

**APPROVED MARCH 25<sup>TH</sup>**

**CITY OF EDMONDS  
PLANNING BOARD MINUTES**

**March 11, 2015**

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Chair Tibbott called the meeting of the Edmonds Planning Board to order at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers, Public Safety Complex, 250 – 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue North.

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT**

Neil Tibbott, Chair  
Philip Lovell, Vice Chair  
Careen Rubenkönig  
Daniel Robles  
Valerie Stewart  
Evan Zhao, Student Representative

**STAFF PRESENT**

Rob Chave, Planning Division Manager  
Karin Noyes, Recorder

**BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT**

Todd Cloutier (excused)

**READING/APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**VICE CHAIR LOVELL MOVED THAT THE MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 25, 2015 BE APPROVED AS AMENDED. BOARD MEMBER RUBENKONIG SECONDED THE MOTION, WHICH CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**ANNOUNCEMENT OF AGENDA**

The agenda was accepted as presented.

**AUDIENCE COMMENTS**

**Ken Reidy, Edmonds**, said he is very excited that the Comprehensive Plan Update process is underway, and he is hopeful the City will have successful completion of the project this time. He said that, during the open house that was held just prior to the Board's regular meeting, he mentioned to John Owens and Shane Hope that it would be great if the City could establish a clear and identifiable target goal and end result of the project that could be used as a benchmark to measure progress. He said it would be great if the update is done in such a way that it will be easier to keep it accurate in the future. One problem with the current Comprehensive Plan is that references to the code were not updated on a consistent basis. He said he would also like to see consistency of job titles in the Development Code and Comprehensive Plan, particularly the director positions. This would enable staff to search the documents to learn what they are responsible for.

**REVIEW/RECOMMENDATION FOR DRAFT COMMUNITY CULTURE AND URBAN DESIGN ELEMENT**

Board Member Stewart commended staff for doing a great job of incorporating comments and ideas from the Board's last discussion relative to the draft Culture and Urban Design Element. She suggested that the Board consider an additional change to Item A.6 on Page 185 of Attachment 2 that would replace "other appropriate factors" with "habitat compatibility." She explained that "habitat compatibility" means that the trees should fit into the natural environment. Mr. Chave cautioned

that eliminating the words “other appropriate factors” from Item A.6 could imply that the list is exclusive, and that is not the intent. Board Member Stewart suggested that perhaps Item A.6 could be changed to read, “*Selecting trees for planting in the public rights-of-way should be based on a variety of factors, such as aesthetics, safety, maintenance, size, spacing, longevity, location, utilities, habitat compatibility, and other appropriate factors.*”

Board Member Robles said he sees an opportunity to unify the 1<sup>st</sup> Paragraph in the introductory language in the Community Culture Section of the element (Page 170 of Attachment 2) with the balance of the document by replacing the 2<sup>nd</sup> Paragraph with the following language: “*The citizens of Edmonds recognize the historic significance of culture, environment, arts, beauty, and recreation in our geographic area. A number of professional, non-profit, and volunteer organizations exist to ensure that these combined elements remain a vital part of the community’s heritage and quality of life.*” He summarized that the proposed language would allow the City to lean on its heritage when making decisions and prioritizations.

Board Member Stewart agreed that the language proposed by Board Member Robles would tie the introduction to the balance of the document. If the Board agrees to incorporate the new language as proposed, she suggested that the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sentence of the 1<sup>st</sup> Paragraph could also be eliminated.

Vice Chair Lovell voiced concern that replacing the current language in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Paragraph with the new language would eliminate reference to the Edmonds Arts Commission, which plays an important role in ensuring that arts are a vital part of the community’s quality of life. Mr. Chave pointed out that the reference to the Edmonds Arts Commission was intended as an example of a type of organization in Edmonds.

Chair Tibbott felt the language proposed by Board Member Robles helps paint the picture of what Edmonds would like to be known for. He recalled that there is often discussion about what is considered to be “Edmonds type of architecture,” but it is not defined in the Comprehensive Plan. He said he appreciates that the Urban Design Section attempts to set some guidelines that can be helpful when reviewing the architectural design of future projects. However, he questioned if it provides enough description to ensure that future development is consistent. Mr. Chave explained that the Comprehensive Plan is intended to provide general guidance, and the Development Code provides the detailed regulations that implement the goals and policies in the Comprehensive Plan.

