Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Vice Chair Braithwaite at 7:00 p.m.

Approval of Minutes

1. Approval of minutes of the March 12, 2015 Meeting

Motion made by Commissioner Hurst, seconded by Commissioner Wojack, to approve the minutes as presented. Motion passed unanimously (4-0).

Citizen Comments

None.

Public Hearing

None.

Work Session


Project/Tourism Manager Mary Monroe explained that this Plan is dramatically different from the 2004 Plan, primarily because of the amount of time that has passed. She stated that the Plan Update process was begun in 2013, and in 2014 the Mayor appointed citizens to an ad hoc Economic Development Advisory Group to provide guidance for this Plan. Commissioner Larsen reviewed his experience as a member of that group. Deputy Director Loch explained that this
The document would lead to the preparation of the Economic Development Element. Director Kleitsch reviewed the schedule for completion of this Update.

Ms. Monroe compared the original Plan to this draft Plan. The new Plan ties closely to the community vision and references the community vision in the strategies and goals. One of the biggest areas of difference is between the Strategic Themes in the new Plan and Guiding Themes in the 2004 Plan.

Commissioner Wojack asked if the 2009 community vision is going to be part of the Comprehensive Plan amendment process this year. Deputy Director Loch replied that the community vision is currently referenced within the Comprehensive Plan and is reiterated in the draft update, primarily in the Introduction Element so that it applies equally to all of the elements.

Ms. Monroe continued to explain that in the 2004 Plan one of the overarching themes is economic development as a new citywide priority. Economic development is no longer identified as an overarching theme because economic development has since been integrated into City services and plans. A positive business climate was a theme of the 2004 Plan, this Plan update moves more towards defining what “positive” is. In 2004, strategic partnerships were identified as being essential to the City’s success. While this remains important, successful partnerships are common now, so it is less necessary to identify it as an overarching theme.

The “value of measuring results” was important in 2004 because of the importance of figuring what metrics to track and how to track them. Now, there are processes in place where staff routinely tracks key metrics such as job growth, unemployment, revenues, lodging, etc. In 2004, the City Center was a guiding theme. Since then, City Center has advanced dramatically and no longer needs to be a theme. Instead the Economic Development Plan updates the emphasis on marketing, attracting development, etc. to achieve the City Center Plan.

The Plan’s new strategic themes are more relevant to what the City is currently facing and what is expected to come up in the next 5-8 years. These themes are: accommodating forecasted growth; harvesting the power of a diverse economy; focusing on housing and amenities that attract residents; identifying opportunities to grow mixed use centers; diversification of the economic base; the changing face of retail; and capitalizing on investments and infrastructure.

Ms. Monroe explained specific differences between the 2004 Plan and 2015 Plan Update:

- The new Plan still has a focus on business retention and attraction, but there is a stronger emphasis on family wage jobs than there was in 2004.
- There is more emphasis on reaching out and supporting businesses.
• Strengthening communication and Lynnwood’s positive business climate is now a goal where previously it was a strategy.
• Implementation activities have been added that address improving perceptions of permitting.
• There is a stronger emphasis on customer service and problem solving.
• New communication strategies now include social media, electronic newsletters, and business outreach components. There is more in the Plan about collaborating with property owners and real estate managers as a means of communicating what is needed.
• There is a goal for prioritizing high quality development.
• The Economic Development Infrastructure Fund is specifically called out where it did not exist before. It will be used as a means of attracting the kind of development desired in the City.
• The current Plan has a stronger emphasis on transit-oriented development than the previous Plan did.
• Open space and parks are called out as a tool for attracting high quality development.
• For image and identify, the City will be working on planned implementation instead of brand development.
• The *Shop, Eat, and Stay* program is a program to engage businesses and attract tourism.
• Livability and sense of place was previously a strategy. Now it is a goal.

Overall, the Plan is focused on developing programs, plans, and strategies. It is aimed at implementation improvements that have already been started.

Director Kleitsch commented that the items contained in this Plan are not solely to be done by the Economic Development Department; instead it is a citywide plan. It also looks at internal partnering of the departments to work together to achieve the various goals, objectives, and strategies.

