

**CITY OF EDMONDS  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION  
December 15, 2010**

The Citizens Economic Development Committee meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Chair Frank Yamamoto in the Brackett Room, 121 5th Avenue North, Edmonds.

**COMMISSIONERS PRESENT**

Paul Anderson  
Bruce Faires  
Stacy Gardea  
Don Hall  
Darrol Haug  
Betty Larman  
Beatrice O'Rourke  
Evan Pierce  
David Schaefer  
Rich Senderoff  
Bruce Witenberg  
Rebecca Wolfe  
Frank Yamamoto  
Marianne Zagorski

**COMMISSIONERS ABSENT**

Mary Monfort  
Kerry St. Clair Ayers  
Rob VanTassell

**PLANNING BOARD LIAISON**

Kristiana Johnson

**ELECTED OFFICIALS PRESENT**

Councilmember Diane Buckshnis  
Councilmember Strom Peterson

**STAFF PRESENT**

Stephen Clifton, Community Services/Economic  
Development Director  
Cindi Cruz, Executive Assistant  
Rob Chave, Planning Manager  
Frances Chapin, Cultural Services Manager  
Jeannie Dines, Recorder

**PUBLIC PRESENT**

Natalie Shippen  
Roger Hertrich

**1. INTRODUCTION AND COMMENTS BY CHAIR – NONE**

**2. AMENDMENTS TO AGENDA**

Commissioner Haug requested the addition of a report on the EDC's initiative to support the Port of Edmonds' redevelopment of Harbor Square under Item 4.

**3. APPROVAL OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 17, 2010**

The following amendment was made to the minutes:

Page 3, first paragraph under Item c, add Darrol Haug to the list of Commissioners attending the meeting.

There was a clarification of Councilmember Peterson's report on Page 4, third paragraph under Planning Board, that the Council voted to include in the 2011 docket the addition of a public market facility in the downtown waterfront area.

COMMISSIONER ZAGORSKI MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 17, 2010 AS AMENDED. COMMISSIONER O'ROURKE SECONDED THE MOTION. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

4. REPORTS FROM SUBGROUPS

a. Land Use (Westgate & Five Corners)

**Christiana Haworth, UW Community and Environment Program**, introduced the **Brad Shipley** and **Elizabeth Abrahamson**, the other students working with Edmonds on the 10-week Special District Project. She explained this was a three phase project with a goal of developing conceptual alternatives for potential future redevelopment of Five Corners and Westgate Village. Their role in the first phase of the project has been to gather baseline data to inform the future two phases of the project via community surveys and site analysis. She provided a PowerPoint presentation displaying aerials of the two sites and described the surrounding area and features. She described the process used in their site analysis, a multifaceted approach utilizing a variety of methods to gather a complete data set. The resident survey focused on current use, transportation and site improvements for each site and the business survey focused on laying groundwork for future involvement in this project. Their site analysis consisted of qualitative observations about site functionality and quantitative data collection to support survey findings specifically related to the location and distribution of parking and infrastructure.

Mr. Shipley explained at the beginning of the project they spoke with local businesses to engage them as well as gather incentives for survey completion. Approximately 2200 surveys were mailed by the City to single family residences with 2000 feet of each site which represents approximately a 5-10 minute walk. He displayed a map identifying the area where surveys were mailed. To date there have been 169 respondents to the resident survey. He provided age and gender demographics of survey respondents, relaying that this was preliminary data; surveying will continue to gather more responses.

He highlighted survey questions and responses:

Question	Response
How frequently do you pass by the sites?	Respondents stopped more frequently (over 65%) at Westgate (3/week) than Five Corners
What are your means of transportation when you visit Westgate or Five Corners?	No one took the bus. More walked/biked to Five Corners than Westgate
Why choose to drive rather than use alternate means of transportation?	Dangerous to cross street, cannot carry bags home, small children/pets, fast cars, too noisy, multiple destinations, inadequate bike, not pleasant
How can Westgate and Five Corners areas be improved?	Five Corners: more public spaces, outdoor café, amenities Westgate: improved walkability

Ms. Abrahamson explained they also attempted to engage the business population at Westgate and Five Corners. Questions included why they chose to locate their business in Edmonds, why they chose the site, whether they had thought about redevelopment, and their top priorities for redevelopment. They found it very difficult to engage the business owners in the survey because many had not thought about redevelopment and business owners were very busy. The business engagement process will continue through early January to lay the groundwork for the next two phases.

