

**CITY OF EDMONDS
PLANNING BOARD MINUTES**

January 9, 2013

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

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

John Reed, Chair
Valerie Stewart, Vice Chair
Todd Cloutier
Ian Duncan
Bill Ellis
Philip Lovell
Neil Tibbott

STAFF PRESENT

Rob Chave, Development Services Director
Stephen Clifton, Community Services/Economic Development Director
Karin Noyes, Recorder

OTHERS PRESENT

Cary Guenther, Architectural Design Board
Tom Walker, Architectural Design Board
Kristiana Johnson, Edmonds City Council Member

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT

Kevin Clarke (excused)

READING/APPROVAL OF MINUTES

BOARD MEMBER LOVELL MOVED THAT THE MINUTES OF DECEMBER 12, 2012 BE APPROVED AS AMENDED. BOARD MEMBER ELLIS SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF AGENDA

The order of Item 8a (Expanding design standards to Enable Removal of Stepback Requirement in BD Zones) and Item 8b (Presentation on Sustainable Building Design) was reversed. The remainder of the agenda was accepted as presented.

AUDIENCE COMMENTS

Council Member Johnson reported that all of the Board Members up for reappointment (Stewart, Duncan, Clarke and Lovell) were reappointed by the City Council on January 8th. She also reported that she was appointed to serve on the City Council's Planning/Parks/Public Works Committee. She indicated she would attend as many of the Planning Board's meetings as possible.

PRESENTATION ON SUSTAINABLE BUILDING DESIGN – VICE CHAIR STEWART AND BOARD MEMBER DUNCAN

Vice Chair Stewart welcomed Architectural Design Board Members Cary Guenther and Tom Walker and asked them to pass on the good information that is discussed during the presentation regarding sustainable building design to the other members of their Board. She said she would welcome more opportunities for the Planning Board and Architectural Design Board to meet together.

Vice Chair Stewart said she is an academic and has studied sustainable design. She said that in their book, *“Ecological Design,”* Sim Van der Ryn and Stuart Cowan define sustainable building design as “any form of design that minimizes environmentally destructive impacts by integrating itself with living processes.” She explained that when constructing buildings and human artifacts, they should take the environment into account. The goal should be to minimize the environmental impacts, not have any impacts, and in some cases actually improve the environment throughout the lifespan of a building. They know the earth’s capacity to provide resources is finite. Unsustainable buildings and lifestyles create more waste than can readily be assimilated and uses resources more quickly than they can be renewed. Rather than that being the case, they should use resources that can be renewed rather than fossil fuels, which take millions of years to produce. She provided a chart showing the percentage of natural capital (timber, water, energy and raw materials) that is spent on conventional building development. She particularly noted that 40% of the world’s energy and raw materials are used to support conventional buildings. About 15% of the world’s water resource and 25% of the world’s timber resource is utilized by conventional buildings, as well. She summarized that the numbers on the chart illustrate the need to be more thoughtful about how they build and use their natural capital.

Vice Chair Stewart said it is clear that conventional development has significant consequences such as resource depletion and environmental pollution. The world’s finite supply of fossil fuels and virgin materials is being depleted and cannot be replaced. Rather than utilizing virgin materials, one sustainable option would be to recycle and reuse materials that are taken from the existing inventory. Environmental pollution occurs both inside and outside when materials that emit compounds and toxins into the air are used.

Vice Chair Stewart explained that sustainable development “incorporates principles, techniques and materials that conserve natural resources and improve environmental quality through a building’s lifecycle.” It specifically incorporates principles for resource conservation, ecosystem protection and indoor environmental quality. She referred to a book titled, *“Our Common Future,”* which was written by Harlem Brundtland, former Prime Minister of Norway and chair of the World Commission on Environment and Development. In the book, Mr. Brundtland states the Commission’s recognition that “the time has come for a marriage of economy and ecology, in order to ensure the growth of human progress through development without bankrupting the resources of future generations.” Vice Chair Stewart advised that the words “environment,” “economy,” and “equity” are all elements of sustainable building design and cannot be addressed separately without short changing the future. She stressed the importance of living a sustainable lifestyle and constructing sustainable buildings so there is a future for today’s children. All sectors of society should benefit from sustainable development and not just those with money.

