related to each. Many ideas, opinions and recommendations have been gathered over the past year through various activities which include:

- Interviews conducted by Tom Beckwith and Steve Price, both from BCG, with the City's last and current Mayors, past and current City Council Members and department directors.
- Twenty discussion groups (stakeholder meetings), organized around subjects of interest, were held with service clubs, young adult outreach organizations, senior center, individuals at large, environmental, parks and recreation, performing and visual arts, transportation, economic development, waterfront, hospital and medical community, developers, governance, and the business districts of Downtown, Perrinville, Westgate, Firdale Village and Highway 99.
- Five surveys were conducted to solicit input and opinions: adult survey (681 responses), young adult survey (119 responses), business owner survey (219 responses), customer survey (484 responses) and employee survey (86 responses).
- More than 140 people attended the community charrettes held at the Edmonds Conference Center and Edmonds Library Public Plaza Meeting Room and Frances Anderson Center on March 14 and 19, 2012.
- About 80 people attended an open house held at the Edmonds Library Plaza Meeting Room on May 3, 2012, where a list of 72 potential action items that were identified during the earlier mentioned were presented to the public. Participants were provided rating sheets and asked to rate the importance of the draft actions. An identical rating sheet was created using Survey Monkey and a link to the rating sheets was posted on the City's website. An email blast of more than 9,000 email addresses and notification to media entities was also used to announce the electronic method of rating the draft actions. In total, 213 people participated in the rating exercise.
- A registered voter's survey was undertaken by BCG, and 466 people completed the survey either on line or by mail back. The survey asked Edmonds residents to rank the importance of the draft priorities. The results of the survey were presented during Retreat #6.

Mr. Clifton reported that during the Strategic Planning process, the City Council, Planning Board and Economic Development Commission conducted six joint retreats/workshops. Each of the meetings was open to the public and aired on the City's government channel. He noted that a summary of each of the retreats was included in the Introduction Section of the Edmonds Strategic Action Plan, and more detailed information can be found in Appendix A of the plan. He reported that at Retreat #6, Tom Beckwith and his team presented a Draft Strategic Action Plan Report, which included actions generated throughout the process and grouped under ten categories and themes. Also at Retreat #6, a subcommittee was created consisting of four City staff, two Planning Board Members, four Economic Development Commissioners, and two City Council Members. The subcommittee met three times to discuss the matrix and determined that 10 categories were too many, particularly as they relate to potentially tying them to a future Budgeting-by-Priorities (BBP) process. The subcommittee discussed the need to create five broader overall strategic objectives instead, and the five objectives are highlighted on Page 3 of the draft Strategic Action Plan. Using this direction from the subcommittee, Mr. Beckwith generated the five-page narrative and action tasks contained within the draft document.

Mr. Clifton advised that prior to the meeting, he forwarded the comments from the Planning Board and Economic Development Commission on the draft Strategic Action Plan to Mr. Beckwith to help him prepare for the presentation. He said it is important to note that although each Economic Development Commission, Planning Board and City Council member was provided a paper copy of the draft report, a PDF version was provided to all members earlier. In addition, the PDF version and appendices can be found on the City's website via a link to the January 23rd Planning Board meeting. He explained that tonight's presentation is Part 1 of a two-step process; Step 2 will be a presentation to the City Council. He

advised that the City Clerk issued a special meeting notice in case four or more City Council Members attend this evening's meeting.

Mr. Clifton encouraged the Commissioners and Board Members to provide their comments to Mr. Beckwith after the presentation or to staff in writing by January 25th so they can be considered and possibly incorporated into the draft report.

Tom Beckwith, Beckwith Consulting Group, explained that the purpose of the strategic action planning process was to identify how economic trends have impacted Edmonds' fiscal sustainability and help the City to make strategic decisions about services and projects that reflect citizens' desires and aspirations. The draft Strategic Action Plan is a six to ten-year plan that included the entire community in the process. The objective was to get as much participation and input as possible. The process resulted in 60 specific action tasks with citywide priorities, lead agents and participants, schedules and performance measures.

