

APPROVED APRIL 27TH

**CITY OF EDMONDS
PLANNING BOARD MINUTES**

April 13, 2016

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

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

Philip Lovell, Chair
Carreen Rubenkönig, Vice Chair
Matthew Cheung
Alicia Crank
Todd Cloutier
Nathan Monroe
Daniel Robles
Valerie Stewart
Samuel Kleven (Student Representative)

STAFF PRESENT

Rob Chave, Planning Division Manager
Karin Noyes, Recorder

READING/APPROVAL OF MINUTES

BOARD MEMBER CRANK MOVED THAT THE MINUTES OF MARCH 23, 2016 BE APPROVED AS AMENDED. BOARD MEMBER STEWART SECONDED THE MOTION, WHICH CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF AGENDA

The agenda was accepted as presented.

AUDIENCE COMMENTS

Natalie Shippen, Edmonds, said she does not believe that the City's public sidewalks are a commodity to be loaned or given for private use, and the sign code should not be used a tool for economic development. In addition, she believes the sign code should protect the quality of the community, and the sign code revisions being presented to the Board do not reflect the community values. If adopted, Edmonds will be regressing. She said it is ironic that Edmonds is now considering a proposal to rid Highway 99 of its commercial strip zone image, yet it is planning to introduce that same commercial strip zone concept into the downtown where there would be rows of temporary signs to attract passersby. This will be the same concept, different sign, different target, producing the same third-rate image that is now present on Highway 99. She hopes the Board will keep in mind that the Edmonds sign code is weak, and the proposals before them will only make it weaker. The sign code needs strengthening, not revisions that make it weaker. She recalled that in previous discussions, Board Members expressed an interest in referring to other sign codes as examples, and she highly recommended the Mount Lake Terrace sign code, particularly the section pertaining to temporary signs. It is very well organized and will give the Board Members an example by which to measure the other proposals as the sign code review proceeds.

Roger Hertrich, Edmonds, reminded the Board that there is a large piece of Snohomish County property (Esperance) located within the City's borders, and he has heard that the County is considering Development Code amendments, particularly pertaining to setback, density and parking requirements. He expressed his hope that the Board and the City staff

will carefully consider what the County is proposing and how it will impact Esperance and the City of Edmonds if annexation occurs at some point in the future.

Mr. Hertrich reminded the Board of its two roles: Planning Board and Parks Board. He voiced concern that the Board's agenda rarely includes park issues. He suggested that Board meetings should be set aside on a regular basis to address issues that are specific to parks.

SNOMOMISH COUNTY URBAN COUNTY CONSORTIUM

Vice Chair Rubenkönig said she asked that this topic be placed on the agenda for information purposes as the Board considers how the City can accommodate additional housing units to comply with the 2024 growth targets. She referred to the document that was included in the Planning Board Packet regarding a meeting of the Snohomish County Urban County Consortium. The document provides information about what is going on in the County to address current and future housing needs. The document made it clear to her that the Board's discussion should focus on opportunities for the physical location of housing rather than trying to identify funding sources for housing.

Chair Lovell said he perused the report, which it was referenced in the brief that he and Vice Chair Rubenkönig provided to the City Council on April 5th regarding Planning Board activities. He said the consortium deals primarily with the pursuit of grant monies to improve existing conditions in the County, mostly with respect to existing facilities. The Consortium's efforts are intended to address housing for the homeless, affordable housing, temporary housing and repair, maintenance and upgrades. They are talking about approximately \$2.6 million from grants and other funding sources that will enable them to meet their goals over the next two years. In that context, they have organized a list of goals for the number of households that would be impacted by the various improvements. Over the next year, the goal is to support 165 homeless households, 13 non-homeless households, and 503 special needs households for a total of 681 households. The intent is to meet these goals by rendering assistance to 165 households, producing no new units, rehabilitating 506 existing units, and acquiring 10 existing units for a total of 681.