Commissioner Larsen summarized that Lynnwood is somewhat focused on retail-level jobs, but has recognized the need to increase the number of family wage jobs. He commented on the number of light industrial uses in south Lynnwood and how this might relate to a potential strategy to increase family wage jobs. Ms. Monroe added that studying and figuring out a strategy for south Lynnwood was part of the 2004 Plan, but hasn’t yet been accomplished. Preparing such a strategy is included in the new Plan and will be an interesting challenge.

Ms. Monroe commented on the amount of multifamily housing that has come into the City. Current studies show that the people moving into urban multifamily properties are not necessarily lower income or aging. It has become a more attractive lifestyle for young adults without children, especially if the housing is near transit. She has not read any studies indicating whether this particular group is a greater or lesser user of police and fire services. Director Kleitsch added that
the City has made a policy commitment to prevent encroachment in single family
neighborhoods. At the same time under the Growth Management Act there is
pressure to take increasing population and employment projections. The City’s
solution is to have denser development along the Interstate 5, Highway 99, and
transit, and light rail.

Commissioner Hurst questioned if there was economic analysis for residential
projects that took advantage of the Multi-Family Housing Property Tax
exemption. Director Kleitsch reported that there had not been an analysis of
these projects, but Lynnwood Place indicated that housing generates economic
activity for the community. Commissioner Hurst stated that he was looking into
research that studied the economic benefits of multifamily housing.

Commissioner Wojack asked how much influence Snohomish County had on this
Plan. Director Kleitsch commented that the PSRC projections have more
influence on the Plan than the County. PSRC does the forecasting, and those are
the allocations that the City is provided. If the City does not take those allocations
there are sanctions. The projections used in this Plan were the PSRC
calculations.

Commissioner Wojack referred to the tax abatement and which taxes were
included. Director Kleitsch thought that all property taxes were included (city,
county, state), but indicated staff could confirm this. Commissioner Wojack
commented that he is familiar with the Target store in downtown Seattle and it is
doing extremely well because so many people have moved downtown in the past
15 years. He spoke in support of the City’s plans for Highway 99 so that people
don’t have to travel far to access transit service.

Vice Chair Braithwaite asked about the Business Improvement District which is
referenced on page 47 under item 1.4.4. Director Kleitsch explained the Business
Improvement District is enabled by state law. It would be for a specific
geographic area and is authorized by property owners within that area, who then
assess themselves a fee to increase service delivery. An example of this would
be in downtown Seattle where a Business Improvement District assessment pays
for litter cleanup, increased security, maintenance of public amenities, etc. A
Business Improvement District is enacted by a vote of the property owners.

Vice Chair Braithwaite referred to entertainment and cultural arts as a focus. He
commented he and his wife often go to events in Edmonds and often wish that
Lynnwood had similar opportunities. He spoke in support of trying to attract those
types of activities here. Ms. Monroe agreed, noting that the Economic
Development Advisory Group also stressed that goal. Staff hopes the further
development of the downtown core will result in a better venue for those sorts of
activities.
Referring to the discussion about focusing on family wage jobs, Vice Chair Braithwaite said he believes Lynnwood needs to play to its strengths. One of those strengths is that Lynnwood is a nexus for retail activities. Retail businesses tend to have lower wages than other industries, but he believes keeping that as a focus is still important. Ms. Monroe concurred. There is a section of the Plan that focuses on the fact that Lynnwood is a retail mecca and will remain that. She spoke to the importance of having a diversified economy and stated that the City expects employment to grow significantly over the next 15 years. Retail will always be a fundamental part of Lynnwood’s economy.