Vice Chair Stewart pointed out that climate change is an obvious reality that must be addressed. This can be done by upgrading the envelope of buildings so they are more energy efficient, reducing landfill waste, preserving trees, and using CFC and HCFC-free insulation. Declining salmon runs can be addressed by amending soil with compost so that rainwater can be absorbed into the ground, using advanced framing techniques use less lumber, using pervious pavement that allow rain water to infiltrate on site, and using green infrastructure techniques. Problems related to asthma and multiple chemical sensitivities could be improved by encouraging public transportation rather than individual cars, which is something that could be made available to all levels of society. It is also important to use low-emitting building materials, provide indoor pollution control, and improve building ventilation. Everyone should have access to affordable housing that is energy efficient and results in lower maintenance costs. Food from local community gardens and markets should be available to people of all incomes, as well.

Vice Chair Stewart explained that sustainable design differs from conventional design in that it sets goals that include environmental objectives that recognize economic and equality outcomes. It utilizes an integrated design approach through a series of eco-charrettes where all disciplines and stakeholders meet to discuss goals and processes. It requires iterations of improvement in design via computer simulations, modeling, etc. It also requires commissioning to ensure a building has been constructed to meet the design intent. Sustainable building design incorporates the following:

- **Sustainable sites** include such elements as green parking lots, charging stations and Flex Car spaces, bicycle facilities, green roofs, and stormwater reclamation.
- **Water efficiency** can be improved by using drought tolerant native plants, xeriscaping, rainwater harvesting, and low-water appliances and fixtures.

- **Energy consumption and the atmosphere** can be addressed by creating a climate responsive envelope. She provided a picture to illustrate how a building's roof can be sloped in such a way to allow the sun to heat the building during the winter months and keep the sun from shining into the building during the summer months. Natural ventilation can be used in place of air conditioning, and buildings can be designed to take advantage of natural lighting. Planning early will result in right-sized systems and energy efficient equipment. Sensors and controls can be used to automatically shut off equipment and lights. Commissioning is important to ensure that the design intent is met and the equipment is working properly.
- **Materials and resources** should be durable, and they should think more long-term so they do not have to replace buildings as quickly. It is important to recycle and reuse materials when buildings are taken down. Containers can be placed on site so contractors can sort the salvageable materials. She encouraged the Board Members to visit the IslandWood Great Hall, which is a good example of a building constructed with on-site timber and recycled materials.
- **Indoor environmental quality** can be improved by eliminating materials with VOC's and other toxins. Good construction management on site is also important. Using individual controls to adjust the inside temperature can result in lower energy consumption, and daylighting not only reduces energy consumption but it elevates moods, increases productivity and provides a connection to nature.

Vice Chair Stewart advised that Washington State was the first to promote green building by approving Senate Bill 5509 in 2005 requiring state-funded projects over 5,000 square feet to achieve LEED Silver certification. They also adopted the 2005 New Energy Life Cycle Cost Analysis Guidelines, which mandate all new and remodeled projects over 25,000 square feet achieve LEED Silver certification. These legislative actions put into place a great system to start the "green building" movement in Washington State. Since that time, the City of Seattle has become a leader in the concept. In addition, she announced that the City of Edmonds was recently awarded a 2012 Municipal Excellence Award for their efforts of "going green." She advised that the City has a long list of accomplishments, which indicates they are heading in the right direction.

Vice Chair Stewart reported that the American Council for Energy Efficient Economy adopted the 2006 Energy Policy Act, which offers incentives for green building. The American Society of Heating, Refrigeration and Air Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE) and the National Home Builders Association also offer incentives. There are also a number green building programs on both the national and local level. She particularly noted the National Association of Home Builders Green Building Program; LEED Standards for New Construction, Existing buildings, Core and Shell, Commercial Interiors, and Neighborhood Development; Living Building Challenge; Green Globes Ratings; Washington Master Builders Association Built Green; and the Architecture 2030 Challenge. She said additional sustainability guidance can be found in the ASHRAE Advanced Energy Design Guidelines for small office and retail buildings. In addition the American Lung Association of Washington provides a set of builder guidelines to improve the indoor environment.

Vice Chair Stewart advised green financing based on energy efficiency and location is also an option. These mortgages are a bit harder to obtain, but they are available from certain banks. Green ratings for multiple listings are becoming more common, and training is available to help realtors understand how to market green building. Usually, green buildings sell at a premium compared to similar conventional development. You may pay a premium to construct the building, but the payback time is relatively short in most cases. Sustainable design makes sense over the long-term. It not only benefits property owners, but those who lease space in the buildings through reduced energy costs and optimal indoor environmental quality.