With regard to site analysis, Ms. Abrahamson reported they conducted an adapted GEHL architectural analysis that considered the enjoyment, comfort and protection of the two sites as well as downtown as an

example of what the two sites could become.. They took five and ten minute walks on main arterials near Five Corners and Westgate and used GIS data to create maps. They also conducted a series of parking counts at both sites. She reported the findings of the adapted GEHL architectural analysis, noting many of their impressions corresponded with comments made in the community surveys.

Ms. Haworth explained another element of their quantitative analysis was the five and ten minute walks on major corridors from each site that focuses on the ease and comfort of pedestrian access. The boundaries of the walks were marked on GIS maps and generally coincided with the mailer radius. The findings of the walks included:

- Poor/nonexistent sidewalk quality in Westgate and Five Corners, pedestrian use much higher in Five Corners
- Traffic related obstacles fast moving traffic challenge pedestrian use
- Crosswalks very wide with lights timed for cars or too few crosswalks.

She reported findings of an audit that examined the availability and distribution of infrastructure supporting pedestrian and bicycle use such as bicycle racks, outdoor seating, and transit stops:

- Westgate: good distribution of bike racks, a lot of outdoor seating, good transit access
- Five Corners: two human scale lights, little outdoor seating, one bike rack that is difficult to use, only private seating, transit service, nearby commuter parking lot

Mr. Shipley reported the results of parking counts taken on different days and times to determine utilization. This analysis will continue but preliminary data indicates a lot of the parking is not being used.

Ms. Haworth summarized survey data and site analysis found area walkability and scale as two areas for improvement. Potential future redevelopment could be possible using currently underutilized parking spaces to provide amenities such as open public space with activities for children and infrastructure that supports pedestrian use of the sites. She concluded the sites face common challenges of orientation to cars but have many opportunities for improvement.

The Commission requested staff provide a copy of the surveys. Mr. Clifton offered to post the surveys on the EDC webpage. Mr. Shipley advised a report including their PowerPoint would be available by Friday; some data gathering will continue through January.

Mr. Clifton suggested the students comment on their experience during their 10 minute walk:

- Five Corners: Sidewalk ends not far from site, streets in neighborhoods busy and have on-street parking and no shoulders. Well kept sidewalk on 212<sup>th</sup>.
- Westgate: Problems similar to Five Corners, few sidewalks in neighborhoods, SR104 is dangerous to walk on and limits pedestrians' desire to walk

The students responded to the following questions:

- *Did parking utilization take into account vacancies?* Vacancies were tracked and are identified at both sites. Parking utilization varies by business and time of day.
- *Was there any qualitative differentiation between outdoor seating areas – are some more desirable?* Quality of seating was not tracked; mid-November not a good time. PCC features a garage door that allows seating to be changed from outdoor to indoor. Quality of seating varies by location.
- *How do pedestrians cross streets?* Streets often difficult to cross, lights timed for cars, lengthy wait for pedestrian crossing lights.

- *Why are businesses not receptive, difficult contact?* A strong minority of the businesses were interested in being involved, difficult to coordinate meetings with restaurants. Many businesses do not have email.
- *Reference comment that Five Corners most receptive to biking/walking but that site seems least friendly toward that.* Five Corners more integrated into the surrounding residential community. Westgate is located on a busy street.
- *Was there any effort to capture quantitative information regarding the amount of business currently occurring?* Market study in next phase will include that information.
- *Where do trips originate?* First question on survey asks point of origin and subsequent questions address mode of transportation.
- *Suggest expand survey radius in Westgate into neighborhoods to southwest and northeast as schools make up much of the 5-10 minutes walkable radius on those areas.* Radius where surveys were mailed was based on 10 minute walk from sites. However, survey was also available via news outlets. The next phase will capture data from a larger circle.
- *Did survey ask if residents were willing pay for sidewalks?* Data is preliminary and identifies generally where people would like improvements. Survey indicated interest in improved area walkability and more public spaces for Westgate. Many people thought Five Corners was fairly walkable. Survey addressed improved walkability and did not ask specifically about sidewalks. Vote on TBD issue may be indicative of residents' interest in paying for sidewalks (comment by Commissioner).
- *Is 169 responses to 2200 mailers an acceptable ratio?* 8% response rate is a fairly common public participation. Surveys will be also distributed in the next phase.

