

CITY OF EDMONDS
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
July 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 Rubenkonig, Vice Chair
John Dewhirst
Julaine Fleetwood
Darrol Haug
Randy Hayden
Roger Hertrich
Nicole Hughes
Debbie Matteson (arrived at 6:01 p.m.)
Rich Senderoff
Douglas Swartz
Bruce Witenberg
Teresa Wippel (arrived at 6:03 p.m.)

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT

Jenny Anttila
Jamie Reece
Darlene Stern

PLANNING BOARD LIAISON

Phil Lovell

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
Jeannie Dines, Recorder

1. OPENING REMARKS AND ROLL CALL OF MEMBERS

Ms. Cruz announced Commissioners Stern, Anttila and Reece have excused absences.

2. AMENDMENTS TO AGENDA - NONE

3. APPROVAL OF EDC MINUTES OF MAY 20, 2015

COMMISSIONER WITENBERG MOVED, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER SWARTZ, TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF MAY 20, 2015. MOTION CARRIED (11-0-1) COMMISSIONER DEWHIRST ABSTAINED.

4. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Chair Schindler reported on the following:

- Quarterly Communication Plan

- Subgroup chairs submit a paragraph describing items they are working on to him or Vice Chair Rubenkonig who will submit information to My Edmonds News and other media quarterly.
- Update on Meeting with Council President
 - Vice Chair Rubenkonig and he met with Council President Fraley-Monillas to discuss the EDC's mission and goals and how to better align the EDC's work with the City Council. He and Vice Chair Rubenkonig will report at a future meeting on ideas they are developing.
- Purpose of Commissioners' Corner
 - An opportunity for commissioners to identify items for future discussion.
- Guidelines for Subgroup Drop-ins
 - Commissioners are welcome to attend and observe, but will not necessarily be invited to speak. Be aware of quorum issue.
 - No opportunity for audience comment at subgroup meetings. If dropping in on a meeting and want to speak, inform the chair prior to the meeting
- Rules on endorsing candidates
 - Welcome to personally endorse candidates, cannot endorse candidates as a commissioner. Goal of the EDC is to stay objective and bring objectivity to items that are presented to the Council.

Commissioner Hertrich referred to the use of the terms “mixed use” and “mix of uses” in the Comprehensive Plan and suggested the EDC agree on a meaning.

5. SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS: TWO AREAS SUBGROUP WANTS HIGHLIGHTED IN PUBLIC COMMUNICATION PIECE

A. Tourism

Commissioner Dewhirst reported staff plans to include a proposal for downtown restrooms in the 2016 budget. He referred to a memo *that he generated* to the EDC informing that the Tourism and Visitor Services Subcommittee will be taking a hiatus pending direction from Council. Chair Schindler clarified the goal was to align with the Council's objectives for the EDC to avoid the subgroup spinning its wheels. *Several members of the Commissioner were disappointed that the Tourism Subcommittee will be taking a hiatus. Discussion followed regarding disappointment the Tourism Subgroup was disappearing when they have done good work in the past; the EDC continuing to generate ideas; and concern some aspects of tourism are already being addressed by other groups.*

Discussion followed regarding tourism subgroup members visiting other subgroup meetings; purpose of the EDC to gather ideas that are then shared with the Council; tourism as an integral part of the EDC; the goal to create better communication between the EDC and City Council; projects that emanated from the EDC such as the Strategic Action Plan, Westgate and Five Corners Plans; ideas the Commission has identified but have not been pursued such as dancing footsteps and sidewalk art; ideas the tourism subgroup has generated without any action due to lack of funds and ownership; need for the EDC to flush out and champion the best ideas; having each subgroup identify two ideas that can be communicated to the public via the media; concern one subgroup taking a hiatus gives Council fuel to disband the EDC; work done by the Tourism Subgroup such as written reports on B&Bs, the Farmers Market, and the economics of tourism, assistance with the tourism website, downtown restrooms. ~~disappointment the Tourism Subgroup was disappearing when they have done good work in the past; the EDC continuing to generate ideas; and concern some aspects of tourism are already being addressed by other groups.~~

C. Business Districts Enhancements

Vice Chair Rubenkonig reported the subgroup meets the first Monday of the month. The subgroup has been discussing business districts; the six members are drafting summaries of each business district that Mr. Doherty will edit and post on the City's website. He circulated a sample. Discussion followed regarding noticing/posting subgroup meetings to avoid the quorum issue, concern with expanding attendance at subgroup meetings when there was already not enough time for discussion between subgroup members, and the original intent for subgroups to working groups that could meet as often as they wanted.

