

## PLANNING BOARD MINUTES

October 23, 2002

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Chair Dewhirst called the regular meeting of the Planning Board to order at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers, Public Safety Complex, 250 – 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue North.

### PRESENT

John Dewhirst, Chair  
Jim Crim, Vice Chair  
Virginia Cassutt  
Janice Freeman  
James Young  
Cary Guenther  
Wayne Zhan

### ABSENT

### STAFF PRESENT

Rob Chave, Planning Division Manager  
Arvilla Ohlde, Parks and Recreation Director  
Karin Noyes, Recorder

### READING/APPROVAL OF MINUTES

BOARD MEMBER CASSUTT MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF OCTOBER 9, 2002 AS CORRECTED. BOARD MEMBER CRIM SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

### ANNOUNCEMENT OF AGENDA

There were no changes made to the proposed agenda.

### REQUESTS FROM THE AUDIENCE

There was no one in the audience who desired to address the Board during this portion of the meeting.

### PUBLIC HEARING ON DRAFT PUBLIC URBAN DESIGN AND STREET TREE PLANS

Arvilla Ohlde, Parks and Recreation Director, introduced Terry Reckord from MacLeod Reckord, who was the consultant for the project. She advised that he would provide a brief overview of the two documents. She noted that there were no significant changes made to the document since the last time the Board reviewed them. However, a new page was prepared for Page 39, since a portion of this page was omitted. She clarified that there was a reference in the street furniture standards to ECDC 18.00.040, which is a standard from the engineering standards book.

Ms. Ohlde explained that the purpose of the Urban Design and Street Tree Plans is to provide a standard for developing public areas in Edmonds in a way that retains the aesthetic look the citizens feel is so important. At this time, there are no codified documents that identify what these standards are. The proposed document identifies things that are important to

preserve the character of Edmonds and then suggests standards to guide future development. The intent is to encourage continuity and retain the aesthetic stability that exists in Edmonds.

Mr. Reckord reminded the Board that the Public Urban Design Plan and the Street Tree Plan are two separate and distinct documents. The Street Tree Plan is very straight forward, and is basically an update of the 1983 Street Tree Plan. It recommends specific species and their locations throughout the City, as well as installation and management recommendations. The focus of this document is primarily on the downtown corridor, but it includes some recommendations for expanding the standards to include other areas of the community, as well.

Mr. Reckord explained that the intent of the Public Urban Design Plan is to capture the aesthetic elements in the downtown corridor that determine and identify the character of the community. He noted that Edmonds has a unique character that is based partly on the waterfront, but also on its art and pedestrian environment.

Mr. Reckord advised that the first part of the process had to do with establishing the issues and recognizing the goals. They made some preliminary assumptions, one being that the City would benefit from enhancing the downtown. He explained that the City has a lot to build upon. They have a solid art program, a good downtown scale, and a proximity to the waterfront. The goal should be to build upon the strengths. The following goals were identified:

- Enhance the street environment, which would enhance the economic viability of the downtown.
- Establish a stronger pedestrian connection between the downtown community and waterfront.
- Identify and enhance gateways to establish the City's presence in the South Snohomish Community.
- Enhance the economic viability of the downtown.
- Enhance the City's presence on Highway 99.

Because the resources were not available for them to look at the entire City, Mr. Reckord said the study focused primarily on the downtown bowl area. But all of the solutions could be expanded and applied throughout Edmonds. He said the following criteria were used to evaluate the downtown area: safety, security, comfort, the relationship between automobile and pedestrian traffic, aesthetics and the character of the downtown.

Mr. Reckord explained that safety and comfort have to do with the ability of the pedestrians to recognize their way around the downtown area such as signage, street crossings, recognition of pedestrian corridors, etc. He pointed out that there are places in the downtown where these issues need to be addressed. He said safety also has to do with enhancing the pedestrian environment to make it more safe and comfortable, both in a real and a perceived way, and include things like more clarity in marking crosswalks and pedestrian routes. He said that comfort has to do with the comfort level of walking around downtown and the perception of safety and security. The recognition of the need for enough room to move downtown comfortably in groups as well as individually is another issue related to comfort. Comfort has to do with being able to enjoy yourself downtown in a comfortable pedestrian environment where you feel secure. Both circulation and comfort also have to do with the relationship between pedestrian and automobiles downtown and the need to make distinctions between the two in public areas. Circulation also has to do with the service routes and the number of driveways in the downtown area and how they impact the pedestrian circulation. The goal is to provide consolidated driveways and enhance the pedestrian environment without losing any of the net parking that is available in the downtown.