PLANNING BOARD REPORT TO THE CITY COUNCIL

Chair Lovell reported that a question and answer period followed the presentation he and Vice Chair Rubenkönig made to the City Council on April 5th. The number one topic of discussion was affordability and housing in Edmonds, primarily as it relates to growth. The City is currently considering growth patterns and growth capabilities, with an eye towards a number of additional residential units to accommodate the anticipated population growth. The following topics were emphasized:

- The City Council made it clear that affordable housing should be a priority, particularly when looking at potential zoning changes on Highway 99. A consultant has been retained to study the growth potential on Highway 99, and the City Council has emphasized that housing should be a strong consideration. They encouraged the Highway 99 Task Force to make contact with every resident living along Highway 99, as well as property owners and business owners.
- The City Council would like staff to research what other cities in Snohomish County are doing with respect to addressing current and future housing needs.
- The City Council indicated a desire to work more closely with the Planning Board in the future. It was suggested that it would be appropriate to have one or two joint work meetings each year.
- The City Council asked that the Planning Board rejuvenate discussions about the concept of Project Development Agreements. While there are already provisions in the code with respect to the concept, it is an element of the administration of projects that might be applied more productively in the future.
- The City Council stressed the importance of completing the Code Rewrite Project as quickly as possible.
- The City Council questioned if the Planning Board is aware of any increased attendance or interest exhibited by the public in Planning Board activities as a result of the meetings being televised. He informed the City Council that he

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could not see a marked difference, and that the level of attendance at Planning Board meetings primarily depends on the agenda topics.

Board Member Robles pointed out that there appears to be a willingness amongst the citizens to participate in the public process, but they typically are not aware of the process for doing so. He suggested that there needs to be improved communication with citizens to inform them of the Planning Board's agenda and how they can participate.

Chair Lovell said he and Vice Chair Rubenkönig will work more closely with Council President Johnson to scope out the Planning Board's extended agenda and plan opportunities to meet jointly with the City Council.

Board Member Crank commented on affordable housing and housing in general within the context of urban planning. She said she recently attended a Corporate Development Responsibility Conference where a professor from the University of Washington-Tacoma's Urban Study Program talked about the correlation between the large number of businesses moving into Seattle and the rising housing demand in South Snohomish County and North Pierce County. This reminded her of the need to have a broader sense of planning. They should focus less on numbers and more on who the people are and what is driving the need for housing. Economic Development should be paired with urban planning, and job creation and movement should play a role in the discussions.

DUSCUSSION/REVIEW OF SIGN CODE: TEMPORARY SIGNS

Chair Lovell referred to the discussion draft of potential sign code amendments and asked how it compares with the report prepared by the consultant. Mr. Chave explained that the discussion draft is intended to be a continuation of the Board's last discussion and is not anything close to a firm proposal at this point. However, it does provide examples for how to differentiate between sign types (A-frame versus stanchion) and location (right-of-way versus private property). He explained that A-frame signs in the downtown are currently unenforceable. They are treated as temporary signs, with a 60-day limit, but it is very difficult to know when the signs are placed. He suggested the Board could come up with a specific proposal to present at a public hearing, or they could provide a few different alternatives for the public to comment on. For example:

- A-frames could be prohibited, but other types of signs could be allowed.
- A-frame signs could be permitted, not as temporary signs, but as permitted signs that must meet more specific criteria related to location, size, etc.
- A-frame signs could be permitted as right-of-way signs, or a type of quasi-on-site sign. The code defines the area in front of your business as part of your premise where you do business.

Mr. Chave explained that treating A-frame signs as right-of-way signs can be difficult, particularly when a business is set back. If an A-frame sign is placed in front of a store on private property, they probably would not want to allow a sign in the right-of-way, too. If businesses are only allowed to have one sign, the code should specify a preferred location.

Mr. Chave specifically asked the Board to provide feedback about whether they support allowing A-frame signs as an legitimate type of signage in a pedestrian environment such as the downtown, but provide ways for them to be permitted and tracked. They could provide this as an option to solicit public comment. The current code allows the category of sign that includes A-frames in the downtown, recognizing that they have historically been allowed and the sign type fits best in a pedestrian environment. Although many businesses insist that A-frame signs are necessary and important, he did not feel they are an appropriate sign type on major arterials since they are not generally visible from the roadway and there is not significant pedestrian activity.

Mr. Chave said it is important to consider that the sidewalks in Edmonds are typically narrow, and space is limited. There is always tension between pedestrian space and use of the space for a variety of amenities that complement the overall pedestrian environment. There is a purpose for signage to advertise specials that change on a daily basis, and it is much easier than a reader board that tends to get a little more garish and does not really fit with the environment. If A-frame type signs are allowed, the code should provide specific details about what the circumstances must be. For example, it would not make sense to allow one for every business. There are situations where a single entry leads into four or five businesses behind the street front, and allowing four or five A-frame signs along a single store front makes no sense. If the Board wants

to allow A-frame signs, perhaps it would be appropriate to establish a standard for the maximum number of signs allowed per store front.

