

CITY OF EDMONDS
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
April 15, 2015

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

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT

Michael Schindler, Chair
John Dewhirst
Julaine Fleetwood
Kevin Garrett
Darrol Haug
Randy Hayden
Roger Hertrich (arrived 6:02 p.m.)
Nicole Hughes
Jamie Reece
Rich Senderoff
Darlene Stern
Teresa Wippel
Bruce Witenberg

ELECTED OFFICIALS PRESENT

Councilmember Lora Petso

PORT OF EDMONDS LIAISON

Bruce Faires

STAFF PRESENT

Patrick Doherty, Econ. Dev & Comm. Serv. Dir.
Cindi Cruz, Program Coordinator
Frances Chapin, Arts & Culture Program Mgr.
Jeannie Dines, Recorder

PUBLIC PRESENT – None

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT

John Rubenkönig, Vice Chair
Jenny Anttila
Debbie Matteson
Douglas Schwartz

1. OPENING REMARKS

Chair Schindler commented the EDC is a powerhouse team of leadership and he wants to leverage everyone's input so that good recommendations can be made to City Council. He plans to add Commissioner Comments as an agenda item; an opportunity for commissioners to identify issues for discussion at a future meeting, etc.

2. AMENDMENTS TO AGENDA

The following amendments were made at Chair Schindler's request:

- Following Item 4, update by Mr. Doherty regarding Strategic Action Plan and Westgate Plan
- Following Item 9, add Staff Update
- Following Staff Update, add Decorum Update by Commissioner Haug

3. APPROVAL OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION MINUTES OF MARCH 18, 2015

The following amendment was requested:

- Change vote on motion on page 9 to read, Motion failed (1-8-2), Commissioner Stern voting yes and Commissioners Dewhirst and Fleetwood abstaining.

COMMISSIONER WITENBERG MOVED, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER STERN, TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF MARCH 18, 2015 AS AMENDED. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

4. STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE UPDATE

Ms. Cruz advised there has been one applicant for the position; all Commissioners were provided his application. He was unable to attend tonight but will attend the May meeting. Chair Schindler requested an interview be scheduled on the May meeting agenda. Commissioners were encouraged to invite others students who are Edmonds residents to apply.

4A. UPDATE ON STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN AND WESTGATE PLAN

Strategic Action Plan (SAP)

Mr. Doherty reported the Council originally approved the SAP in April 2013. To assist with implementation and fine tuning the plan, funds were included in the 2014 budget to hire a consultant to assist with that effort. The SAP Working Group was established to work with staff and the consultant, Cynthia Berne. Ms. Berne's work included technical and clerical updates, identifying and getting a commitment from the primary leads for the action items, and creating worksheets for each item. She also created a roadmap for 2-3 select items as an example. The 2015 budget included funds for Envisio software to track the SAP. Following clarifications made to the SAP as a result of issues raised at presentations, the Council approved the updated report, accepted the consultant's recommendations which include beginning implementation and next year engaging in a more comprehensive public based process to update the SAP. Several action items have been completed and many are underway.

Westgate Plan

Mr. Doherty explained when the City Council considered the Westgate Plan in the fall, it was tabled until the SR-104 Transportation Study was completed. That study has been completed and the Westgate Plan was again presented to Council last week. The Council approved amendments that established a uniform setback of 16 feet from SR-104 and 100th (staff's recommendation was 12-15 feet), lowered the maximum height limit in the QFC quadrant to 3 stories, established a minimum 30 feet of space not occupied by parking on the 1st floor in mixed use buildings, and established a parking ratio for commercial of 1 space per 400 square feet.

Mr. Doherty summarized now that the Westgate Plan has been adopted, property owners can make their plans accordingly. Many of the businesses will remain the same; Bartell as well as the owners of the vacant parcel near the carwash have expressed interest in development/redevelopment. In response to a Commission question, Mr. Doherty advised other issues raised during previous Council discussions were incorporated into the Westgate Plan such as requiring amenities spaces to be public and allowing an additional 5 feet of height as an incentive for large format retail.