Mr. Reckord pointed out that Edmonds has a unique character that is all its own. It is known, already, as a pedestrian friendly downtown. The seasonal plantings, the art programs, and the street trees downtown all add to a particular character that is unique to Edmonds right now. However, the document suggests that there are ways to capture those things that are positive and expand and build upon them over time. The proposed document makes a series of recommendations based on those issues. It includes a description of each of the recommendations, along with a summary of the issues they are trying to address with each recommendation. He reviewed each of the recommendations as follows:

- **Traffic Improvements:** This has to do with the relationship between automobiles, service vehicles, trucks and pedestrians. He said there are some areas in the downtown where several driveways are located in sequence, and this disrupts the pedestrian movement. There are opportunities to reduce the noise and congestion by calming the traffic, rerouting the service traffic and reducing the number of driveways.

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- **Connections:** This has to do with recognizing the connections that are of primary importance to pedestrians such as connecting down to the waterfront to capitalize on the downtown's relationship to the water and ferry dock.
- **Bikeways:** The City currently has a bikeway plan. However, the Urban Design Study suggests that there are ways to enhance and provide incentives for alternative forms of transportation in the downtown
- **Corners:** The intent is to recognize the need to balance auto/truck turning requirements against pedestrian needs by reducing the turning radius at corners. This can enable the City to expand the pedestrian environment and provide more room for sign posts, etc. He noted that there are places in the downtown where there are sign posts and light standards that are exactly in the middle of pedestrian walkways.
- **Crosswalks:** This has to do with enhancing the visibility of crosswalks either through the use of alternative paving or colors within the crosswalks, themselves, to make them more visible to both motorists and pedestrians.
- **Medians:** While there is not a lot of room on the downtown streets, medians can provide a refuge half the way across the street for pedestrians. It also provides an opportunity to modify the traffic movements to prevent cars from blocking crosswalks, etc.
- **Pavement Parking:** It is suggested that the crosswalks be marked more clearly to enhance the safety and security for pedestrians.
- **Signing:** It is important to provide clear and simple information systems for both automobiles and pedestrian to reduce the confusion in the downtown. The goal is to make the signing system downtown more pedestrian friendly. Right now, the signing system is aimed at the motorists.
- **Landscaping.** This has to do with taking advantage of the opportunities that the City has already been doing to a great extent, such as providing medians and curb extensions for plantings in a way that takes more advantage of the opportunities.
- **Seasonal Planting:** This is aimed at the existing hanging basket and seasonal planting programs that take place downtown, but are not codified in any document. If the document is adopted, it is suggested that this program be codified to ensure that it continues on.
- **Sidewalk Design:** This is perhaps the most broad umbrella category. There is a whole list of suggestions made in the document to enhance the street/pedestrian environment through thoughtful, consistent design.
- **Gateways:** This has to do with clearly marking the City's edges and entries in a positive, recognizable way. It is important to identify and map the logical gateways (located typically at arterial intersections, but not necessarily at the actual City limits). It is also important to establish a palette of design elements for gateways that includes signs, banners, landscaping, etc. .
- **Distribution:** The street tree map that is found in this section assigns use zones or functional categories to the various downtown streets based on field observation of existing conditions and probable near term development.

Next, Mr. Reckord referred the Board to the Street Tree Plan, which is a companion piece to the Urban Design Plan. It goes into more specific detail about street trees and defines a list of street trees to be used all over the City. Street trees have been selected from the list and mapped out or described in the plan for the downtown area, the gateways and Highway 99. He briefly reviewed the criteria that was used to identify appropriate types and location of street trees. It also provides guidelines for maintenance and installation of the trees.

Mr. Reckord recalled that there was some concern expressed by the Board at their last review of the Urban Design Plan regarding implementation. He said that the Urban Design Plan was never intended to identify projects that are funded. It was intended to become a set of guidelines the City could apply as projects are funded over time. It could be split up and sent to different departments in the City such as public works, engineering, parks and recreation, etc. The implementation would be three tier, and could be applied to projects that are in the works now, to projects that are planned in the near future, and to projects that will be considered in the distance future.

Board Member Dewhirst inquired if underground utilities are identified in the Urban Design Plan as a guideline. Mr. Reckord answered that underground utilities are identified in the document as desirable. Because this would be very expensive, the decision was made to suggest it as a good idea, but not as a specific recommendation.