Vice Chair Stewart summarized that wonderful resources about sustainable building design are available and there are numerous case studies. She specifically referred to the New Central Hotel Renovation in Seattle that resulted in a 3-Star Built Green certification and the Lasting New Woodlawn Project in Seattle that resulted in a 5-Star Built Green certification. She noted that both of the projects significantly improved the buildings' sustainability without compromising their integrity and historic character. She concluded that it is possible to remodel buildings to make them more green and sustainable.

Board Member Duncan said he has lived in Edmonds for three years and joined the Planning Board just a few months ago. He has degrees in architecture and environmental design and is a registered LEED Architect. He said the purpose of his presentation is to describe the LEED 2009 Neighborhood Development Program, which utilizes a point system. He said that while he is not 100% familiar with program, he has reviewed it and believes it is a good model for the Board to look at for inspiration. In particular, it provides a way to evaluate and quantify mixed-use development and can be used as a boiler plate

for creating master plans. He provided examples of various concepts developers can utilize to obtain points towards LEED Certification.

- **Rain Gardens/Bio-Retention Basins.** There are numerous fun ways to do rain gardens that connect to the entire stormwater system.
- **Water Canal Renewal.** It is important to make sure a development will not put any more stormwater into a system. The goal should be to restore what they have and make stormwater control a feature rather than an expense.
- **Permeable Paving.** Permeable paving is easy to install and costs about the same as pervious surfaces. Using permeable paving reduces stormwater runoff and increases groundwater discharge through infiltration.
- **Green Roofs.** Green roofs are a huge marketing tool, as well as a great way to manage stormwater on site. They can become an amenity rather than an expense.
- **Cool Roofs.** The color of the roof material determines the amount of heat a building will retain.
- **Grey Water Systems.** Grey water can be used in landscaping, and a grey water system is an easy retrofit for existing structures.

Board Member Duncan shared information about local projects he has been involved in that contain elements of sustainable design. He emphasized that economic viability is paramount for developers. Sustainable building design must be sold to developers by pointing out the benefits. He specifically reviewed the following projects:

- **Semiahmoo Resort Village.** This master plan is similar to the Harbor Square Master Plan. In addition to permeable surfaces, the project incorporates sustainable methods for addressing stormwater runoff. Connectivity and circulation is also an important element of this master plan. Amenities and places for people to gather were provided, and native plants that use less water and easily adapt to the environment were used in the landscaped areas. Light pollution is also addressed in the master plan. The project was constructed with a lot of local materials, which allowed the developer to obtain additional LEED points. The colors were chosen to complement the colors found in the surrounding landscape.
- **Roosevelt Neighborhood Streetscape Plan.** This plan takes a holistic view of the streetscape and the adjacent properties. It particularly considers how connectivity works throughout the site. It offers a new approach to infrastructure, using rain gardens instead of installing a new stormwater system. It is hoped that stormwater runoff associated with new development in the area can be addressed without having to increase the underground stormwater piping. Wildlife habitat was of significant concern to the community, and the plan calls for plant species that attract birds and insects to increase pollination.
- **Chamber Base Golf Course.** While golf courses are typically one of the worst land uses, this course has been certified as an Audubon Bird Habitat. The turf type uses the least amount of water, and a new fertilizer was developed using waste from the nearby treatment plant.
- **Westin Seattle.** The new bus stop nearby offered a good opportunity to upgrade the exterior space of this building. The new design incorporates a narrow drainage channel between the sidewalk and pavers. This creates interest and brings attention to the fact that they are going green, which is a good marketing tool.
- **Private Residence in Maple Valley.** No trees were removed to accommodate the structure. The owner wanted them to be preserved to attract native bird habitat. The house is certified at the LEED Gold level, with water management throughout the site in natural features.

Board Member Lovell questioned how compatible the sustainable building design elements would be with the City's current building code requirements that are intended to address health and safety issues. He noted that the building code is largely dictated by federal and state code requirements. He expressed his belief that the current building code significantly limits the City's ability to apply sustainable building design concepts based on factors of safety.

Board Member Guenther agreed that implementing sustainable building design will have to be balanced with the need to address health and safety issues associated with development. He recalled that while serving on the Planning Board, he reviewed the requirements for LEED for new construction and pulled out sustainable design elements that could be

incorporated into the City's Development Code. He advised that a "green construction building code" has been created, but has not yet been adopted by the State of Washington. He explained that the City's current building code describes the minimum requirements for buildings, and the green construction building code goes beyond to incorporate many elements of sustainable design, while still adequately addressing health and safety issues.

