

**CITY OF EDMONDS
PLANNING BOARD MINUTES
November 16, 2005**

Chair Young called the regular meeting of the Planning Board to order at 7:03 p.m. in the Council Chambers, Public Safety Complex, 250 – 5th Avenue North.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

James Young, Chair
Janice Freeman, Vice Chair
Virginia Cassutt
Judith Works
John Dewhirst
Cary Guenther
Jim Crim
Don Henderson

STAFF PRESENT

Rob Chave, Planning Division Manager
Brian McIntosh, Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services Director
Karin Noyes, Recorder

READING/APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Approval of the minutes from the November 9th meeting was postponed until December 14th.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF AGENDA

Mr. Chave suggested, and the Planning Board concurred, that Item 7a (further discussion on the downtown waterfront component of the Comprehensive Plan) be replaced with a discussion about the Planning Board's extended agenda and 2006 work plan.

AUDIENCE COMMENTS

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

PUBLIC HEARING ON THE EDMONDS SKATE PARK WORK GROUP PROPOSAL TO LOCATE A SKATE PARK AT THE CIVIC CENTER PLAYFIELDS (FILE NUMBER CDC-05-29)

Chair Young clarified that the Planning Board is also the Parks Board for the City, and that is why the public hearing for the proposed skate park is being heard by them. After the public hearing, the Board would make a recommendation to the City Council, who would be responsible for making the final decision on the matter.

Brian McIntosh, Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Director, explained that the intent of the Skate Park Work Group's presentation is to provide a complete report on the history of the proposal, their findings, answers to previous questions from the Planning Board and public, improvements and changes from original recommendations, and to answer any further questions that may arise.

Mr. McIntosh reviewed that at the October 26, 1999 City Council Meeting, the Edmonds Police Foundation donated \$4,500 towards the future development of a skate park facility in downtown Edmonds. At that time, Mayor Fahey, the Council, and City staff recognized the health and social benefits of skateboarding and the success of the new Lynndale Skate Park, which was jointly funded by Edmonds and Lynnwood after a lengthy development process. It was also identified that the park was heavily used and many younger, inexperienced skateboarders had difficulty getting to the park. He pointed out that the need for a local skate park was identified in the 2001 Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan and has been included in the City's Capital Improvement Plan since that time.

Mr. McIntosh further reviewed that on March 23, 2004, staff met with the Police Foundation to discuss the possibility of building a skate park in the downtown area, and it was decided to form a Skate Park Work Group. The first meeting of this group was held on May 17, 2004, and participants included Edmonds skaters, parents and community members who believed a skate facility in downtown Edmonds would be a valuable asset to the community's youth. On January 26, 2005, the Skate Park Work Group presented a report to the Planning Board of their findings to date. Committee members reported on different aspects of the proposal, which included health benefits; growth and popularity of the sport; the 40 Development Assets that are nationally recognized building blocks that help young people grow up healthy, caring and responsible; safety; risk management; the Recreation Immunity Act; pictures of skate parks in surrounding communities; criteria for selecting a skate park site; and the proposed location of the Civic Center Playfields.

Mr. McIntosh reported that a public hearing was held on March 9, 2005, and at the conclusion of the hearing the Planning Board asked the Work Group to return at a later date to answer questions concerning noise impacts on the surrounding neighborhood and provide an accurate site plan of the park. On October 26, 2005, Julie Weibusch from the Greenbusch Company, Inc. presented a comprehensive noise study. Two other refinements to the original proposal were also presented at that time. First, the location of the proposed facility was changed within the Civic Center Playfields. Second, there was a significant change proposed for the product that would be used for the facility.

Mr. McIntosh reviewed the following twelve points:

- **Goal:** The parks and recreation community recognizes skateboarding as a healthy and popular recreational activity and a legitimate use to be accommodated in our parks system. The goal of the Skate Park Work Group is to continue their efforts to gain approval to plan and construct a skate park in downtown Edmonds at the preferred Civic Field site for beginning to intermediate skateboarders.
- **Popularity of Skateboarding:** The interest in this sport continues to grow at a fast rate. Estimates of the number of people between the ages of 6 and 18 who skateboarded in 2003 was 13 million, with numbers expected to reach 15 million this year. This number exceeds the number of Little League Baseball players and trails only basketball and soccer in participation. As the sport grows, so does the need for facilities as evidenced by the installation of skate parks in most communities surrounding Edmonds.
- **Safety/Liability:** As mentioned in earlier presentations, there are far fewer skateboarding accidents per capita than many other popular sports such as baseball, soccer, or snowboarding. Children under the age of 15 are twice as likely to be injured on playground equipment and three times more likely to suffer a bicycle injury. The skate park would not be directly supervised, but if constructed to industry standards and maintained properly, the Recreation Immunity Act would protect the City from liability for skateboarding accidents. All City playground and park amenities are inspected and maintained regularly, and equipment logs are kept on all inspections. The City's Park Maintenance Staff respond immediately to reported problems with equipment or vandalism. Due to the high active use at Civic Field, park crews visit the site almost daily.
- **Security/Police:** Early in the development of the proposal, the City of Edmonds Crime Prevention Officer solicited information from surrounding communities, specifically to determine what common problems they may have. In addition to emphasizing the need for the facility to be in a highly visible area, many communities encouraged a strong police presence, especially during the first few weeks. This sets a tone early that the police are aware of and interested in the success of the facility, and it helps create a bond between skaters and officers. Parents watching and community spectators also promote security and caring and give the participants a chance to perform. With a good start, users do take ownership and peer pressure to protect the facility can be powerful. At the present time, the police are not able to

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direct kids that are skating on public facilities and restricted areas to a local park in downtown Edmonds. Lynndale Park is the closest facility, and it is about three miles away.

