

**APPROVED FEBRUARY 10<sup>TH</sup>**

**CITY OF EDMONDS  
PLANNING BOARD MINUTES**

**January 27, 2016**

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Chair Lovell 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**

Philip Lovell, Chair  
Carreen Rubenkönig, Vice Chair  
Matthew Cheung  
Todd Cloutier  
Daniel Robles  
Nathan Monroe  
Samuel Kleven (Student Representative)

**STAFF PRESENT**

Shane Hope, Development Services Director  
Rob Chave, Planning Division Manager  
Karin Noyes, Recorder

**BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT**

Valerie Stewart (excused)

**READING/APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**BOARD MEMBER CHEUNG MOVED THAT THE MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 18, 2015 BE APPROVED AS AMENDED. VICE CHAIR RUBENKONIG SECONDED THE MOTION, WHICH CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**BOARD MEMBER ROBLES MOVED THAT THE MINUTES OF DECEMBER 9, 2015 BE APPROVED AS SUBMITTED. VICE CHAIR RUBENKONIG SECONDED THE MOTION, WHICH CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**ANNOUNCEMENT OF AGENDA**

The agenda was accepted as presented.

**AUDIENCE COMMENTS**

There was no one in the audience.

**DEVELOPMENT SERVICES DIRECTOR REPORT TO PLANNING BOARD**

In addition to her written report, Director Hope announced that, on January 26<sup>th</sup>, the City Council voted to adopt the Critical Areas Ordinance, including a set of amendments that were approved by the City Council in late December. Prior to City Council action, Mayor Earling voiced concern about some of the changes and indicated he would veto the Critical Areas Ordinance if all of the amendments were included. The City Council has indicated a desire to work together to resolve the issues of concern as soon as possible.

Chair Lovell noted that the City Council and Mayor have confirmed the appointment of Lauri Strauss as the “at large professional” on the Architectural Design Board, and the City Council is scheduled to interview another candidate on February 9<sup>th</sup> for the “builder” position.

Chair Lovell referred to the letter from Mayor Earling on behalf of the City to Sound Transit, voicing support for Sound Transit 3, which will be the next proposal put forth to voters in November to extend financing and planning arrangements for the next 20 years. In the letter, the City endorses certain aspects of the project, some of which could have a direct impact on Edmonds. He encouraged the Board Members to read the summary of the proposal that was attached to the report, as well as additional information that is available via Sound Transit’s website. The proposal may impact the City’s existing regulations at some point in the future.

Vice Chair Rubenkönig thanked Director Hope for making note of the Stewardship Training on January 27<sup>th</sup> through March 16<sup>th</sup> at McCullum Park. She said she is a member of Sustainable Community Stewards, which is sponsored by the Washington State University Extension Services, and is active as a Waste Warrior. She received her training from a similar event, and there are a number of different opportunities to serve. The training is an excellent session to become aware of what is taking place and allows participants to create new opportunities to volunteering within the program.

Director Hope announced that the City will celebrate the purchase of Civic Field at an event on February 3<sup>rd</sup> at 10:00 a.m. at the field.

### **PRESENTATION ON GROWTH AND LIVABILITY IN THE EDMONDS FUTURE**

Director Hope said the purpose of her presentation is to review how the community is changing, what the changes mean for the City, and how the City can plan for the future. She reminded the Board that Edmonds is a member of the Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC), which is a regional planning organization for Snohomish, King, Kitsap and Pierce Counties. The PSRC helps guide growth and development issues for the region, based on the Growth Management Act (GMA), which sets up regional organizations and calls for them to provide multi-county planning policies. The multi-county planning policies are supplemented by countywide planning policies and local planning policies. The PSRC is also the funding agent for many of the Federal Government’s transportation programs.

Director Hope advised that a Regional Growth Strategy was developed by PSRC for the four-county area. The overarching goals of the strategy is to minimize the environmental impact of growth, improve mobility, and make efficient use of existing urban land. She noted that the total growth expected in the region by 2040 is over 1.7 million people. The idea is the metropolitan cities (largest cities in each county) would take up the largest share of the growth (32%), and, cities in the same category as Edmonds would take up less (14%). She summarized although the figures are not exact, they provide an idea of how to help growth happen so it doesn’t take up farm and forest land. Rather, the intent is to improve urban areas where the infrastructure already exists in order to accommodate the anticipated growth.