Vice Chair Braithwaite commented there are a lot of higher-wage jobs all around Lynnwood in Bellevue, Seattle, and Everett. Lynnwood is at a crossroads of all of those locations. From that perspective Lynnwood seems to be a good, central location for businesses. He asked how much analysis has been done on other communities to see how much office space inventory is available in those areas. Ms. Monroe stated one of the metrics tracked is office vacancy rates in communities in and around Lynnwood. When the vacancy rate goes down in Seattle it goes down in Lynnwood too. She agrees that the City needs to develop more office space, but right now vacancy rates are too high and lease rates are too low. It is anticipated that as Lynnwood grows and community amenities are improved, the vacancy rate will decrease. Lynnwood has more Class B and Class C space than Class A. The vacancy rate in the Class A buildings is about 20%. Director Kleitsch commented that the vacancy rate has come down since 2004. The City had very strong relationships with the property owners and the brokers of the Class A buildings before the recession. Staff is in the process of re-establishing those connections since many of those properties had turnovers in ownership. He commented that the vacancy rate of Class C buildings is very low (about 7%). The Plan calls for a recruitment strategy to get the vacancy rate of Class A buildings down as well. Ms. Monroe added that retail space vacancy rate is also very low.

Vice Chair Braithwaite asked what kind of consideration is being given to infrastructure projects related to improving the accessibility from the highways other than the Poplar overpass project which would add to the desirability of Lynnwood by businesses. Ms. Monroe stated there are quite a number of infrastructure projects in the City Center that would improve traffic flow inside of Lynnwood. With regard to getting to and from Lynnwood, there will be one or two light rail stations in Lynnwood as well as bus transit and other multi-modal forms of transportation. Director Kleitsch added that another project includes the completion of the couplet (ring road) from Alderwood Mall to the City Center. There is discussion about widening 196th. The 204th Street extension around the college will improve access to Highway 99. Construction on 36th Avenue will also help. He noted that the issue really is finding the money and being “shovel ready” for competitive grants. Vice Chair Braithwaite asked if it is feasible to address on/off ramps from I-5 to 44th. Director Kleitsch noted that those are in the I-5

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Corridor Improvement Project previously adopted by the City, but implementation will not occur until later years.

Commissioner Wojack agreed on the importance of theater activities. He has worked with two theaters in two different cities that both started in convention centers. He discussed how these progressed. Director Kleitsch commented the Plan talks about working in partnerships. One of those partnerships would be building a stronger relationship with Edmonds Community College and their cultural and theatrical arts programs.

Deputy Director Loch recalled a question at the last meeting about what would be done with the neighborhood map. Page 40 of the Plan Update (Better Neighborhoods) gives an idea about what would occur with a focus on neighborhoods.

Vice Chair Braithwaite asked about the possibility of designating south Lynnwood as a redevelopment zone in order to offer develop incentives and economic benefits. Deputy Director Loch replied that options to offer incentives in Washington State are limited, but agreed that looking at some of these for south Lynnwood could be appropriate. Ms. Monroe stated the Plan calls for investigating those opportunities. Vice Chair Braithwaite noted the City of Portland allows some parts of the development rights to be transferrable between properties. He encouraged the City to find creative ways to promote new investment.

Commissioner Hurst asked about a general forecast for retail at Alderwood Mall. Ms. Monroe replied that retail activity at the Mall continues to be strong. Retail properties are at the top of the list in terms of performance. Trends indicate that people will shop online, but there is still a large contingent that prefers to shop in physical stores.

Commissioner Wojack remarked that the Target in Lynnwood is the top performing Target store in Washington State. Director Kleitsch added that the Lynnwood Sears is also a top performer.

2. Comprehensive Plan: Draft Community Character Element

Parks & Recreation Department Deputy Director Sarah Olson referred to the theater conversation during the previous agenda item indicating that the Arts Commission is currently drafting a Cultural Arts Plan. Deputy Olson referenced that there are several policy statements included in the Element relating to planning for a regional arts theater and better partner with Edmonds Community College’s Black Box Theater. In the Capital Facilities Plan there is a planned Phase 2 project to the Recreation Center which is the Community Center portion of the project. The concept for that project includes a performing theater space.
which is attached to activity space including a commercial kitchen, rental
facilities, senior center, teen activity space, etc.

