

**CITY OF EDMONDS  
PLANNING BOARD MINUTES**

**September 10, 2014**

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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  
Bill Ellis  
Daniel Robles  
Careen Rubenkönig  
Valerie Stewart

**STAFF PRESENT**

Rob Chave, Planning Division Manager  
Karin Noyes, Recorder

**BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT**

Philip Lovell (excused)

**READING/APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**VICE CHAIR TIBBOTT MOVED THAT THE MINUTES OF AUGUST 27, 2014 BE APPROVED AS SUBMITTED. BOARD MEMBER STEWART 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.

**DEVELOPMENT SERVICES DIRECTOR REPORT TO PLANNING BOARD**

Chair Cloutier referred the Board to the Director's Report, which was disseminated to Board members via email. The report provided an update on the Shoreline Master Program, Highway 99 area zoning amendments, legal lot zoning amendments, Sunset Avenue walkway, Five Corners roundabout, 2015 Comprehensive Plan update, Westgate zoning code proposal, changes to the City Council's meeting format, and a community calendar.

Mr. Chave noted that, in addition to the items listed on the community calendar, Council Member Bloom has scheduled a Town Hall Meeting on Monday, September 15<sup>th</sup>, to discuss the Westgate zoning code proposal. Information regarding the meeting is available on the City's website.

## CONTINUED DISCUSSION OF COMPREHENSIVE PLAN SUSTAINABILITY ELEMENT

Mr. Chave referred the Board to the updated version of the Sustainability Element. He noted that, as discussed at the last meeting, a new section that incorporates an action and performance measure was inserted at the end of the element. In addition, recommended changes submitted by Board Member Stewart were inserted into the document and identified in red.

Board Member Stewart reported that she attended a recent meeting of the Mayors Climate Protection Committee, and asked the members to review and comment on the current Sustainability Element. The comments she received were forwarded to staff.

The Board reviewed the document as follows:

- **Background on Page 18.** Board Member Robles observed that, currently, the term “sustainability” is defined as “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” He questioned what is meant by the word “future.” He suggested the word opens the door to a very well-known concept called Pareto Efficiency, which is a state of allocation of resources in which it is impossible to make any one individual better off without making at least one individual worse off. He noted that a huge body of education is dedicated to this concept. He suggested a definition of sustainability could include an account of those who win and those who lose based on a decision the City makes. While he recognized it would be difficult, he felt the definition should be adjusted to lend itself to more main stream analysis.

Board Member Stewart responded that the current definition is widely accepted throughout the world and refers to environmental, social and economic sustainability. While Board Member Robles’ recommendation has merit, she questioned if it would be appropriate to insert additional language at this point in time. Chair Cloutier suggested that the concept would be more appropriately discussed when the Board talks about methods for implementing the goals and policies contained in the Sustainability Element.

Board Member Robles commented that climate change is very relevant to global sustainability. Sustainability at the micro level is also important. He questioned if changes are needed to address the City remaining sustainable if transportation is cut off for an extended period of time in the future. Other potential concerns are whether there would be enough food and water to sustain citizens in an emergency and if it is possible to generate as much solar power as the City would need?