Director Hope said the City also participants in a group called Snohomish County Tomorrow, which includes participants from all of the cities in Snohomish County, as well as some other agencies. She shared the following highlights from the group’s monitoring report:

- Snohomish County’s population has grown an average of 1.2% per year since 2010, and the majority of the county’s population (56%) resides within the cities.
- Urban Growth Areas (UGAs) accounted for 91% of the County’s population growth between 2011 and 2015, which is positive for long-term environmental protection, while recognizing the need for growth. UGAs include all official cities and towns, as well as areas that have been designated by the County for additional growth in an urban manner. Typically, UGAs are around cities or an island within cities, but they are also areas that have been developed but have not actually become cities. Most of these areas are expected to either incorporate as a new city or as part of an existing city at some point. The county and regional goal is to have more of the development occur in the UGAs rather than taking up farm and forest land; and that is, indeed, what has been happening.
- The County was hit hard during the recession, but employment has grown steadily since 2010, exceeding the previous 2008 peak in 2012 and reaching an annual average of 273,300 non-agricultural jobs in 2014. In addition, the unemployment rate was back down to 5.1% in 2014 after peaking at 10.7% in 2010 as a result of the recession.

- Countywide residential building permits have increased since 2010, driven primarily by increases in multi-family unit permits. There were 1,331 permits issued in 2014 for new multi-family units. Since falling to record lows in 2008, single-family permit activity countywide has stayed stable, averaging around 2,000 units per year for the entire 2008-2014 period.

Next, Director Hope provided statistics and shared the County's expectations for population and job growth through 2035 as follows:

- It is forecasted that Everett would have the largest growth in the county in terms of both population and employment. Bothell and Lynnwood would also have large shares.
- While Edmonds is expected to accommodate a smaller share, it is estimated that by 2035, Edmonds' population will increase by nearly 15% and jobs by over 21%. Chair Lovell requested clarification as to what is meant by jobs, and Director Hope said it references the number of new jobs in the City.
- The population and job growth estimates translate into about 5,550 more people, 2,520 more housing units, and 916 more jobs.
- It was noted that the past is not always a good indicator of the future. For example, between 2,000 and 2010, the City's population grew at an average rate of 19.4 people per year. However, since 2017, the City has grown at an average rate of about 295 persons per year. While they do not expect the increases to continue at that level, it is possible that Edmonds could grow by an average of 245.3 persons per year over the next 20 years.
- About 18% of the City's new residents have come from California and about 12% from Oregon.
- About 26% of Edmonds residents have income levels above the region's median levels compared to Kirkland at 31.5%, Bothell at 26.6%, and Snohomish County at 19.2%. About 17.9% of the City's residents are extremely low income, compared to 13% for Kirkland, 16.9% for Bothell, and 18.76% for the County.
- The median age in Edmonds is 46.9 years, which is higher than in most other parts of the County.
- While Edmonds remains predominantly white, making up an estimated 82.6% of the population in 2014, there is evidence that the greater region is becoming more diverse.

Director Hope briefly shared her thoughts on where growth in Edmonds would go. She reminded the Board that the City is undertaking a Highway 99 Subarea Planning Process in 2016, which has a lot of growth potential. Other key areas for growth include the Westgate and Five Corners areas.

Director Hope explained that, as the City discusses opportunities for growth, they should also consider transportation trends and the changing opportunities. For example, the north link of Sound Transit's light rail system is scheduled for completion to Lynnwood in 2023, and the City has a clear connection with the service, particularly at Mountlake Terrace. In addition, Community Transit operates Swift, a popular bus rapid transit service along Highway 99. Trends are changing with single-occupancy vehicles, as well. For example, ridesharing in the region is a growing portion of driving options, and fully autonomous vehicles are expected to debut in 2019. In addition, walking and bicycle transportation are popular activities and healthy modes of transportation.

Director Hope reminded the Board that the City must also consider rising sea levels as it plans for the future. While the exact impacts are unknown at this time, sea level rise will have some effect in Edmonds over a number of years.

Director Hope summarized that the question is not whether or not the City will grow. The City has always grown. The question is how the City will grow and how it will improve its livability. Looking out to 2035, with 5,550 more people, 2,520 more housing units, and 916 more jobs, the City will need creative solutions to house projected population increases. Affordable housing is already an issue in Edmonds, and possible solutions include:

- Infill development, such as making use of vacant or under-utilized parcels and/or increasing density by subdividing large lots.
- Detached Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU), which provide affordable housing options and may be used to house elderly parents. While not currently allowed in the City, detached ADU's would allow density to increase without significantly altering the existing character of neighborhoods.

- Mixed Use Development, which improves walkability of a neighborhood, reduces dependence on cars, and increases affordable housing options.

As they consider the best way for the City grow, Director Hope said it is important to keep in mind the characteristics that are important to the citizens of the community such as wildlife, walkability, parks, waterfront, and sustainability. Trends to think about include rising housing costs, income inequality, traffic congestion, more transit and walkability, climate change, increasing population, greater proportion of seniors, more/different jobs, changing land uses, lower air quality, greater racial and ethnic diversity, smaller households, and a younger generation (fewer driver's licenses, technology reliance, and urban living).