- **Location:** The survey conducted by the Crime Prevention Officer and other readings and research by the Work Group yielded a set of criteria that the group used to determine the best location in the downtown area for the skate park. The group identified nine areas that might have potential as a site. Members traveled independently to each site, applied criteria to those sites, and selected the Civic Center Playfields as the preferred location. None of the criteria was weighted so having easy access to police and fire was scored the same as availability of restrooms and phone. Attachment 6 is a location analysis chart that provides more information about the site that was selected by the Work Group.
- **Location Within Civic Playfield:** The original location identified by the Work Group was adjacent to the basketball courts, 120 feet from the north perimeter fence line and 140 feet from the nearest residences. Upon further observation, it was noticed that shifting the skate park south and slightly east would keep most of the usable dimensions of the north field a consistent 285-foot perimeter softball field. Distance from the nearest residents was increased from 140 feet to 240 feet. Attachment 7 illustrates the proposed location of the facility, which would be more centrally located and provide more direct site lines from the police station.
- **Noise Study:** At the request of the Planning Board, due to concerns from the neighborhood about the potential noise impacts from a skate park facility, a scope of work was developed to perform an ambient noise study. The Greenbusch Group, Inc., an acoustical, mechanical and audio/visual design firm, was selected to perform the study. The original study measured from the location adjacent to the basketball courts and concluded that noise levels would pose very little impact to the community. The analysis did not recommend mitigation. The study provided in the Board's packets was updated to reflect noise levels at the new proposed location, which would be 240 feet from the nearest residences. The noise study continued to use the wooden ramp design, which is considerably noisier than the new proposed design of concrete structures.
- **Rules:** Simple rules similar to other skate parks and following the recommendations of the Washington Cities Insurance Authority would be posted. This type of park is designed for skateboards and roller blades. The Washington Cities Insurance Authority is the City's insurance carrier, and staff has talked at length with them about the proposed facility. They have indicated no problems with skate parks in municipal areas.
- **Hours of Operation/Lights:** The facility would not be equipped with lights and would be open from 9 a.m. to dusk, which is about ½ hour past sunset. Anyone using the facility beyond those hours would be trespassing.
- **Fencing:** To protect skaters from errant baseballs, soccer balls, etc., the proposal includes an 8-foot fence on the north, a 10-foot fence on the east, and a 4-foot fence on the west and south where play is minimal and spectators could observe. The fencing would be removable to enable flexibility for special events.
- **Drainage:** The field area north of the proposed site and east of the basketball courts has had an ongoing problem that makes the area unplayable for significant parts of the year. In coordination with the development of the park, a separate drainage project would be undertaken to rectify this problem. This would extend the season in which the field could be used for events.
- **Design/Accommodation:** The original proposal called for a modular park with steel, wood, or like surfaces to enable removal for special events such as the Taste of Edmonds. The Work Group continued to visit other parks to explore surfaces, including markedly quieter pre-cast concrete recently installed at the Kenmore Skate Park. This product can be designed to match any skating feature and usually duplicates the "streetscape" forms that are designed, requested by, and popular with skaters. Streetscapes mimic real street features. These are low maintenance, permanent and the 2 to 6-ton concrete weight of each piece absorbs sound and creates stability. The forms would be placed on an approximately 5,400 square foot smooth concrete pad. The Chamber of Commerce endorses the design and would be able to work on and around the skate park.

Board Member Works asked if the City has funding available to maintain the park. Mr. McIntosh explained that the City's Capital Improvement Plan identifies \$200,000 for construction of the new facility, and the project should stay within that range. The facility would be maintained on the regular maintenance schedule and they do not anticipate a lot more maintenance than is currently done at the Civic Playfields.

Board Member Freeman noted that the proposed new pre-cast concrete design would be permanent. She asked if the structures could be moved if the proposed location doesn't work out. Mr. McIntosh said that once the pieces are installed, they would be considered permanent. However, because they are modular, they could be moved to another site if necessary.

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Board Member Works pointed out that the noise study indicates that the noise would be within a tolerable range for the nearby residences. However, she asked what kind of mitigation could be done in the future if the noise is found to be greater than anticipated. Mr. McIntosh answered that there are several different mitigation options, such as landscaping and rubber padding on the side walls to the east and north to reflect the noise back into the park. However, the staff has discounted the use of permanent berms or solid concrete walls.

Chair Young said he found the background packet provided by staff to be very thorough, and it provided a good summary of all of the information provided thus far. He pointed out that the need for the skate park facility was identified in the 2001 Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan, and has been identified in the City's Capital Improvement Plan since that time, as well. However, it would be helpful for the Board to have a clear understanding of the specific Comprehensive Plan policies that pertain to skate park facilities. He reminded the Board that they must formulate tight recommendations to the City Council showing that they are good policy decisions and that the potential impacts have been evaluated.