Port of Edmonds Commissioner Faires remarked Westgate redevelopment under the new zoning parameters is an important element of economic revitalization. He suggested the EDC discuss what steps it could take to further activity at Westgate consistent with the new plan. Discussion followed regarding:

- Other areas where redevelopment could occur that were identified in the SAP and whether the EDC should review those and how they could be advanced
- Having staff provide an update in a year of what has occurred at Westgate, whether it was what was hoped would happen, any unexpected consequences, or whether something was inhibiting the intended concepts

- There are two audiences for Westgate Plan, 1) developers, which the EDC does not have much impact on, and 2) the public, where there is an opportunity for advocacy and positive outreach and lay the groundwork for plans for other business areas
- Whether an action item needs to be added to the SAP regarding implementation of the Westgate Plan

Mr. Doherty said there are no progress benchmarks/milestones in the Westgate Plan. It was agreed to add discussion regarding the Westgate Plan to the May agenda including staff comment on the EDC's role and other areas that are identified in the SAP.

5 SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS: 1. Final Two Areas of Focus; 2. Final Target Demographic; 3. How It Improves Tourism, Economic Stability, or Attracts New Business. ** What Help Do You Need from Other Commissioners/Staff to Complete Your Area of Focus?

a. Tourism

Commissioner Wippel reported she spoke with Parks & Recreation Director Hite about ziplines, an idea raised by Commissioner Senderoff a long time ago. Ms. Hite said the Parks Department has discussed ziplines; in general they do not generate much revenue although they can generate tourists who in turn impact the economy. There is some controversy about ziplines; she referred to the negative reaction of a neighborhood in West Seattle in response to a proposed zipline. Ms. Hite indicated the only location in Edmonds that was large enough would be Yost Park; limited parking and a bird habitat do not make that an ideal location. Ms. Hite did not see a zipline as being feasible. The only other big space for zipline would be a county park. The subcommittee concluded it was not feasible at this time.

Commissioner Dewhirst reported on areas of focus:

1. Infrastructure that support tourism and the general population
 - o Downtown restrooms
 - o Signage in/around Edmonds; there is a lot, some of it is difficult to see and it's uncoordinated
 - o Target demographic: everyone
2. Building on existing events and diversifying and getting that information out
 - o Target demographic: Daytrippers from Seattle/Bellevue north and Vancouver BC south; encourage them to make more trips or stay longer

Commissioner Dewhirst advised the Tourism Subcommittee has gotten superb support from staff; the only thing missing from the initiatives is money. One of the subcommittee members plans to meet with the Port about ways to enhance/support whale watching trips. Mr. Doherty advised whale watching trips were added to the City's tourism website.

Commissioner Reece inquired about the possibility of a mobile vendor for kayaks and paddle boards. Mr. Faires reported 12 years ago such a business existed at the Port for about 3 months/year for 3 years, The Port has had discussions with potential vendors to provide that amenity but no one has expressed interest due to the open waters and liabilities. Ms. Chapin reported the City had a similar experience when exploring concessions for the waterfront; variable conditions often make the water too rough. Mr. Faires relayed sailing classes for kids has been deemed inappropriate in Puget Sound because water conditions make the liability and risk too high. Commissioner Senderoff remarked that type of business only works when it is adjunct to retail or restaurant.

Commissioner Senderoff recalled during brainstorming a suggestion was made to engage the International Community in a Chinese New Year celebration. Ms. Chapin said that was discussed with a number of the

business owners when the Highway 99 lighting project was dedicated in January but there was no further response from them.

Commissioner Stern suggested installing dance steps on the sidewalk to create activity between Main Street and Walnut Street. Public Works identified what needed to be done and she is working on it.

b. Strategic Action Plan Implementation

Commissioner Haug reported:

1. Goal of SAP subcommittee (Commissioners Matteson, Stern, Fleetwood and he) is to find ways to help with the implementation of the SAP
2. EDC is a listed participant in 15 of the SAP elements
 - a. Review to determine our role on work items
 - b. Make recommendations of which EDC sub group will be accountable for each element.
3. Subcommittee did a demo of the tracking system Council funded.
 - a. Initial training of Cindi and Patrick is scheduled for April 16
 - b. Based on Council actions the tracking system will be updated.
4. Council accepted the consultant recommendation for a facilitation process.
 - a. Subcommittee will review the recommended tasks and make recommendation of how best the SAP subcommittee, other EDC committees, or the EDC as a whole will fit into the tasks.
5. Need to get the “worksheets” produced by consultant that have not yet been made public and see what the various leads have outlined as tasks and timing for all 88 elements.
6. Council and Staff outlined their priorities for 2015 at recent retreat and formed several working committees.
 - a. Subcommittee will look at these priorities and committees to see how they match up with SAP elements.
 - b. For items matching or supporting the SAP, subcommittee will review how the EDC can help develop public input to the process
7. SAP subcommittee not likely to be able to do all the things so how do we broaden our efforts?
 - a. EDC involvement?
 - b. Public involvement?
8. Subcommittee will develop some ideas on how to keep the public informed of progress
 - a. Hold public meetings?
 - b. Post subcommittee meetings?