- **Last paragraph on Page 18.** Board Member Stewart advised that Barbara Tipton, a member of the Mayor’s Climate Protection Committee, felt strongly that the Edmonds Marsh is a significant asset that should be specifically mentioned in this paragraph. The Board Members agreed.
- **Sustainability Goal A on Page 19.** Board Member Rubenkonig suggested that the words “in a sustainable way” in Item A.1 should be removed from the first sentence. Chair Cloutier advised that using the term “sustainable” implies that the City will consider outside things when maintaining the City’s character and charm. The Board agreed to leave this paragraph as written.
- **Sustainability Goal F on Pages 21 and 22.** Board Member Stewart advised that Barbara Tipton requested an additional item should be added to Sustainability Goal F that “all citizens should be within walking distance of a park.” Chair Cloutier explained that this would be more of a metric for measuring how well the City has implemented Sustainability Goals F.2 and F.3 or the specific goals called out in the Parks, Recreation and Open Space (PROS) Plan. Mr. Chave agreed that the Board could discuss this as a potential performance measure when reviewing the PROS Plan, which is a separate element of the Comprehensive Plan. The Board agreed, particularly if it is already called out as a goal in the PROS Plan.
- **Sustainability Goal D on Page 20 and Climate Change Goal E on Page 26.** The Board discussed that perhaps Sustainability Goal D could be expanded to place more emphasis on the need for energy-efficient development. Concern was expressed that including the word “in city facilities” might unnecessarily limit the goal’s application. The Board agreed that improving energy efficiency should be a citywide goal. Board Member Stewart pointed out that Ms. Tipton

**APPROVED**

also commented on the need to make energy efficiency a citywide goal. Mr. Chave pointed out that Climate Change Goal E calls for developing mitigation strategies that could be used by the both public and private sectors. He also noted that the word “city” is not capitalized, which means it is intended to apply to all facilities and not just those owned and operated by the City. The Board agreed not to eliminate the words “in city facilities.”

- **Climate Change Goal E on Page 26.** While it is well known that multi-family housing is more energy efficient than single-family housing, Board Member Rubenkonig noted that the fact is not specifically called out in the Sustainability Element. Board Member Stewart pointed out that the issue is specifically called out in the Climate Protection Plan. Chair Cloutier agreed that, typically, multi-family housing is more energy efficient, but there are techniques for making single-family housing energy efficient, as well. Mr. Chave referred to Climate Change Goal E.3, which talks about developing programs and incentives that encourage existing land use, buildings and infrastructure to reduce their carbon footprint. While this is a general statement, the idea is that the entire City is included in the effort.

Vice Chair Tibbott asked if it would be appropriate to include multi-family residential development as a specific example of energy efficient development. Mr. Chave cautioned against singling out a specific use, as it could be interpreted that energy efficiency is less important for other types of uses. Mr. Chave explained that, if the goal is to reduce green house gases, the best approach would be to start with the highest users and work backwards. Available data indicates that the treatment plant is the City’s highest user, followed by grocery stores and large commercial establishments. Chair Cloutier pointed out that data on energy use is available on the Mayor’s Climate Protection Committee’s website. Vice Chair Tibbott asked how much solar energy is produced in the City, and Chair Cloutier said it is next to zero at this time.

Vice Chair Tibbott said it is not clear to him that the language in Climate Change Goal E applies to buildings. Mr. Chave pointed out that Goal E.3 specifically calls out existing land use, buildings and infrastructure. To make it clearer, he suggested that the first sentence could be changed by adding “and increase energy efficiency.” The Board agreed that would be appropriate.

Vice Chair Tibbott noted that the goal does not point to any specific type of use. Again, Mr. Chave said it is intended to apply to all types of land uses, buildings and infrastructure, and adding examples may limit its application. Chair Cloutier reminded the Board that the goal is to reduce the carbon footprint and not to change the land use. He cautioned that broad statements are more appropriate for the goals and policies in the Comprehensive Plan, which will be implemented by the more specific Development Code regulations.

Vice Chair Tibbott said it is not clear that the term “development” applies to buildings. Mr. Chave explained that the term was carefully chosen and applies to the arrangement of buildings, pedestrian connections, bikeways and other things associated with the development such as retaining trees, clearing and grading, mitigation programs, reducing footprint and incentives for buildings that are energy efficient.

