

**CITY OF EDMONDS  
PLANNING BOARD MINUTES**

**January 22, 2014**

---

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

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT**

Todd Cloutier, Chair  
Neil Tibbott, Vice Chair  
Kevin Clarke  
Ian Duncan  
Bill Ellis

**STAFF PRESENT**

Carrie Hite, Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services  
Director  
Renee McRae, Recreation Manager  
Frances Chapin, Arts and Cultural Services Manager  
Karin Noyes, Recorder

**BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT**

Philip Lovell (excused)  
Valerie Stewart (excused)  
Madeline White (Student Representative) (excused)

**READING/APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**BOARD MEMBER ELLIS MOVED THAT THE MINUTES OF JANUARY 8, 2014 BE APPROVED AS SUBMITTED. VICE CHAIR TIBBOTT SECONDED THE MOTION, WHICH CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**ANNOUNCEMENT OF AGENDA**

The agenda was accepted as presented.

**AUDIENCE COMMENTS**

No one in the audience indicated a desire to address the Board during this portion of the meeting.

**PUBLIC HEARING ON PARKS, RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE (PROS) AND COMMUNITY CULTURAL (CC) PLANS**

Ms. Hite announced that tonight's public hearing is on the draft Parks, Recreation and Open Space (PROS) and Community Cultural (CC) Plans. She recalled that the two plans were presented to the Board on January 8<sup>th</sup>, and tonight's presentation would be very similar. However, staff would summarize the comments that have been received and the changes that have been made since the January 8<sup>th</sup> meeting. At the end of the hearing and after the Board's discussion, staff will ask the Board to forward the two plans to the City Council with a recommendation of approval. It is staff's hope that the two plans will be adopted by the City Council by the end of February.

Ms. Hite explained the integrated planning progress that was used to prepare the draft PROS and CC Plans, starting in July of 2013 with a review of the City's current demographics and related City planning documents such as the Comprehensive Plan,

Development Code, Strategic Action Plan, Transportation Plan, etc. There was an extensive public involvement process that included:

- Meetings between the consultants, staff and the PROS Plan Advisory Team (PAT) and CC Plan Advisory Team (CCAT)
- Meetings with various focus groups. Common themes that emerged from the focus groups included the need for more variety to serve all ages and expanded partnerships to get the most out of the current system.
- Attendance at various community events in an effort to reach out to the public. At the community events, citizens placed a high value on recreation and cultural services and indicated a desire for more open space and connecting trails and sidewalks. They also indicated that free community art events are important.
- An online questionnaire. The 1,161 citizens who responded to the survey indicated that top activities include walking/biking, social gathering, and nature observation. Top arts and culture activities include visiting galleries and/or exhibits and attending performances and arts and cultural festivals. The respondents' highest priorities were engaging more youth and young adults in arts and having free publicly accessible arts and culture events.
- Community workshops in various locations. Participants were asked to respond to a visual preference survey, similar to the one the Board participated in at an earlier meeting. The intent was to gauge the public's reaction to various concepts to help guide the specific recommendations that the consulting team was in the process of developing.
- A statistically-valid telephone survey. The survey results were consistent with other public comments that indicated support for building more trail and sidewalk connections, buying and renovating Civic Center Playfield, building an indoor aquatic center, creating more partnership projects with the school district, and renovating and expanding the Frances Anderson Center.

Ms. Hite advised that a Council appointed task force studied options for funding parks, and specifically recommended the City establish a Metropolitan Park District (MPD) in Edmonds. When asked in the survey, 71% of the respondents indicated they would either strongly support or somewhat support the implementation of a MPD to maintain and operate the City's current parks. Support for the concept increased when it was pointed out that it would cost the average property owner \$10 per month and the money could not be used for other City programs and/or projects. She said the draft PROS Plan supports the creation of an MPD.

Ms. Hite said the PROS Plan includes an inventory of existing park lands, recreation facilities and recreation and cultural programs. The 2008 PROS Plan measures Level of Service (LOS) based on the number of acres per 1,000 residents. The LOS goal identified in the 2008 plan was ambitious, and the City fell short if only the parks and open spaces owned by the City are considered. However, the LOS is much closer to the 2008 goal if additional recreational sites in and immediately around Edmonds, such as properties owned by Snohomish County and the Edmonds School District, are factored in.