Mr. Beckwith advised that six joint Planning Board, Economic Development Commission and City Council retreats were held throughout the process. Summaries of the retreats were provided in the Introduction Section of the plan, and more detailed information about the meetings can be found in Appendix A. He advised that numerous public outreach events resulted in a total of 2,514 participants, including some multiple events per person. He summarized that the public outreach effort was successful, which indicates that members of the community are interested in the process and what can be done in the future.

Mr. Beckwith explained that the 60 specific action items were grouped into five strategic objective themes: economic sustainability, environmental sustainability, community character and quality of life, transportation and infrastructure and responsible, accountable and responsive government. A separate worksheet was prepared for each of the action items to identify a lead agency responsible for organizing and facilitating an action, the action's priority ranking, complexity of the action, potential participants, an implementation schedule, and potential performance measures.

Mr. Beckwith reviewed the draft Strategic Action Plan by answering the following questions:

- **Who defined the strategic action tasks?** The strategic action tasks are based on public input from focus group sessions, surveys and charrettes.
- **Who defined the priorities?** The rankings were defined through the voter household survey. City resources should be allocated to action tasks that received the highest ranking. That does not mean the lower ranked projects will not get done, but they would likely need to be done with something other than City resources.
- **What are the financial implications of the task priorities?** The action tasks, including some City tasks, do not compete for the same sources of funding. Many will be accomplished by parties and funds other than the City such as the Port of Edmonds, Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT), and the Chamber of Commerce.
- **How do the priorities signify?** The rankings indicate voter household opinions of the overall priority of each and all actions on a citywide basis for accomplishments within the next ten years, regardless of who would be the implementing agents or the sources of funding.
- **How will the City use the priorities for City actions?** Where the City is the lead agent, the priorities will be used in the Budget by Priorities (BBP) process to determine how the City's limited financial and staff resources will be budgeted or allocated amongst the City's action tasks. One of the first tasks is to identify how much is available to be spent, what the City most wants to achieve, the total cost of implementing the priority actions, and a timeline for each action.
- **How will the priorities be used when the City is not the lead?** Depending on whom the lead agent is, the organization will likely follow the same process as the City in determining how to allocate resources to accomplish the action tasks.
- **Will the action tasks be accomplished in rank order?** It is not likely the action tasks will be accomplished in rank order, nor should that be the City's objective. Some of the action tasks can be initiated immediately and others will require lead times necessary to form participant groups, secure outside funding, conduct environmental reviews, etc. Therefore, even if a task is a high priority, it may take a number of months or years to fully initiate and achieve results. The City should be opportunistic and be open to starting lower-priority action tasks if funding becomes available and someone volunteers to take the lead. The City should not get caught up in doing the action tasks in order.
- **Should a low-priority task be ignored or deferred?** Not if the lead agent is successful in getting it accomplished or primed for accomplishment. Again, the Strategic Action Plan is designed to be opportunistic and multifaceted. The goal

should be to implement as many community-desired actions as possible involving as many participants as events and circumstances allow. Prioritization should not preclude interested groups from carrying through with an action task by providing leadership, funding, etc., as long as their work does not get in the way of a higher priority.