Mr. McIntosh explained that the Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan is updated every six years, and the next update is scheduled for 2006. This element of the Comprehensive Plan was compiled after a lot of public input and is considered to be the official planning document for parks. Because skateboarding was a recognized need as long as ten years ago, a policy was included in the plan to emphasize the need to provide varied recreational opportunities for the youth of Edmonds.

Emily Erlich said she was present to represent the group, Friends of the Civic Playfield, which consists of approximately 100 residents whose homes surround the playfield. She said the group is seeking a comprehensive and objective siting analysis for a premier skate park in Edmonds, one that creates a winning situation for the kids and the residents. She provided pictures comparing modular skate parks to in-ground concrete parks. The Friends do not feel the aesthetics of a modular park would meet the same quality standards of some of the other parks in Edmonds. She provided pictures to compare what the City might be able to construct using the same amount of money were they to construct a premier in-ground park instead.

Ms. Erlich said the Friends are thrilled and grateful that so many concessions have been made and so many of their points have been addressed. She thanked the Skate Park Work Group, the City Staff and the Planning Board for all the work that has been done. However, the Friends would like to see a little more work done in the direction of a premier, in-ground skate park that would require less maintenance, be more durable, and available to the youth year round.

Ms. Erlich referred to the location analysis chart that was prepared by the Friends using the work performed by the Skate Park Work Group. She noted that the location analysis chart places Edmonds Elementary School at the top of the list along with City Park. The Civic Playfield site was actually seventh on the chart when measured straight across. In addition, the natural buffers that were seen as a positive aspect of the City Park location were not balanced with the fact that the Civic Playfield site did not have natural buffers. She explained how the Friends evaluated and weighed each site differently than the Work Group. First, to address the point of children who cannot drive being able to walk to the park, the Friends analyzed the school population data from the Edmonds School District. This data indicates that the lowest number of children live in the downtown area. If a skate park were to be placed in a neighborhood where the highest number of non-driving children live, it would be located in the Seaview or Chase Lake neighborhoods.

Next, Ms. Erlich referred to two pages of comments that were provided in the packet to represent what other organizations and the media are saying about residential setbacks and the sounds that come from nearby skate parks. These comments illustrate how other residential neighborhoods have been impacted by the proximity of skate parks close to their homes.

Ms. Erlich said the decibel readings provided in the sound report prepared by the Greenbusch Company, Inc. matched those identified by the Friends, but it would be helpful if the study could explain why the dynamics of sound reflection was not addressed since this is a significant concern of the people living near the playfield.

Ms. Erlich noted that several references were made in the documents provided to the Planning Board regarding the impact the skate park would have on economic development, which is a valid and strong point. However, the construction of a

premier skate park, as proposed by the Friends, would have an even greater economic impact than would the modular design. People from outlying areas would likely be more interested in driving to downtown Edmonds if the park were unique.

In summary, Ms. Erlich asked that the Board consider the points provided by the Friends of the Civic Playfield through letters to the editor in the local newspapers, ad campaigns, their website and their presentation to the Board. She asked them to give the children in Edmonds a premier skate park that would do the City proud.

Jim Underhill said he finds the proposed park would be good for Edmonds and a right use of the public field. The plan for the placement of the park at the Civic Field has been developed over time, allowing all parties to participate, evaluate and consider the goodness of the proposal. It has been an open process with scheduled meetings, minutes posted for public review, and allowance for comment. The skate park project married policy with data and scientific processes. By use of a good matrix assessment tool by the youth, research about skateboarding as a worldwide sport, the determined need for this type of park for a segment of Edmonds' youth population, and by data presented by a reputable acoustic measurement company, the Work Group has shown that the policy is solid ground and is defensible.

Mr. Underhill further stated that the addition of the new facility would be consistent with the City's policy of providing many and varied activities through its parks and recreation programs. He pointed out that the *Fall CRAZE Catalog* includes 21 pages of offerings for all ages just in Edmonds. The skateboard park could provide introductory classes for the younger residents and any adult willing to strap on a helmet and knee pads. Finally, he stated that construction of the skate park would provide a sign of respect for the youth of the City. Several youth have worked with the City staff, the community and the Police Foundation to prepare and present a solid plan. Having waited five years, it is time to act by offering support for the project. He referred to the other ideas that have been offered regarding the design and location of the facility. However, he pointed out that a "premiere skate park" has not been the plan for the past five years. The proposal should move forward using the current design and proposed location.

Aaron Taylor said that last April he had an opportunity to visit New Zealand. While there he had the privilege of visiting 11 different skate parks in towns of less than 1,000 people. When talking to the local police departments, he learned that many of these parks were designed by children working with the cities. All spoke positively about the asset to the community. He said that in his opinion, New Zealand is forward thinking as far as communities supporting the youth. He asked Edmonds to support the youth by moving forward with the proposed plan to construct a skate park.

