

**CITY OF EDMONDS
PLANNING BOARD MINUTES**

January 28, 2009

Vice Chair Lovell called the meeting of the Edmonds Planning Board to order at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers, Public Safety Complex, 250 – 5th Avenue North.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

Phillip Lovell, Vice Chair
Cary Guenther
John Reed
Judith Works
Jim Young

STAFF PRESENT

Brian McIntosh, Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Director
Francis Chapin, Cultural Services Manager
Ranee McRae, Recreational Manager
Rich Lindsay, Parks Maintenance Manager
Karin Noyes, Recorder

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT

Michael Bowman, Chair

READING/APPROVAL OF MINUTES

BOARD MEMBER REED MOVED THAT THE MINUTES OF JANUARY 14, 2009 BE APPROVED AS AMENDED. BOARD MEMBER WORKS SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF AGENDA

No changes were made to the agenda.

AUDIENCE COMMENTS

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

DAYTON STREET PLAZA RENOVATION PROJECT UPDATE

Frances Chapin explained that the plaza is located in front of the building at the corner of 2nd Avenue and Dayton Street (old public works building). At this time, two arts organizations occupy the front and middle portions of the building (Driftwood Theater and Edmonds Arts Festival Foundation). The City still uses the back portion of the building. She showed a slide to illustrate the current condition of the plaza and noted that the area has not been used for many years, and the fountain is no longer operational. In addition, the landscaping materials are in poor condition and the plaza is not highly visible from the sidewalk and street. She reviewed the goals of the proposed project as follows:

- Create a more inviting entry to the plaza, which is located along a very popular walking route between downtown Edmonds and the waterfront.

- Create a small gathering place, with a seating wall that provides a resting spot for passersby.
- Provide a showcase area for visual or small performing arts events.
- Create an art element in the surface of the plaza to provide interest for visitors of all ages.
- Vastly improve the landscaping to beautify the area and attract birds.

Ms. Chapin advised that the Edmonds Arts Commission has been interested in creating sites for the temporary display of exterior sculptures, and the proposed project would provide three foundations where short term (6 to 18 months) sculpture exhibits could be displayed. She provided a picture to illustrate the art design that would be put into the hard surface at the center of the plaza, as well.

Ms. Chapin reported that this would be a partnership project. Nearly 25% of the project would be funded by contributions from the Edmonds Arts Festival Foundation (\$25,000), the Hubbard Family Foundation (\$5,000) and Edmonds in Bloom (\$2,500 for plant materials). The total cost of the project would be about \$135,000. She summarized that staff believes the proposed project is consistent with the goals and policies of the Comprehensive Parks Plan and the Cultural Plan, which call for more public gathering spaces and better connectivity throughout the downtown area, as well as public art and beautification.

Ms. Chapin advised that an open house was conducted to invite the public to review the proposed designs and provide feedback. Everyone seemed happy with the draft designs, which have now been finalized. She provided each of the Board Members with a copy of the final drawing. She noted that because the entry sidewalk would come directly down from the sidewalk, the plaza would be more visible and open. A seating wall would be provided around the main plaza area, and the sculpture foundations would be located in the landscaped area. While the proposed plan would retain some of the existing landscaping (the large Birch Trees and one of the Witch Hazel Trees), most of the landscaping is unhealthy and needs to be taken out.

Ms. Chapin summarized that staff is excited that the plans are ready to move forward. The next step would be to have the Engineering Department prepare the bid documents. They hope to complete the project in 2009.

Board Member Reed requested information about adjacent property uses. Ms. Chapin acknowledged there is a condominium project to the east of the plaza, and the elevation of the plaza area would be significantly below the elevation of the condominiums. She noted that the condominium residents were invited to attend the public meeting and provide comments, and they seem excited about the proposed improvements.

Vice Chair Lovell asked for more information about the fence that is shown on the plan to surround the plaza area. Ms. Chapin answered that would be a security fence and would be removed once the renovation project has been completed.

Board Member Works recalled the current economic climate and asked if the City currently has funding to move forward with this project. Ms. Chapin answered that the project has been identified for funding in the adopted 2009 and 2010 Capital Improvement Plan. Board Member Reed asked if staff has considered other private funding opportunities. Ms. Chapin answered that other than the grant funding provided by the Edmonds Arts Festival Foundation, the Hubbard Family Foundation, and Edmonds Bloom, they have not sought other private donations for the project.

