

**CITY OF EDMONDS  
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION  
SUMMARY MINUTES OF SPECIAL MEETING**

**June 29, 2016**

**CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL**

Chair Scott called the meeting of the Edmonds Historic Preservation Commission to order at 5:30 p.m. in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor Conference Room of City Hall, 121 – 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue North.

**COMMISSIONERS PRESENT**

Emily Scott, Chair  
Larry Vogel, Vice Chair (arrived at 5:35 p.m.)  
Sandra Allbery  
Chris Deiner-Karr  
Eric Livingston  
Tim Raetzloff  
Dave Teitzel, City Council Member

**COMMISSIONERS ABSENT**

Steve Waite (excused)

**STAFF PRESENT**

Rob Chave, Planning Manager  
Kernen Lien, Senior Planner  
Diane Cunningham, Administrative Assistant

**OTHERS PRESENT**

Barry Ehrlich  
Bruce Witenberg  
Alex Witenberg  
Kristiana Johnson  
Pat Woodell

**REQUESTS FROM THE AUDIENCE**

**Barry Ehrlich, Edmonds**, said he lives across the street from the Civic Field, and he believes the grandstands are unsightly. Rather than designating the structure as historic, he would like it to be removed and the space could be used for a better purpose.

**City Council Member Johnson** said she was present because she is very interested in the master planning process for Civic Field, and she wants to make sure there is a thorough evaluation of the historical attributes of the property. The property has significance to people of her age who grew up in Edmonds.

**Pat Woodell, Edmonds**, observed that the grandstand structure is quite old. She questioned what impact the renovations that were done in 1983 would have on the Commission's review of the property as historic.

**NEW BUSINESS: CIVIC FIELD (field house and Grandstands)**

Mr. Lien presented the Staff Report, reviewing that the City recently purchased Civic Field from the Edmonds School District and has begun the process of developing a master plan. He explained that the master plan will require State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) evaluation, and one of the questions on the checklist is whether any structures on the site are eligible for the national, state or local preservation registers. The purpose of the special meeting is for the Commission to evaluate and make a recommendation as to whether the field house (Boys and Girls Club) or grandstands qualify for listing on the local register. The Washington State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (DAHP) has issued detailed guidelines for historic mitigation and documentation standards, which were attached to the Staff Report. If the DAHP determines that a more detailed Level II Historic Mitigation Report is desired, staff recommends that the work be done by a professional in the historic preservation field.

Council Member Teitzel asked if any evaluation was done regarding the site's historic significance when it was initially developed. Chair Scott answered that no regulations were in place at the time of initial construction, and no subsurface investigation has occurred to date. It was noted that the site's significance to Native American history is outside of the Commission's purview.

Mr. Lien advised that the City is conducting a structural analysis of the grandstands, and the preliminary report is that they have one to two years of life remaining before significant funding would be needed for restoration. Chair Scott explained that, regardless of the Commission's recommendation relative to the two structures, the DAHP will automatically require an updated inventory for each one because they are more than 50 years old. The field house inventory was updated in 2004, but the grandstands have never been inventoried on DAHP's database. While the Commission can help in the process, professional assistance will likely be required as part of the mitigation process.

Ms. Cunningham reminded the Commission that an application for inclusion on the Register has already been prepared for the field house structure, but the Edmonds School District declined to pursue the application.

There was a lot of discussion about whether or not the changes that have occurred to the field house structure over the years would disqualify it for the Register. It was noted that some of the changes could be considered significant. While some commented that community sentiment should not play a role in the Commission's recommendation relative to the structure's eligibility on the Register, others felt the Commission's recommendation should consider the building's importance to the community. It was part of the school at one time and has served a variety of other uses, and people who grew up in Edmonds spent a lot of time there. Concern was expressed about what would be developed on the property if the grandstands and field house were removed.

The Commissioners agreed that additional photographs are needed to determine the significance of the changes made to the field house over time, particularly the windows and porch. Commissioner Deiner-Karr agreed to take on this task and report back to the Commission. They discussed that regardless of whether the building meets the eligibility requirements for the local Register, the Commission could make a recommendation that the building be retained because it represents the history of the area. Mr. Chave agreed and added that whether or not the building is eligible for the Register is a different question than whether or not it is valuable to the history of the community.

The Commission had a discussion about whether or not changes that were made more than 50 years ago would render the building ineligible for the Register. Mr. Lien recalled Commissioner Waite's guidance that each change that has occurred over time must stand on its own.

The majority of the Commissioners voiced support for retaining the field house structure due to its significance to the community and because it echoes what Edmonds used to look like in the 1920s and 1930s. However, a number of changes have occurred to the grandstands and a significant investment would be required to bring them up to code and make them ADA compliant. Also, the grandstand structure does not have the same architectural merit as the field house. They agreed that the park is hugely important to Edmonds and it has always been so. Retaining some of the historic awareness and flavor is important for the community as the master plan moves forward. Even if the field house does not qualify for the local, state or national registers, the entire site has historic interest and there would be value in rehabilitating the structure for future use as a preservation of how Edmonds looked in the 1930s.

Chair Scott recommended that a full assessment of the field house should be done to determine its condition and pinpoint the changes that have occurred over time. Perhaps the City can obtain grant funding to rehabilitate the building and make it eligible for the Register. The property is a cornerstone in downtown Edmonds. It should be maintained as a historic playfield for the community, and the building should remain integral to the space.

**CHAIR SCOTT MOVED THAT THE COMMISSION PURSUE AN ASSESSMENT RELATIVE TO THE POTENTIAL OF LISTING THE ENTIRE CIVIC FIELD AS A HISTORIC SITE AND THE FIELD HOUSE AS A HISTORIC STRUCTURE ON THE EDMONDS REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES. SHE FURTHER MOVED THAT THE COMMISSION ENCOURAGE THE CITY TO ACKNOWLEDGE AND ENSURE THAT THE**

**APPROVED**

**HISTORY OF THE SITE IS PROMINENT IN THE MASTER PLAN. VICE CHAIR VOGEL SECONDED THE MOTION.**

Although the Commission has done so in the past, Mr. Chave cautioned against designating sites on the Register. It is basically designating a historic fact rather than a structure. While it may be appropriate to place a plaque on the site to recognize the historic location, it should not be placed on the Register. This type of site acknowledgement is better suited to the Museum, and the Commission's role is more related to designating structures for inclusion on the Register.

**THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY. (Chair Scott was not present in the room when the motion was approved).**

The Commission discussed that the master plan could include a display showing what the site looked like in the 1930's. Another idea was to repurpose materials from the grand stand structure into the new restroom facility. They agreed to continue their discussion at the next meeting. Commissioner Deiner-Karr was tasked with finding more photographs and information, as well.

**HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION CHAIR COMMENTS**

Chair Scott did not have any additional comments.

**HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSIONER COMMENTS**

Vice Chair Vogel announced that a video recording of the recent public meeting on the Civic Field Master Plan is available on line at [www.myedmondsnews.com](http://www.myedmondsnews.com).

Commissioner Raetzloff recalled that he was asked to write an article about the history of Civic Field, and he invited Commissioners to forward useful information to him.

Council Member Johnson requested that Mr. Lien and Chair Scott meet with her and Council Member Teitzel after the meeting.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 6:30 p.m.