Chair Reed recalled that a separate section related to sustainable building design was incorporated into the draft Harbor Square Master Plan at the request of the Planning Board. He questioned if implementing sustainable building design would require the City to adopt specific language in each section of the Development Code. He pointed out that the City can incorporate sustainable building design elements that relate the relationship of the building to the human scale and respect for the environment without conflicting with the building code.

Mr. Chave said the materials he has read indicate that it is more difficult and costly to treat sustainable building design as an add on after conventional design work has been completed. Approaching sustainable building design at the onset of the design process may be less costly. He suggested it is all about experience and training. He acknowledged that people who are not used to thinking this way may struggle initially, but if the City insists on it, people will come around. Many professionals have now been trained to think about sustainable building design, and it is become more the norm for building. It is much easier to integrate sustainable building design today than it was 10 years ago, and he anticipates that within the next 10 years, it will become the norm rather than the exception.

Board Member Guenther pointed out that the majority of the City's building stock is existing construction. Therefore, much of the change will focus on how to make the existing buildings more sustainable. Mr. Chave referred to the PCC Project, which converted a run-of-the-mill ordinary building into a LEED Platinum design. Water reuse was a significant element of their sustainable design, and a Development Code amendment related to the setback requirement was necessary in order for them to accommodate water tanks on site to collect rain water. There were no Building Code issues associated with the project.

Vice Chair Stewart shared her experience in designing her green home project, which was meant to be a demonstration project. She reported that staff was very open to the sustainable elements she incorporated into the site and building design, and they did not run into any significant issues with either the Building Code or the Development Code. Staff learned a lot through the process, and so did she. She concluded that staff can work with developers to produce wonderful green buildings. If developers start early to integrate systems on the site, the features can become selling points.

Board Member Duncan observed that the younger generation has come to expect sustainable development, and innovation of materials will make it a lot easier in the future. He expressed his belief that sustainable building design is moving towards becoming more normal than additive. Vice Chair Stewart noted that 51% of all new construction in the City of Seattle is considered "green." She agreed that sustainable building design is becoming main stream, and the City needs to get on Board in order to attract the younger, creative generation. She noted that 11 jurisdictions in the Puget Sound area have sustainable building design programs, and she suggested the City of Edmonds establish a work group to develop "green" incentives for the City.

Chair Reed suggested it would be helpful to provide examples of successful "green" development, such as the PCC Project, to show the public the cost benefits associated with sustainable building design.

Board Member Lovell observed that rather than adapting conventional design to be more sustainable, "green" building has a greater chance for success if the design team understands and considers the parameters of sustainable design from the get go. While a developer may determine that some sustainable design elements are too costly or difficult to incorporate, many can be included in the design without any additional cost and without conflicting with the life/safety requirements in the Building Code.

Board Member Ellis asked how easy it is to sell the idea of "green" building to developers or retrofitters of buildings. He asked if developers are interested in the idea that while it may cost more to develop, the costs can be recovered over time. Board Member Duncan said this concept does not really sell. Developers are not typically interested in "green" development that results in a loss of something. Board Member Ellis asked if it would be helpful for the City to encourage "green" development by offering incentives such as tax breaks or credits. Board Member Duncan answered that incentives are very

important to the success of a sustainable building design program. He summarized that the bottom line is paramount to developers. If the City offers economic incentives, developers will be encouraged to utilize “green” building techniques. Board Member Guenther added that private owners have a financial stake in how efficient a building operates. If the City can convince them that doing sustainable building design up front will save money in the long run, they will be more able to recognize the value of implementing sustainable building design elements. Board Member Duncan emphasized that peer pressure is also a big motivator for property owners to “go green.”

Chair Reed thanked Vice Chair Stewart and Board Member Duncan for their presentation. He suggested it would be appropriate for them to make a similar presentation to the City Council, Economic Development Commission and Architectural Design Board. He suggested it would be helpful for them to include examples of how sustainable building design has been financially feasible and successfully incorporated into development in the community.