Sandy Zickuhr said she feels it would be wonderful to construct a skate park for the youth, but she hasn't heard anything about how the City would address the concerns raised by the residents who live in the condominiums adjacent to the proposed site. She said her home is located uphill from the proposed site, and she invited Board Members to visit her property and listen to the sound that comes from the Civic Playfield on a regular basis. Because noise from the Civic Playfield reverberates uphill, the skate park should not be constructed in the proposed location. She said she is not really bothered by the soccer games, etc. that take place on the field, because these are not year round activities. If the skate park is added, the noise would drive the uphill residents crazy. She reminded the Board that they are taxpayers and their concerns should be considered. She summarized that there must be other locations for the proposed skate park that would have less impact to neighboring residential properties.

Katy Reischling said her son enjoys skateboarding, and they live near the proposed site. She said the noise would not be as significant as what comes from the current soccer games that take place on the playfield, the Arts Festival, or the weekly Summer Market. There are already a lot of kids hanging around the Boys and Girls Club until quite late at night, and the skate park would provide the youth with something to enjoy that is legal. She noted that the kids get in trouble when they skateboard on City streets. Because she works, she is not able to take her son to the other skate parks in the area during the weekdays. She said that placing a skate park in the proposed location, in clear view from the Police Department, would be appropriate. The skate park would fulfill the need for pre-teens and teens that do not like to play team sports but want to develop a skill of their own.

Cal Taylor said she spent a lot of time working with the Skate Park Work Group and visiting different parks in the area. She visited the new Kenmore Skate Park recently because it was the type of facility they wanted to build in Edmonds. She took time to listen to the noise that was generated by the park users. She found that while the skateboarders are on the

ramps, the noise level is very low. The only noise was generated when the skaters were on the asphalt surface. This would not be the case for Edmonds, since the proposal is to start with a concrete surface. She suggested that the noise concerns have been overestimated. She invited the Board Members to visit the Kenmore Skate Park and see how quiet it actually is.

William Tamblin said he likes to skateboard, but it is not allowed on many of the City's streets. His mother works during the day, so she can't drive him to skate parks in the surrounding areas. He said he prefers skateboarding over team sports. Before he was told he couldn't skateboard on City streets, he and his friends used to be outside all afternoon. He was invited by the Police Department to get involved with the Skate Park Work Group. He said he feels the Civic Center Playfield would be the best location for the new skate park, and he hopes the Board will support the proposal.

Don Kreiman complimented Ms. Erlich for a wonderful presentation on behalf of Friends of the Civic Playfield. However, he reminded her that the Civic Playfield was in place before she purchased her home. It is a central place for the youth to hang out since it is located near the Frances Anderson Center and the Boys and Girls Club. He said he rides his bike around Edmonds almost every day, and he would be able to watch the kids at the proposed location. He noted that the users of the new facility would be younger children. He reminded the Board that the youth designed the facility and the Police Department has indicated their support, as well. He asked them to forward a recommendation of approval to the City Council.

Nancy Crim said she lives in the Bowl of Edmonds and understands the concerns that have been raised by the residents regarding noise. However, she asked how many of them hear the trains at night. She suggested that to live in the Bowl means you must accept noise. She said she is a volunteer with the Edmonds Police Foundation, who gave the City \$4,500 six years ago as seed money for the skate park. She said she would like to see construction of the new facility get started soon, and she asked for the Board's support of the project. She concluded by stating that she is a real estate agent and could help people sell their condominiums if they don't want to be located so close to the new facility.

John Pierre said that as he came through the east entrance of the Public Safety Complex he noted that there were several soccer games going on at the Civic Playfield, and there must have been 100 children participating. He said that when he was raising his children in Edmonds, they would have been overjoyed to have such a facility as the one proposed available to them. He asked that the Board support the project in the proposed location.

Kristen Leupold said she recently experienced a situation in which she was in her car and a skateboarder came out into the street in front of her. This illustrates the need for the City to provide a safe place for the children to skateboard. She concluded that the proposed park is very important to the youth in the community.

Roger Hertrich reported that last evening the City Council considered a problem raised by residents living between Walnut and Alder Streets regarding a trail. The City Council listened to the residents' concerns intently, which is something the Board should do, as well. It is important that the Board work to protect the fragile status of the neighborhoods surrounding the playfield. They already have to deal with a number of different disturbances. He expressed his belief that if neighborhoods are disturbed too much, the residential uses eventually become multi-family. In this situation, the uses are high-quality multi-family units that are already subject to many disturbances from the playfield.

Mr. Hertrich said the Board has the opportunity to look at the entire City when deciding the appropriate location for the new facility. However, they have only focused their review on the Civic Playfield site. While they did much more than they started out to do because of public pressure from those who live in the neighborhood, they should have given more consideration to the impacts the proposed project would have on the surrounding properties. He suggested that a more appropriate location would be the old Woodway High School site, where quite a bit of development is currently being planned for future sport uses. He noted that this area is isolated from residential development and would be a good location for a skate park.

Mr. Hertrich said it appears the Board has made the decision to not talk about the other sites. Instead, they have talked about how to mitigate the impacts for the central location at the Civic Playfield. He said he can picture skateboarders riding their boards on City streets to get to the new facility. He urged the Board to follow the City Council's example and work to protect the fragile neighborhoods. A skate park can be constructed anywhere, but a neighborhood cannot be moved.