Vice Chair Lovell asked what materials would be used for the artwork in the center of the plaza area. Ms. Chapin said the materials would be a combination of stone, brick and concrete, with bronze lettering. The stones and lettering would be set into the concrete.

DISCUSSION OF PARK NAMING POLICY

Mr. McIntosh advised that in the near future, the City hopes to dedicate two new community parks: one at the Old Woodway Elementary School Site, and one at 162nd Street in North Meadowdale. He recalled that the last City parks to be named were Marina Beach and Olympic Beach in 1984. The name for Marina Beach Park was selected by a panel of staff

and citizens, and a name contest was conducted as part of the effort. Olympic Beach Park was named by consensus to honor its mountain view and local Olympic athletes.

Mr. McIntosh said staff anticipates there would be multiple names put forward to identify the two new parks. Therefore, they are recommending the City adopt a fair policy and procedure for accomplishing the task. He noted that unsolicited names have already been suggested for both of the new parks. He referred the Board to the draft Naming Policy, which was prepared by staff after investigating several policies that have been adopted by other cities and choosing those that most fit the City of Edmonds. He noted that the purpose of the proposed policy is to establish consistent standards, procedures and guidelines for the naming of public parklands owned and/or operated by the City of Edmonds.

Mr. McIntosh read through the draft policy, which indicates that the naming of park sites shall be a function of the Planning/Parks Board or a "Naming Committee" designated by the Board. He explained that the Naming Committee would include two Planning/Parks Board Members, a representative from the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Department, and two citizens (perhaps neighbors of a subject park). He noted the draft policy also provides a list of policies that should be considered when determining whether or not a proposed name would qualify.

Board Member Works referred to the "Authorization" Section on Page 1 of the draft policy and expressed concern that the draft language does not make it clear whether the Planning/Parks Board or a Naming Committee would be responsible for naming a site. Mr. McIntosh explained that the intent is that the Board would form a Naming Committee, and the committee would review the suggestions and make a recommendation to the Board. After conducting a public meeting, the Board would make the final recommendation to the City Council. The Board agreed that the language in this section should be clarified. They further agreed that Item A in the "Naming Process – Existing Un-named Facilities" Section should also be amended to more accurately describe the process.

Board Member Works pointed out that the word "television" should be inserted after "cable" in Item C in the "Naming Process – Existing Un-named Facilities" Section. She also suggested that Item C in the "Naming Process – New Facilities" Section should be changed to indicate that public involvement would be required, not just encouraged. She noted that if the Naming Committee includes two citizens the requirement would be met, even if no one chooses to participate in the public meeting.

The Board discussed whether the Naming Committee would be a permanent, standing committee. It was noted that if the committee is required to include citizens who are neighbors of the subject site, then the make up of the committee would have to be altered for each situation. They agreed that another option would be to create a permanent naming committee to work on all park naming situations. Vice Chair Lovell suggested that the naming process could take place without forming a separate committee. For example, the Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Services Department Staff could be responsible for collecting suggestions from the public and presenting those that qualify to the Board for a public meeting and a final recommendation to the City Council. Board Member Young agreed the process could be as simple as placing an ad in the local newspapers inviting the public to suggest names. The staff could present the qualifying names to the Planning/Parks Board and explain which ones best fit the policy and why. Mr. McIntosh agreed that the process could be simplified. However, he emphasized the importance of creating a policy to help the citizens have a clear understanding of the types of names that would qualify.

Vice Chair Lovell asked if there was ever a process to formally name the little park next to Old Mill Town. Mr. McIntosh said that because this park has always been known as Old Mill Town, it would be difficult to change the name now, especially since the park is located adjacent to Old Mill Town. However, the Board could choose to consider alternative names. Board Member Works suggested they could also consider renaming the Dayton Street Plaza. Vice Chair Lovell asked if the City has considered the option of renaming any of their parks. Mr. McIntosh answered no.

Board Member Reed said he likes the idea of creating a Naming Committee because this would offer the citizens another opportunity to participate in the process. He said he went on line to view the policies of both the City of Seattle and the City of Bothell. Bothell's ordinance provides five qualifying criteria, but it is light on the procedural details. The City of Seattle has an extensive procedural process, but only four or five criteria. He observed that the draft policies proposed by staff could be condensed.