Ms. Hite advised that the draft PROS Plan goes beyond a simple LOS measurement to identify how accessible parks are to City residents. A geographic model was created that reflects the pathways people travel to get from their homes to parks. This analysis resulted in a much more refined view of where the gaps are. The plan also analyzes the distribution of shoreline assets, performance spaces, sports fields, and potential habitat areas, as well as the condition of the existing parks and the opportunities they provide. She noted that including an analysis of potential habitat areas will help the City compete for federal and state funding for certain projects.

Ms. Hite explained that the PROS System concept called out in the plan includes the following: expand and connect recreational opportunities, capitalize on the unique identity of Edmonds, look forward to the future of Edmonds, and steward and activate key community assets. The plan calls out seven specific goals, some of which were brought forward from the 2008 plan. She particularly noted Goal 4, which calls for preserving and providing access to natural resource lands and habitat conservation, recreation and environmental education. She also noted Goal 1, which calls for the City to lead collaborative efforts to fulfill the community's need for parks, recreation and cultural services. She advised that the action plan identifies recommended projects and initiatives to advance the system and is organized by goal. She pointed out that the most prominent recommendation in the funding plan is the creation of an MPD.

Ms. Hite advised that changes were made to the draft PROS Plan based on Planning Board comments and public comments that were received after the plan was presented to the Board on January 8<sup>th</sup>. She reviewed the changes as follows:

- Importance of open space and land acquisition. Many commented that this should be a high-priority goal.

**APPROVED**

- Aligning recommendations on the Senior Center with the Strategic Action Plan and continuing to work with the Senior Center on long-range plans. This project should be a top priority for the City.
- Addressing Aquatics. Many in the community have indicated that Yost Pool is a cherished and valuable asset, but they do not want to lose track of the aquatics study that was done in 2008.
- Support for the new approach to considering the community's needs based on access and socio-economic status.
- Several typographical and grammatical errors were identified and corrected.

Ms. Chapin advised that the CC Plan was created using a similar process as that used for the PROS Plan, starting with the formation of a CC Advisory Team (CCAT). She said the vision outlined in the draft CC Plan is similar to visions in the community for many years and emphasizes that art is a part of their everyday life and the plan should emphasize that Edmonds is an arts community. The plan calls out five goals:

- Goal 1 – Reflect Edmonds commitment to arts and culture through integration of the arts in the City's physical infrastructure, event planning, image and brand. This includes integrating art elements into design and planning for capital projects. The City has done a lot of work with image and branding in the way it advertises.
- Goal 2 – Embrace an expansive view of art and culture to include and respond to multiple forms of artistic and cultural expression. This goal focuses on broadening the perspective to make room for all types of art and culture in the community and broadening the audience. For example, the City should look for opportunities to serve younger audiences and those with different ethnic backgrounds. There is a tendency to cluster everything in the downtown, and the community has expressed a desire for the City to reach out to all sectors.
- Goal 3 – Foster creative community partnerships to increase and secure accessibility to the arts and cultural experiences. Partnering and collaboration has been the City's most successful approach, and the goal is to make this effort more widespread and encourage other citizens and groups to participate.
- Goal 4 – Maximize and diversify use of spaces for arts and cultural activities in Edmonds. The 2001 CC Plan had an emphasis on creating space for performing arts. This has been accomplished and the City now has an outstanding space with a number of other smaller spaces. The emphasis in the new plan will be on making the best use of the spaces they have. As new spaces are created and existing spaces are altered, the City should be thoughtful about how art and cultural activities can be integrated.
- Goal 5 – Strengthen communication among arts and cultural organizations and projects to enhance scheduling, information sharing and collaboration and to increase cultural awareness in the community. The importance of communication was something they heard over and over again at the community meetings. There are numerous organizations that are doing exciting things in the community, and it is important to create a better way for them to be aware of what the other groups are doing.

Ms. Chapin explained that the plan identifies who would take a leadership role in implementing the goals and strategies called out in the plan. Without being too specific, the plan identifies the goals and strategies that will be the purview of the City to implement, those that would be implemented by community organizations, and those that would be implemented by community organizations with the help of the City.

Ms. Chapin referred to the appendices section, which contains a lot of valuable information to assist in the implementation of the CC Plan. Appendix A includes an environmental scan evaluating the strengths and challenges; Appendix B consists of an inventory of cultural organizations that are active in Edmonds; Appendix C documents the inventory of cultural facilities in Edmonds; Appendix D provides an implementation table to identify potential partners and track and evaluate progress, and Appendix E contains specific actions and tactics for some of the strategies, as well as a compendium of ideas generated during the planning process.