**Jill Sterritt, Affiliate Instructor, UW School of Urban Design and Planning,** explained this first phase was an environment scan/data gathering regarding the physical conditions on the sites and the survey. The next phase will include more public involvement and visioning; the EDC will more involved in that phase. The second student team will meet with the EDC in January and several public meetings will be scheduled. First will be an open house for each site in late January to collect ideas, using the maps to identify obstacles that pedestrians experience/envision. A public design charrette will be scheduled in late February that hopefully will include the local design community. The charrette would include groups working on design ideas for each sites that will form the basis for alternatives that will be presented to the EDC. The EDC will be involved in refining the alternatives in approximately March. By end of April she hoped to have a solid concept developed for each site that could be presented to the public for input. The design would be further refined, followed by appropriate Board and Council approval. A written document as well as a design concept will be provided. She reported the Phase 2 team has been selected and will include Mr. Shipley.

**Nancy Rottle, Professor, Department of Landscape Architecture, Adjunct Architecture and Planning, and directs the Green Futures Lab,** reported the Phase 2 team members includes representatives from architecture, planning and landscape architecture who are finished or finishing advanced degrees and have real world experience. She introduced **Eric Scharnhorst**, a graduate student who has been mentoring the Phase 1 team. He brings expertise working with GEHL Architects in Copenhagen.

Planning Board Member Kristina Johnson inquired about the Planning Board's role in Phase 2. Mr. Chave answered updates will be provided to the Planning Board and he encouraged them to participate in the open houses. He anticipated a joint meeting with the EDC to review concepts.

#### **b. Strategic Planning and Visioning – Fundraising**

Mr. Clifton reported the City Council voted 6-1 to fund the Strategic Plan in the amount of \$100,000. That approval is subject to change with adoption of the 2011 budget.

Councilmember Buckshnis reported the City Council passed a budget note regarding their involvement in the selection of a consultant.

**c. Technology**

Commissioner Haug reported Commissioner Faires and he have had several meetings with Mr. Clifton and CIO Carl Nelson to follow up on outreach to Rick Steves about converting to the City's fiber optic service. Topics discussed include:

- How to best advance the message that the City is open for business to provide high speed fiber connections for qualified customers
- Pricing, capacity and services offered
- Timing and work steps necessary to make the sale to Rick Steves

Mr. Nelson has had several discussions with Steves organization and they are preparing to test the service to confirm it will meet their needs. Similar testing has been completed with SNOCOM and there are no concerns about the ability to meet Steves' needs. After testing the City will negotiate the details for service and present a decision package to Council for approval.

With regard to the City's efforts to update their website, Mr. Haug offered to work with staff on testing/evaluating website redesign.

**d. Tourism**

Chair Yamamoto relaying that Snohomish County is promoting a tournament that will generate \$3.1 million. He expressed support for Edmonds' involvement in sports tourism as soon as possible.

Commissioner Haug reported the governor's budget proposes drastic cuts in tourism. Mr. Clifton reported a Snohomish County Tourism Promotion Area is being formed that will allow hotels with 50+ room to assess \$1/room/night; the funds will be used to fund tourism promotion.

Commissioner Hall suggested working with the Edmonds Center for the Arts and Edmonds Conference Center (formerly Floral Arts Center) to get patrons to return to Edmonds during the day/weekend. Councilmember Peterson reported ECA Executive Director Joe McIalwain is very interested in a program where season tickets holders could receive a discount at local businesses similar to the Port's program.

Councilmember Buckshnis suggested providing information to the Citizens Levy Committee (CLC) who is moving toward a levy/bond issue. It may be appropriate to include something related to sports tourism. The CLC plans to do polling to determine citizens' priorities.

Commissioner Wolfe inquired about upgrading the City's fields. Chair Yamamoto responded the capital request to the State is unlikely to be funded due to the State's budget. The lease with the Edmonds School District for Civic Playfields needs to be renegotiated before improvements to those fields are discussed. Commissioner Wolfe commented voters did not approve long term and comprehensive funding for bike/walkways in the TBD ballot measure. Voters may be more supportive of a levy if it includes short-term projects.

Ms. Chapin reported a new Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Director has been selected and will start work on January 10.

Ms. Chapin reported on the Interurban Trail project for which the City has received significant grant funding. She commented on the importance of connections between the Interurban Trail and neighborhood centers such as Five Corners and into downtown.

Chair Yamamoto encouraged Commissioners to view the ad that showcases Leavenworth, “Bavarian Babes of Leavenworth” via either the *Seattle Times* article or YouTube.

Discussion followed regarding capitalizing on Five Corners residents’ openness to biking and walking, cuts in the State tourism budget, connectivity to the Interurban Trail, and advertising Edmonds in Leavenworth due to the train.