Regarding infrastructure questions, Deputy Olson stated that Parks is working
very closely with both Economic Development and Public Works on a number of
multimodal infrastructure projects including improvements to the Interurban Trail
and Scribe Creek Trail. This trail connects to the Interurban Trail at the
Lynnwood Transit Center, continues northwest to Wilcox Park and eventually will
be extended to Lund’s Gulch in northwest Lynnwood. When completed, this trail
will be an important corridor for pedestrians and cyclists. Additionally, Lynnwood
is involved in a 5-year BikeLink project which will connect or construct over ten
(10) miles of bicycle facilities in South Snohomish County. Four of those miles
are planned in Lynnwood. Construction will be complete by 2018.

Deputy Olson reiterated that the Economic Development Plan is a citywide plan
being conducted by all the departments working together. The Parks Department
understands that addressing deferred park maintenance is important to the
Economic Development Plan. Also related to the Economic Development Action
plan is the Art Commission’s inclusion of Neighborhood Identity as a strategy and
a goal in the new Cultural Arts Plan.

Discussion of the Draft Community Character Element:
The Healthy Communities Section is a new section to the Comprehensive Plan.
The Healthy Communities Program was initiated six years ago so it was not part
of the previous Comprehensive Plan. The program has two priority goals: 1)
improve access to physical activity; and, 2) improve access to healthy food.
Regarding access to healthy food, the Farmers Market was launched, and the
first city-managed community garden was created. Access to healthy foods is
also related to policy advocacy such as, menu labeling in restaurants, access to
food banks that are well-supported, and working with partners such as Edmonds
School Foundation and Nourishing Network Foundation that helps to feed nearly
400 homeless youth in the community. Improving access to physical activity is
largely infrastructure-based. Projects such as BikeLink, trails, connecting with
City Center, and larger Public Works and Economic Development infrastructure
projects support this goal.

Deputy Olson then reviewed plans for the future. This fall the City will be
launching an initiative to create a citywide, 10-year Healthy Communities
Strategic Plan. Once completed, staff will recommend future revision to the
Community Character Element. The additional goals sections are around Historic
Preservation, Arts & Culture, and Sustainability which were previously
standalone elements. The Arts section went through a modest update, but staff
hope to come back to do a more thorough update next year after the Cultural
Arts Plan has been completed.
Historic Preservation is split between Parks and Community Development. Parks operates Heritage Park which houses a number of non-profit partners, artifacts, and a restored Interurban trolley car. Parks also works in partnership with the Historical Commission to work on the broader historic preservation of the City. Senior Planner Gloria Rivera reviewed the goals and policies in the Historic Preservation section on pages 33-35.

Questions and Comments:

Commissioner Larsen asked if there is currently a docent program at Heritage Park. Deputy Olson replied there is a modest docent program that strives to have docent present when the Visitor Information Center is open.

Commissioner Larsen noted the significant cultural diversity within the community and suggested Parks could offer programs with those population groups to help forge new cultural connections. He also suggested that those who come to Lynnwood from other parts of the world might be interested in sharing their own cultural heritage.

Vice Chair Braithwaite observed that, as an example, there is a large and growing Korean community in Lynnwood, but there aren’t any cultural resources that embrace and engage that community segment.

Deputy Olson commented that there are nearly 10,000 weekly visitors at the Recreation Center and it serves a very diverse population. She stated from a general recreation perspective, Parks provides opportunities for the full community to participate. In the upcoming survey for the Park, Arts, Recreation, and Conservation Plan, the City is seeking input on a number of amenities which might appeal to diverse audiences. Regarding culture, Parks works collaboratively with the Diversity Commission in terms of community offerings and events. Last year the Diversity Commission and Parks held a community celebration called Celebrate. 90% of the entertainment and activities that were offered were ethnic music, dance, art, and activities. On Monday, there will be a youth summit to identify areas or gaps specifically around youth programming. Deputy Olson thinks the multicultural component will be lifted out of that. In April, the City is planning an event specifically for the Korean community in an effort to build better connections with that community.

Commissioner Wojack referred to Goal 17 on page 32 and asked if this was the correct title. He thought it should be “Social Networking Development” instead of “Social Human Development.”