- **Should the list of action tasks be reduced or tasks eliminated?** It is not necessary to eliminate action tasks that have low priority scores if there is an interest group who is willing to take the lead and implement the action without unduly using City funds or resources. All action tasks should remain in the plan, recognizing that the plan provides a list of action tasks City residents want to see accomplished within the next 6 to 10 years. It is not the intent that all 60 action tasks be accomplished in one year. Spreading them over a 10 year period would be approximately six per year, which is certainly doable.
- **What does complexity mean?** Complexity refers to the degree of ease or difficulty that may be involved in implementing each action task. Low-complexity tasks may involve a single implementing agent following a simple process. High-complexity tasks may involve multiple agents and a complex process that includes public participation, environmental impact statements, permits, hearings, etc.
- **Who determined complexity?** A subgroup of the Joint Committee and Department Director's determined the complexity assessments ranging from low, moderate, high and very high. Just because an action task is complex, does not mean it should not be initiated. But the City should recognize that the process will be much slower and likely require more resources. Low-priority action tasks tend to be less complex and easier to do.
- **What do months mean?** Months refers to the probably production time involved in implementing an action task, accounting for specific steps involved and the degree of complexity. An ongoing entry indicates the action task is a continuous activity.
- **How do months relate to an implementation schedule?** The schedules shown assume each action task would be initiated as soon as possible and extend through the number of months assigned to the task. However, the actual schedules will depend on who the lead agent is, how many other tasks they are responsible for, the complexity of the project, when funding is available, etc.
- **Who are the participants?** The participant lists include all parties who will be affected by or on an individual action task. The lists were determined from the focus group session, survey comments, charrettes, and by the consultants and staff.
- **Who are the lead agents?** The lead agent is assumed to be the primary implementing party where there is a single agent, or the facilitating and implementing parties where there are multiple leads. The City has been identified as the lead in 31 specific action tasks. However, more complex projects will require multiple leads to complete.
- **How were the lead agents selected?** In some instances, lead agents were self-selected based on the actions they proposed during the focus group sessions, survey comments or charrettes. In other instances, the lead agents were presumed to be the most likely parties having the predominant interest and benefit in the actions and the resources with which to accomplish or facilitate the actions with other affecting or affected participants.
- **How are the lead agents distributed between the City and others?** Though Edmonds elected officials and staff are involved in a large number of action tasks, in some situations they will have facilitator rather than lead status. There are six City entities named in the draft plan as lead or facilitator, resulting in the City having 31 lead responsibilities and 46 facilitator responsibilities. About 26 agencies including, City Departments, the Port of Edmonds, Downtown Merchant's Association, Edmonds School District, Sound Transit and Chamber of Commerce have been identified for lead and facilitator responsibilities. Nearly all were participants in the Strategic Planning process. The list of other agencies was created by asking participants at the charrettes to identify who they thought should participate in the implementation of tasks.
- **Will this require additional organizations?** It could, depending on who the participants and lead agents determine will be most effective and representative of the costs and benefits. Ad hoc groups are definitely an option to bring together groups with specific expertise. The real strength of the Strategic Action Plan is not only organizing resources and financing, but getting other people involved in the community process.
- **What will result if the lead is not interested or able?** The lead responsibility will pass to another interested party or parties or the action will not be accomplished.
- **What are the performance measures?** The performance measures are indicators or benchmarks by which to measure the progress and effectiveness of the implementation of each of the action tasks. It is important for the City to have the ability to measure performance in a straightforward and simple process. Some measurements will be objective and based on numbers, but others will be based on public perception of how well the City is doing. Many communities conduct annual surveys.

- **When will the Strategic Action Plan be updated?** The plan defines key objectives, tasks, responsibilities, schedules performance measures, etc. for the next six to ten years concurrent with updates to the Comprehensive Plan, Capital Facilities Plan, and budgets. However, should an unforeseen event require, the plan can be updated if and when the City Council deems it necessary. It is up to the City Council to determine when and how broad each update should be.

Next, Mr. Beckwith described the process for moving the plan forward as follows:

- Finalize the draft document and complete Council hearings. The plan is open to reform at this time, and they welcome comments and suggestions from the Commission and Board before it is forwarded to the City Council for review and approval.
- Confirm lead agents and participants. It is important to make sure that those identified as lead agents are comfortable taking on the assigned task. It may also be necessary to create ad hoc groups or involve multiple players in some tasks.
- Coordinate with other City, public agency, and non-government programs. Some participants will come from outside the City's jurisdiction such as Sound Transit, WSDOT, etc. They need to make sure the City's Strategic Plan is reflected in the plans and goals of these other public and non-governmental entities.
- Monitor performance and adjust particulars as necessary.

