

EDMONDS CITY COUNCIL APPROVED MINUTES

March 12, 2002

The City Council Community Services/Development Services Committee meeting began at 6:00 p.m.; the City Council Finance and Public Safety Committee meetings began at 7:00 p.m.

ELECTED OFFICIALS PRESENT

Gary Haakenson, Mayor
Dave Earling, Council President
Dave Orvis, Councilmember
Jeff Wilson, Councilmember
Michael Plunkett, Councilmember
Lora Petso, Councilmember
Richard Marin, Councilmember
Deanna Dawson, Councilmember

STAFF PRESENT

Stephen Clifton, Community Services Director
Peggy Hetzler, Administrative Services
Director
Arvilla Ohlde, Parks & Recreation Director
Jim Larson, Assistant Admin. Serv. Director
Sandy Chase, City Clerk

At 7:30 p.m., Mayor Haakenson announced that the City Council would recess the committee meetings and meet as a whole in Executive Session to discuss a real estate matter. It was anticipated that the Executive Session would last 30 minutes. Mayor Haakenson stated the Council may or may not reconvene as a whole Council following the Executive Session.

At 8:00 p.m., Mayor Haakenson reconvened the whole City Council in open public session. He stated at the conclusion of the Executive Session, the City Council indicated the desire to make comments in public session regarding the matter discussed in Executive Session. The Mayor reported the matter involves an offer that was presented to him by a potential purchaser of the Puget Sound Christian College (PSCC). The City has the Right of First Refusal with regard to the purchase of that property.

Councilmember Marin stated based on the fact that the price that has been offered for the property is "out of our league" at the moment, and the fact that the City has empowered a Public Facilities District (PFD) to try to put something together, he felt it was appropriate that the City pass on the Right of First Refusal at this time to allow the PFD to move ahead.

Council President Earling concurred with Councilmember Marin. Because of the purchase price, the City should decline the ability to claim the Right of First Refusal. He commented it is important that the PFD do the work they were created to do, which is to put together a financial package that would make a performing arts or conference center available to the community. Councilmember Earling also stated he wanted to put on the record that he felt strongly the City of Edmonds should still be a partner in trying to put together an agreement that would allow the Edmonds PFD, the Snohomish County PFD, the potential purchaser of the property, and the City of Edmonds to make the project succeed.

Mayor Haakenson noted for the record that the potential purchaser of the property is more than willing to work with the PFD to accomplish their stated goal of trying to create a performing arts center where the auditorium and gymnasium are located at the PSCC. They are willing to be a partner with the PFD. To try to accomplish that end, they intend to be a very good neighbor on the project.

Councilmember Orvis indicated his support for not exercising the Right of First Refusal. The cost is simply not something that the City can manage. He supports the PFD efforts in trying to acquire that building. It is a direction that makes sense and shows a lot of courage as there is a lot of pressure to do other things. He supports the efforts of the PFD in trying to acquire that building.

Councilmember Wilson stated that given the purchase price and the fact that the City is not in a position to be able to compete at this point, the City should allow its Right of First Refusal to go away. Although, he pointed out there may be other opportunities that may come up in the future (such as working with the PFD or with the purchaser should some other arrangements come together) to allow the City to look at preserving the facility for public use. At this point, he believes the City needs to step away from its Right of First Refusal.

Councilmember Dawson stated she believes the City should be in a position to attempt to do what it can to save the old high school building and the auditorium in particular. Unfortunately, the purchase price is not something that the City can match at this point in time. She indicated this is not taking a position on the PFD or the merits thereof, or what will happen if this matter is put to a public vote. She commented at this point that there is no way the City can match the offer that was made.

At 8:05 p.m., Mayor Haakenson adjourned the meeting of all City Council members to return to the Council Committee meetings.