- **Climate Change Goal D on Page 20.** Board Member Rubenkonig said she would still like “energy efficiency” to be addressed as a Sustainability Goal rather than a Climate Action Goal. The Board agreed that the second sentence should be changed to specifically call out the need to improve energy efficiency.
- **Climate Change Goal B on Pages 24 and 25.** Board Member Stewart suggested that the language no longer reference the 1990 and 2012 pollution level numbers. Mr. Chave explained that this references an historic policy that the City agreed to when joining the United States Mayors’ Climate Protection Committee. It is not the City’s current policy, and that is why it is not stated as a goal. What the City has actually agreed to do is called out in Climate Change Goal B.
- **Climate Change Goal E on Page 26.** Board Member Stewart suggested that the words “and potential sea level rise,” should be added at the end of Climate Change Goal E. Mr. Chave pointed out that sea level rise is just one of the affects of climate change. Specifically calling it out could imply that it is the most important issue. Board Member Stewart commented that sea level rise must be addressed when planning for development and Best Available Science must be considered. The City should at least acknowledge sea level rise somewhere in the Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Chave noted that Page 34 of the Sustainability Element calls for the City updating its Hazard Mitigation Plan by 2017 to reference emerging risks and hazards related to climate change. This update will include a discussion about sea level

rise. Chair Cloutier added that sea level rise is called out in the broader term, “mitigating the affects of climate change.” The question is whether it should be called out as a particular concern for which the City is vulnerable. He cautioned that calling it out specifically could muddy the issue because people will narrow the policy to the example provided. Again, he reminded the Board that the Comprehensive Plan is not code; it is intended to be a high-level vision. He cautioned against adding details that will constrain future decisions. All code changes must be balanced against the sustainability element. If they keep it narrow, the results will be narrow. If it is kept broad, it will not be constrained to what the City thinks is important today. He urged the Board to keep the Sustainability Element as broad as possible.

As an example, Mr. Chave said he views ocean acidification as a far more threatening problem than sea level rise. The impacts of this will be much more drastic in the near term before you ever see significant impacts from sea level rise. If the City focuses on just one specific thing, it may lose site of the other issues that might be more important. Board Member Stewart also suggested the green house gases and ocean acidification should be called out specifically in the Sustainability Element, but she is not sure the best place to do it. The Board agreed not to add “and potential sea level rise” to Climate Change Goal E.

Board Member Robles cautioned that Edmonds cannot stop all sea level rise, but it can look at Edmonds as a sustainable unit for which sea level rise is a significant threat. He noted that there are documents that address both local and global sustainability, and he suggested it might be appropriate to add a new element that addresses sustainability for just Edmonds, as he discussed earlier.

- **Action 1 on Page 34.** Chair Cloutier commented that no matter how much the City does to address rising sea levels and ocean acidification, they will not impact the overall situation. However, they can prepare to mitigate the impacts. The City must have a plan in place to adapt to all the impacts of climate change. The Board agreed that rising sea levels is a hazard that will impact Edmonds and it should be addressed in the Hazard Mitigation Plan. They agreed to change Action 1 to read, “By 2017, update the City’s Hazard Mitigation Plan to reference emerging risks and hazards related to climate change such as rising sea levels and ocean acidification.”
- **Paragraph 3 on Page 27.** Board Member Stewart referred to her proposed language and clarified that the 2<sup>nd</sup> sentence should read, “The percentage of young people who are overweight has more than doubled in the last twenty years, and childhood obesity is a potential precursor to obesity in adults.” While obesity is a current health problem, Board Member Ellis cautioned against calling it out as a specific example. He suggested that some of Board Member Stewart’s proposed language should be eliminated and the paragraph should read, “Transportation systems, development patterns, community design and planning decisions can have profound effects on health and well being. All citizens should be able to live, work and play in environments that facilitate physical activity and offer healthy choices.” This would allow the City to address all health problems, including obesity, aging population, safe pedestrian access, etc.

Mr. Chave cautioned that the danger is that health concerns tend to go in cycles and various issues rise to the top. Board Member Stewart pointed out that obesity is a national trend that results in a number of other health issues such as diabetes and heart disease. The City should recognize this as an issue that needs to be addressed for the long term.