Commissioner Hughes explained subgroup members are developing descriptive overviews of each business district that describe the character of the district that will be available to prospective businesses on the City's website. The goal is for the summary/overview to be complete by the subgroup's next meeting, August 3. The districts include Highway 99 (Medical, International and Mainline) Waterfront, Firdale, Westgate, Downtown, Five Corners and Perrinville.

Mr. Doherty referred to a list of Edmonds' assets from real estate brochures that could be included in the summary such as demographics, average daily vehicle traffic, transit lines, accessibility, etc. He explained this is the first month the City is doing business attraction advertising in addition to tourism advertising. He circulated an ad in Seattle Business Monthly that includes the website, YourBizInEdmonds.com. The intent of the website is to attract new businesses to Edmonds; the description of the business districts allows a business to consider which district would be the best fit for them.

Discussion followed regarding marketing business district's unique qualities, information included in ads, how the ads' success is measured, and data accumulated via that effort.

B. Strategic Action Plan

Commissioner Haug reported:

- Data has been input into the SAP tracking system
 - Information will be added as information is received from leads which will allow reports and timelines to be generated
- In 2005 Edmonds gained access to 23 strands of fiber from WSDOT as part of a Homeland Security project with the ferry system
 - Fiber currently used for City services, Municipal Court video arraignment, and leased to both government and commercial customers
 - Initial startup costs have been fully repaid with revenues and savings and City enjoys a net savings and revenue of more than \$50,000/year
 - City does not have full redundancy or 24/7 support
 - Revenue potential of \$150,000/year if fiber used to its full potential
 - Extending the network is costly and it may not be in the City's best interest to pursue hiring a consultant to produce a business and marketing plan
- SAP Item 1b.2, attracting high tech businesses using fiber optics
 - On hold due to lack of funds for a consultant to prepare a business and marketing plan. Funds in 2013 budget were not used and were reallocated to other projects; funds will have to be budgeted.
 - If SAP leads do not have any alternative ideas, this item may need to be removed from the SAP

Discussion followed regarding the market value of the dry fiber, upgrades required to increase the financial value of the fiber to the City, and the expense of extending fiber.

6. STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN DISCUSSION & Q&A

Commissioner Haug referred to the Executive Summary from the 2009 EDC Report to the Council and identified progress on the six elements.

1. Ensure that the City's economic development position can devote full time to economic development activities and adequately fund proposed programs and activities. A focus of this role is to continue to define and promote Edmonds' brand. *Has not been pursued.*
2. Commit to developing/reviewing/updating a strategic plan every year, ideally corresponding to the City Council's annual retreat; this includes setting goals and continually assessing progress metrics. *Accomplished.*
3. Initiate Neighborhood Business Center plans for Five Corners (Neighborhood Center) and Westgate (Neighborhood Community Center) in order to position these areas to attract redevelopment. *Westgate Plan has been adopted.*
4. Support the process to redevelop Harbor Square with public involvement that ensures a balance between generating revenue and addressing environmental concerns. *Accomplished.*
5. Initiate and fund a business/marketing plan for the City-owned fiber optic network. *See Item 5.*
6. Develop a community vision that addresses a balance between quality of life and growth objectives while furthering Edmonds' "green" initiatives. *Has not been accomplished other than some items in the SAP.*

Commissioner Haug reviewed SAP subgroups suggested topics for EDC discussion:

1. Completed Items of SAP – how to best communicate to public
 - a. Mixed use on Highway 99 (1a7)
 - b. Mixed use at Firdale Village (1a12)
 - c. Formation of BID (1b9)
 - d. Long term financial plan for Yost Pool (3a6)
 - e. Effective public communication (5b2)
 - f. View Preservation (3a7)
2. EDC input element – list distributed, do we want to create formal inputs for these or other elements of the SAP
3. Town Hall meetings to continue the public discussion of the elements of the SAP
 - a. Economic health, vitality and sustainability
 - b. Maintain, enhance and create a sustainable environment
 - c. Develop and maintain a transportation and infrastructure system to meet current and future demand
 - d. Responsible, accountable and responsive government
4. When and how should we update the current SAP
5. Development of cost estimates (order of magnitude) for key elements of SAP

Mr. Doherty suggested adding a quarterly update on the SAP on the City's homepage. In approving the SAP, the City Council requested staff report back in a year and to engage the public in updating the SAP. Staff will develop a menu of options for doing that. Commissioner Wippel suggested including the SAP in the Mayor's department updates that are published in My Edmonds News and the Beacon as well as in the City newsletter.

Mr. Doherty referred to the Brief Update on Strategic Action Plan Items he prepared in anticipation of tonight's discussion. He explained of the 85-86 SAP items, only 9 do not have a lead; the remaining items are underway in some way.