THERE WAS NO ONE IN THE AUDIENCE INTERESTED IN ADDRESSING THE BOARD ON THIS PARTICULAR ISSUE. THEREFORE, THE PUBLIC HEARING WAS CLOSED.

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Board Member Guenther said that some things in the Urban Design Plan seem to conflict. One has to do with the recommendations for service entrances and traffic improvements which seem to conflict with the recommendations for chocking down some of the corners. Service trucks will have more difficulty accessing the sites if the turning radius is reduced. Mr. Reckord explained that access for emergency vehicles and a minimum turning radius would be maintained at all intersections. The plan also suggests that some service routes be identified for the downtown area.

Board Member Guenther expressed his concern that trying to add bike routes, medians, wider sidewalks, and additional streetscape could end up making the sidewalks too wide. Mr. Reckord agreed that there is not enough room on most of the streets for all of the improvements that have been recommended. But as streets change in the future, all of the solutions are good ideas to identify what is desirable.

Board Member Guenther said there is a suggestion that different materials be used for driveways than for sidewalks. He said he lived in a town that turned their downtown into a mall type of design using pavers for the sidewalks. The pavers required a significant amount of maintenance. He said he is concerned that they do not create a maintenance nightmare. Mr. Reckord answered that there are other ways to accomplish this guideline that would require less maintenance.

Board Member Dewhirst said he is still concerned about the Urban Design Plan being applied mainly to the downtown area rather than the community as a whole. He suggested that since this is the case, the document should be renamed to the "Downtown Edmonds Urban Design Plan." Perhaps a work program could be established to create a second document to apply the information contained in this document to the rest of the community.

Ms. Ohlde cautioned that if the name of the Urban Design Plan is changed and a separate document for the rest of the community is created, the City would end up repeating what they have already done rather than moving on to implement the solutions throughout the City. She said that some developers have already approached the City seeking direction from design standards that are not available at this time. She said she would hate to give the perception that the proposed document is not meant to be applied in other areas. The proposed document can be applied as guidelines when development occurs throughout the City. She suggested that it would be wiser to have an all-encompassing document, even though it references the downtown more. The document does indicate that the guidelines should be applied to all business cores in the City. Board Members Cassutt and Crim agreed. Board Member Crim suggested that the document provides a good target to guide development in other areas such as Highway 99.

Board Member Dewhirst said that if the document is intended to be applied throughout the City, it needs to be more clearly stated in the introduction and in the goals. He said the proposed plan is good, and he would like it to apply everywhere. He said there needs to be stronger language up front to indicate that the guidelines apply to all commercial areas in the City.

Board Member Young agreed with Board Member Dewhirst that the document should be applied Citywide. Perhaps it could be tweaked from neighborhood to neighborhood or commercial center to commercial center. But as it stands now, it could be somewhat of a let down for someone who really wants to see attention paid to other commercial areas in Edmonds since ninety-nine percent of the content focuses on the downtown area. To really implement a quality statement about the City of Edmonds, it should be structured to be stronger throughout the entire community.

Board Member Young said that while this is an excellent document and provides good information, it is weighted towards just one specific biographic area. He said he would like to pass this on to the City Council with a resounding vote of confidence, but with a much stronger statement that they want it to become part of what the City and developers are asked to consider with all new development. The information in the document is complementary to the community, but the implementation policy is wishy-washy. They should step up this policy to state that this is something the City and developers should be considering.

Board Member Freeman inquired if it would enhance the document if some of the examples were from areas outside of the downtown. The Board agreed that this would be appropriate.

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Board Member Guenther noted that Perrinville is identified as a possible gateway to the City. He travels through that area frequently, and he does not see this as a significant gateway. 196<sup>th</sup> Street would be a better location for a gateway improvement.

Board Member Zhan agreed with Board Members Dewhirst and Young. He inquired if they feel comfortable applying all of the solutions Citywide without making adjustments to address the specific features in other areas. Mr. Reckord said the majority of the guidelines identified in the document are expandable. They are good ideas wherever they are applied. But without reviewing the outlying areas, it is difficult to determine if all of the solutions could be applied throughout the City. They may need to identify additional solutions that could be applied to the other areas.

Board Member Young suggested that they almost need to have two phases of the plan: one for the downtown and one that could be applied throughout the community. He pointed out that when driving along Highway 99, there is nothing to identify the City of Edmonds. He said he would like to see a sequel to the document that identifies the stretch of Highway 99 that is within Edmonds and the other entrances to the City. Mr. Reckord agreed that it would be good to expand the document, but their resources are limited. Board Member Dewhirst agreed and suggested that they should complete this document but leave the door open for a sequel to address the other areas.