Mr. Chave said the intent of the discussion draft was to put the information that was provided at the open house into verbiage for the Board's consideration. He emphasized that, under the existing code, A-frame signs are only allowed in the downtown. Continuing to regulate them as temporary signs is inconsistent with the way the signs are actually used. Referencing other types of signs makes some sense to provide some perspective. He cautioned that the sign code can regulate the type, location and dimensions of a sign, but it cannot regulate signs based on content. It is not possible to use examples from other jurisdictions because, by and large, most are out of compliance at this point.

Board Member Crank said she recently visited three stores in downtown Edmonds that had A-frame signs. She asked the owners if they were aware of the sign code requirements. She also asked how they would feel if they were told they could no longer have A-frame signs in front of their establishments. None of them liked the idea of prohibiting A-frame signs. She recalled that, at the last meeting, she asked if the business owners had been contacted for feedback. The response was that the business owners had been contacted early in the process, but there was no follow up or description of the responses. She suggested that the Planning Board extend an invitation to the downtown business owners to attend the next Planning Board meeting in which the sign code is discussed to express their points of view.

Mr. Chave said that the Development Services Director has reached out to the Edmonds Downtown Alliance (ED) and the Chamber for feedback. He commented that it is very difficult to discuss meaningful ideas with a large group of people in a regular Planning Board meeting setting. He suggested that a more effective way to solicit feedback from property owners and citizens would be to have an open house. As the discussion moves forward, the Board could offer a series of options and then solicit feedback. The feedback could be used to prepare a public hearing draft that hones in on the options the Board wants to pursue. Again, he suggested the Board put forward several options for the public to react to and encourage more specific comments. They can also use the City's website to solicit more feedback, and the Development Services Director could continue to work with the Edmonds Downtown Alliance and the Chamber as the discussion moves forward.

Vice Chair Rubenkönig referred to Board Member Crank's comments about responses she received from business owners, which relate back to the comment she made at the last meeting that the City does not know what Edmonds looks like with the sign code properly enforced. There is currently a proliferation of signs that are not allowed. For education purposes, she suggested the City could sponsor a campaign once or twice each year to get the illegal signs removed. Perhaps this could be done in cooperation with the Chamber and Edmonds Downtown Alliance. She expressed her belief that there is currently a lack of understanding, and perhaps the sign code is not as clear as it could be. She recalled that staff is recommending that only one sign per building be allowed, yet the graphic that was provided in the discussion draft is labeled as allowing one sign per business. Lastly, she voiced her opinion that stanchion signs pose less impediment to the pedestrian walkways than A-frame signs.

Mr. Chave said staff is recommending that just one sign be allowed per building or one per entryway. He pointed out that, in some cases, a building hosts multiple businesses from a single entry. Allowing one sign per business could result in a large number of A-frame signs in front of the entryway and the sidewalk could become cluttered. Chair Lovell suggested that perhaps there could be a different standard to address buildings with multiple tenants. For example, a stanchion sign could be used with a strip of space on the sign for each business to advertise. Perhaps a larger sign size could be allowed in these situations. He acknowledged that this would necessitate design standards and an additional cost to businesses.

Chair Lovell summarized that it appears that the Development Services Director has done some survey work with respect to the merchants in the downtown, and his understanding is that the merchants rely on the temporary signs to attract customers. However, staff has indicated that it is difficult to regulate A-frame signs as temporary signs based on the current code. The signs are currently allowed up to a 60-day period, but the City has no way of knowing when the signs are originally placed. In reading the Board's discussion from the last meeting, he gets the impression that the temporary signs are supposed to be of a nature that provides a message or information to the public that is not contained on the regular business signs. Examples of this include special sales, or daily menu items. While he supports the City continuing to allow the signs, he felt the number should be limited to one per business and they must be located within three feet of the business entry. He noted that this would be consistent with the consultant's recommendation. He observed that there are numerous other opportunities for signage, including wall signs, window signs, and blade signs.