Vice Chair Braithwaite referred to the performing arts theater in Kirkland which is integrated into the retail community and commented that a facility located near the Recreation Center will not create that kind of connected, community feeling.
He then asked if the library is still considering expanding and locating their main facility in Lynnwood.

Deputy Director Loch thought the library was still interested, but there are no plans at this time. He noted it would require an affirmative vote of the residents of the Sno-Isle Library District.

Vice Chair Braithwaite commented that a library is a great nexus of art, culture, and community activities. He suggested making it a goal to encourage the library to expand their facilities in Lynnwood.

Deputy Olson pointed out that Subgoal HR-6, Policy CC-19.5 on page 37 refers to advocating and participating in the planning and design of a possible regional performing arts center. This performing arts center would be a separate entertainment venue in City Center and not connected with the recreation center or with Edmonds Community College. She added that the City of Edmonds subsidizes the operation of its performing arts center. The City hopes that urbanization within City Center will bring a lot of people, dining, and entertainment establishments. Lynnwood has the potential to offer a central location that is more accessible for the region.

Deputy Olson then referred to the first policy statement under Subgoal HR-8 on page 38 which references partnership and collaboration with the community college and the library. The City has an ongoing relationship with the library. The Arts Commission features and sponsors the library art gallery sees the library as an excellent partner in arts in general. The Sno-Isle Library System offers a wealth of programming that is also arts related.

Commissioner Hurst referred to page 40, Policy CC-22.6 regarding light pollution and suggested rewording of this. He noted that the goal is not necessarily to turn lights off at night time, but just to have them go off when not needed. Commissioner Wojack referred to CC-22.4, also under the Light Pollution section, and suggested that this should be required, not just promoted.

Vice Chair Braithwaite asked who controls the streetlights in the City. Deputy Director Loch stated that some are owned by PUD and some are owned by the City. Vice Chair Braithwaite asked about including engaging with the PUD to retrofit the streetlights to LED lights and also proceeding with this for City-owned lights as a goal in Light Pollution. The energy cost savings makes it worthwhile, but the light pollution reduction is another important benefit. There was general consensus among the commissioners to integrate this suggestion.

Commissioner Larsen had the following comments:
- He referred to importance of the yellow “flags” or highlighting throughout the Comprehensive Plan. On page under Community Character there is...
an opportunity to highlight what this chapter is about where it says, “The
goal of this element is . . .”

- On Goal 3: Neighborhoods on page 19, he noted that code enforcement is
  a term that is a sensitive issue to a lot of people in Lynnwood so code
  compliance is sometimes used as a softer term. He is not familiar with
  code administration and thought the meaning might be lost on the readers.
  Either code enforcement or code compliance might be better here.

- On page 20, Policy CC-3.9, limit is a soft word that makes him
  uncomfortable. He recommended substituting the word discourage.

- On page 22, Signage and Wayfinding, the second sentence down, the
  recommended substituting the word travelers for community to respect the
  multimodal goals that the City has.

- On page 23, he asked why greenhouse gas was removed since this is
  such an important term. Deputy Director Loch explained that it was just a
  matter of using the abbreviation GHG which is identified in the preceding
  paragraph.

- It might be possible to combine Goal 10: Sustainable Community on page
  27 and Goal 11: Sustainable Built Environment on page 28.

- In Healthy Communities on page 31, he recommended putting the last
  sentence at the beginning of the section.

- In the first sentence of the Historic Preservation section page 33 he
  recommended inserting “and truck farms” after logging. Deputy Olson
  noted that the common terminology used at Heritage Park is stump farms.
  She wondered if that was the same as truck farms. Commissioner Larsen
  stated that stump farms were what were left after the land was logged.
  After the stumps were removed, and the land was used for agriculture, the
  products were shipped by truck to Seattle so those farms were called truck
  farms.

- On page 35, Subgoal HR-3, Policy 18.17, he wondered if City Steward is
  still a relevant term. Deputy Olson replied it should be Park Stewards
  which is the name of the current program.

- He asked if there is a Diversity Action Plan. Deputy Olson explained that it
  has not been started. The Diversity Commission has worked on their
  mission and purpose, but has not created a specific plan. Commissioner
  Larsen spoke in support of continuing to pursue creating a Diversity Action
  Plan as a goal.