Board Member Cloutier commented that while it is great to talk about how to implement sustainable building design in new or redevelopment projects, they do not have any numbers or goals in place to clearly identify the benefits. Implementing sustainable building design to make them feel good is the wrong reason. Builders will not support it and neither should the Board. Because the City is primarily built out, simple behavior changes could have an immediate and significant impact on the consumption of materials and energy. For example, if every homeowner in Edmonds switched to dual-flush toilets, there would be a significant reduction in water usage. Significant energy would be saved if every homeowner lowered their thermostat by 2 degrees. Before they spend a lot of time changing the Development Code to implement “green” elements, he suggested they should compare the impact the code changes would likely have on energy consumption with the impact of changing behaviors. Vice Chair Stewart agreed that starting with the “low-hanging fruit” would be the best way to start, but they should also move towards greater programs.

REFERRAL FROM CITY COUNCIL: CONSIDERATION OF EXPANDING DESIGN STANDARDS TO ENABLE REMOVAL OF STEPBACK REQUIREMENTS IN DOWNTOWN BUSINESS (BD) ZONES

Mr. Chave reviewed that in 2011 the Planning Board recommended that the City Council remove stepback requirements from the BD zones as part of its recommendation on a package of BD zoning amendments. The City Council indicated their general support but asked the Planning Board to recommend design standards that would provide design parameters for downtown development prior to removing the stepback provision. He reminded the Board that design standards are only in place for the BD1 zone. Staff believes that these existing standards offer a good starting place for the discussion of what design standards should apply to the remaining BD zones.

Mr. Chave recalled that a study was completed in 2005 to identify potential design standards for the BD zones. The Planning Board spent many months reviewing the study. While the study was never formally adopted, some of its general design objectives were incorporated into the Downtown/Waterfront portion of the Comprehensive Plan and apply to all of the BD zones. Subsequent to the study, the City worked with Mark Hinshaw, an Urban Designer, to further discuss the issue of design objectives and guidelines. To address specific concerns about building heights and design, the City Council agreed with Mr. Hinshaw’s strong suggestion that the City establish firm design standards for the BD1 zone in particular. Because the design standards offered enough assurance that good design would be required, the City Council agreed that no stepback requirement would be necessary in the BD1 zone. The current proposal is to eliminate the stepback requirement for the other BD zones and apply the design standards, instead.

Mr. Chave explained that the BD zones are all very similar. The BD1 zone is considered the downtown retail core. The BD2 zone is the downtown mixed-commercial zone and is the largest in the downtown business area. The BD3 zone is the downtown convenience commercial zone located on the southern end of the downtown area. Existing development in the BD3 zone includes the Petosa’s Grocery Store and Baskin Robbins. While the uses allowed are similar to the other BD zones, it does not have the same level of pedestrian activity and drive through uses are allowed. The BD4 zone is located in the southwest corner of the downtown area and is currently developed with primarily residential uses. It allows mixed use development similar to the BD2 zone, but requires that commercial development be located at the street front. It also allows multi-family residential development with a standard setback requirement. The BD1 design standards could apply to all mixed-use and commercial developments in the BD4 zone. However, simple multi-family residential development that is setback from the street 15 feet could be exempt from the design standards. The BD5 zone (4th Avenue Cultural Corridor) is

different than the other BD zones. Design standards for the BD5 zone will be taken up as a separate issue. He referred to the 4th Avenue Arts Corridor Study, which ads emphasis on historic elements of building design.

Mr. Chave said he and Mr. Clifton reviewed the BD1 design standards. With just a few exceptions, they believe they could be applied to the BD2, BD3 and BD4 zones, as well. However, they recommend that ECDC 22.43.060 should be changed to increase the number of elements an applicant must incorporate into any ground-floor, street-facing façade. He expressed his belief that the number could be increased to five or six without any significant cost. It would simply mean that buildings must look better. Again, he suggested that the BD1 standards could be applied uniformly across the BD1, BD2, and BD3 zones where buildings are required to locate within 10 feet of the street front. However, the standards should only apply to mixed-use commercial development in the BD4 zone. Strictly multi-family residential development requires a 15-foot setback, making the design standards unnecessary.

Chair Reed questioned why the multi-family development on 5th Avenue near Howell Way was included in the BD3 zone. He asked if the intent is for the BD3 zone to eventually extend further south 5th Avenue. Mr. Chave said the BD3 zone mirrors the extent of the previous Community Business (BC) zone. He said some people have questioned whether the southernmost end of the BD3 zone should be changed to multi-family residential (RM) zoning at some point in time. He agreed that because of its location outside of the walking area of downtown it is different. The existing development in this zone is generally uses that people drive to.