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Bruce Witenberg said he is a member of the Edmonds Police Foundation and has served as a liaison to the Skate Park Work Group. He son, Alex, also had the opportunity to serve as part of the Work Group. He wasn't able to attend the meeting, so he asked him to read the following letter into the record:

My name is Alex Witenberg. I am 16 years old and attend Edmonds Woodway High School. Tonight, I am attending a lecture on Hurricanes with my honors chemistry teacher at the University of Washington.

The City of Edmonds needs a skate park for the youth. It is really intended for younger, beginner and intermediate skaters. Since I am a sophomore, in two short years I will be in college and therefore, will not be able to use the park. However, this is not the issue. The issue is that there are kids who will come after me, wanting a skate park. This is our opportunity to fulfill their dreams. There are people here tonight who will say that Edmonds needs a premiere skate park: a concrete, in-ground facility that is world class. This is an excellent idea, however, in the words of the Rolling Stones, arguably the greatest rock band of all time, "you can't always get what you want, but if you try, sometimes you can get what you need". This is the situation that we are faced with. A premiere, in-ground, concrete facility would be excellent. However, especially in politics, you can't always get what you want.

The answer, therefore, is the skate park design at the Civic Playfield location that the Skate Park Work Group has reasonably presented after 18 months of work. The design is supported by the noise study done on the area by the Greenbusch Group. The youth generally do not have a large say in what goes on in this city. This is our chance for input on an issue that we care about. This about the future of our city, and the youth are the future. We will not be around forever, but there will always be kids. Therefore, I implore you, listen to the voice of the youth, listen to the science, and pass the skate park on to the City Council.

Mr. Chave referred the Board to e-mails the Board received just prior to the meeting regarding the proposed skate park project. He reviewed each one as follows:

- **Pat Gow:** *I do not have any strong feelings one way or the other, but if the skateboard facility does happen, can we please be assured that the kids will be leaving that area no later than 9:00 p.m. I live directly across from the field and if someone from the decision making panel has time to go over to the field at that time of night, they will notice how lovely and peaceful it is then. I would love to keep it that way. Kids should be home by that time anyway, don't you think?*
- **M.B. Walsh:** *I attended the last meeting when the noise study was presented. There is one question I have regarding the study. When the study was presented, they used three skateboarders to determine the noise levels at the proposed park. Does this mean there will be limits for the number of skateboarders using the park at one time? Or does the noise level of three skateboarders mean the proposed park can only accommodate three people at one time? I would suggest that the noise study be revised to consider use by more than three people. If the park is so limited that only a few people can use it at one time, I would suggest that the site selection be revisited to accommodate a larger park.*
- **Kendall Berry:** *During the Planning Board Meeting last spring, I spoke in opposition to placing the skateboard park on the Civic Playfield. I believed that other sites in the bowl area could easily accommodate a skate park. I was also concerned about using modular equipment. After that meeting, I joined the Skate Park Work Group as a neighbor interested in finding a resolution that could benefit both the neighbors and the skaters. I do still feel that another site could work for the skate park, but the Civic Playfield is the one being considered this evening. The Skate Park Work Group has done a fabulous job of revising their plan to address the legitimate concerns of residents surrounding the park. Many thanks to Renee McRae and Brian McIntosh and all of the Work Group members for their efforts. I support the plan and ask you to approve it in its current form.*
- **Chris Brevik:** *This letter is in support of the skate park being considered for downtown Edmonds. The Brevik family are residents of the Edmonds bowl and unanimously support this effort. Our family has two children (12 and 14) that have often referred to Edmonds as "Deadmonds." Their friends also reflect this attitude because Edmonds is not a kid friendly city. It almost seems like if a project is not in direct support of senior citizens, there is a high chance it will fail. My kids and their friends are good kids that are doing very well academically. They enjoy riding skateboards (like most kid that age) but would be breaking the law if they were caught riding downtown. My wife and I are constantly amazed when we visit other waterfront cities and communities that encourage the public of all ages to enjoy their waterfront by*

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providing paths that people can walk, run, ride, roller skate, skateboard, etc. Look at West Seattle, Lake Washington, Bothell, Kirkland, along with a multitude of other waterfront communities. These areas have vibrant waterfront areas that invite all age groups to participate in healthy activities. Edmonds needs to quit being afraid of change and truly become "The Friendliest City on Puget Sound." Please support and allow a skate park in a location that is convenient to the bowl kids that will provide a health activity for all our children.

- **Lisa Conley:** *I think it's a great idea to put a skate park at the Civic Center. I live near the Lynndale Skate Park and my two boys (ages 7 and 9) enjoy riding their skateboards and scooters at the park. We try to go before 11:00 a.m. because after that time the park is crowded with the bigger kids. Since my youngest plays soccer at the Civic Center, my oldest would enjoy having the opportunity to skateboard while his brother is playing soccer. I also have noticed skateboarders at our school because there are not enough skate parks for them. They like to grind on our concrete curbs which costs the schools money to repair. If there were more parks for them, I feel they would be less likely to go to the schools.*
- **Bill Dalziel:** *I am writing to show support for the skateboard park to be located at the Civic Field in Edmonds. I look forward to working with the City staff in maintaining the park and the appropriate behavior at the park. My reservations are only that the Boys and Girls Club will be the focal point with any issues that may arise. Obviously, my largest concern is from the negative aspect. I am confident that with open communication and the involvement of all stakeholders, the skateboard park in Edmonds will be an asset to the community.*

THE PUBLIC PORTION OF THE HEARING WAS CLOSED AT 8:07 P.M.