Councilmember Buckshnis reported on the formation of the South Snohomish County Commission for Health (formerly Stevens Hospital Board of Commissioners) that will be allocating funds collected from taxpayers within the Hospital District.

**e. Support for Port Redevelopment of Harbor Square**

Mr. Haug recalled one of the seven items the EDC presented to the Council was to support the planning and discussion process for the redevelopment of Harbor Square by the Port. The Port has made a number of presentations to involve the community in the discussion. The Port has established a Steering Committee to help guide the process. The role of the Steering Committee is to determine what goals/principles should be used to guide the preparation of the redevelopment plan that will meet the Port’s stated objectives. The first Steering Committee meeting was held December 6. Several members of the EDC also serve on the Harbor Square Steering Committee including Bruce Faires, Bruce Witenberg, Frank Yamamoto and himself. Mr. Clifton is the City’s liaison on the Steering Committee. The Port is doing a good job of gathering input from a number of groups to ensure the success of the Harbor Square redevelopment. The Steering Committee will meet monthly to review concepts with the consultant.

Commissioner Faires reported the Steering Committee process is linked with the public process; the Steering Committee will provide information that will be presented and refined during public meetings.

**5. NEXT STEPS**

Chair Yamamoto reported the Tourism Subgroup needs additional assistance and encouraged Commissioners to attend their meetings. He requested Commissioners review the list of potential revenue generating ideas to identify other items the Commission could pursue in the future.

Commissioner Witenberg inquired about providing a yearend report to the City Council. Chair Yamamoto suggested the Focus Group meet to develop a yearend report that would include a summary of accomplishments and plans for the future.

**6. FUTURE AGENDA TOPICS**

Yearend report to City Council.

**7. MISCELLANEOUS**

Planning Board Member Kristina Johnson explained the Planning Board plans to provide a report to the City Council at the first meeting in January about processes that have been before the Planning Board related to economic development. The Planning Board's retreat, held at their second meeting in January, will include discussion regarding the Planning Board's role in upcoming planning processes as well as the Planning Board's ideas regarding land use.

Mr. Clifton reported staff has been successful in securing 5 federal grants that total over \$2 million. He will provide the City Council and the EDC the amount of each grant, the funding sources, what the funds will be used for and the local match.

Commissioner Senderoff reported the Fall 2010 Snohomish County PUD "Current" magazine includes an article regarding a demonstration wind turbine at their facility in Everett. He envisioned a similar demonstration project could be done at the Port.

Commissioner Senderoff referred to Lynnwood's increase in their employee head tax and asked whether Edmonds had a head tax. Mr. Clifton advised Edmonds does not have an employee head tax. Commissioner Senderoff suggested that be highlighted in the City's recruitment efforts

Commissioner Wolfe referred to the new Costco near Alderwood, anticipating it would hurt businesses in Edmonds. Mr. Clifton and several Commissioners disagreed, noting there is already a Costco in Shoreline.

Commissioner Hall reported on the new flower basket poles with art elements. Ms. Chapin advised the first three poles were funded by the Edmonds Arts Festival Foundation; two are located outside the Frances Anderson Center and one is near City Hall. The goal is for poles with art elements to eventually create an outdoor exhibit stretching along Main St. and 5th Avenue. The poles will be part of the Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services Department Gift Catalogue similar to the bench program. Mr. Hall suggested contacting businesses regarding purchasing a pole.

Mr. Hall referred to the new sign on 4<sup>th</sup>/Main describing historic sites on 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue and the vicinity. Ms. Chapin advised that sign was the last component of the federal Preserve America grant the City received in 2007. A second small grant was received to install interpretive elements on 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue in the vicinity of some of the historic sites.

## **8. AUDIENCE COMMENTS**

**Roger Hertrich, Edmonds**, commended the students' presentation. He inquired how the Tourism Promotion Area Board will distribute funds and suggested the former City/Port/Chamber Tourism Committee be reinstated to lobby for funding from the Tourism Promotion Area. Ms. Chapin advised Mr. Clifton has been appointed to the Snohomish County Tourism Promotion Area Board. Next, Mr. Hertrich expressed concern with plans for a roundabout at Five Corners, commenting roundabouts are designed to keep traffic moving rather than stop at businesses. He suggested studying whether a roundabout would be beneficial to the economic development of that area. He was also concerned with pedestrians crossing the street when a roundabout is constructed.

## **9. ADJOURN**

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:47 p.m.