Board Member Dewhirst agreed that most of the concepts in the document are expandable and with some minor changes, it would not be hard to apply the document to other areas. Board Member Guenther suggested that most of the things identified, with the exception of the pedestrian elements, could be applied throughout the City.

Board Member Cassutt inquired if the staff and consultant feel comfortable with adding language changes as discussed by the Board so that the document could be forwarded to the City Council now. Ms. Ohlde answered that she appreciates the suggestion made by the Board. But they should keep in mind that the document could be used when developers come in with projects in other areas, as well, because it identifies aesthetic values that can be applied.

Board Member Crim said that perhaps some photos from Five Corners could be used in the plan. The intersection at 76<sup>th</sup> and 212<sup>th</sup> is another area that could be identified. He said perhaps these areas could be highlighted in the document with photographs and/or verbiage.

**BOARD MEMBER CRIM MOVED THAT THE BOARD FORWARD THE PUBLIC URBAN DESIGN PLAN AND THE STREET TREE PLAN TO THE CITY COUNCIL WITH A RECOMMENDATION FOR APPROVAL. BOARD MEMBER CASSUTT SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**WORK SESSION ON BUILDABLE LANDS AND CONSIDERATION OF “REASONABLE MEASURES” TO COMPLY WITH BUILDABLE LANDS REQUIREMENTS UNDER GMA**

Mr. Chave explained that the Planning Board reviewed the buildable lands report from Snohomish County within the last few months. As part of the buildable lands requirements in the State law, the City is responsible for reviewing reasonable measures which could be considered to meet their growth targets and buildable lands requirements. When the City reviewed the County’s buildable lands report, they found that they have sufficient capacity in the City, but development is not occurring at the rate that would be expected in order for the City to meet the growth targets of the Growth Management Act. Mr. Chave recalled that, as a follow up, the Planning Board agreed to consider whether or not any regulation changes should be considered in order to further encourage infill development. At this point, none of this discussion has been in the form of a public hearing, but discussions amongst the Board only. Potentially, they could be aiming at forwarding a report to the City Council that would outline some ideas that the Council should consider. But the Board would not proceed with any drafting of regulations or public hearings until the City Council has provided feedback indicating their interest.

Board Member Dewhirst recalled that Ron Gard, a citizen of Edmonds, has repeatedly asked that the Board consider the option of allowing the density to be rounded up. He inquired if staff has obtained feedback regarding this option from the City Attorney. Mr. Chave said this issue could be discussed at the joint Planning Board/City Council meeting on November

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12, at which the City Attorney would be present to answer questions. Legally, rounding up cannot be done as an exception for one specific lot, but it could be allowed as a general rule that is applied to any property in a particular zone.

Board Member Dewhirst referred the Board to the list of ideas that were discussed by the Board at the last meeting. He said staff did a good job of putting the ideas together on paper.

Mr. Chave recalled that a few meetings ago, a Board Member brought up the issue of conditional uses, so he tried to provide information related to this concept. He also provided information about SEPA Planned Actions, but noted that only a few of these have been done around the region, and they are typically used for large-scale development. SEPA Planned Actions involve a time consuming and expensive process, but there is potential for applying the concept to a portion of Highway 99. With a SEPA Planned Action, all of the environmental analysis would be done up front so that developments that are consistent with the plan for that area could have a streamlined process for obtaining approval. Basically, this is a type of area wide environmental review.

Board Member Zhan said he does not recall the Board discussing why infill development is not occurring in the City if there is sufficient capacity. Mr. Chave pointed out that there is more plentiful land in other areas, and development tends to occur in these areas most often. Although there is capacity for development in Edmonds, it is on smaller lots sprinkled throughout the City. Many of the properties in Edmonds are more difficult to develop because of environmental constraints. If developers do not have to deal with these issues in other locations, the tendency is to go where it is easier. Land values also play a significant role in this situation.

Board Member Young suggested that if the growth inhibiting factors within the incorporated limits of Edmonds are land practices and the lack of large lots, the Board does not have any control over these situations. If they adopt the five reasonable measures identified, they would be making a good faith effort to meet the target growth projections. However, he is not sure that a lot more can be done to encourage infill development. They cannot force the developers to do something that does not pencil out for them.