Mr. Chave informed the members of the audience that they could place their names on the sign up sheet in order to be notified if the City Council decides to hold a public hearing on the proposal. He noted that anyone who received a notice for this public hearing would also be notified of a future public hearing.

Mr. McIntosh expressed his belief that many of the questions that were raised by the audience were also answered by other speakers. However, he pointed out that a premiere skate park would cost at least \$300,000 to construct, and the one that was recently built in Mukilteo cost about \$900,000. Typically, these types of parks are much larger in size than the one that is proposed for the Civic Playfield.

Julie Wiebusch, Greenbusch Group, Inc., requested an opportunity to respond to the comments that were made regarding the Sound Study. She pointed out that there is not much located around the proposed site. It is an open field, and the Boys and Girls Club building is the only structure the sound could reflect off of. The little reflection coming from the Boys and Girls Club structure would not have a significant impact on the properties located uphill. She further explained that they reviewed the worse case conditions by identifying the highest levels of sound from the loudest events and combining them for the study. They compared these numbers to the noise levels identified in the City's noise ordinance. Even if the sound created by the bowl effect were doubled, the levels would still be below the noise ordinance and below any of the activities that already exist on the site.

Second, Ms. Wiebusch explained that while the study reviewed the noise created by three skaters, the park would not be limited to just three skaters. She explained that while there would typically be a larger number of kids using the park, only a maximum of three skaters would be able to use the ramps at any one time. The rest of the skaters would be waiting in line for their turn. The kids are very polite because of self preservation.

Regarding the possibility of siting the new facility at the old Woodway High School site, Mr. McIntosh agreed that this would be a great location for a skate park in the future, but it is two or three miles from the bowl area. A presentation would be made at the November 29th City Council Meeting regarding preliminary ideas for the high school site.

Board Member Freeman said staff mentioned that they are planning to have the skate park open from 9 a.m. to ½ hour after sunset. She noted that this would be quite late in the summer. If the park is being designed for younger children, perhaps it could close before sunset in the summer. In addition, she noted that most of the kids are in school so there would be very little activity at the new facility during the daytime hours on the weekdays. Mr. McIntosh agreed that during the school hours, the facility would be used very little. Most of the activity would occur when the weather is dry and kids are out of school. Board Member Freeman also inquired if the gate for the new facility would be locked during the evening hours. Mr.

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McIntosh answered that the gate would not be locked. In answer to Board Member Dewhirst's question, he further stated that the Boys and Girls Club is typically staffed from about 10 a.m. into the evening hours.

Chair Young pointed out that the proposed location is the most centrally located site with maximum access for the greatest number of kids. He asked if this was considered as one of the siting criteria. Mr. McIntosh answered that the siting criteria was not specific as to the greatest number of kids who could access the site. However, the proximity of the proposed site to the Boys and Girls Club and the opportunity to welcome the kids to the downtown were very important. Chair Young expressed his belief that the skate park should be located in an area that is accessible to the greatest number of kids. Mr. McIntosh agreed and noted that the Civic Playfield is certain an active area already, as is the Boys and Girls Club and the Frances Anderson Center.

Board Member Dewhirst recalled that when the proposal was first presented to the Board, staff stated that isolated sites in other communities have not been successful because they are hard to get to and there are no eyes on the facility to keep problems from starting. Ms. McIntosh referred to the survey the Crime Prevention Officer conducted of 14 or 15 skate parks in surrounding jurisdictions. The survey indicated that skate parks should not be put in isolated locations. He referred to the comments provided by Mr. Dalziel from the Boys and Girls Club, who has personal experience with a skate park that was constructed in Sultan next to the Boys and Girls Club. Both facilities were relatively isolated and he was often called upon to solve problems at the skate park.

Chair Young asked if the proposed design of the facility would hold the long-term interest of skateboarders in the community. The skateboarders in the audience answered affirmatively.

Board Member Crim summarized that the Board has heard a lot of opinions from the public regarding the proposal, and it is clear that Edmonds is a divided community on many issues. Many people have the attitude that their mind has been made up. Oftentimes, when they encounter a report that supports something they are opposed to, they tend to dismiss it as inaccurate. He pointed out that the noise study was thorough and well based, and he believes it supports the conclusion that the impact of the skateboard park would be minimal, at best. Therefore, he said he would support the proposal as presented.

Board Member Dewhirst said that no matter where the facility is proposed, it would be opposed by someone. Based on that, he feels that the proposed central location is good. Having knowledge of some of the other sites, he feels that most do not have anywhere near the proverbial eyes as what would exist at the Civic Playfield. The Boys and Girls Club would be able to provide a restroom facility, telephone service, and drinking fountains with no additional cost to the City. In addition, the close proximity to the fire and police station make the site a superb location. He noted that the old Woodway High School site is isolated and kids tend to get in trouble in these situations. While there are other possible sites for the skate park, none of them have the amount of setback from surrounding residential uses that the Civic Playfield site can offer.