Board Member Rubenkönig asked if Chair Tibbott is concerned that people reading the Comprehensive Plan will not have a firm understanding of the terms that are used in the Design Guidelines (i.e. massing, articulation, etc.). She asked if it would be appropriate to provide a definition or short explanation of the terms for the readers’ benefit. Chair Tibbott said he is not concerned that the terms are unfamiliar, but he wants to make sure the language provides sufficient guidance for the intent to be carried out in future design via the Development Code. Vice Chair Lovell agreed that the terms used in the language are common and will be well understood by anyone in the business of producing or evaluating design. He and Chair Tibbott agreed that the illustrations provided in the draft element are helpful and provide additional guidance and understanding.

Mr. Chave reviewed that design standards for the downtown have already been established in the Development Code, but design standards for multi-family and other types of development in the remainder of the City are not so clearly established. He advised that these additional standards would be added during the code re-write process. He commented that the City hired a consultant team (Makers) that has extensive experience rewriting codes, including design standards. The intent is to follow up the guidance provided in the Comprehensive Plan with more code standards for the pieces that are missing.

Chair Tibbott observed that some cities in the State have “historic downtowns.” He questioned if the proposed language provides enough detail and guidance to write Development Code regulations that capture the type of architecture that is distinctive for Edmonds. Mr. Chave said it would be hard to find a unified design type in most areas of Edmonds, and trying to pick out a design theme would be inadvisable. However, the draft language does provide direction on design features that are important such as building scale and orientation, streetscape, etc. Chair Tibbott said it will be interesting to see how the goals and policies of the Comprehensive Plan are carried out in the Development Code. He said he would be particularly interested in hearing feedback from the public relative to the future look of Edmonds as it continues to evolve.

Board Member Stewart referred to the introductory language in the Urban Design Section of the element (Page 174 of Attachment 2), which talks about the values of the members of the community. She asked if there is a policy document that specifies the community’s values. Mr. Chave said community values are discussed in various locations throughout the

Comprehensive Plan, but there is no “values” element. He advised that the Development Services Director would like to conduct a City visioning process, but this will take a tremendous amount of time and effort, and will not be part of the current update.

Chair Tibbott commented that improving the physical character of Edmonds assumes the City has values. Articulating the community’s values and choices about the character of Edmonds will be an evolving conversation, and bringing the issue to the forefront as part of the Board’s discussion about design and streetscape is appropriate. He said he hopes the City Council and public will comment regarding community values as they review the various elements of the Comprehensive Plan.

Vice Chair Lovell recalled that there are at least two specific examples of recent developments on SR-104 that were criticized relative to design. He asked if the Architectural Design Board (ADB) reviewed both of the projects. Mr. Chave answered that the ADB did review the Compass Development, but he is not sure design review was required for the daycare building. He recalled that the concerns relative to the Compass Development were more about bulk and configuration than design, and the Development Code was recently amended to address the problems.

### **DISCUSSION ON DRAFT STREETScape AND STREET TREE PLANS**

Board Member Rubenkönig referred to the list of key changes to the Street Tree Map (Attachment 3) and requested more background information about the term “poor performance.” She also asked who guided the replacement schedule. Mr. Chave answered that the proposed changes to the Street Tree Map was drafted by Rich Lindsey, Parks Maintenance Manager, and Engineering Department staff. These two groups reviewed the existing Street Tree Plan and Street Tree Map and considered how successful or unsuccessful the tree species had been. In some situations, they found that the tree species were inappropriate for the location and that they impacted the infrastructure. Board Member Rubenkönig asked who proposed the replacement species. Mr. Chave said the same staff team identified the replacement species. Based on their experience, these are tree species that have been shown to be successful. Board Member Rubenkönig said she would have liked to hear that a landscape architect had provided input. However, she supports the input from staff as it is likely the recommended species are already used successfully in the City. Mr. Chave advised that the draft Street Tree Plan will be presented to the Tree Board for feedback, as well.