Board Member Guenther said that rather than creating separate design standards for each of the BD zones, he would prefer to apply to the existing BD1 design standards to the BD2, BD3 and BD4 zones, with some minor adjustments. Mr. Chave agreed that this would be the simplest approach to implement and administer. He said that, based on recent projects in the City and elsewhere, staff believes the existing BD1 design standards are still applicable and appropriate and could be easily applied to the BD2, BD3 and BD4 zones, as well. However, multi-family residential development in the BD4 zone could be exempt from the design standard requirement.

Mr. Chave said staff also discussed the BD3 zone, where existing development is set back from the street. If the Board decides they want to encourage more pedestrian activity in the BD3 zone, they could insist that any new development be located at the street front, and the design standards would apply. If development is not required to be at the street front in this zone, then developments that are set back from the street could be exempted from the design standards.

Board Member Ellis said he reviewed the City Council minutes and learned that their major concerns\ was that square monolithic buildings could be developed if the City removes the stepback requirement without having sufficient design standards in place. He agreed with staff that the simplest way to address this concern is to apply the BD1 standards to all BD zones. He suggested the Board should concentrate their discussion on whether or not this approach is appropriate.

Board Member Ellis said the City Council also raised concern about the BD5 zone. He asked if some other document would address design in the BD5 zone if the stepback requirement is eliminated. Mr. Chave said the same concept staff proposed for the BD4 zone could be applied to the BD5 zone, requiring mixed-use commercial development to abide by the design standards. Design requirements for other types of development in the BD5 zone could be addressed by the 4th Avenue Cultural Corridor Plan.

Mr. Clifton expressed his belief that the arbitrary stepback requirement does not make a building more attractive. Architectural embellishments such as recessed entries, pronounced windows, and cornices are what make a building attractive. To say that removing the stepback requirement would result in ugly, box development is irrational. It is possible to have an unattractive building with stepbacks, as well. The stepback requirement arbitrarily cuts off a much needed portion of the building. He said he supports applying the existing BD1 design standards to the BD2, BD3 and BD4 zones, as well. He said he was discouraged in 2005 when the City Council chose not to incorporate design standards in the other BD zones because the development community did not support the concept.

Board Member Duncan asked if staff supports the concept of requiring all buildings in the BD2, BD3 and BD4 zones to be located on the street. Mr. Clifton said he would prefer that structures be located against the street, with parking in the back of the site. Mr. Chave recommended that ECDC 22.43.020.B.1 be amended to change “buildings” to “building frontages.” He explained that if ECDC 22.43.020.B.1 were applied to properties in the BD3 zone, all new buildings would be required to

locate at the street front, with parking at the back of the property. Board Member Duncan asked at what point a major renovation becomes reconstruction. Mr. Chave said they do not have a threshold for making this determination.

Chair Reed noted that the Downtown/Waterfront Plan in the Comprehensive Plan states that auto-oriented uses are allowed in the BD3 zone. He asked if applying the BD1 design standards to require development to locate on the street front would be inconsistent with the Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Chave explained that requiring a building to be located on the street front would not prohibit auto-oriented uses. However, driveways and parking would not be allowed to locate between the building and the street. He emphasized that the design standards do not insist that the entire length of the streetscape has to be a building. However, he agreed that a footnote could be added to the design standards to make this clear.

Board Member Tibbott said his understanding of the current code is that the additional height (from 25 feet to 30 feet) could only be achieved with a stepback. Eliminating the stepback requirement, as proposed, would mean that a developer could achieve the maximum height with certain design accommodations. He asked what a developer might provide in terms of amenities or design features in order to obtain the maximum height. Mr. Chave answered that the BD1 design standards provide illustrations that give a good idea of what would be expected.

Chair Reed noted that, as currently proposed, ECDC 16.43.030.C would allow an additional five feet of building height in the BD1, BD2, BD3 and BD4 zones if a development meets the requirements enumerated in ECDC 16.43.030.B. He suggested the best approach would be to simply change the height limit to 30 feet in the BD zones, eliminate the stepback requirement, and require all development to be consistent with the design standards. Mr. Chave agreed that would be the best approach. He pointed out that, as currently written, a building that meets the 25-foot height limit would be exempt from the design standards, and that is not the City Council's intent. He expressed his belief that all buildings in the BD1, BD2, BD3 and BD4 zones should be required to meet the design standards regardless of their height. Mr. Clifton also agreed that this approach would be the simplest for developers to understand and staff to administer.