Ms. Chapin reviewed the changes were made to the draft CC Plan based on Planning Board comments and public comments that were received after the plan was presented to the Board on January 8<sup>th</sup>:

- Add a "Call to Action." The CCAT felt strongly that there needs to be a "call to action." They want to encourage the community to tell the City Council that it is important to move forward with implementation of the plan. They have suggested that an oversight committee be formed to help ensure the plan is moving forward, track progress, and report back to the community. Several members of the CCAT agreed to participate on the oversight committee.

- Include examples to illustrate the vision and goals identified in Chapter 2 of the plan. So many things are already taking place in the community, and examples should be shared via the plan. However, it should be clear that the examples provided are not intended to be an exhaustive list.
- Several typographical and grammatical errors were identified and corrected.

Chair Cloutier opened the hearing for public comment. No one in the audience indicated a desire to participate, and the hearing was closed.

Board Member Ellis asked if the Veterans Plaza Project was added to the plan. Ms. Hite said it was added to the plan in the section regarding the Public Safety Complex. .

Board Member Duncan requested clarification on the diagram that identifies where citizens have access to parks within a ¼ or ½ radius. He also asked if bikeway and walkway projects were included in the PROS Plan. Ms. Hite answered that sidewalk and walkway plans were included in both the PROS Plan and the Transportation Plan. She explained that the park access diagram identifies all of the access points to parks. She noted that some parks are not accessible from all sides. Staff started at the access points and traveled by sidewalk and walkway to identify residential properties that are within ¼ to ½ mile of the access points to the parks. Board Member Duncan pointed out that rather than adding more park space to serve the public, another option would be to provide more access points to the existing parks. He asked if geography and terrain were taken into account when the park access diagram was prepared and Ms. Hite answered that the diagram only takes into account walkways and sidewalks leading to the park and not topography.

Vice Chair Tibbott noted that several references were added to the plan about acquisition of wetlands or parcels that are not developable. He asked why the City would want to acquire land that cannot be developed. Ms. Hite said the PROS Plan calls out the need to preserve open space. Cities often work with organizations to preserve wetlands and their buffers to protect and preserve the open space land in the event that the laws change. She noted that the draft PROS plan contains a new chapter regarding habitat to enable the City to go after grant funding to preserve of the existing open spaces. Vice Chair Tibbott asked if the City has catalogued the wetlands and buffers that exist in the City. Ms. Hite answered they have identified potential habitat areas, but they have not been catalogued. She noted that the City recently purchased property at 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Main Street to preserve the watershed area.

Vice Chair Tibbott pointed out that most of the art venues are located in the downtown area. He asked Ms. Chapin to identify venues in other parts of the City. Ms. Chapin said the Driftwood Players Theater is close, but not in downtown. The Phoenix Theater is a small venue located at Firdale Village. There are also performing arts venues at the two high schools, although they have limited access for events. Vice Chair Tibbott asked if the City partners with the school district to use their facilities for performing arts events. Ms. Chapin said the school district facilities are heavily used and it is difficult to schedule community events. There have been partnership programs in the past, and she agreed to study the option again. Vice Chair Tibbott encouraged staff to look at options for providing performing arts venues on the outer edges of the City.

Board Member Clarke thanked Ms. Hite and Ms. Chapin for their leadership on both plans. He has seen a lot of changes and good things happening in the parks over the past several years, and he expressed appreciation for the leadership of Ms. Hite, Mayor Earling and the City Council. He said he has driven the Puget Sound area extensively looking at parks in connection with his employment, and it is sad to see what has happened to parks in many municipalities as a result of budget issues. The City of Edmonds has continued to maintain their parks.

Board Member Clarke recalled that when he first joined the Planning Board, he visited each of the parks in Edmonds, including the small ones that many people do not even know exist. The City has some small neighborhood parks that are wonderful. He said he grew up as a neighbor to the Mathay family, who created a park space near Lake Ballinger. It was exciting to see the City upgrade the park in 2013. Each time he has visited the park he has found families or caregivers with children playing on the equipment. Most of them accessed the park from the Interurban Trail.

Board Member Clarke encouraged the City to work with Snohomish County to potentially acquire Esperance and Chase Lake Parks. These are small parks, but they really identify with Edmonds and they get lost in the unincorporated area between Highway 99 and 84<sup>th</sup> Street. Ms. Hite advised that the City has been in communication with Snohomish County about Esperance Park. In the past, the County has indicated they would deed the park to the City, but it would have to be annexed

into the City in order to spend public funds on its maintenance and operation. Most recently, however, Snohomish County applied for conservation funding to purchase adjacent land from the school district to add to the park site. They have invested public dollars to improve the site, as well. They have collaborated with the City of Edmonds to create a community garden and other park elements on the site. The park borders the City of Edmonds, and they know that City residents use and enjoy the park. She said Esperance Park is called out in the draft PROS Plan, but it could also be added as goal in the section regarding Snohomish County partnerships.