Commissioner Stern pointed out the importance of informing the public about progress on the SAP. Mr. Doherty pointed one the SAP is the informational boxes on the City’s home page and has been updated with the most recent information. He invited suggestions for information to include.

Commissioner Hughes advised the Business District Enhancement Subcommittee discussed non-traditional ways to get the word out such as Twitter, Facebook, and other electronic means. She suggested the next meeting include social media or non-traditional means of communication to reach those who may not attend a public forum, visit the City’s website, etc. A brief discussion followed regarding moderation that may be needed on social media.

c. Business Districts Enhancement

Commissioner Hughes reported the subcommittee identified several areas of focus (Five Corners, startup incubators, business incentives, year round farmers market, promoting businesses at Salish Crossing, Hospital District tie in to Five Corners) but agreed on the following primary areas of focus:

- Five Corners

- Target demographic: citizens, Planning Board, City Council, potential developers and businesses
- Has potential to attract new businesses, expand retail
- Lessons learned from the Westgate Plan to help message more effectively, ensure adequate public input, etc.
- Startup incubators
 - Target demographic: very small businesses, entrepreneurs and developers and business owners to support incubator environment
 - Has potential to tie individuals into Edmonds
 - Seeded businesses will grow to position of strength
- Business incentives
 - Target demographic: discount on taxes, incentives for offering services/goods, local businesses, potential businesses and developers
 - Provides additional opportunities for businesses considering locating in Edmonds, retail, family entertainment, services
 - Code and legal implications need to work with staff on

The subcommittee will make a decision at their May 4 meeting regarding their top area of focus. She invited feedback on additional ideas, priorities, etc.

6. EDC CHARTER/SUNSET CLAUSE DISCUSSION

a. Discuss EDC Potential Proposal to Council to Renew EDC Charter, Pros/Cons of Asking for Formal Resolution and Vote By council to Renew EDC Charge by September 1, 2015.

Chair Schindler reported the EDC is scheduled to sunset in December. The issue has been raised whether there is value in developing a formal proposal to Council asking for a resolution and vote by Council by September to renew the EDC charter to avoid what happened when the EDC was originally sunseted and ten members were lost. Discussion followed regarding:

- A Council committee (Councilmembers Petso, Bloom, and Fraley-Monillas and Mr. Doherty, Ms. Hope and Mr. James) is evaluating the role of EDC including whether to split it into different groups, establishing a different focus, sunseting, etc. Another committee is discussing staffing for boards and commission.
- Support for preparing a formal proposal so EDC members know how long the commission will operate.
- Knowing whether the commission is sunseting will have a major effect on how much effort the subcommittees invest. For example, the SAP subcommittee's work will not be done by yearend.
- Approach to monitoring SAP implementation this year is to use staff, EDC SAP subcommittee, and software as a project management team and next year engage the public and consider a more robust project management team.
- EDC has been in existence for five years, has done incredible work/heavy lifting. At least three dozen citizens have been involved over the years. Large, diverse group has worked reasonably well together.
- EDC was the recommendation of the 60 member Citizen Levy Review Committee. Councilmembers and Mayor have input into the membership. It is important the EDC continues to exist and to get an answer regarding its future from the City Council by September.
- EDC has done significant things in the time it has existed.
- Determine whether the Council is interested in allowing the EDC to sunset and if so, why?
- The Council will do what they will do. The EDC has a job to do; it is not time efficient to discuss justifying its existence. Time can be better spent doing things to justify its existence.

- Continue doing job, let Council go through their process and assume the EDC will continue.
- Prime reason EDC was established was economic development to help address City's revenue shortfall. It was determined the City had a revenue shortfall not an expense problem.
- Make the EDC so valuable no one would want it to sunset. If the EDC is not doing enough of value, allow to sunset.
- EDC formed as an outgrowth of the Levy Committee to look at economic development but also to decide what economic development is appropriate for the community's values.
- Better work product results from people who devote their time in a secure work environment
- Staff will research whether original commissioners are eligible to continue if the EDC is extended beyond 2015.

Chair Schindler summarized the options were, 1) the EDC continue its work and see what the Council does, and 2) submit a formal proposal to Council requesting a decision by September regarding extending the EDC.