Mr. Clifton recalled that Mr. Chave provided a lengthy presentation to the City Council to illustrate the types of development that has occurred in Edmonds based on different codes in place at the time. Many of the existing buildings would not be allowed under the current code, yet they are some of the most interesting and compelling buildings in the downtown. Mr. Chave specifically pointed out that the stepback requirement does not necessarily result in good design. Good design can be accomplished better through design standards.

The Board agreed that if the stepback requirement is eliminated, the provision for an additional 5 feet in height would be irrelevant. The maximum height limit for the BD1, BD2, BD3 and BD4 zones should be set at 30 feet. The design standards would apply to all development in these zones, regardless of height. Mr. Clifton clarified that the Board is not proposing to increase building height in the BD zones. The maximum building height would remain at 30 feet, which is the height of most of the existing development. The difference is instead of requiring sloped roofs to achieve the maximum height, developers could use other architectural features to make the buildings more interesting.

Chair Reed commented that in all their discussions about stepbacks, neither the City Council nor the Planning Board talked about how the concept would be applied to sloped lots that can accommodate three-story development. Mr. Chave said it is difficult to predict where these situations will occur. He explained that the design standards would apply to all buildings regardless of whether they are one, two or three stories. The design of a building must still address the horizontal and vertical elements identified in the design standards. While there is some variation in height along the streetscape, the streetscape should be fairly uniform if development is consistent with the design standards. He summarized that the streetscape should be pedestrian friendly, and buildings should be oriented towards the street.

Board Member Tibbott asked if there is anything that would compel, encourage or entice a developer to offer open space as part of a project. Mr. Chave answered that developments that exceed a certain threshold would be required to provide open space. Board Member Tibbott asked if elements such as elevator shafts and mechanical equipment would be allowed to exceed the 30-foot height limit. Mr. Chave answered that rooftop equipment is addressed elsewhere in the code, but the design standards require that it be screened.

Board Member Lovell referred to the illustration provided in ECDC 22.43.010.B.1, which does make it clear that a building could potentially be three stories. Mr. Chave said the picture is intended to illustrate the concept of a distinct base and top and would apply whether the building is two or three stories.

Board Member Lovell asked how ECDC 22.43.020.B.A would be applied to buildings located on corner lots. He recalled that, as per language elsewhere in the code, a building on a corner lot would only have one designated street front. Mr. Clifton agreed this is addressed elsewhere in the code. To clarify the issue, he suggested that ECDC 22.43.020.B.1 be amended to read, "Building frontages shall be primarily oriented to the adjacent street, rather than the parking lot and/or alley.

Board Member Lovell suggested that ECDC 22.43.030.B.1 be amended to reduce the number of criteria that ground-floor, street-facing facades of commercial and mixed-use buildings must meet from five to three. Mr. Chave cautioned against reducing this requirement. He noted that the elements are not hard to incorporate into a design, and multiple elements are needed to contribute to the overall look of the building. The majority of the Board concurred.

Vice Chair Stewart asked staff to provide pictures of buildings in the BD zones that illustrate the current code requirements for setbacks, setbacks and height and how they would be altered by the current proposal. She expressed her belief that people would only walk in areas where there is something interesting to look at, which does not include parking lots. She said she supports encouraging pedestrian-scale development that is closer to the street whenever possible. Board Member Guenther said the intent of the standards is to improve connections up and down the street by bringing storefronts out to the sidewalk to engage people in what is going on inside the buildings. Mr. Chave noted that applying the BD1 design standards to the BD3 zone would accomplish this goal.

Board Member Lovell referred to ECDC 22.43.030.B.2 and suggested it would be appropriate to require that entry areas be level with the sidewalk. However, they should not preclude the remainder of first floor retail area from being out of parallel with the sidewalk. Board Member Guenther agreed it is highly desirable to have at-grade entrances. Chair Reed pointed out that this issue is sufficiently addressed in ECDC 16.43.030. However, to clarify the intent, the Board agreed to change ECDC 22.43.030.B.2 to read, "ground floor commercial space is intended to be accessible and at grade with the sidewalk. . ."

Board Member Lovell suggested that the provision in ECDC 22.43.050.B.2 requiring transparent windows could be reduced for buildings located on corner lots where only one elevation would be considered the street front. Chair Reed pointed out that the other street-facing façade would still be required to meet the requirements in ECDC 22.43.060.B.1 regarding blank wall treatments. Mr. Chave referred to the map of designated street fronts. He suggested the requirement in ECDC 22.43.050.B.2 could be tied to the façade located on the designated street front only. However, if a corner building is located on two designated street fronts, transparent windows would be required on both facades. Mr. Clifton pointed out that the transparency requirement would only apply to the portions of buildings between 2 and 10 feet in height and not 75% of the entire street facing façade.