Board Member Dewhirst said he read through the Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan pertaining to skate parks. One of the supporting documents contained in this plan is the Community Youth Report dated July of 2001, which emphasizes the need to engage the youth of the community in the decision making process. He said he doesn't know of a better example of the kids being engaged from the beginning of a process. They have followed it all the way through to the public hearing. The location was moved and the design of the facility was changed to address the concerns of the surrounding property owners, and the noise study indicates that the impacts would be minimal. He said he would support the proposal.

Board Member Freeman said that before the noise study was completed, she was concerned about the impact the skate park would have on the residential properties. However, the results of the study have alleviated these concerns. She said she likes the central location and what the kids have done to promote the plan. The fact that the site would be in an open area and all eyes could be on the facility is definitely a good thing, as well. She said she would support the proposal.

Board Member Cassutt agreed with the comments provided by her fellow Board Members. She said she would support the proposal, too.

Board Member Works said that when the proposal was first presented to the Board, she didn't think it would be a good idea. But after reading the facts presented in the noise study, she now plans to support it. However, if there is a problem with

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noise after the park is constructed, she would hope the City could mitigate the problem. She also commented that, given the economic climate of the City, a premiere skate park is not a reality at this time.

Board Member Guenther said he likes the proposed location because it can create a synergy between the Frances Anderson Center, the Civic Playfield, the Boys and Girls Club, and the downtown. Also, the site's proximity to the police station is another important positive factor. He said he does not believe the park would create significant noise impacts to surrounding properties, and he plans to support the proposal as presented.

Board Member Henderson said he was initially concerned about noise, but the noise study was well done and answered his concerns and questions. He said he plans to support the proposal, with the proviso that he would like the City to make a commitment to measure the sound levels once the park is operational to verify that the projected sound levels identified in the study are accurate. If they are not, the City should take action to mitigate the problem.

Chair Young pointed out that the proposed skate park is supported by the policies contained in the Comprehensive Plan. This type of facility has been discussed and a need has been identified. The proposal has been reviewed and analyzed to identify negative impacts, and the closest residential property would be 240 feet away. In addition, only two or three skateboarders would be making noise at any one time. He emphasized that the Civic Playfield is the outdoor recreation center for the City, and that is the type of activity that occurs there. The site is not located on the edge of a wetland or swamp. It is located in the middle of Edmonds. He said he would rather the kids be at the Civic Playfield skateboarding with eyes on them than at the mall playing video games. If there were a better location to consider, they would have something to talk about, but they have to do something now for the children who live in the community. If the proposed project would help the kids in the community, he doesn't see any externalities that haven't been dealt with.

BOARD MEMBER WORKS MOVED THAT THE BOARD FORWARD A RECOMMENDATION OF APPROVAL TO THE CITY COUNCIL FOR FILE NUMBER CDC-05-29, A PROPOSAL BY THE EDMONDS SKATE PARK WORK GROUP TO LOCATE A SKATE PARK AT THE CIVIC CENTER PLAYFIELDS, WITH ALL OF THE ASSOCIATED FINDINGS. BOARD MEMBER CRIM SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

THE BOARD TOOK A BREAK AT 8:35 P.M. THEY RECONVENED THE MEETING AT 8:45 P.M.

REVIEW OF EXTENDED AGENDA AND 2006 WORK PLAN

Mr. Chave recalled that at the Board's last meeting, they talked about the need to create a new extended agenda and identify their work items for 2006. He said that as he started working on this project, it became apparent that there are many items on the Board's plate for 2006. He pointed out that as the new year starts, there will be new City Council Members and perhaps a new direction for the Comprehensive Plan. Therefore, he suggested it would behoove the Board to present their proposed work program to the City Council early in 2006 for additional direction. This would enable them to obtain feedback from the City Council before they spend a lot of time addressing each issue.

The Board discussed comments from some City Council Members about the possibility of reconsidering their previous Comprehensive Plan decisions. Board Member Crim explained that City Council Members can only ask for an issue to be reconsidered if they voted one way on the issue and they want to change their vote. Mr. Chave said the rules that apply depend upon the type of decision that was made. While some decisions can be reconsidered, those associated with Comprehensive Plan amendments must go through the process again. Zoning decisions cannot be revisited once a property owner has acted upon the action.

Mr. Chave suggested that the Board spend some time at their December 14th meeting discussing and identifying the most important issues for them to take care of in 2006. They could highlight their concerns and questions and request input from the City Council regarding their current policy direction. It is important that the City Council be given an opportunity to identify any changes in policy direction before the Board spends a significant amount of time on any one issue. The Board agreed that this process would be appropriate.

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Board Member Dewhirst asked why the Mayor was unable to vote on the rezone application. Mr. Chave explained that the Mayor can only vote on policy issues. He does not have the ability to participate in rezone actions because that power is expressly reserved for the legislative body of the City. The Mayor can also participate in decisions related to administration items, such as design review. Board Member Dewhirst pointed out that while he cannot vote on rezone actions, the Mayor does have a lot of power to set the agenda for the community. He suggested that before the Board meets with the City Council, it would behoove them to seek insight from the Mayor regarding the topics he feels should be priorities for the City. Mr. Chave agreed that it would be appropriate for the Board Chair and Vice Chair to solicit input from the Mayor when they meet with him prior to the Board's next meeting. The Board agreed that this would be appropriate. The Board could then consider the Mayor's priorities as part of their review of the 2006 work plan on December 14th.