Chair Lovell suggested that if temporary signs are going to be allowed, they must have clear guidelines that can be applied throughout the entire City. However, he does not see how the City can regulate anything other than size, number and location. He noted that A-frame signs are not just a problem in the downtown area, but the problem seems to be more noticeable in the downtown where the sidewalks are narrower and there is more pedestrian traffic.

Board Member Monroe said he likes stanchion signs least of all because they are taller. A-frame signs are lower to the ground and not as visible from the street. He said he also believes that A-frame signs are a safer option, as long as the required 4-foot walkway can be maintained as per the American's with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Board Member Stewart said she believes there are certain benefits associated with both stanchion and A-frame signs. She expressed her belief that placing A-frame signs next to the buildings rather than away from buildings is a safer standard. It is easier for those in wheelchairs to get by stanchion signs. She suggested that perhaps one stanchion sign per building could be allowed, and the message on the sign could be changed and tenants of the building could take turns. A-frame signs could be allowed, as long as they are tucked against the buildings. She would like to hear from the public as to the appropriate number of A-frame signs to allow per building or business. While they want to avoid clutter, they also don't want to take away a business owner's right to notify the public of changing conditions at their business.

Board Member Cloutier suggested the Board should start by identifying the specific problems before having a lengthy discussion about potential solutions. This approach would help the Board determine whether the proposed solutions will actually help address the problems or if they will simply address personal preferences. For example, ADA accessibility is a problem that can be addressed by requiring that the signs are ADA compliant. Rather than placing A-frame signs next to buildings, a better location might be near the street trees where they will not impede pedestrian traffic. Another example of a problem associated with A-frame signs is that they create clutter and detract from the appearance of the downtown. A possible solution might be to limit the number of signs allowed per building or per business.

Chair Lovell asked if it would be appropriate to create aesthetic uniformity for downtown signage. Mr. Chave cautioned that when developing sign standards for the downtown, it makes sense to describe the parameters for signs rather than trying to enforce uniformity of design. Currently, there is a lot of variety along the downtown streets, and variety tends to attract people. He suggested that the code should be very specific about the standards that must be met, but still allow for creativity.

The Board all agreed that the approach suggested by Board Member Cloutier would be appropriate, and they further agreed that maintaining adequate pedestrian walkways, per ADA requirements, in the downtown is an important criterion. Board Member Stewart pointed out that the sidewalks in the downtown all different widths. There are some places where the sidewalks are wide enough to accommodate a stanchion sign without impacting the walkway. However, she is hoping that as Edmonds becomes more discovered, there will be more people using the sidewalks. That may require the City to revisit the sign code, and businesses may have to come up with other solutions.

Mr. Chave said that last year the City decided to be more flexible with other kinds of signage. For example, they now encourage blade signs or projecting signs that are more attractive and effective as permanent advertising of a business. Signage that gives notice of changing events has its place, but it must be regulated in a way that is content neutral.

Board Member Robles agreed that allowing for creativity should be part of the Board's consideration, but there is also an argument for uniformity. For example, the gas lamp district in San Diego is defined by ornate gas lamps. He suggested the Board could actually populate the criteria and have a contest. They could invite designers in the City to actually interview the citizens on behalf of the Board and propose some solutions. Also, the City has a database of business owners in the City, and there are methods for statistically sampling those individuals to obtain a representative opinion. He suggested they could combine these different approaches into a strategy.

Chair Lovell asked if the breadth and depth of the Board's discussion has been narrowed down to temporary signage. Mr. Chave agreed that is the main focus of tonight's discussion. Staff is trying to figure out which direction the Board wants to go so that draft code language can be prepared for their consideration at a future meeting. Chair Lovell suggested that perhaps a representative from the Planning Board could attend the next meetings of the Chamber and the Edmonds Downtown Alliance to give a brief presentation and solicit feedback.

Board Member Cheung referred to Board Member Crank's earlier comment and said he is not surprised that business owners seem to be unaware of the regulations for signs. He voiced concern about creating a sign code that is overly restrictive and/or too specific. It will be difficult enough just getting them to comply with a simple ordinance. Business owners should already know not to place signs in the middle of walkways, even if it is not specifically prohibited in the code. He cautioned that the Board should be realistic about what the new sign code will convey to businesses and whether or not they will actually comply with a lot of specific rules.