Chair Lovell thanked Director Hope for her excellent and informative presentation in terms of statistics, trends, history and projections. The presentation was also very thought-provocative in terms of ideas and what to think about for the future. The list of "things to think about" will be useful for all of the Board members to keep in mind as they undertake various land use items in the future. The list will also help guide property owners and developers as they design and develop properties on Highway 99 in the future, particularly housing and mixed-use development. He recalled that the Board will have a discussion later in the meeting related to a date and potential agenda items for their retreat. He suggested that Director's presentation would be a good topic of discussion.

Board Member Cloutier voiced support for the items included on the list of "things to think about." He also supports the list of characteristics that are important to the community and suggested that maintaining the "small town charm" of the downtown area should also be added to the lists. He voiced concern about relying too much on Highway 99, Westgate and Five Corners to accommodate the City's growth. There are also opportunities for creative infill development. He said he sees the trends associated with younger residents (fewer driver's licenses, technology, and urban living) as an opportunity for the City. Mixed-use development near transportation nodes would fit that kind of demographic well.

Board Member Robles said he recently worked with a City resident as he considered opportunities for redeveloping a large parcel of property that is zoned for multi-use. They met with City staff to discuss different options, and they were tremendously helpful in brainstorming ideas, such as micro-housing. It was good to see the City staff so open to considering the possibilities for the property.

Board Member Robles recalled that, a few years ago, he raised the issue of Airbnb and its impact to the City. Airbnb is designed to help people who live in the community have affordable housing and stay in their homes. The option can provide overnight accommodations in the City without building large hotels, and can help in times of disaster to house people locally. Other cities have grappled with the subject and have instituted different regulations to address parking and other impacts to neighborhoods. He suggested that establishing a City policy for Airbnb would be very progressive. The model has been well-established and is legally defensible, and the use is here to stay. Chair Lovell said his understanding is that Airbnb is used primarily for overnight travelers rather than residential situations. Board Member Robles explained that the emphasis is not to accept more people into the City, but to make housing more affordable for existing residents. It is an infill strategy that helps people afford their existing homes. He acknowledged that there have been some problems, but they are easy to mitigate. Board Member Cheung said he has heard concern that Airbnb has impacted the rental housing market because units that were previously available for rent on a long-term basis are being rented out for Airbnb instead. While the option is great for homeowners, it can increase the cost of rental housing. Board Member Robles agreed that is one issue that needs to be addressed.

Board Member Cheung requested statistics for where people who are leaving Washington State are going. Director Hope said the largest outflow of people are heading to Oregon and California. Board Member Cheung said he would be interested in knowing the average age of those who are moving in and out. Director Hope said she could likely provide statistics about the average ages of people who move in, but it may be more difficult to identify the average age of and where people move to when leaving.

Director Hope agreed with Board Member Cloutier that the City should consider a variety of strategies (infill development, transit-oriented development, etc.) for accommodating the growth, in addition to Highway 99, Five Corners and Westgate. No one solution will be adequate.

Vice Chair Rubenkönig said the topic of rising housing costs made her think of things the Board has talked about before, such as sustainable building practices. While some believe it is more costly, others want the freedom to pursue a lifestyle they enjoy. The Board has also discussed alternative structures, such as manufactured homes, and the types of building materials allowed in Edmonds. She would be interested in learning more about how the City handles alternative building materials and practices. She recognized that sustainable building practices may not reduce housing costs, but it should be added to the list of characteristics/values that are important to the City. She said she would like Edmonds to be known as a place where citizens can achieve some economy on how much money is spent on energy. She is interested in learning more about what a person can do and what flexibility the City already has in place or could have in place to accommodate and even encourage sustainable building practices. Director Hope suggested that perhaps the Board could have a discussion at their retreat about the community values that are important to Edmonds' sense of identity.

Board Member Monroe pointed out that the list of "things to consider" should also include impacts to existing infrastructure such as streets, stormwater, water and sewer. He voiced concern about how infill development will impact infrastructure as the population increases.

Chair Lovell observed that the situation relative to Esperance will likely be a topic of conversation in 2016, particularly concerns that the existing infrastructure is substandard. Director Hope said it is true there are a lot of places without sidewalks and older infrastructure in Esperance, but not any older than many areas of Edmonds. If Esperance were to become part of Edmonds, there would likely be little change. They would use the same water and sewer systems, which can accommodate growth. They will continue to monitor the situation, but City staff does not believe there are significant problems. This is a subject the City will look at more in 2016 and 2017.

Board Member Cheung noted that the Edmonds Police Department does not service the Esperance area. Director Hope said Snohomish County provides police service to Esperance. Because county services are further away, the county sometimes makes agreements with Edmonds to cover some things in Esperance, but the taxes from Esperance do not go to Edmonds. This is a misfit since Esperance residents drive on Edmonds streets and use other City services.