Board Member Dewhirst pointed out that the Design Guidelines were not identified on the Board's extended 2006 agenda. Mr. Chave pointed out that this document is at the City Council and Architectural Design Board level at this time. He explained that while the Board will discuss design aspects of the Highway 99 and Downtown Plan, design guidelines, as a stand alone item, would not likely be discussed by the Board next year. Board Member Crim suggested that the Board's concerns about the Design Guidelines should still be brought up in the Chair's meeting with the Mayor. If the Design Guidelines had been approved, the Board's work on many of the other issues would have been much easier. Chair Young said the Board has made this point to the City Council time after time to no avail.

Chair Young expressed his disappointment that the discussion about how to revitalize the downtown and increase the tax base got whittled down to the height of buildings, which is a political issue. If they could have considered the Downtown Plan with the right design guidelines in place, they could have come up with a win/win situation for everyone. However, that is not likely to occur given the present makeup of City Council Members.

Board Member Crim said it is easy for people to say they are against a certain proposal, but they do not present any positive suggestions for what should be done instead. If there are no programs, then the City will not be able to move forward. Board Member Cassutt expressed her concern that for the past four years the City Council has been so against business owners that they don't give their concerns any thought. She said she feels the City Council is making a very big mistake. Chair Young said he feels bad for the business owners in Edmonds. He said he has never seen a business community in a small town contribute more to their community yet routinely get dismissed by the City Council.

Mr. Chave advised that the Economic Development Director would present the Economic Development Plan to the City Council on November 29th. Board Member Works suggested that the Board ask the City Council to provide direction as to what "economic development" means to them. They should also provide further information about what their economic development plans for the City are, since this is obviously not clear to the Board. Board Member Dewhirst pointed out that years ago, the City of Mountlake Terrace made the decision to oppose growth, and they are now left with the consequences of their decision. It will take them 20 years or more to recover.

Board Member Freeman referred to Initiative 912, which was recently defeated by voters in the State. She asked how this would impact the City of Edmonds. Chair Young noted that there would be some local distribution of transportation funds. Mr. Kreiman added that the City would receive about \$50,000 from this funding source, which is really a drop in the bucket compared to what the City needs.

Mr. Chave reported that the City Council recently reviewed the Planning Board's recommendations regarding Essential Public Facilities and the Definition of Family. Both were approved with no changes.

At the request of Chair Young, Mr. Chave provided a report on the City Council's action on the rezone proposal for property on Sunset Avenue. At the beginning of the meeting, Council Member Wilson decided to recuse himself. This left six voting City Council Members. A motion was made to approve the rezone proposal, but it resulted in a 3-3 tie. At that point, the issue was done because the proposal had to obtain the support of the majority of the voting City Council Members. A reverse motion was later made and the vote was also 3-3.

Chair Young noted that the City Council adopted the Comprehensive Plan that allowed the rezone to occur in the first place. Mr. Chave said the City Attorney advised that he would have a difficult time writing findings because there was very little information forthcoming from the City Council and now no findings were cited as to why some members voted against the proposal. More discussion might need to take place amongst the City Council Members to give more direction to the City Attorney. Board Member Works asked if this additional discussion would have to be conducted during a public meeting. Mr. Chave said that since it involves a legal matter, the City Council could discuss the issue in an executive session. However, the adoption of findings would have to take place at a public meeting.

Chair Young expressed his concern that there is nothing to guide the Board in terms of letting prospective developers or their representatives write specific zoning ordinances for the Comprehensive Plan. He said he felt the whole matter took on a life of its own as it proceeded through the process. While he agreed with the comment Board Member Cassutt made at the last meeting that the City couldn't ask the applicant to do anything more, it should not have come down to that, and it should not have been the basis for the Board's recommendation. The City should have policies in place that promote and guide development rather than letting the developers write the policies for the City.

Board Member Cassutt pointed out that the subject property had been vacant for so long and is so difficult to develop that she doesn't know what else could be done. She said she understands the public's concern about the big building, but no one offered any reasonable ideas on what else could be done with the site. Mr. Chave interjected that if the appropriate zoning, Comprehensive Plan and land uses had all been sorted out, there would have been no need for situations of this type to occur. However, this will never be the case. Washington Law allows property owners and developers to do exactly what the applicant for the Sunset Avenue rezone proposal did.

Board Member Henderson said it is important to note that the City Council previously approved an ordinance that required an applicant of a rezone proposal to meet three of four criteria in order to obtain approval. The applicant for the Sunset Avenue rezone proposal met all of the criteria except the one related to massing. Therefore, the Board didn't really have any other option but to recommend approval of the application. Under the ordinance put in place by the City Council, they should have had no choice but to approve the proposal, as well. He suggested that the City Council's decision sets the City up for possible legal action in the future.

PLANNING BOARD CHAIR COMMENTS

Chair Young did not provide any comments during this portion of the meeting.

PLANNING BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

None of the Planning Board Members provided comments during this portion of the meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 9:17 p.m.

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