Mr. Chave referred to Vice Chair Rubenkönig's earlier comment that the City does not know what the downtown would look like if the current sign code were enforced. He advised that the City has occasionally sent out general notices when the signage has gotten out of control. The Code Enforcement Officer has sent word to the Chamber and the Edmonds Downtown Alliance that the signs need to be better controlled. This approach has worked well in the past. It is not that the business owners do not know the rules, it is a matter of what they can get away with. For example, businesses already know they are not supposed to put signs blocks away from the business. There tends to be a constant push/pull, and people will try to see how much they can get away with. However, if the new rules are well understood and a sign permit is required, enforcement will be easy and quick. People will quickly figure out that their signs will get pulled if they haven't been approved by the City. The sign code will become self-enforcing over time.

Board Member Cheung asked what happens with non-compliant signs. Mr. Chave answered that sometimes the signs are confiscated. For example, signs that are put in the right-of-way by clubs have been confiscated by the City, and people have quickly figured out other ways to do their signage. He suggested that addressing signs in the City will require education, combined with enforcement and clear, understandable rules.

Vice Chair Rubenkönig commented that window signs can also add to the visual clutter. Mr. Chave said the sign code allows signs in windows up to a certain percentage of the window area. Vice Chair Rubenkönig asked if the window signs must reflect on the activity of the business within. Mr. Chave reminded the Board that the City cannot regulate sign content. The idea behind allowing some amount of window signage is that it tends to be more temporary advertising.

Vice Chair Rubenkönig recalled that the City currently has some wayfinding signs off the main road to direct citizens to public areas, but there are no wayfinding signs for businesses. She asked if it would be possible to allow wayfinding signs on Main Street to direct pedestrians to businesses off the main road. If this were allowed, then perhaps A-frame signs would not be necessary. Mr. Chave said that wayfinding signs for commercial uses would require a specific program that addresses design, maintenance, etc. The Edmonds Downtown Alliance could pursue this approach as one solution to signage, and another option would be the creation of a website or app for smart phones that advertise and direct people to the businesses. Vice Chair Rubenkönig asked if businesses could rent their window space to another business for advertising. Mr. Chave answered that there are restrictions on off-premise signage, which is generally not allowed.

Chair Lovell suggested that permitted signs could be required to display stickers that provides physical evidence that they meet the sign code requirements. Board Member Cloutier felt this would be cumbersome for the City to administer, as it would require the Code Enforcement Officer to check all of the signs for labels. He reminded the Board that the goal is to enforce the standards without having to go business-to-business and sign-by-sign. For example, it would be easy to administer a requirement that ADA access must be maintained at all times. The Board discussed that the ADA standard will soon be updated to require 48-inches of sidewalk space. Board Member Cloutier suggested that once the Board has a clear understanding of the current sidewalk widths in the downtown, it will be easier for them to make an informed decision. Board Member Monroe reminded the Board that there are other competing factors that must be considered, as well, such as street trees and other amenities in the public rights-of-way.

Board Member Monroe asked if the City would be held responsible if someone were to trip on a sign that is placed in the right-of-way. Mr. Chave said he does not have enough experience to say who would ultimately be responsible, but it would likely be both the City and the sign's owner. He reminded the Board that when the City issues a Street Use Permit, applicants must provide insurance verification and a Hold Harmless for the City, as well. He believes these same requirements would apply to Right-of-Way Permits. Board Member Monroe asked if the same would be required for signs, and Mr. Chave answered affirmatively. However, he acknowledged that there is no enforcement, and the requirement needs to be more clear. If signs are allowed in the rights-of-way, there needs to be some sort of insurance in the event that someone trips over them.

Student Representative Klevin asked how the City monitors how many days per year a sign is put out. He suggested that a website could be set up that would allow businesses to schedule beforehand the days they will be displaying their signs. The City's Code Enforcement Officer could then check to make sure that only those businesses that signed up for the day are displaying signs. Board Member Cloutier agreed a website would be one option for showing when temporary sign permits are effective and/or expire. However, the Board has agreed that A-frame signs in the downtown will no longer fit the definition of a temporary sign. While the City wants to allow businesses to advertise special events, business owners should not be allowed to violate the standards. He summarized that staff is encouraging the Board to move away from temporary signs and make A-frame type signs their own category of business signage in the public right-of-way. Vice Chair Rubenkönig suggested that "movable signage" would be a more accurate term.