Mr. Beckwith said BCG completed a very similar action plan for the City of Chehalis approximately two years ago called the Chehalis Renaissance Plan. The plan identified projects to make the Chehalis area a more attractive place in which to live, enhance job opportunities and involvement of youth, increase tourism traffic, and grow the retail base to enhance local shopping. Because of the recession, the city had no resources and very little staff time to commit to the plan's implementation. Whatever actions were implemented had to happen outside of the normal city channels. Driven by voluntary leadership, broad community participation, and using disciplined project management, the Chehalis Community Renaissance Team (CCRT) was formed to implement the council-approved plan through non-city actions. The CCRT counts on and encourages citizens to provide leadership and work in partnership with them. They rely primarily upon private investments and donations to implement projects, and their success is a combination of small, medium and large projects. He emphasized that it was important for their plan to be sanctioned by the government leaders in order for the community to buy into its implementation.

Mr. Beckwith reported that, to date, the CCRT has completed 21 action tasks, and 15 more are in progress, and they have fewer resources than the City of Edmonds. He stressed the importance of moving forward with projects that are less complex but can build momentum amongst the community, such as wayfinding signs. He emphasized the need to reach out and engage all of the resources in the City to achieve the action tasks identified in the draft plan. He expressed his belief that 60 action tasks are not too many. The key to getting started is finding interested people and/or entities to take the lead and work under the guise of a City-approved plan.

Commissioner Senderoff said he was happy that the consultants pointed out the connection between the Strategic Action Plan and the BBP program. He said it was his impression that not everyone who participated in the focus groups understood this connection. He pointed out that while the individual worksheets identify the lead agencies and participants for each action task, it is not clear whether or not the action will require City funding. He suggested that a box be added to the worksheets to indicate when City funding will be required to implement a project. While the City is identified as the lead agency for 31 of the action items, that does not necessarily mean City funding will be required.

Mr. Senderoff said he often likes to see proposals presented in different ways to highlight various concepts and ideas. He noted that sometimes the responsibilities of different departments overlap. As the City moves forward with their BBP program, he suggested it would be helpful to provide an alternate table that identifies the action tasks that each of the departments would be responsible for or required to participate in.

Mr. Beckwith suggested that, at this point in the process, discussions about funding need to be generic. Although it would be possible to indicate when City funding would be required, it would be more difficult to identify whether the funding would come from the general fund, the utility fund, grant funding, etc. Commissioner Senderoff agreed the plan does not need to be specific about funding, but it would be helpful to at least identify when City money would be needed to implement an action task. Mr. Beckwith pointed out that BBP may require levels of funding from more than one source in the City, as more than one department would be involved in many of the action tasks. He questioned the need to go into great detail in the plan

about funding, when that is the purpose of the City Council's upcoming BBP Program. The BBP Program can allow non-governmental groups to make proposals for certain projects, as well. It is the City Council's prerogative to determine how to budget the action items amongst the various departments. Commissioner Senderoff said he did not mean to imply that a detailed funding strategy should be included in the plan. However, he felt it would be helpful to identify the departments that would participate in each of the action tasks and whether or not City funding would be required.

Commissioner Witenberg asked Mr. Beckwith to describe the next step in the process as the plan moves forward to the City Council for approval. He also asked Mr. Beckwith to share his experience about how long it typically takes to obtain city council approval. Mr. Beckwith answered that because adoption of the Strategic Action Plan is not a Growth Management Act requirement, the City Council can adopt the document whenever they are comfortable with its contents. Mr. Clifton added that, although not required, the City Council would likely conduct a public hearing. Commissioner Witenberg observed that the Strategic Planning process was statistically valid in terms of surveys and the number of participants in the various sessions. If the data is statistically valid, he questioned the purpose of the public hearing and the weight the City Council would give to additional public comments that may or may not have already been received as part of the statistically valid process. Mr. Beckwith replied that the City Council would likely receive two types of comments. "big picture" comments about whether or not the action tasks are all necessary or if the list could be narrowed down and comments on the "nitty gritty" elements of the plan such as lead agents, were all participants properly identified, length of time for each project, etc. These questions will help the City Council evaluate whether or not the action tasks have been realistically stated.

Commissioner Witenberg asked if part of the City Council's process will involve reprioritization of the action tasks. Mr. Beckwith emphasized that the priorities in the plan are consistent with surveys and public comments. He said he does not anticipate the City Council will want to change the priorities. Their discussion will most likely focus on implementation and incorporating the action tasks into the City's work program and budget.