APPROVED

Board Member Young expressed concern that the proposed document contains both the policies for determining whether or not a proposed name would qualify and the process for making the final decision. He suggested that it would be better to separate the policies from the process. He said that as long as the policies are clearly outlined, the Board could use their discretion as to the appropriate process to use; it could even be considered on a case-by-case basis. Board Member Guenther agreed and pointed out that the proposed language represents more of a policy statement than the details of a process.

The Board agreed it would be appropriate to consider the policies for naming a park separately from the process for naming a park. They agreed to consider the issue further over the next month and provide further direction to staff at their February 25th meeting. They agreed that the likely first step would be to codify the policy and then decide the appropriate process for implementing the policy. They discussed that it may be appropriate to have the public involved early in the process rather than waiting until the Planning/Parks Board conducts a public meeting. Mr. McIntosh agreed it is important to get the citizens involved in the naming process.

The Board asked staff to forward them each a “Word” copy of the document so they could add their comments and suggestions for changes.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

Mr. McIntosh reported that on the morning of January 14th, the consultants met with the Aquatics Study Advisory Group to review the status of their work. In the early afternoon they met with representatives from the Harbor Square Athletic Club to discuss the possibility of partnering with them to provide a new aquatics facility in the City. Mr. McIntosh explained that the athletic club already has conceptual plans for a new pool facility, but they have indicated they would be receptive to the idea of partnering with the City. City staff is excited about this potential opportunity, as well. He noted that the athletic club has been operating in the City for 25 years and they have been good neighbors. They also have experience with these types of partnerships at some of their other locations. Mr. McIntosh further reported that the consultants met with stakeholders of the community (Stevens Hospital, Edmonds Community College, Edmonds School District, Chamber of Commerce, Edmonds Senior Center, etc.) to discuss the aquatics center concept and gather feedback. Later that evening, they conducted a public open house, where 96 citizens provided a wealth of input.

Mr. McIntosh advised that a private firm has been hired by the City to conduct a citizen telephone survey, which should get started in the next few weeks. This survey would represent a cross section of the City’s residents. Once the survey results have been compiled, they would be submitted to the consultants for analysis. He said he anticipates the consultants would be ready to present three or four conceptual ideas by the first or second week of March. The consultant would meet again with the Aquatics Study Advisory Group, as well as conduct another public meeting to gather input regarding the conceptual ideas. After the public meeting, the consultants would prepare the final concepts to present to the City Council sometime in April. He said the Board would be apprised of when the final concepts would be presented to the City Council, since it would be important for them to attend the meeting, as well.

Mr. McIntosh clarified that the Edmonds School District has notified the City that they are not interested in having the Old Woodway High School Site considered as a possible location for an aquatics center. He explained that the school district owns the property, but the deed restriction states it must remain as either a recreational or educational use. They do not have the ability to sell the property for another use, but they can dedicate it to a recreational use or some other educational use. Vice Chair Lovell added that the district has indicated they would continue to use the site as an educational facility, and they do not have any plans to change the use of the site at this time.

PLANNING BOARD CHAIR COMMENTS

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

APPROVED

PLANNING BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Board Member Guenther reported that he recently received a new book, which describes how to write form-based codes. He suggested that he be allowed an opportunity to expound on the contents of the book at the Board's retreat in April.

Board Member Reed recalled that the Board used to review their extended agenda at the end of each meeting, but this item has not been identified on the past few agendas. He suggested it be added to the agenda as part of the Administrative Report.

The Board discussed the current status of the vacant Board positions. Vice Chair Lovell reported that the January meeting with the Mayor was cancelled, so he and Chair Bowman did not get an opportunity to discuss Planning/Parks Board issues with the Mayor. He agreed to contact the Mayor's Office to find out when the interviews and appointments would take place.

The Board briefly discussed that they have typically held a retreat in the spring. It was noted that they wanted to wait until the new members have been appointed.

ADJOURNMENT

BOARD MEMBER YOUNG MOVED THAT THE MEETING BE ADJOURNED AT 8:05 P.M. BOARD MEMBER REED SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

APPROVED