Board Member Crank suggested the Board go back to Board Member Cloutier's earlier suggestion that they hone in on what they are trying to solve. They should also consider what they are trying to prevent. Business owners are trying to prevent a loss of potential business for not having the signs as a source of advertising or marketing. If the City is focusing on issues they are trying to solve such as clutter, proliferation of signage, pedestrian access, etc. they should also try to mitigate any potential issues for the business owners. Board Member Cloutier suggested that instead of thinking of it as "preventing," they should focus on enabling the businesses to put out signage to continue their business. We can't give them everything they want, but we don't want to take away everything, either.

Board Member Monroe asked if the Board supports the idea of allowing public signage in rights-of-way. Chair Lovell said the real problems seem to be fairly limited to the downtown bowl area, and it will be difficult for the City to regulate all temporary signs throughout the City (including real estate signs, political signs, etc.). If the Board agrees that temporary signs should be allowed in the pedestrian rights-of-way, there is not a lot more the City can do beyond requiring provisions for ADA accessibility and adequate clearance for pedestrians. He voiced concern about creating separate and different standards for each of the business districts in Edmonds. Board Member Monroe pointed out that downtown Edmonds is unique in that it is a pedestrian-friendly business area. Chair Lovell reminded the Board that one of the goals of the Comprehensive Plan is to make neighborhoods more walkable and safe. The intent is to create zoning and land use provisions that allow people to work, live and shop in their neighborhoods.

Vice Chair Rubenkönig said her perception was that the discussion was focused on downtown Edmonds because it is unique in its walkability. The idea was to address this part of town and then look at other areas at a later time. Mr. Chave agreed that is the assumption staff has been working on. If you look at the sign code, A-frame types of signage are not allowed elsewhere in the City. Downtown is unique because the sidewalks are right up against the buildings. In other commercial areas, there are large pieces of property with buildings set way back from the sidewalk. He said the City Attorney has agreed that the City can regulate signs in the rights-of-way differently depending on the type of environment. However, he agreed with Chair Lovell that, if the City really wants to change the character of another business district at some point in the future, they could take a second look at the sign standards. But they are not there yet. He suggested the Board work on coming up with sign code standards that are unique to downtown Edmonds and see if they work before applying them elsewhere in the City.

Chair Lovell noted that the chart that was included in the discussion draft implies that the same concepts they are considering for downtown signs would be applied elsewhere in the City. Mr. Chave said the chart needs more work and is not in keeping with the existing code. Chair Lovell voiced concern about having different sign code requirements for each commercial area in the City because it would make it more difficult to administer. He also voiced concern that, with the exception of the ADA requirements, many of the other requirements being suggested are subjective.

Mr. Chave summarized that, based on the Board's discussion, staff will bring back more information to the next meeting for their consideration. He also agreed to meet with the Development Services Director to discuss future plans for outreach. He reminded the Board that the current focus is on right-of-way signs in the downtown. Although real estate and campaign signs are also temporary in nature, adjusting the sign code that applies to them will require close scrutiny from the City Attorney at some point in the future. They are not included in the current discussion.

Board Member Robles recalled that a few months ago he provided a possible solution to the tree code based on a block chain, which is a new type of software. Such can also be developed for something like the sign code. He said he did not receive a

response on his suggestion for the tree code, and he questioned if it would be appropriate to specify a block chain solution for regulating signs. He explained that block chains are a new technology, and he could provide more information if the Commission is interested. It is basically a decentralized database, where multiple writers can write in. In the case of signs, the City could provide a map of where signs could be allowed, and then the community decides and trades with local currency and/or credit. Board Member Cloutier summarized that the signs still end up where you want them, but you aren't saying that all businesses have to use their spot. Someone else can use that spot. Board Member Robles said it is a self-regulating and self-enforcing approach that would allow the City to stay out of the business of regulating signs. Chair Lovell said he is not sure the City is ready to apply the concept. Board Member Cloutier summarized that with this type of program, it would be the City's responsibility to set the standards, and it would be up to the Edmonds Downtown Alliance to create and administer the database consistent with the standards.

Mr. Chave said the intent of the process is to adopt a new sign code. The draft language that has been provided to date was intended for information purposes. At their next meeting, staff will present draft language for the Board's consideration. A tentative public hearing is scheduled for May.