Chair Lovell asked about the process for annexing Esperance into the City of Edmonds. Director Hope explained that Esperance is an Urban Growth Area (UGA), and has been assigned to the City of Edmonds for future annexation. The Comprehensive Plan indicates it will be part of Edmonds at some point in time, as well. However, there a lot of steps involved in the process. Board Member Monroe asked if Esperance was reflected in the population growth numbers, and Director Hope answered no. Board Member Monroe asked for population figures for Esperance, and Director Hope said she did not have them available. She concluded that annexation will not likely take place in the near future, but it is on the horizon.

### **DISCUSSION ON TOPICS AND DATES FOR THE PLANNING BOARD RETREAT**

The Board scheduled their retreat for March 9<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 p.m., starting with dinner. Chair Lovell reminded the Board that the meeting would be open to the public. He suggested that the Board consider the following topics of discussion for the retreat agenda:

- The Development Code update process.
- Highway 99 Subarea Plan process.
- Five Corners
- Growth in the City and population accommodation.

Given the prediction that sea levels will rise, as well as the City's aversion to increasing building heights, Board Member Cloutier suggested the City should at least consider the idea of relocating the proposed new senior/community center to a different site. Chair Lovell agreed it may be appropriate to talk about what should be done to accommodate concerns about sea level rise, but the matter of a new community center being sited on the waterfront was resolved in 2014 via a City Council resolution and a long-term lease. He reminded the Board that the City Council took action on December 15<sup>th</sup> that amended the draft Critical Areas Ordinance that was forwarded to them by the Board last July. They adopted the Critical Areas Ordinance on January 26<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Chave clarified that the ordinance approved by the City Council included the

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amendments that were approved in December. However, the Mayor has indicated he would veto the ordinance, and the City Council has agreed to discuss the matter further at a future meeting.

Chair Lovell felt it would be a good idea to have a general discussion about the waterfront at their retreat. He said he is a member of the Waterfront Access Taskforce that was formed by Mayor Earling to study access over the railroad tracks, and a consultant has been hired to assist in the work. The second public meeting was held earlier in the day. Board Member Cloutier pointed out that many of the options, including digging a trench under the tracks, do not take rising sea level into account.

Chair Lovell invited Board Members to email either him or Vice Chair Rubenkonig with other potential retreat topics. He suggested that the topics should be narrowed down to just two or three.

### **REVIEW OF EXTENDED AGENDA**

Chair Lovell and Vice Chair Rubenkonig agreed to meet with Mr. Chave and Director Hope to discuss the extended agenda.

### **PLANNING BOARD CHAIR COMMENTS**

Chair Lovell suggested that the Board Members stay abreast of what is happening with the CAO. His understanding is that the ordinance will not come back to the Planning Board for further work.

Chair Lovell reported that at the January 26<sup>th</sup> City Council Meeting, Patrick Dougherty, Economic Development Manager, presented a proposal to reform the Economic Development Commission. As proposed, the group would be smaller and have a more focused agenda. Of the nine members, seven would be appointed by City Council Members and two by Mayor Earling. The only requirement would be that members must be residents of the City of Edmonds. There seemed to be general support for the proposal, and it was moved to the next meeting on consent agenda. It was discussed that members should have some experience with and knowledge of economic matters. There was also some discussion about representation from the Planning Board and Port of Edmonds. He has served as the Board's liaison to the Economic Development Commission from the last two years. If the Commission is reformed, he would appreciate it if another Board Member would assume this responsibility going forward.

Chair Lovell announced that a report from the Planning Board to the City Council is scheduled for March 22<sup>nd</sup>. Mr. Chave suggested that Chair Lovell follow up with Council President Johnson with questions.

### **PLANNING BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS**

Vice Chair Rubenkonig recalled that lights will be installed on 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue to encourage people to go to the Edmonds Center for the Arts. However, the project has been delayed because the purchased lights were not up to the standard needed. City staff is working to find a better solution at this time.

Board Member Cloutier reminded the Board that in 2009 Sustainable Edmonds was asked to address the issue of principles for Edmonds and conservation. The City funded a study called "Save Energy Now," which asked owners of ten businesses and ten homes to save 10% on their energy bills. An energy audit was done on each of the homes and businesses, and then the owners were asked to do what they could to save energy. The average savings was about 30%. The difficult part was getting people to participate because they don't want to change their behavior. It is difficult to convince people they can save by implementing simple strategies.

Vice Chair Rubenkonig pointed out that the City has made it easier for people to get permits for solar installations. Maybe there is a way to continue that image of Edmonds being a great place for businesses to operate. Board Member Cloutier said the intent is to get people to recognize that the City is a conscientious consumer of energy.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

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

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