Steve Price, Beckwith Consulting Group, emphasized that the City Council has the prerogative to do whatever they want with the draft plan: adopt it or not, modify it or not. However, he reminded the Board and Commission that the process was developed with input and guidance from the City Council, which should give them a comfort level to receive and act upon the community's input. He once again reviewed the elements that were part of the extensive public outreach program. Mr. Beckwith added that, once adopted, the City Council can use the plan as guidance when allocating funds for action tasks.

Contrary to Page 17 of the draft plan, Commissioner Stern expressed her belief that it would be better to approach the lead agents and participants to gauge their level of interest before sending the plan to the City Council for approval. This will provide assurance to the City Council that lead agents and participants are willing to accept the responsibilities. Commissioner Rubenkönig suggested that the City Council must approve the action tasks identified in the plan before the lead agents and participants are finalized. Mr. Beckwith agreed with Commissioner Stern that, politically, the plan would have smoother sailing before the City Council if the lead agents and participants are identified first. He suggested that the draft plan could be circulated amongst the potential lead agents and participants before it is finalized and presented to the City Council.

Commissioner Proudfoot observed that whether or not the City Council approves the plan, the real issue centers on what the community is willing to pursue. He noted that lead agents could include people in the community who want to push forward a particular objective and are willing to devote the time and resources to the project. Mr. Beckwith explained that while the City of Chehalis chose to create just one group, the City of Edmonds could create several groups that focus on different areas of interest. The plan is intended to encourage groups with specific interests to get involved to move action tasks forward. However, City Council validation of the plan is necessary in order to empower members of the community to move projects forward. Working together can create a significant amount of synergy.

Mr. Clifton reported that he had a lengthy discussion with Mr. Beckwith regarding the overall structure of the plan, particularly Pages 4 and 5 of the introduction. He observed that the question and answer format used in the consultant's slide presentation provides a much better explanation of the overall Strategic Action Plan and clarifies the 60 action task items. He suggested that incorporating a question and answer format into the introduction of the document would help people really understand the plan's contents.

Mr. Clifton said he supports the earlier suggestion that the plan be circulated amongst the various interest groups, asking if they are comfortable with their identified roles in each of the action tasks. The question is whether this should occur before or after the plan is presented to the City Council for review and final approval. Mr. Beckwith pointed out that circulating the plan before forwarding it to the City Council would give the interest groups an opportunity to provide feedback to the City Council and validate their willingness to serve as lead agents or participants. Mr. Price explained that strategic planning and implementation of the strategic plan are two separate processes. In his experience with other communities, ad hoc committees are formed to take on specific action tasks, and the lead agents simply provide facilitation and organization to get the task started. The City could appoint a strategic planning committee to be responsible for keeping track of how each of the ad hoc groups are functioning, but he cautioned against getting hung up on how the groups will get the work done. They should let the groups outline their own work programs. Mr. Beckwith added that if it is not carefully, the City can focus more on organizing than on doing. He encouraged them not to get too hung up on details; let the groups emerge and the City will be surprised how quickly they take off.

Commissioner Pierce suggested the City come up with a better name for the Strategic Action Plan. He also asked at what point dollar valuation to implement the action plan would come into play. He suggested that project costs may alter the ranking somewhat. Mr. Beckwith said costs are dealt with as part of the next phase of BBP. The first step in the BBP process is to identify the revenue available, what you want to achieve, how you can achieve what you want to do, and what are alternative resources. Rather than starting out with what the City wants to spend, it should identify what it wants to accomplish and then look for all potential funding opportunities.