DEVELOPMENT SERVICES DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Chair Lovell briefly reviewed the written report, noting that two Board Members attended the recent public open house relative to the Highway 99 Subarea Plan. He also announced that Sound Transit's ST-3 draft program is available for public comment, and he urged Board Members to review the plan and provide appropriate comments.

Board Member Stewart reported that the City Council spent little time on the Critical Areas Ordinance at their April 12th meeting. The agenda was quite full, and the Council only got through one amendment having to do with the mapping of critical areas being made available to the public on the City's website. The mapping system allows citizens to apply layers to the GIS maps to identify such things as critical areas, steep slopes, streams, pipes, infrastructure, etc. The intent is for citizens to have the ability to access the information on their own, and then approach City staff with questions when necessary. She said it was emphasized that the maps are not 100% accurate, and the mapping system makes note of this in a disclaimer.

Mr. Chave provided more information about how the mapping system works. However, he cautioned that including critical areas in the mapping system can be misleading because they are not precise regulatory maps. Board Member Stewart shared examples of the information that can be accessed from the City of Seattle's website.

Vice Chair Rubenkonig said she receives regular communication from other jurisdictions in the area concerning the permitting activity that occurred throughout the month. This is helpful information, and she asked if it would be possible for the City of Edmonds to generate a report of this type, as well. Mr. Chave said the City's permit tracking system is available on line, but the City does not issue an email that summarizes the monthly permitting activity. Board Member Crank suggested that Vice Chair Rubenkonig provide examples to staff of reports that have been issued by other jurisdictions. Mr. Chave said the Building Division does a monthly report that summarizes the building permits that were issued, but it is not linked to a more extensive database. They do not currently have a method of doing a realistic report on all of the development activity in the City. Vice Chair Rubenkonig felt this would be a wonderful tool for the Board to have on hand.

REVIEW OF EXTENDED AGENDA

Chair Lovell reviewed that the agenda for the April 27th meeting will include a continued discussion on the sign code, as well as a review and discussion of land division concepts.

Chair Lovell asked staff to provide feedback from the City Council regarding the timeframe for rewriting the Development Code. Mr. Chave said the plan is to get as much of the update as possible finished in 2016. The sign code is a priority, as is the process section. The update of other elements will extend into 2017. He agreed to invite the Development Services Director to provide materials to update the Board on the overall schedule.

Chair Lovell questioned the timing of the Highway 99 Subarea Plan. Board Member Crank reported that she attended the public meeting, but the timeline was not provided. The meeting was presented as the first step in getting the public involved

in the process. Participants were divided into groups and invited to mark on paper maps and present collective feedback. Mr. Chave added that a summary of the public meeting is available on the project website. An on-line survey is also available on the project website. He said the next public meeting is scheduled for May 19th.

Vice Chair Rubenkönig said she also attended the public meeting for the Highway 99 Subarea Plan. She reported that the approach was for the participants to view Highway 99 in its entirety, but it was difficult for her group to agree on the landmarks that set aside the different sections of the highway. It was noted that there are already organizing principles in place for identifying different sections of Highway 99, but they were not utilized at the workshop. There appeared to be an assumption that residents traveled the highway in its entirety, which is not the case for many citizens.

PLANNING BOARD CHAIR COMMENTS

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

PLANNING BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Board Member Monroe reported on his attendance at the recent Citizens Economic Development Commission (CEDC) meeting where they handled a number of procedural items to get the group started. He said he plans to attend their April 14th meeting and report back to the Board.

Vice Chair Rubenkönig thanked Chair Lovell for his fine report to the City Council of the Planning Board's recent activities. The City Council Members had a variety of questions after the presentation.

Board Member Robles announced that he and his wife have become foster parents, which was a daunting process because the government regulations are horrific. He commented that children are incredibly resilient. He emphasized that when talking about public housing and affordable housing, it is important to consider what will happen in communities and families in the future. These are real issues for people, and allowing them to fall off the edge should not be an option. There are methods for mitigating the situations, and foster families should be included in the discussion.

Board Member Stewart reported that she participated on the committee that selected the consultant team for the Civic Park Project, and she anticipates that an announcement will be made soon. She has also been invited to participate on the advisory team, which is currently being formed to move the park plan forward. She will not likely be able to attend all of the meetings, and she would be glad to share the load with another Board Member. The meetings will be held during the day, with open houses in the evening.

ADJOURNMENT

The Board meeting was adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

APPROVED