Consistent with keeping the Sustainability Element broader, the Board agreed to incorporate only the last two sentences of Board Member Stewart’s recommended language.

- **Community Health Goal B on Page 28.** Board Member Rubenkönig said she supports the first sentence in Item B.6, which talks about increasing access to health-promoting foods and beverages in the community. However, she questioned what incentives are in place to have locally-sourced produce available in the City. Chair Cloutier pointed out that encouraging locally-sourced food is a possible solution for implementing Community Health Goal B. Again, he reminded the Board that the goals in the Comprehensive Plan, including the Sustainability Element, are intended to guide the City’s future. They are intended to call out the problems, but not offer solutions. They are used as a guide when considering future Development Code amendments, which must be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.
- **Environmental Quality Goal A on Page 30.** Board Member Stewart asked that the word “natural” be changed to “native” in Item A.1. She explained that native vegetation supports native wildlife and natural vegetation does not necessary do that. Mr. Chave commented that the term “native” has a very different meaning than “natural,” especially

as it relates to climate change. Board Member Stewart pointed out that certain species of native plants should be present in riparian areas along streams. Native plants have been bread in the community and support wildlife. If the City simply requires natural vegetation rather than native vegetation, the ecosystem could be altered. Mr. Chave agreed but pointed out that the concern is addressed in Item A.2, which calls for the retention and enhancement of wildlife habitat areas. Introducing native species might not accomplish this goal. He said he views “natural” as a much broader term that will allow the City to implement appropriate development codes to protect and enhance wildlife habitat areas. The Board agreed not to change “natural” to “native.”

Board Member Ellis asked how the City would determine which species are native and which are not. Board Member Stewart answered that there are lists available to make this determination. Non-native species are usually invasive and compete against the native species. Board Member Ellis stressed the importance of educating property owners about the difference between non-native and native species. Mr. Chave said most people know the obvious invasive, non-native species, and there are lists available from various agencies.

- **Environmental Quality Goal A on Page 30.** Board Member Stewart advised that Ms. Tipton suggested that Item A.1 be amended to include private residential properties as potential wildlife habitat in addition to urban forests, wetlands, etc. Board Member Stewart pointed out that wildlife habitat is not just in public spaces, but in private yards, too. The City’s goal should be to increase wildlife habitat. Once again, Mr. Chave pointed out that the word “city” is not capitalized, which means it is intended to apply to all wildlife habitat areas and not just those owned by the City. He advised that urban forests include more private lands than public lands, and the goal is intended to be very broad to encompass all wildlife habitat areas. The Board agreed that the goal was broad enough as written.

#### **DISCUSSION OF COMPREHENSIVE PLAN HOUSING ELEMENT UPDATE**

Mr. Chave referred to the current Housing Element of the Comprehensive Plan (Exhibit 1) and invited the Board members to share their comments and questions in preparation for their September 24<sup>th</sup> review and discussion on the draft Housing Element update. He reported that the Executive Director of the Housing Coalition of Snohomish County and Everett made a presentation (Exhibit 2) to the City Council on August 26<sup>th</sup> about countywide housing needs, especially related to affordability and the region’s growing population. The presentation also included important countywide data related to the need for affordable housing.

Mr. Chave also reported that the City is partnering with other cities and Snohomish County in the Alliance for Housing Affordability (AHA), a group formed from Snohomish County Tomorrow. Through this effort, an affordable housing profile has been created for each of the participating jurisdictions. A copy of the draft Edmonds Affordable Housing Profile was attached to the Staff Report as Exhibit 3. The final profile should be very similar and ready for the Board’s September 24<sup>th</sup> meeting, and Kristina Gallant from the AHA will be present at that time to walk the Board through the details. He explained that the profile contains extensive data on housing in Edmonds and looks at housing affordability mostly from the perspective of the entire metropolitan region, including Seattle. On the other hand, Exhibit 2 from the Housing Coalition looks at housing affordability based just on the Snohomish County area, not including Seattle. Both documents will be useful when updating the Housing Element.