Mr. Clifton recalled that the recent presentation by Roger Brooks stressed the value of blade signs in the downtown area. Several property owners have expressed a desire to put up blade signs, but they are hesitant to go through the lengthy sign permit process. Staff is recommending that ECDC 22.43.040B.9 be amended to allow blade signs up to a certain size and exempt them from being counted as part of the overall sign area allowed. The Board agreed that would be appropriate. They also agreed that the word "encouraged" should be changed to "preferred." Vice Chair Stewart suggested that the size limit for blade signs should not be too small. The larger ones in the illustrations provided are attractive and add architectural detail to the street front. In answer to Board Member Tibbott's question, Mr. Chave said safety issues related to blade signs are covered in the City's right-of-way standards.

The majority of the Board agreed to change ECDC 23.43.060.B.1 to require at least five (not four) of the listed elements into the ground-floor, street-facing façade. They also agreed to add another element, "green walls." Board Member Walker pointed out that it is more about quality than numbers when it comes to elements on the street-facing façade. Using three elements might result in a great development, and using seven may look ridiculous. He asked if there is a way to prevent the design from being "tacky." Mr. Clifton suggested the design standards could provide more illustrations of good architecture to motivate, promote and encourage the design of more interesting buildings. Board Member Ellis noted that this approach is consistent with a design-based code.

REVIEW OF EXTENDED AGENDA

Mr. Chave announced that a joint Planning Board/Economic Development Commission meeting is scheduled for January 23rd (the Board's regular meeting date) to review the Strategic Plan. The consultant will be available to present the draft plan and solicit comments from the Board and Commission. A public hearing on the BD design standards is scheduled for February 13th, along with a continued discussion of the Westgate Plan and form-based code.

The Board discussed potential dates for a retreat and agreed it should be scheduled for a regular meeting date, perhaps starting earlier than 7:00 p.m. Chair Reed suggested that the Board focus their retreat discussion on just a few items, including an introduction of the code re-write project.

Chair Reed reminded the Board that they are scheduled to present a report to the City Council on February 5th. He agreed to prepare a written report.

PLANNING BOARD CHAIR COMMENTS

Chair Reed thanked Board Member Lovell for his strong years of leadership as Board Chair. He also thanked Board Member Stewart for her service as Vice Chair, and for agreeing to continue in that capacity. He thanked the Board for allowing him to serve as Chair in 2013.

Chair Reed said his goal for the coming year is to encourage Board Members to fully participate in the topics of discussions, offer all the input they can, listen to input from other Board Members, and show respect for each other. It is also important to get the public involved in the process as much as possible. He suggested they continue with the steps they implemented last year of publicizing upcoming meeting topics in *myedmondsnews.com*. Vice Chair Stewart reminded the Board of Council Member Petso's offer to announce upcoming Planning Board agenda items at City Council Meetings. Chair Reed said he would also like the Board to publish a brief report in *myedmondsnews.com* and in the *Edmonds Beacon* after each meeting. The Board agreed to continue their reports to the City Council every two months, as well.

PLANNING BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Vice Chair Stewart announced that the student representative has indicated she is unable to continue because of work related issues. She said she would like to fill this position as soon as possible. Board Member Tibbott agreed to contact his source for potential candidates.

Vice Chair Stewart reminded the Board that the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Manager has invited two Board Members to participate on the Metropolitan Park District Committee. She indicated her desire to serve in this capacity and suggested that Board Member Clarke may be interested, as well.

Vice Chair Stewart said her personal goal for the new year is to get to know the members of the City Council, Architectural Design Board and Economic Development Commission better. She stressed the importance of understanding where each group is coming from. She suggested it would be appropriate for a Planning Board representative to attend other meetings when matters related to the Planning Board are discussed.

Vice Chair Stewart referred the Board to an article in the January 8th edition of *The Everett Herald*, regarding the Point Wells property. The article reports that the Washington State Court of Appeals overturned a decision by the King County Superior Court that sided with the Town of Woodway and the Shoreline neighborhood group Save Richmond Beach, who sued Snohomish County and the developer to force the project to adhere to new, stricter development regulations. As per the new ruling, development on the site could grow to more than 3,000 homes and buildings up to 180 feet tall.

ADJOURNMENT

The Board meeting was adjourned at 10:02 p.m.

APPROVED