Board Member Clarke pointed out that Esperance Park has the potential for at least two soccer fields, which has been identified as a community need. Ms. Hite said the open field is currently developed as a baseball field. She added that additional playfields are identified as a need in the PROS Plan, and the City was just notified that it received a \$2.5 million grant from Verdant that will be added to funding provided by the City and State to complete Phase 1 of the Old Woodway High School improvements. This project will include two new soccer fields.

Board Member Clarke expressed concern that, although dogs are not allowed in most parks in Edmonds, he continually sees adults with their dogs. This is of particular concern on playfields that are used by children. He noted that the problem is compounded when dogs are allowed to use parks as bathrooms because once the smell is there, other dogs will be attracted to the area. He shared an experience he had at Pine Street Park where he approached a woman to remind her that dogs were not allowed in the park. The woman did not seem to care about the rule. This appears to be the common response since the City does not patrol the parks to make sure people comply. He questioned how the City could best address this problem, and suggested that perhaps educating the public about the problem would be a good place to start.

Ms. Hite said the City has fairly restrictive rules about dogs in parks, more restrictive than most. Dog owners who want to legally walk their pets have to get out the City's code to see where dogs are allowed and where they are not. The City does not typically post "no dog" signs, and they do not provide bags because it would encourage dog owners to use the parks even more. She said she gets equal calls from those who want to know why the rules are not enforced and those who want to know why the rules are so restrictive. This difficult issue is on her list of things to explore at some point in the future. She suggested that the issue be added to the PROS Plan as something that needs to be addressed. \

Board Member Clarke expressed his belief that it is a tragedy that the waterfront walkway is broken up by a section of private property. He asked if the City has explored options for obtaining this property for the public good so that a contiguous walkway could be provided as a complete public amenity. While he recognized this would be costly, it would provide a significant long-term public benefit. Ms. Hite said there has been quite a bit of study on this opportunity and it was found to be prohibitive. One discussion she has engaged in is the possibility of building a boardwalk past the private property. While this would be a difficult and costly project, it would not be impossible. The potential project is addressed in the PROS Plan to keep it at the forefront of discussions. She agreed to research the possibilities again. She agreed it is a shame that the walkway cannot be connected, and it should remain a City priority.

Board Member Clarke asked if staff has given any thought to working with the Downtown Business Improvement District (BID) to market the cultural aspects of the community. Ms. Chapin said she has been in conversations with BID board members and a member of the BID board participated on the CCAT. There is some interest on the part of the BID, but it is too early to say what direction they will take.

Board Member Clarke asked if the City has explored options for providing a public restroom in the vicinity of downtown. Ms. Hite said the City has had discussions with the owners of Old Mill Town regarding a potential partnership to open their restroom facility to the public. In addition, the Economic Development Commission's Tourism Subcommittee is also looking at options for providing this public amenity. She is hopeful they will be able to establish something in the downtown in the next year or two. Ms. Chapin pointed out that a public restroom in the downtown area is also identified as a priority in the Strategic Action Plan.

Board Member Clarke asked if private property owners are required to sign up on a waiting list if they want to have a mural painted on their building. Ms. Chapin emphasized that the mural program is administered by the Mural Society and not the City. However, she knows that they do have a list of private property owners who are interested in participating in the program. Board Member Ellis pointed out that finding suitable locations for murals is a complex process.

Board Member Clarke asked if the City has given any thought to creating a funding mechanism that would allow donors to contribute money for park projects. Ms. Hite referred to the “funding” chapter in the draft PROS Plan, which calls for creating a park foundation that would allow and encourage donors to make charitable contributions for parks. She said she would love to put together a committee to explore this option further.

Board Member Clarke said it would be helpful if the PROS Plan identified specific projects the City would like to move forward in 2014 and 2015. This would allow the community to measure how well the plan is being implemented. Ms. Hite explained that the PROS Plan is intended to be six-year macro-level plan that allows the Parks Department to put projects together when funding opportunities arise. In addition to the PROS Plan, they also establish a work plan with action items each year.

Board Member Duncan asked staff to share the process that was used for coming up with the capital cost model found in Appendix C of the PROS Plan. Ms. Hite said the metrics were based on average costs used by parks departments nationwide. Board Member Duncan commented that \$250,000 seems high for two restroom structures. Ms. Hite answered that costs can be much greater if utilities and infrastructure have to be added. She agreed to review the cost estimates again.

