SUMMARY OF THE MINUTES OF THE MARCH 9, 2000, MEETING

Sign Code Amendment
Senior Planner Eastin reintroduced this code amendment and highlighted those issues returned by the Council. He will bring this back for a public hearing at the March 23rd meeting.

Cultural & Historic Resources Element - Introduction
Planning Manager Hough gave an overview of this element, and solicited comments from the Commission.

Progress Report on Sector Study Process - Discussion
Senior Planner Lewis introduced a new map, and gave an overview of how he planned to proceed with the sector study. The Commission asked for copies of the maps.

A. CALL TO ORDER
The meeting was called to order at 7:33 P.M.

B. APPROVAL OF THE FEBRUARY 24, 2000, MEETING MINUTES
Commissioner Hudson reminded staff that the representatives of Community Transit had offered the Commission a report on transit in the City. He asked staff to follow up on this with CT. He asked if the proposed presentation for March 23 was going to fall through. Planning Manager Hough reported that he had been unable to get hold of the speaker for the evening, but would keep the Commission informed if any progress was made. He thought the program would likely be rescheduled for April. Chair Johnson asked that the time for the Commission's recess be corrected, and added one typographical correction. Motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes, as amended. Motion carried. Commissioner Ferguson recused herself from voting as she was absent at the last meeting.

C. CITIZEN COMMENTS
None.

D. PLANNING COMMISSION MEMBER DISCLOSURES
None.

E. DIRECTOR'S REPORT
Planning Manager Hough reported that Chair Hanson had recently bought a house outside the City limits, and was therefore unable to serve on the Planning Commission. Commissioner Hudson made a motion to hold an election at the March 23 meeting to fill the position of Chair, and any subsequent positions. Seconded by Commissioner Ferguson, the motion carried. A brief discussion about the By-laws indicated that the Commission could leave things as they are, without a First (or Second) Vice Chair, but the Commission felt that having all positions filled was best.
Commissioner Hudson asked staff to prepare a resolution recognizing Commissioner Hanson's service to the Commission.

Planning Manager Hough reported that there was no Council action on Commission recommendations. A special work session was held on March 1st to discuss Councilmember Gough's draft visions and goals for the City. Gough proposed that visions be adopted by the Council by April 1, which means they would have to take that action on March 27. The Council members were asked to write draft mission statements for discussion at the March 13 Council meeting, along with any modifications to the vision statements that were originally recommended by the Planning Commission. Staff would provide those statements to each Councilmember on a disk or by e-mail.

The Volunteer Recognition event is scheduled for Tuesday, April 18, at the Trident Union Building at the Edmonds Community College. Commissioner Hudson asked if spouses were invited, and staff agreed to look into this and report back.

Hough reported that the College District Plan had been reviewed by the Environmental Review Committee, and was waiting for some information from Public Works and fine-tuning of text and maps by the consultant. He hoped to bring the plan back to the Commission on April 27 for a work session, followed by a public hearing on May 11.

**G. WORK SESSION**

**ITEM G-1: SIGNS CODE AMENDMENTS**

Senior Planner Eastin refreshed the Commission's memory on the history of the signs code amendment. Originally proposed in May of 1996, the Commission held several work sessions and hearings in 1996 and 1997. The Commission made its recommendation on a package of amendments to the City Council in April of 1997. The Council held a series of work sessions, and took a final vote in October 1998, and the signs code amendment ordinance did not pass. Eastin reported that Council had recently identified four issues they wanted reviewed. These matters are now being referred to the Planning Commission, and they are:

- portable open house, directional real estate signs and political signs in public right of way
- commercial real estate signs
- maximum height of free-standing signs
- effective date of the sign code amendment ordinance

Commissioner Temples asked if the Council had provided any direction to the Commission about what the concern with each of the issues was. Eastin responded that he was not aware of any specific direction from the Council, just that they wanted the issues looked at. It was suggested that the Commission consider staff's recommendation on the issues presented and determine whether or not they agreed. Eastin gave a brief description of each of the issues and how the amendments came up during the review process. He added that the one contentious issue was the effective date of the ordinance. The draft ordinance will be effective 5 days from the date of passage. Staff asked for an additional 60 days to prepare a permitting process for the commercial real estate signs and inform businesses, the sign industry and public about the code amendments prior to the effective date of the ordinance. In addition, the Council wanted a sunset clause for signs in the public right-of-way, so the Council, Planning Commission and staff could revisit the ordinance amendments in one year, or sooner.

Commissioner Johnson asked if "For Sale by Owner" signs were governed by these amendments. Eastin responded that these private home sellers would be governed by the amendments, not just
commercial home sellers. Commissioner Hudson asked if a time limit was applied to how long a sign could remain posted once the property sold, and how that would be enforced. Eastin responded that the code amendment stated that the signs had to be removed once the property sold (or was leased, etc.). He added that the City's Code Enforcement Officer had participated in the original amendment process and felt that this was enforceable.