- On page 41, regarding Noise Pollution, he asked about moving the last
  sentence of the narrative down below to become Policy 23.1.1. He
  commented that requiring noise attenuating walls and windows sounds
  like a really good idea.

Vice Chair Braithwaite thanked Commissioner Larsen for his comments and
edits, particularly the comments about code enforcement and the sentence on
Healthy Communities. There was consensus among the Planning Commission to
integrate those suggestions.
Commissioner Hurst asked why code administration was used. Deputy Director Loch explained that code administration covers everything that staff does regarding rules including writing, application, inspection, and enforcement.

Deputy Director Loch stated that the recommendations would be integrated. Staff will also continue, as time allows, to make edits for clarity and readability. Any substantive amendments from here forward will be shown as strikeout or underlined changes. He stated that all the draft Elements will be on the website with some background documents so that anyone may review them. A public hearing has been scheduled for April 23. This will be one of multiple opportunities for citizen engagement on the Comprehensive Plan. He thanked the Planning Commission for their hard work.

3. Zoning Code: Omnibus correction ordinance

Deputy Director Loch explained these are all housekeeping-type corrections that staff has come across in code administration which have been put together into one ordinance as a labor-saving effort. Staff will be advertising a public hearing sometime soon for these amendments as part of the regular legislative process.

Commissioner Larsen asked if the City has a formal process for dealing with scrivener errors. Deputy Director Loch replied that text changes to the municipal code must be approved by the City Council by ordinance. Commissioner Larsen suggested the addition of limited authority of staff to correct scrivener errors.

Other Business

Council Liaison Report

Councilmember AuBuchon had the following comments:

- He agreed with Commissioner Larsen that Lynnwood remains as a nexus within the region because of its geographical location. It also puts Lynnwood in a very good location for the high-tech industry. Lynnwood is right in the middle between the largest airplane manufacturer and the largest software publisher. It is the bedroom community that feeds Seattle many of its workers including many of its Amazon employees. He noted Amazon is now 25% of the employment of the City of Seattle.
- He announced that the Council will be considering an Ordinance next month that will finally establish an IT Department for the City of Lynnwood with its own IT Director and budget.
- Regarding the streetlights, the PUD has been installing LED lights as lights need replacing. The lights dim down when nobody is around and illuminate up when a car comes down the street. The new lights are very bright and very directional.
- He commended the Planning Commission for their hard work on the Comprehensive Plan.
• He stated he received notification that the Planning Commission’s Annual Report is complete and will be transmitted to the Council, but will not be presented by the Director. Deputy Director Loch stated that the Planning Commission’s Annual Report and the Hearing Examiner’s Annual Report will be on the Council’s agenda as an FYI item. If the Council wishes to discuss either report, they would have the prerogative to ask for that. Councilmember AuBuchon noted that this is the second year since 2007 that there hasn’t been a specific discussion about the Planning Commission Annual Report.

**Director’s Report**

Deputy Director Loch invited the Planning Commission to the Volunteer Dinner on April 8, 2015. On May 19, 2015, there will be a joint meeting of all of the advisory boards. He encouraged the Planning Commission to attend if possible to learn about some of the initiatives that are being undertaken Citywide.

**Commissioners’ Comments**

Commissioner Hurst asked if the Planning Commission would conduct a business meeting on May 19, 2015. Deputy Director Loch replied that he did not think the Planning Commission would have a need to. If the Planning Commission would like to convene a meeting that evening, it would be from 8 to 9. There is time reserved at the end of the meeting so that if commissions and boards want to break out and have a meeting they will be able to do so. If the Commission wishes to have a breakout meeting, staff would need to have a list of topics on the agenda in order to notice the meeting properly.

Commissioner Larsen asked about the agenda. Deputy Director Loch replied that an emphasis will be on economic development initiatives that are cross-departmental and cross-discipline. Vice Chair Braithwaite stated the consensus of the Planning Commission seemed to be not to have a separate meeting that evening.

**Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 9:01 p.m.

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Richard Wright, Chair