

CITY OF BURNABY
EDMONDS AREA ADVISORY COMMITTEE

TO: HIS WORSHIP THE MAYOR & COUNCILLORS 1996 January 16
FROM: EDMONDS AREA ADVISORY COMMITTEE
SUBJECT: WORKINGS OF EDMONDS AREA ADVISORY COMMITTEE
PURPOSE: To summarize the Edmonds Area Advisory Committee's review of its workings and provide suggestions for improvements.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. **THAT** this report be received for information.

R E P O R T

1.0 BACKGROUND:

In March of 1995, Council provided the Edmonds Area Advisory Committee with a new mandate and terms of reference to pursue the implementation phase of the Edmonds Town Centre Plan. The objective was to ensure that the recommendations previously developed by the Committee and adopted by Council would become a reality.

As part of their revised task, the Committee identified priority recommendations vital to the implementation of Edmonds Town Centre Plan, with special emphasis on the following areas:

1. Protection and dedication of extensive park areas related to Byrne Creek, Taylor Park and 12th Avenue Ravine Park.
2. Enhancing community identity, notably through a successful banner program.
3. Pursuing street improvements to promote a pedestrian and bicycle friendly environment.
4. Enhancing youth involvement and services.

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Specific implementation recommendations were made in a report to Council and were adopted by Council on 1995 September 18, to form the basis of an immediate annual implementation strategy.

A final requirement of the Committee's new mandate was to prepare a status report on the workings of the Committee, including any suggestions for improvements in the terms of reference and mandate that could be incorporated in the future work of this and other similar committees in the City. To this end, the Committee examined the initiation of the process, committee composition, and the preparation and implementation of the Edmonds Town Centre Plan.

While the Edmonds Area Advisory Committee has been very pleased with its overall operation, a few areas of concern were identified during this review. These are described below with the Committee's suggestions on how they may be addressed.

2.0 SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

2.1 Strive for full community involvement in committee composition.

The Edmonds Area Advisory Committee consists of a fairly broad mix of people. Some members, however, were unaware of the details of the selection process. It was suggested that it might be desirable to include interviews as part of the selection process.

Under-representation from the business community, visible minorities and the physically-challenged was notable. The Committee recognizes that many attempts were made to solicit participation from local businesses. Although this lack of full community participation may have hindered the planning process, the Committee does not feel it negatively affected the quality of the plan in the end. Still, further work is needed to ensure these groups recognize that their input is important at an early stage. In the opinion of the Committee, the establishment of a Merchant's Association in the Edmonds Town Centre would be desirable to further this goal.

2.2 Explore methods to replace members as necessary and maintain enthusiasm.

Initially, some members felt that a committee of 16 people might be unwieldy. Instead, this size offered a variety of perspectives and good group dynamics. Over time, some members resigned while others waned in their participation. Although some members were immediately replaced, others were not. Consistency is essential in determining when replacement is necessary and how it is carried out.

The Committee discussed the possibility of creating a roster of alternate members who could step in as needed. While it may be time consuming to keep such alternates informed, they may assist in ensuring workload is evenly distributed when the number of committee members declines. By regularly publicizing the committee's ongoing work, interested community members can be kept up to date. Identifying an optimal group size for a committee at this stage should also be further discussed.

Another possible way to maintain the enthusiasm of dedicated committee members may be to restrict the number of meetings to one per month, or as workload requires.

2.3 Provide training in committee procedures and background on existing Burnaby committees.

The Edmonds Area Advisory Committee feels that more extensive training in general committee procedures would have assisted those members with less experience in such matters. Likewise, it would have been very important to have background information on existing Burnaby committees.

2.4 Clarify expectations and limitations at the beginning.

Although the Committee felt well informed and clear of its mandate from the onset, some members were surprised to realize that meetings would be so frequent, the workload so immense, and that sub-committees would become such a necessary component of their work. Recognizing the opportunity before them, Committee members rose to the challenge and were extremely pleased with their participation in the planning of their community.

While there is a balance to be struck between letting members find their own way and directing the process, additional preliminary discussion of expectations and limitations would have been beneficial. Likewise, the demands made of staff resources need to be monitored and kept reasonable.

2.5 Ensure sub-committees have appropriate levels of support.

As mentioned above, the formation of sub-committees was integral to the development of the Edmonds Town Centre Plan. Sub-committees produced a large quantity of valuable work. Due to the unavailability of recording secretary services, however, some important information may have been lost.

2.6 Allow for appropriate notification of meeting dates and timely receipt of agendas.

To ensure Committee members have sufficient time to prepare for meetings, it is essential that they receive agendas and notification of meeting dates as early as possible.

3.0 CONCLUSION:

Notwithstanding the above suggestions, the Edmonds Area Advisory Committee is very satisfied with the process it has been involved in and the work it has completed to date. The initial workshops were well-advertised and scheduled appropriately over two nights so as to encourage maximum community involvement. The Committee's mandate was clear and well-crafted but flexible enough to allow exploration into relevant areas. The Committee was provided with good support from City staff who guided, but did not lead the process. The quality of materials produced, particularly the unique brochure for the draft plan, was excellent and well received in the community.

Council's unanimous support of the draft plan developed by the Committee affirmed Burnaby's commitment to citizen involvement in community planning. Overall, members of the Edmonds Area Advisory Committee have enjoyed working with each other and are proud of the Committee's participation in realizing the goals of the Edmonds community. The Committee now looks forward to the ongoing implementation of the Edmonds Town Centre Plan.

Councillor Dan Johnston, Chair
Edmonds Area Advisory Committee

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cc: City Manager
Director Planning and Building