Mr. Chave recalled that when the Board reviewed the buildable lands report, it was pointed out that the City has done quite a few things to encourage infill development. These have all had an impact on development activity, in general. He agreed that there is only so much the City can do. However, after the City has shown a good faith effort to review all of their options, they could go back to the Snohomish County Tomorrow Committee and ask them to reconsider how much growth Edmonds can reasonably be expected to accommodate. They can only do this after the City has done all they can to address the situation.

Board Member Zhan inquired if there would be any consequences for the City if they do not meet the growth targets identified. Mr. Chave answered that there would be no consequences at this time. When Snohomish County Tomorrow considers the reasonable allocation of the growth targets throughout the region, the City would be in a better position of helping them understand what is happening in Edmonds if they can show that they have taken numerous steps in the right direction.

Board Member Dewhirst cautioned that the City needs to balance their need to meet the growth target allocation with the needs and expectations of the citizens. While he understands Mr. Gard's desire that the City allow lot size rounding to provide for infill development of non-conforming uses, putting an additional house on a street that is only 15-feet wide now would have a negative impact to the existing neighborhood. Many of these same type of situations can be found in the downtown area, and it is important to find a balance.

Board Member Cassutt commented that if some of the concepts that are currently being considered would have been available a few years ago, they probably wouldn't have had so many condominiums built on Fifth Avenue.

Board Member Dewhirst suggested that the Board's report to the City Council should list all of the measures the City has already taken. The City has taken numerous steps to achieve their growth target. If the Board is comfortable, he said he would recommend that all five of the concepts identified in the memorandum by staff be forwarded to the Council for consideration. He suggested that a sixth item be added related to the option of SEPA Planned Actions. He said he would

also like to recommend that cottage housing be considered as a possible option, too. The Board agreed that cottage housing would be addressed as part of Item 3. The Commission concurred that the six items identified by Board Member Dewhirst should be forwarded to the City Council for their consideration.

Board Member Dewhirst emphasized that all of the options being forwarded to the City Council for consideration are only alternatives. The Board has not expressed an opinion, one way or the other, on any of the options yet. This needs to be made clear in their report to the City Council—especially given the emotional state of some of the neighborhoods as a result of the PRD ordinance. The Board agreed that staff would bring the draft report to the City Council back to the Board for final review before sending it on.

Board Member Guenther reported that he attended the cottage housing open house in Shoreline. He said this type of development creates small communities where everyone shares the same front yard. They seem to provide a sense of both community and security. Board Member Freeman added that because there are a lot of retirees in the City of Edmonds, perhaps alternatives such as cottage housing should seriously be considered. They provide single-family homes in a safer setting. This is a good option for single women, as well. Mr. Chave advised that the City Council just approved a PRD proposal for a multi-family zone that has some of the same aspects of the cottage housing concept.

### **REVIEW OF EXTENDED AGENDA**

Board Member Dewhirst noted that there is a joint City Council/Planning Board meeting scheduled for November 12<sup>th</sup>. This is the night before the Board's next meeting. The sole issue that will be discussed is the report the Board forwarded to the City Council regarding the PRD ordinance. Mr. Chave advised that a work session on the budget would be the first item on the Council's agenda that evening. It is likely that the joint meeting would start at approximately 8 p.m. He said he would notify each of the Board members to confirm the start time. He advised that Board Member Dewhirst requested that staff provide each of the Board members with copies of the City Attorney's memorandum as well as the packet that was sent to the City Council.

Board Member Dewhirst reviewed the Board's agenda for November 13<sup>th</sup>, which will include a public hearing on a Comprehensive Plan Map and rezone application. Hopefully, they will also be able to move the Transportation Element of the Comprehensive Plan on to the Council, as well.

### **PLANNING BOARD CHAIR COMMENTS**

Board Member Dewhirst said he informed the Mayor of Ms. Noel's resignation. The Mayor immediately advertised the position in *THE ENTERPRISE*. Board Member Dewhirst said it is likely that the Mayor will conduct the interview process.

### **PLANNING BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS**

Board Member Young said that he recently compared the old PRD ordinance with the new PRD ordinance. He suggested that there are some things that could be changed to ease the public emotion related to the ordinance.

Board Member Freeman inquired if there are workable PRD ordinances from other jurisdictions that the Board could review. Mr. Chave said that when the Board considered the revisions to the PRD ordinance, they reviewed several ordinances from other jurisdictions.

THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS TO COME BEFORE THE BOARD, THE MEETING WAS ADJOURNED AT 8:25 P.M.

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