Board Member Stewart asked when the Board would discuss potential performance measures and action items. Mr. Chave said this topic would be part of the Board’s September 24<sup>th</sup> discussion. He encouraged Board Members to forward their thoughts and additional comments to him via email.

#### **REVIEW OF EXTENDED AGENDA**

Mr. Chave reviewed that in addition to the Board’s continued discussion of the Comprehensive Plan Housing Element, the September 24<sup>th</sup> meeting would include a public hearing on proposed updates to the Capital Facilities and Capital Improvement Plans for 2015-2020. The Development Services Director would also provide an overview of the development projects and activities that are currently taking place in the City, as well as data and statistics on how the City is doing in terms of valuation of construction. He said he anticipates the Board will need one more opportunity to discuss the Comprehensive Plan Housing Element on October 8<sup>th</sup>. The October 8<sup>th</sup> agenda would also include a discussion on the

Comprehensive Plan General Introduction Section, as well as the Land Use Element. The Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Director will present a quarterly report to the Board on November 12<sup>th</sup>.

Vice Chair Tibbott advised that would present the Board's quarterly report to the City Council on September 16<sup>th</sup>.

### **PLANNING BOARD CHAIR COMMENTS**

Chair Cloutier thanked the Board for their patience as he frequently reminded them about what a comprehensive plan is and is not supposed to include.

### **PLANNING BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS**

Board Member Ellis thanked Board Member Stewart for her review and thoughtful comments regarding the Sustainability Element. He appreciates all of her effort. Board Member Stewart thanked the Board Members for their comments and Chair Cloutier for leading the discussion.

Board Member Stewart announced that she kicked off her citizen project earlier in the day, meeting with about 20 students and teachers from Edmonds Woodway High School. After discussions with the students, it was decided that the title of the project would be "Students Saving Salmon." Her role is to keep the students in tune with what documents are being reviewed and when public hearings are being held so they can prepare their comments, articles, etc. She invited the students to participate in a tour of the marsh and shoreline on October 4<sup>th</sup> from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon. The tour will be led by Keeley O'Connell and a representative from the Tribes. Members of the City Council, Planning Board and Mayor's Climate Protection Committee will be invited to attend, as well. Participants will meet in front of the Harbor Square Athletic Club.

Vice Chair Tibbott expressed frustration that the names for exhibits in the Staff Report often do not match the titles on the actual documents. He suggested they create consistent names to help the Board Members navigate to the various documents. The Board discussed the problem, and it was suggested that the best solution would be for Board Members to download the exhibits and then give them a more descriptive name. Mr. Chave said one of the Development Services Director's goals is to create a more uniform naming system, but it will be geared towards the date a document is created and not necessarily tied to a particular agenda item.

Board Member Robles announced that he submitted a proposal to the American Planning Association National Conference that will be held in Seattle in 2015. The title of his proposal is "Reorganizing Communities for the Peer-to-Peer Economy." He explained that new peer-to-peer platforms allow people to create, store and exchange value without any broker or intermediary. This places responsibility on urban planning to accommodate collaborative society and decentralized production of goods and services.

Board Member Rubenkong reported that she participates in the Waste Warrior Program, which is group of volunteers sponsored by Washington State University and Snohomish County Sustainable Community Stewards. Last year in Edmonds, the group siphoned off 1,000 pounds of compostable waste from the Edmonds Waterfront Festival. This year they attended the Mukilteo Lake House Festival and collected 900 pounds of compostable waste. She advised that an event is scheduled for September 15<sup>th</sup> at Yost Park.

Mr. Chave reported that the Mayor's Climate Protection Committee has been working to sign up businesses for the "Clean Business Pledge Program." So far about two dozen businesses have signed up to participate, and they will be provided a sticker for their window and information on how to collaborate and share practices.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

The Board meeting was adjourned at 8:40 p.m.

**APPROVED**