Councilmember Petso relayed Council consideration of the EDC sunset will be scheduled sometime between now and the end of year. She did do not think there was a Council majority to terminate the EDC without the willful and voluntary participation of the EDC. If the Council committee recommended restructuring into separate committees such as long range finance, tourism and business recruitment, that would be presented to the EDC but she did not think there currently was any consensus to do that. It may merely be a result of one person's observations this is a large group and possibly different focuses or structure would be more efficient. She relayed the Finance Director is interested in forming a long range finance committee and may be interested in members from this committee. She anticipated the committee will make a recommendation over the summer; she suggested commissioners forward ideas to the committee members.

COMMISSIONER REECE MOVED, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER HAUG, TO HOLD OFF ON ACTION RELATED TO RENEWAL OF THE EDC PENDING RECEIPT OF A REPORT FROM THE COUNCIL'S EDC REVIEW COMMITTEE. MEMBERS ARE ENCOURAGED TO PROVIDE FEEDBACK TO COUNCIL AND STAFF. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

7. COUNCIL LIAISONS' COMMENTS

Councilmember Petso reported the Council is halfway through approving a Diversity Commission. She envisioned a Diversity Commission will provide economic development opportunity as they will be sponsoring events.

8. PLANNING BOARD UPDATE – None

9. PORT OF EDMONDS UPDATE

Port Commissioner Faires agreed better discussion and information flow between the Port, the City and the EDC's Tourism Subcommittee regarding Puget Sound Express whale watching would be a good idea. They are running a few whale watching tours now and will officially be scheduling trips in Puget Sound, Saratoga Passage and the Straits beginning May 23. There is a link to their website on the Ports website. Commissioners commented on trips they had taken with Puget Sound Express.

Mr. Faires relayed the Port Commission's primary emphasis during the last month has been the annual financial analysis. He encouraged the EDC to revisit the UW's plan for Five Corners now that the Westgate Plan has been adopted.

9A. STAFF UPDATE

Mr. Doherty reported:

- Following approval of the Westgate Plan, he is reaching out to property owners to explain the new regulations
- A conceptual proposal for a hotel with retail and medical office space is being discussed for a site on Hwy 99 near the hospital
- Initial work has begun on an ad campaign for general economic development associated with bringing business to Edmonds
- He is contacting vendors about a holiday/winter farmer's market (mid-November to weekend before Christmas) in the City's surface parking lot as part of the City's 125th anniversary. Five have expressed interest, seeking eight before move forward, total number would be fifteen
- Sponsors are being sought for the August 11 street party and dance for City's 125th celebration. Will include performers, historic reenactments, refreshments, speeches, and Sister City delegation.

Arts & Culture Program Manager Frances Chapin reported although the 4th Avenue Cultural Corridor was not a high priority in the SAP, it was an area of great interest in the Community Cultural Plan which followed the SAP. An interim project is underway to create a sense of connection between the Edmonds Center for the Arts (ECA) and Main Street. Three artists presented designs; one design was selected by a selection committee and the Arts Commission recommended approval to the City Council. She described the project, LED solar light elements that are set into the asphalt to create a pathway glow at night along the road between the ECA and Main. A public hearing is scheduled at City Council on May 5. She noted this is an example of something that was a low priority in the SAP but was pursued by a group of interested, passionate people.

9B. DECORUM AT CITY COUNCIL

Commissioner Haug relayed his understanding that unless a commissioner is representing the official viewpoint of the EDC when speaking with friends and family, to My Edmonds News, Edmonds Beacon, statements/letters to Council, etc. they are not to state they are speaking for the EDC. He referred to incidents in the last few days regarding remarks made in public. Chair Schindler agreed it was important for the EDC to speak as a body. Commissioners making comments need to disclose they are members of the EDC but that they are speaking as a private citizen and not on behalf of the EDC.

Councilmember Petso clarified her comments at tonight's meeting are her thoughts as a Councilmember and are not representative of the Council. Mr. Doherty reminded that elected and appointed officials should not comment on the City's Facebook page to prevent an unintentional quorum. Commissioner Senderoff advised a member can provide a dissenting opinion to Council regarding an EDC recommendation

10. MISCELLANEOUS

Commissioner Haug welcomed Commissioner Hayden and thanked him for joining the EDC.

Ms. Cruz advised Commissioners Rubenkonig, Anttila and Matteson have excused absences.

Chair Schindler invited commissioners to contact him with topics for the May and/or June meetings.

11. AUDIENCE COMMENTS – None

12. ADJOURN

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:57 p.m.