Board Member Stewart thanked the consultant team for their hard work, which provided a good representation of citizens from various facets of the community. She said her comments were related to organization of the plan to make it easier for the public to read and understand. She suggested that the table of contents should list not only the five objectives, but also the sub-objectives and action items that pertain to each of the sub-objectives. She suggested it would also be helpful for the table of contents to identify the order of priority so people can see the highest priorities at a glance. If they want more details about each of the action items, the table of contents will direct them to the applicable pages in the plan. Mr. Beckwith agreed this change would be helpful. She further suggested that Objective 3 should include some sub-objectives to be consistent with the other objectives contained in the plan. She also pointed out that "financing for Yost Pool" is listed as a very high priority, but Yost Pool Improvements is listed as a moderately low priority.

Board Member Stewart suggested that in an effort to get the community involved as lead agents and participants, perhaps the City Council could dedicate an hour at each of five City Council meetings to solicit volunteers for each of the five objectives. People interested in participating in a specific action task could attend the applicable City Council meeting to learn more and make commitments to serve. She expressed her belief that this approach would result in more buy-in from the City Council. Mr. Beckwith cautioned that approval of the plan and buy in by the City Council is very important, and there are no advantages associated with rushing this part of the process.

Board Member Stewart summarized that she appreciates the ideas for implementation that were provided by Mr. Beckwith throughout this presentation. He has been through many strategic planning processes and has ideas and expertise that can help the City see and understand the possibilities. She said she hopes he will be willing to brainstorm with the City if they become stuck and need public/private partnership ideas.

Board Member Tibbott asked Mr. Beckwith to provide some idea of what the qualifications might be for the City staff person who is assigned to help empower the lead agents to connect with resources or sponsor a project. Mr. Beckwith explained that real empowerment comes from a Rotary Club style meeting, where a representative from each of the group attends and provides an update on how projects are going. This format allows participants to help each other out, and gets away from the assumption that one person can do it all. He suggested that Mr. Clifton has the qualifications and ability to lead a group of this type. As volunteers approach the City wanting to take on an action item, Mr. Clifton could become the City's contact person to identify resources that are available from the City's side.

Board Member Ellis asked how the City would deal with conflicts that arise when a volunteer steps forward to lead a relatively low-priority project that he/she is passionate about, but City funds are needed to move the project forward. To answer this question, Mr. Beckwith provided an example of a skate park. Although a skate park may be a low-priority project that would only be used by a small number of citizens, those who enjoy the sport are passionate about it. Skate parks

are quite costly to construct and typically require some type of public funding. He shared a recent situation in which youth organized a group of people to help them design and fund a new skate park. While this activity required some staff time, no city funds were involved. The group obtained grant funding, which was matched with outside funding. Board Member Ellis summarized that the City could authorize someone who is passionate about a lower-priority project to move forward with the City's blessing, recognizing that no City funds would be provided. Commissioner Proudfoot pointed out that in a recent internet search, he found numerous funding opportunities for small projects such as neighborland.com.

Commissioner Matteson asked how long it took the CCRT to start implementing their plan once it was approved. Mr. Beckwith answered that the CCRT members were generally the same as those who participated in the strategic planning process, and some of the projects identified in the plan were actually started before the plan was formally adopted.

Commissioner Haug suggested that the terms used to identify higher priority action tasks should be parallel to the terms used to identify lower priority action tasks. Mr. Beckwith agreed.

Board Member Reed expressed his belief that the draft plan needs more work to improve its organization and clarity before it is presented to the City Council. He expressed concern that the City has been identified as lead on 31 of the 60 action tasks, and co-lead on 45. Coordinating the implementation effort will be a major undertaking that must be well thought out and managed. Mr. Beckwith pointed out that as the City works through their BBP program, lead agents could be asked to block out time periods for each of the action tasks. Until the City reaches this point in the process, projecting timelines will be arbitrary. He emphasized that all of the action tasks identified in the plan cannot be implemented in the first few months. Some will be ongoing projects and take months and years to complete, particularly those that are more complex.