Chair Cloutier said he likes the way the plan focuses on collaboration and inclusion and trying to keep a long view while implementing shorter term programs. That is why Edmonds fared better during the financial crisis. The community sees the parks and arts as a treasure and it is good they are working together.

Chair Cloutier agreed that completing the beach walkway should be a City priority. He noted that Ballinger Park has been a huge success because it is easily accessible from the Interurban Trail. He suggested the City consider providing better connections to Pine Street and Yost Parks, as well. Anything the City can do to follow the vision of leveraging existing trails that are both small and informal would be a great benefit to the community. He appreciates that the City is looking for more access opportunities. One walkway can fill in a lot of gaps in the ¼ to ½ mile radius.

Chair Cloutier said he supports the five goals called out in the CC Plan, but suggested the difficult part will be following up and keeping people engaged. Visions are only good if they are implemented. He said is interested in learning more about the communication plan.

As the father of a teenager, Chair Cloutier said he was particularly interested in the idea of broadening the perspective to include a greater audience. Anything that can be done to engage the youth in arts and activities in locations outside of the downtown would be appreciated.

**VICE CHAIR TIBBOTT MOVED THAT THE BOARD FORWARD THE PARKS, RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE AND COMMUNITY CULTURE PLANS TO THE CITY COUNCIL, WITH A RECOMMENDATION OF APPROVAL AS PRESENTED. CHAIR CLOUTIER SECONDED THE MOTION, WHICH CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Ms. Hite thanked the Board for reviewing the plan and making valuable comments. They are excited to take it to the City Council for final approval. She commented that they had an excellent consultant team (MIG, Inc.), and staff would shepherd the plan through the remainder of the process. She also thanked the staff team (Ms. McRae, Ms. Chapin, and Mr. Lindsey), who did a lot of work behind the scenes to move the two plans forward.

Ms. Chapin announced that the Highway 99 Enhancement Project would be dedicated on January 30<sup>th</sup>. She invited Board members to attend the event.

Once again, Board Member Clarke thanked Ms. Hite for her leadership. He expressed concern that the current political climate in the City is so adversarial. He is saddened that many staff members spend countless hours on behalf of the community with very little recognition for their efforts. Without strong leadership at the staff level, hiring consultants would be pointless. City staff worked very hard to bring out the City’s vision, articulate the vision and get the vision approved. He said he loves the City of Edmonds, and the hardworking staff has made it what it is.

**APPROVED**

## **REVIEW OF EXTENDED AGENDA**

Chair Cloutier announced that a public hearing on Initiative 502 (marijuana) is scheduled for February 12<sup>th</sup>, along with a potential public hearing on a rezone application. A public hearing on the Westgate Plan and form-based zoning is scheduled for February 26<sup>th</sup>. The schedule for March is open. He invited Board Members to share their thoughts on possible agenda topics going forward.

## **PLANNING BOARD CHAIR COMMENTS**

Chair Cloutier thanked the Board Members for taking the time to study the PROS and CC Plans and provide thoughtful comments.

Chair Cloutier announced that Climate Solutions, an organization that works with cities and other government organizations to help draft codes, laws and policies to make sustainable practices easier to do, is teaming up with Green Canopy to sponsor an event at the Elysian Fields Brewery in Seattle on January 29 from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m.. The event will be an opportunity to get together with people who have the same interest to share ideas.

## **PLANNING BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS**

Board Member Ellis said he was invited to represent the Planning Board on the panel that will interview candidates for the Development Services Director position.

Vice Chair Tibbott reported on his attendance at the City Council's Parks Committee meeting where he learned that the City was signing an agreement to construct three new sidewalks using a \$2 million grant. He recalled that when the Transportation Plan was presented to the City Council six to eight years ago as an element of the Comprehensive Plan, there was some discussion about the importance of providing sidewalks in front of and near schools. Many people disagreed on the number of sidewalks identified in the plan, as well as the prioritization. After working on the Transportation Plan update and participating on the Planning Board, he has a better understanding of how important it is to include sidewalks in the Comprehensive Plan. If the three sidewalks had not been included in the Plan, they would not have been eligible for grant funding. He noted that only the Madrona sidewalk was identified as a high priority. This illustrates the importance of including all sidewalks in the plan, regardless of priority. He thanked the Engineering Department for going after the grant funding to complete the three sidewalks.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

The Board meeting was adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

**APPROVED**