Vice Chair Lovell also referred to Attachment 3, which explains the changes that have been proposed based on concerns about poor performance, irregular shape, difficulty pruning, disease and pest problems, and height and width concerns at maturity. It does not mention problems that occur when roots grow so large they heave up the sidewalks. Mr. Chave said that, although it is not listed in Attachment 3 as a specific concern, he knows it was considered by the staff team when drafting the proposed changes. Vice Chair Lovell voiced support for a gradual program of replacing trees that interfere with the sidewalk, are difficult to maintain, grow too large, perform poorly, etc. However, he expressed concern that there could be an overwhelming desire to save every tree in downtown Edmonds irrespective of the risk it may impose to the residents, buildings and infrastructure.

Mr. Chave explained that all three maps were provided to illustrate the different versions of the map. Board Member Stewart asked Mr. Chave to describe the differences between the 2006, 2010 and 2015 Street Tree Maps. He explained that the maps are more similar than different, but there were some changes to the list of tree species. Student Representative Zhao noted that a species is spelled “Ginko Biloba” on the 2006 Street Tree Map and “Ginkgo Biloba” on the 2015 Street Tree Map.

Board Member Rubenkönig observed that (Capital Pear) is the species called out in the existing plan for 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue, and it would remain the same. As per the proposed plan, Capital Pear would also be located on Main Street from the Ferry Terminal to 5th Avenue. She noted that the existing trees have started to bloom. They are lovely and tend to guide people down 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue. Bowhall Maple is identified for Main Street from 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue to 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue. This is a beautiful, statuesque tree that has presence. It does not continue all the way down Main Street to the Ferry Terminal because it would likely grow too large for the constrained area in the downtown and waterfront. She said she would like an opportunity to have a discussion with someone who can describe how the proposed plan is intended to flow and give importance to the different areas. Mr. Chave suggested the Board could ask Mr. Lindsey, who has on-the-ground experience with street trees, to be part of their next discussion. Chair Tibbott said it would also be helpful for Mr. Lindsey to provide pictures of the different tree species.

Mr. Chave summarized that the original Street Tree Plan was prepared by a landscape architectural firm. The intent was not to redo the plan, but to make a few adjustments where they know things are not working. He advised that the original plan that was prepared by the landscape architect is available for the Board's review. Board Member Rubenkonig suggested that reviewing the original plan could provide additional understanding as to why the Street Tree Map is the way it is.

Chair Tibbott noted that, as per the Extended Agenda, the Board would continue its review of the draft Street Tree Plan on March 25<sup>th</sup>. Vice Chair Lovell asked if this would be sufficient time for the Tree Board to review the Street Tree Plan and provide feedback to the Board. Mr. Chave noted that the Tree Board is not scheduled to meet again until April. He agreed to talk with the Development Services Director to find out if she is anxious to forward the Street Tree Plan to the City Council as soon as possible or if it could wait until the Tree Board has provided feedback. He said he would be very surprised if the Tree Board recommends major changes to the Street Tree Plan, but their comments would be helpful to the process. He summarized that, given the Board's comments, he is not sure there is much more they can do until the Tree Board has reviewed the document and provided feedback. The Board agreed to remove the discussion related to the draft Street Tree Plan from the March 25<sup>th</sup> agenda. They further agreed to review the draft Street Tree Plan again in April after the Tree Board's review.

Mr. Chave specifically referred to the goals and policies related to Streetscape and Street Trees found in the draft Community Culture and Urban Design Element (Attachment 2). He specifically noted that Policies A.5 and A.6 address the issue Vice Chair Lovell raised earlier about street trees that impact the public infrastructure.

### **REVIEW OF EXTENDED AGENDA**

The Board tentatively scheduled its retreat for July 8<sup>th</sup>, and Chair Tibbott invited Board Members to forward their suggestions for agenda topics. It was noted that a briefing on the Marina Beach Master Plan is scheduled for that evening and could be added as part of the retreat agenda.