The proposed amendment on freestanding signs was drafted to allow taller (30 feet) freestanding signs within 500 feet of a freeway, but all other freestanding signs are limited to a maximum height of 20 feet. The current maximum allowable height for all freestanding signs is 30 feet. Chair Johnson asked if a business that was within 500 feet of a freeway, but also within 500 feet of a residential zone or on a City arterial, would be governed by the maximum sign height regulation applying to a City arterial (20 feet) or near a freeway (30 feet). Eastin replied that this was a good point, and the proposed amendment is not clear on which maximum height would apply. This would need to be addressed in the language of the amendment.

The fourth amendment proposed for review (the effective date of the ordinance) was recommended by staff in order to prepare for the new amendments. The goal of adding the additional 60 days to the effective date of the ordinance was to give staff time to draft a permitting process for commercial real estate signs and inform businesses and the public about the amendments.

Eastin then referred to the sunset clause and asked the Commissioners if they had any strong feelings about a one-year versus a date-certain sunset. Commissioner Hudson commented that he was uncomfortable putting a specific date in the code, and noted that there was language in the ordinance that allowed the Commission, Council or staff to review and revise the sunset issue at any time.

**ITEM G-2: INTRODUCTION TO CULTURAL & HISTORIC RESOURCES ELEMENT**
Planning Manager Hough reported that the Parks, Recreation and Open Space Element is proposed to be broken into three separate elements in the Comp Plan Update. These elements were: Cultural & Historic Resources; Environment Resources; and Parks & Recreation. He reviewed some of the highlights of this element, and invited questions and comments from the Commission. This element, he added, was not scheduled to come back before the Commission until May.

Chair Johnson asked if it wouldn't be better for the Planning Commission to receive recommendation on these elements from more appropriate Boards or Commission (like the Parks Board and the Arts Commission). Hough reported that these entities would have an opportunity to review all the elements and offer input, which would be incorporated into staff reports to the Commission.

**ITEM G-3: PROGRESS REPORT ON SECTOR STUDY PROCESS - DISCUSSION**
Senior Planner Lewis reported that some adjustments had been made to the City map to be used in the neighborhood sector study. He indicated where staff had drawn the neighborhood protection boundary, and where there were "opportunity areas" within which we might consider changes to the Comprehensive Plan and/or Zoning. In general, these were areas that were pockets or islands of one zone type surrounded by other zones, or areas that might be better served with a different land use or more appropriate zoning. There were not many areas up for reconsideration or change, he added.

Lewis introduced a new and improved mapping technique that will be used for each of the sector studies. The Commission asked to have those maps mailed in advance of the meeting so that they had something to review while reading the staff reports. Staff agreed to do this. Lewis asked if the Commission saw any other areas that they were concerned about or wanted to see set aside for future study. Commissioner Temples suggested that more historic data about the study areas would assist the Commission in determining whether an area was ripe for reconsideration.
Commissioner Powers commented that she was impressed at how organized the clusters of single family neighborhoods seemed. She felt the distinct lines around single family neighborhoods indicated that some care had been taken to preserve these neighborhoods. Lewis agreed, and offered that staff was also pleasantly surprised by this finding. Planning Manager Hough added that staff was trying to deal with Policy 2.14, adopted by the Council in 1999. This was the 60/40-split policy, which required that staff keep an eye on the conversion to multi-family in single-family neighborhoods. He hoped that doing this assessment of single-family neighborhoods would make it easier to understand and address Policy 2.14 as well as other reasonable alternatives that might be in the best interests of the City.

H. NEW BUSINESS
None.

I. OLD BUSINESS
Commissioner Hudson asked if the Commission was interested in having an executive session, without staff, to discuss how the Commission works and any concerns that they might have. Planning Manager Hough noted possible legal restrictions on the kinds of matters that can be taken to an executive session (personnel, litigation, etc.). Commissioner Temples asked if the Commission ever took an annual retreat, to which staff replied it could be done, but that it would have to be advertised as a public meeting. Staff agreed to investigate what restrictions might apply to the group meeting outside of the public meeting process.

J. INFORMATION ITEMS
ITEM J-1: UPCOMING PLANNING COMMISSION AGENDA
Planning Manager Hough reported that the March 23 meeting will include the "Let's Talk About Housing" public meeting and a Sign Code Public Hearing. The College District Plan has not yet cleared the Environmental Review Committee and will not be ready by April 13th. Instead, a Public Hearing on the Adult Business Code Amendment will be held. Commissioner Hudson asked what precipitated this code amendment. Hough reported that there had been concerns about adult business superstores. The City had a moratorium in place on new adult businesses until the code could be reviewed and adjusted as necessary. The next Comprehensive Plan open house and public meeting will be on the topic "Let's Talk About Parks, Recreation and the Environment". It will be co-hosted by the Planning Commission and Parks Board on April 27.

K. ADJOURNMENT
Commissioner Nelson moved for adjournment, seconded by Commissioner Hudson. Motion carried, and the meeting adjourned at 9:24 PM.

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Dave Johnson, Acting Chair