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With community and council support, Seaview Park is now Edmonds' first inclusive playground

BY MAKENNA DREHER
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When Edmonds resident Julie Kuehn realized that it was getting more difficult to take her son to the park – Jacob, 4, who has cerebral palsy – she decided to reach out to a councilmember seeking public feedback for Edmonds parks on social media.

"I had been lamenting that we couldn't come to the park anymore because Jacob is so much bigger, and it's hard for me to physically get him to each piece of equipment," Kuehn said. "So I was pretty bummed."

She decided to reach out to Councilmember Mike Nelson about her family's experience, and he just ran with it, she said.

"I got all kinds of feedback that our parks aren't accessible as they should be," Nelson said.

But when he heard about Kuehn's experiences taking her children to parks, and how Edmonds parks were no longer accessible for her son, he had an emotional reaction.

The two met and started exchanging ideas and sharing what different communities were doing to make parks more accessible for everyone.

Nelson then put forward a budget amendment to make Seaview Park Edmonds' first inclusive playground.

"It was a perfect opportunity, since we were already upgrading Seaview Park," said Nelson.

Kuehn said one of the most interesting parts of the process was taking Jacob to a city council meeting. Although it was difficult because it was late and hard to have him there, she said it was worth it.

"The impact that seeing him made on the council and the parks department and to see that this would be valuable to the community was really awesome," she said.

Nelson said the park is for all children.

"It's not just so much that Ja-

An Edmonds park fit for everyone



Beacon photos by Makenna Dreher

Haylie Kuehn hugs her brother, Jacob, and mom Julie Kuehn at Edmonds' first inclusive playground at Seaview Park.

cob can play, but that everybody can play with Jacob," he said. "Kids need to understand at an early age that they can all be friends together, and that they don't have to be separated."

Every part of the park has a purpose, and community feedback was instrumental in the Parks Department's planning process, Nelson explained. For instance, there are areas in the park where children with sensory overload can take a break.

And Seaview Park now has an ADA-accessible fall surface, adaptive swing, disc swing, toddler



Among those at the dedication for the inclusive playground were Mayor Dave Earling (clapping) and Councilmember Mike Nelson (right).

see SEAVIEW PARK page 11 ▶

Candidates for school board: Why they want your vote

One incumbent, eight newcomers are in Tuesday's primary

BY BRIAN SOERGEL
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One incumbent and eight newcomers are vying for two open spots on the Edmonds School District board of directors.

Four newcomers – Rina Redrup, Lisa Hunnewell, Nancy Katims and D.P. "Casey" Auve III – are seeking a seat in District 5 vacated by board president Diana White, who resigned to run for Edmonds City Council.

In District 3, Jennifer Cail, Rory Graves, Boe Lindgren and Mary Schultz are aiming to unseat four-term incumbent Gary Noble.

The top-two finishers in the Aug. 6 primary will face off in the general election Nov. 5.

The winners get a four-year term.

In District 1, both incumbent Carin Chase and challenger Alvin Rutledge move on to the general election. District 1 includes Edmonds Heights K-12, Scriber Lake High School, Madrona K-8, and Sherwood and Westgate elementaries.

While candidates must live in the area they want to represent, the race will appear on ballots throughout the district.

The Beacon asked candidates to tell readers, in 100 words or less, why they want to win a seat on the district board of directors.

Mary Schultz deferred to comments in the primary voters' pamphlet. Boe Lindgren did not respond to emails and phone calls.

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Village at Westgate is first with multifamily tax exemption

Amenities: Dog-washing station, ping-pong tables, rentable A/C

BY BRIAN SOERGEL
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The Village at Westgate, a four-story apartment complex at Edmonds Way and 100th Avenue West, has opened as the first in Edmonds to include the multifamily tax exemption program, which means 20 percent of the units are reserved for families or individuals earning 80 to 115 percent of the area's median income.

The apartment has 19 MFTE units, according to a spokesperson on Wednesday. Eleven are leased; eight studios are

still available.

The City of Edmonds' tax exemption program hopes to encourage developers to provide housing in residential targeted areas. It allows the Village at Westgate's owner, Henbart (an affiliate of Bartell Drugs, owned by the Bartell family), a property tax exemption for the residential portion of the building for up to 12 years as long as designated units remain affordable.

Current availability prices range from \$1,330 (with the exemption) for 420 square feet to \$2,250 for a one bedroom,

one bath, with 675 square feet (no exemption). Numbers may vary according to eligibility.

The tax-exemption program is available in the Westgate mixed-use and Highway 99 areas, the latter part of the City's plan to transform a 2.2-mile stretch of the road.

The City has had plans for Westgate for some time.

In 2010, the City began working with students from the University of Washington undergraduate Community Environment and Planning

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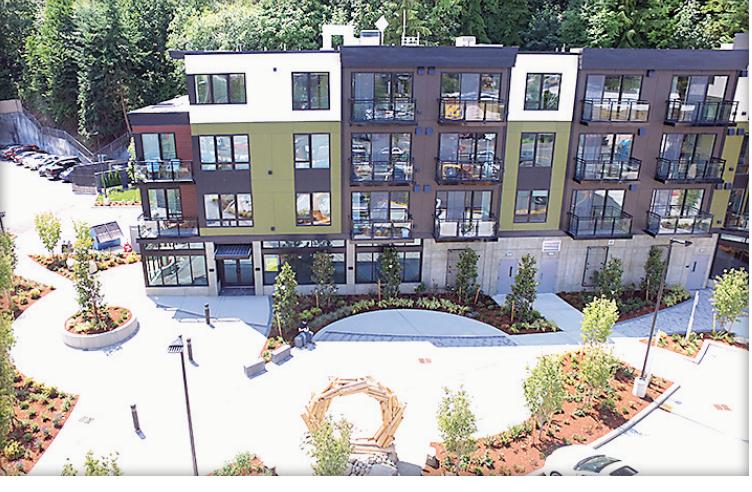


Photo courtesy of The Village at Westgate

The Village at Westgate has 91 apartments in Edmonds.