Commissioner Pierce suggested that much of Chehalis' success has to do with their size and the hunger of their community for change. Mr. Beckwith agreed that Chehalis is more manageable in size, but it's complexity is equal to Edmonds in many ways. For example, they must deal with railroad issues, flooding, etc. While they formed a citywide organization to implement their plan, the City of Edmonds may decide the best approach is to form several ad hoc groups around themes. The important part of the process is getting the participants engaged and then letting the process flow to see how things materialize. Mr. Price added that BCG can provide a number of examples of communities that successfully implemented strategic plans, as well as those that were not successful. He noted that the City of Bellingham went through a similar strategic planning process several years ago, and they were able to complete 80% of their tasks within six years. He explained that the key to successful implementation is identifying what the community wants and appointing individuals to kick start each of the tasks. Many projects can be done once a city focuses on tasks and where the resources can be found.

Mr. Price summarized that failure to initiate action is why many communities fail to implement their strategic plans. Synergy is created when the community sees that changes are happening. Successfully implementing action tasks invigorates a community to realize what can be done. He stressed that getting projects going as quickly as possible builds momentum. He advised that the City recognizes its role in getting tasks started, which will likely to involve staff time, and not necessarily capital dollars. If they successfully accomplish action tasks, the community will become excited and more invested in the plan's implementation.

Mr. Beckwith explained that some communities make the mistake of being overly concerned with organization. Sooner or later, creating the organization takes over what the organization is supposed to do. Communities also make the mistake of assuming they cannot do anything until they get certain priorities done. Some tasks will take longer to materialize, and they should focus on what can be achieved at the time. If a project is not achievable now, wait for a time and let it germinate. He cautioned that communities should not get hung up on individual responsibilities for each project. If someone does not want to participate, they need to find someone else to take the project on. He said that of the 60 action tasks identified in the plan, some are of high interest to the community. In these cases, they should identify lead agents and participants and let them get started immediately, regardless of their priority ranking, since this will build momentum for future projects.

Commissioner Purcell observed that it may be best to forward the plan to the City Council sooner rather than later, because that is the level where momentum is built. He noted that some structural and style changes have been proposed, particularly the recommendation to incorporate the question and answer format into the introductory language, which makes sense. He suggested the real task was to identify for the City Council what the community wants to do. The plan has done that, and it

should be forwarded to the City Council so they can start working their way through it. Mr. Beckwith agreed they should focus on how to implementation of the plan because the community has already identified what they want to do.

Commissioner Witenberg agreed with Commissioner Purcell. He asked if a timeline has been established for City Council review and approval of the draft plan. Mr. Beckwith said he does not anticipate it will take the City Council a lengthy amount of time to review and approve the document, and they can begin to discuss the plan's implementation even before the plan is formally adopted. He suggested that adoption is a formality rather than the end of the process.

Commissioner Senderoff noted that many of the action tasks identified in the plan are not new to the community. For example, citizens of Edmonds coordinated with the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Department and the National Wildlife Federation to qualify for community wide Backyard Wildlife Habitat certification. In addition, volunteers got together and formed a 5013C organization and worked with the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Department to make a lot of changes to the dog park. He summarized that Edmonds is a community that rises to the occasion when challenged and given the opportunity to work in areas of interest. The City can basically say go, and then get of the way. He said participants and lead agents know they can make things better. Mr. Beckwith concurred and said BCG realized early in the process that Edmonds has tremendous resources and talent.

Commissioner Pierce asked approximately how long it would take to get an implementation plan in place, and what can be done in the interim. He suggested they could invite participants and lead agents to a future work meeting to talk about their willingness to move forward with certain action tasks. Commissioner Stern agreed that they do not need to wait for the City Council to approve the plan before they start contacting participants and lead agents. She suggested that members of the strategic plan steering committee could contact these individuals independently, encouraging them to prepare action plans for the City Council's consideration. This type of approach could act as a catalyst and help the City Council understand that implementing the objectives will not be hard if they just get started. Mr. Beckwith agreed that the important thing is to just get something started and momentum will build. The longer the City waits, the less likely the plan will be implemented. They should start by enlisting volunteers to lead the projects.

Mr. Clifton announced that he has already started circulating the draft plan to interest groups. For example, the Chamber of Commerce Board is currently reviewing the document. He suggested the document be forwarded to other interest groups, as well as potential leaders and participants. He also pointed out that some of the action tasks are already underway, and it is important to highlight this in the plan that is submitted to the City Council.