Commission suggestions included identifying the benefit to the community when communicating SAP items that have been accomplished; using social media to get information out to citizens; developing information that EDC members can post on their Facebook, Twitter, etc. with links to additional information; identifying what has been done to date on a SAP goal versus identifying it as completed; providing a status update on each item; increasing community discussion and visibility of the SAP; posting information regarding the SAP on the City's Facebook page, and utilizing a multifaceted approach to communicating progress on the SAP.

7. COUNCIL LIAISONS' COMMENTS

Councilmember Petso provided materials from a presentation the Council received from the Snohomish County Tourism Bureau. The presentation's focus was on adults but there are many things in the area for children. She suggested the EDC help strengthen the description of what makes Edmonds special in Snohomish County.

With regard to communication on the SAP, Councilmember Petso raised questions about items identified as completed and recommended including the Council in any announcements about completed items.

8. PLANNING BOARD UPDATE

Planning Board Member Phil Lovell reported:

- July 8 meeting included a public hearing and a lengthy discussion regarding the Critical Areas Ordinance (CAO).
- Development code update is underway with assistance from a consultant.
- A public hearing was held July 8 regarding code amendments to address irreconcilable applications on the same property, a developer submitting a second application that is inconsistent with a previous application.
- July 22 meeting will include continued discussion and recommendation regarding the CAO, a discussion regarding the SR 104 Study, and a public hearing regarding the rezone of private property.
- Major items next month include the Highway 99 subarea planning process, continued work on the development code update and a public hearing on August 12 on the Marina Beach Park Master Plan.
- A new (alternate) member was appointed, Nathan Monroe, who is a landscape architect.

9. PORT OF EDMONDS UPDATE

Port Commissioner Faires reported:

- Puget Sound Express whale watching is doing well; their two trips per day consistently see whales. They have done a good job of marketing, particularly to groups such as retirement homes. He expressed interest in any anecdotal information regarding the impact the tours have on the community such as visiting downtown stores or restaurants. Commissioners suggested downtown restaurants partner with Puget Sound Express to offer a coupon.
- The Port's budget process is beginning; a public hearing will be held in September
- Jacobsen Marine is ahead of forecast. He was interested in any anecdotal information regarding their impact on the community
- New public restrooms in the mid-marina and at the south marina will be installed this winter. Installation delayed due to issues with the City's application process. He suggested the EDC discuss that reality/perception.

- To Commissioner Hertrich's comment regarding mixed use versus mix of uses, the understanding across the State is mixed use includes retail, commercial and residential; a mix of uses can mean something different.

(Chair Schindler left the meeting at 7:42 p.m.)

10. AUDIENCE COMMENTS – None

11. COMMISSIONERS' CORNER – TOPICS FOR POTENTIAL DISCUSSION FOR NEXT MEETING

Commissioner Hayden commented the hiatus of the Tourism Subgroup leaves only two subgroups which increases the possibility of a quorum at the remaining two subgroups' meetings.

Commissioner Hertrich said in his earlier comment questioning the completion of the SAP item regarding long term financial plan for Yost Pool, he assumed it was the future aquatic center; he now realized it was repairs of the existing Yost Pool.

Commissioner Wippel, a member of the Tourism Subgroup, agreed the Tourism Subgroup struggled to get traction on items. She was not present at the meeting where the hiatus was discussed. She hoped it would be reconstituted in some form and offered to continue to serve on the subgroup.

Commissioner Matteson commented without the Tourism Subgroup, the EDC is a 2-legged stool.

Commissioner Haug commented there are two items in SAP regarding Yost Pool; the one that has been completed is with regard to the existing pool. He recommended the EDC determine how the EDC can guide completion of SAP items. For example, many of the items identified by the Tourism Subgroup fit with SAP items. It may be a matter of packaging efforts and finding a way to communicate that differently.

Commissioner Swartz, a member of the Tourism Subgroup, reported there was no further effort on many of the items the Tourism Subgroup worked on due to the lack of a transition plan to staff.

Commissioner Rubenkonig asked whether Commissioners were available for an August meeting; a sufficient number indicated they were available.

Mr. Doherty commented when the subgroups started, there was not necessarily staff to pursue ideas. Since last year he, Ms. Cruz and the tourism promotion coordinator consultant have been implementing items related to tourism. Staff feels very energized by ideas generated by the Tourism Subgroup and are pursuing many of them. Today he spent three hours with the Snohomish County Tourism Bureau at the first of several planning meetings for 2016.

12. ADJOURN

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:52 p.m.