### **DEVELOPMENT SERVICES DIRECTOR REPORT TO PLANNING BOARD**

Chair Tibbott referred to the written report provided by the Development Services Director.

Vice Chair Lovell specifically referred to the report relative to the Community Profile Brochure that was prepared to highlight some key demographic facts about Edmonds. He said he obtained a copy of the brochure at the open house that took place prior to the Board's regular meeting. He noted that the information in the brochure would also be posted on the City's website. He expressed his belief that the brochure is an excellent public relations tool.

Board Member Rubenkonig said it was wonderful to hear about the City's progress in reducing the greenhouse gasses attributed to City facilities by 26.4%.

Chair Tibbott voiced appreciation for the report, which summarizes the activities taking place around the City, as well as neighboring jurisdictions. The information is helpful to the Board Members.

### **DEVELOPMENT CODE MAJOR UPDATE: PROGRESS REPORT**

Mr. Chave referred to the written report prepared by the Development Services Director to keep the Board informed of the ongoing process to update the Comprehensive Plan.

### **PLANNING BOARD CHAIR COMMENTS**

Chair Tibbott announced that he and Vice Chair Lovell would present the Planning Board's quarterly report to the City Council on March 17<sup>th</sup>. He advised that Vice Chair Lovell prepared a PowerPoint presentation to highlight the Board's recent activities. He invited other Board Members to attend, as well. Mr. Chave agreed to confirm with the City Clerk that the presentation is scheduled on the Council's agenda for March 17<sup>th</sup>.

**APPROVED**

Chair Tibbott said he appreciates the diversity on the Planning Board and the thoughtful comments and direction that is provided. He said he hopes this will continue as they bring on new members in the coming months. He said he looks forward to another interesting year on the Board.

**PLANNING BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS**

Board Member Stewart announced that two students from Edmonds Woodway High School have been interviewing fishermen on the Edmonds Pier and doing research on the existing signage and missing information that should be added. She advised that the City is currently undergoing a project to rehabilitate the pier. While the project will focus primarily on the underpinnings, if money is available, it might also include restructuring the benches, shelters, etc. She reported that the students were well received by the design team and staff and were invited to work with them.

Board Member Stewart asked the Board Members to encourage their neighbors and friends to participate in the electronic open house relative to the Marina Beach Park Master Plan. She emphasized that public input is important to the process, which is moving forward rapidly. She said she participates on the advisory committee that will meet again on March 27<sup>th</sup> to collate the input received to date. She reported that an open house related to the master plan was well attended and good comments were made. Participants were divided into groups and asked to respond to a list of questions, and responses were forwarded to the consultant. She agreed to provide a link to access the electronic open house.

Vice Chair Lovell said he watched the City Council’s March 10<sup>th</sup> meeting where they had lengthy discussions with respect to the SR-104 Corridor Study and implementation of the Strategic Action Plan (SAP). At the meeting, the City’s consultant described the process the SAP Work Committee went through to assign a lead for each of the action items in the plan. As it turns out, the Planning Board has not been assigned as the official lead on any of the action items. The lead for most of the action items was given to the Public Works Department, the Parks Department, and the Economic Development Department. It was discussed that many of the action items lacked funding, and it will be up to the lead groups to identify potential funding opportunities. It was noted that implementation of the plan would extended to 2027, making it a long-range plan. He said the City Council expressed some slight concern that they were not given the responsibility to be a lead on any of the action items. There was also some discussion about whether they should focus on high-priority rather than low-priority action items. Two items, in particular, were used as an example. The idea to have a year-round farmer’s market was identified as a high priority by the citizens, and having a shuttle to connect the downtown to the waterfront was identified as a low priority. Neither of these action items have an identified lead at this time. The City Council indicated low concern about identifying a lead for the shuttle at this time since it is a low priority. However, the farmer’s market is a high priority that needs to have a lead identified as soon as possible.

Chair Tibbott asked if service groups or organizations have been assigned to take the lead on some action items. Vice Chair Lovell answered affirmatively and said the consultant’s entire report would come back to the City Council as a consent agenda item.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The Board meeting was adjourned at 8:20 p.m.