Mr. Beckwith cautioned that the City should not try to over monitor a lead agent once he/she has been appointed to take over a specific action task. If a person is willing to put time and effort into the task, the City should let him/her go forward as independently as possible. If the City tries to over monitor, the leader may lose interest in the project.

Mr. Clifton summarized that staff has taken notes of the discussion with the consultant. In addition, the Commissioners and Board Members can submit written comments to him until Friday, January 25th. He agreed to forward the comments to BCG for possible incorporation into the draft plan. Mr. Beckwith emphasized that the strategic plan is not intended to be static. It should be a guide map of the projects the community wants to occur within the next six to ten years. While it needs to be formally adopted by the City Council, the process is more important than the date it was adopted.

Commissioner Rubenkonig asked if BCG would be asked to do a follow up study four or five years from now as part of updating the plan. Mr. Beckwith said that the City would likely do a conceptual review of the Strategic Action Plan in five or six years, but as long as the plan remains dynamic and projects are moved in and out, no major update should be needed.

Commissioner Purcell asked if either the Planning Board or Economic Development Commission should take formal action to forward the document to the City Council. Mr. Clifton answered that no formal action would be required at this time. However, it might be appropriate for members of the Strategic Plan Committee to review the document once the additional changes have been incorporated and before it is forwarded to the City Council.

Commissioner Matteson asked Mr. Beckwith to describe the next steps in the process. Mr. Beckwith said the next step in the process is to move the plan forward to the City Council, but this could be done simultaneously with additional public outreach and bringing participants into the City Council sessions to discuss their desire to act as lead agents for specific

projects. Commissioner Matteson questioned if it would be appropriate to create a list of talking points that could be used when approaching potential lead agents and participations. Once again, Commissioner Stern expressed her belief that approaching participants would be the next logical step in the implementation process and could occur simultaneously with the City Council's review process. This would enable them to report to the City Council that leaders and groups are ready to get started. Mr. Beckwith agreed it would be appropriate to circulate the plan to the public, inviting people to identify the action tasks they are interested in working on.

Mr. Clifton explained that there are many action tasks where the Economic Development Commission could be involved as participants, typically when the Economic Development Department is the lead agent. Some action tasks could involve the Commission as a whole, and others could involve a smaller Commission subcommittee. Mr. Beckwith said they did not break down the responsibilities of the Planning Board and Economic Development Commission. The plan assumes that if the Economic Development Department is listed as a lead agent, the Economic Development Commission would be participants. If the Planning Department is listed as a lead agent, the Planning Board would be participants.

Commissioner Matteson asked how the City would decide which of the high priority action tasks to work on first. Mr. Beckwith answered that these decisions would be answered as part of the BBP program. Again, he emphasized the importance of implementing action tasks that can be done quickly and that are highly visible in order to create momentum for future implementation of the plan. He emphasized that the Strategic Plan is not intended to be an implementation plan. Implementation will be addressed in the next phase.

Commissioner Pierce pointed out the need to keep the public informed and check for balance. He asked what BCG recommends for periodic performance reviews. Mr. Beckwith said the City should perform a holistic and comprehensive evaluation of their performance on an annual basis. However, it may be appropriate to also do periodic assessments as needed. Commissioner Senderoff pointed out that some of the performance measures require a baseline assessment and a process of how they will analysis progress a year from now, and some objectives may require review on a more timely basis. They do not necessarily need to be very specific as to when an assessment will be done. Maybe it should be up to the lead agent to determine what is appropriate for each particular objective, recognizing they want at least an annual review.

Mr. Clifton reminded the Board Members and Commissioners to submit their additional written comments to him by Friday, January 25th, so they can be forwarded to BCG. He said he would continue to reach out to interest groups, providing them a copy of the draft plan. He would also work with Mr. Beckwith to update the draft plan based on comments from the Board and Commission so it can be forwarded to the City Council. He emphasized that the longer the process drags out, the more disengaged the community will become. They need to keep people interested in the process.

ADJOURNMENT

The Board meeting was adjourned at 9:10 p.m.

APPROVED