

Check It Out! Podcast Transcript
Episode #51
“The music of community service with Dave Earling”
Sno-Isle Libraries, Dec. 20, 2019



Jim Hills:	00:00:00	In this episode, we speak with Dave Earling, Mayor of Edmonds and learn more about the Mayor's community service. What the heck is the growth management hearings board and just how long does it take for a trumpet player to regain his lip. We'll be back in a minute with Dave Earling, Mayor of Edmonds.
Speaker 2:	00:00:29	Welcome to season two and episode 51 of Check It Out!, the Sno-Isle Libraries podcast for lifelong learners with inquiring minds.
Speaker 3:	00:00:36	The views and opinions expressed on this podcast may not necessarily reflect the official position of Sno-Isle Libraries.
Jim Hills:	00:00:45	I'm Jim Hills and I'm joined by...
Susan Hempstead:	00:00:47	Hi, I'm Susan Hempstead.
Jim Hills:	00:00:48	And today day we have a really interesting opportunity that I'm excited about to speak with the Mayor of Edmonds, Dave Earling. Welcome Mayor Earling.
Dave Earling:	00:00:57	Thank you very much. It's I'm sure going to be a joy to be here.
Susan Hempstead:	00:01:01	Thorough joy. Thorough joy.
Jim Hills:	00:01:03	I'm excited. So as we get started, I wanted to touch on a few items that I noticed in your bio without getting too extensive because I want to ask you about all these things, but while you are likely to be known by many of our listeners as the Mayor of Edmonds, a position that you've had for eight years?
Dave Earling:	00:01:19	Yes.
Jim Hills:	00:01:21	You've had other roles including music teacher, realtor, city council member, board member of a bazillion things and husband and father.

(Continued)

Susan Hempstead: 00:01:33 And grandfather.

Jim Hills: 00:01:34 And grandfather. Are there things that I haven't touched on that are right in there?

Dave Earling: 00:01:39 I don't remember.

Jim Hills: 00:01:44 And it does occur to me that as I listed off those things that there is a thread that can be woven through there. There's something, maybe a word maybe called community that might run through all of that. And I'm wondering how you view some of the choices that you've made in how you invest your energy and time in what you do.

Dave Earling: 00:02:11 That's a really interesting question. And I jokingly say I have a checkered past and you just summarized quite a bit of it and it's because I fundamentally believe if you're truly interested in something and if you do good work, you'll be successful. And that's been sort of without really analyzing it previously. That's sort of the way I've worked. My first position was coming out of graduate school at Shoreline Community College. I was a 23 year old music professor and I taught there for 11 years and one of the things I became terribly interested in besides working with students was preparing people for performance.

Dave Earling: 00:03:07 It's always fascinating as a conductor and that's really one of the roles I played to start with a group of people at the very beginning, put out a sheet of music they've never seen before and for the next seven or eight weeks you rehearse that and other music until you have a performance and it's really exhilarating to see people who have gone through that process to share the pleasure of the performance and realize the accomplishments that they've made in that period of time. I did that for 11 years at shoreline and my first music group there was I think around 32 or 34 performers and by the time I left we had over 200 in the music instrumental music program. I've grown to really appreciate the phrase and one that I try to match up to is always leave it better than when you arrived and I knew I was doing that with Shoreline when I left and then of course I moved through another set of circumstances. I had been accepted...

Susan Hempstead: 00:04:28 And before you get onto those, I'm sorry. I love your connection to music and I was hoping you might share with everyone your personal passion for the trumpet and for playing the trumpet and service and connecting with students and people in your community is a key part of who you are and you've played at the veteran's day ceremonies in Edmonds with your trumpet

and I was wondering if you'd just share a little bit about what the trumpet has meant to you even before you get to Shoreline Community College.

- Dave Earling: 00:05:00 Well, the first thing that the trumpet brought to me was disappointment and frustration.
- Susan Hempstead: 00:05:05 Do you mean some chap stick too?
- Dave Earling: 00:05:08 When I started back, actually at that the end of the fifth grade, I was not a good trumpet player. I'll be kind to myself. I was in the Spokane all city third band, which was beginners and I started out in the magnificent position of 53rd chair out of 55 chairs but with the work that my parents provided for me in allowing me to take lessons and buy a new trumpet, we had tremendous progress. And by the time I left the instrumental music program at grade school, I think I was third or fourth chairs. So it was really a metamorphosis for me.
- Susan Hempstead: 00:05:56 And I think that's one of those great examples of what it means to be an individual player and what you sound like as a trumpeter playing on your own. And then as a member of an ensemble and how that is such a larger than life experience on what does it mean to be part of a community and an individual. It's a great metaphor for other things. You've got on to do.
- Dave Earling: 00:06:19 Well, thank you. And that's a great thought and one that you always experience if you're at any level in music. You've got to learn your music, but then when you learn it individually, you're going to have to walk in a room with a bunch of big other people and then make it come together. And that's as I was talking about the experience with Shoreline Community College to see the thrill of the performers after they complete a concert and take personal pride and realize the accomplishment that they've done.
- Jim Hills: 00:06:54 So are you still playing on Veteran's day?
- Dave Earling: 00:06:56 No, I had a hard choice when I became mayor. They always have the mayor speak and I, excuse me, I'll be damned if I'm going to stand at one end and give a speech and then run down to the other end of the cemetery and play taps. So I've been not in that role for the last eight years.
- Jim Hills: 00:07:21 You have to keep your lip.

Dave Earling: 00:07:23 Well, no, actually I don't have the time to keep it in shape. It takes about three weeks to actually get the sound back. And that's a word that's hard for people to understand, but you know what you sound like when you're really good and it's abrasive. Getting those through those three weeks to get to the sound that you anticipate is needed.

Jim Hills: 00:07:53 I'm interested when you talked about leaving the place better than you found it. So I also had some time working at Shoreline Community College and after you had left and the music department there is phenomenal and continues to grow and part of that is built on your legacy there about leaving it a better place, about bringing a sense of that music program is a place to go and grow. Do you go back periodically and still have friends there.

Dave Earling: 00:08:30 I've been back a few times. A couple of times, invited back to conduct which is always a thrill and kind of revisits the joy that you got from that sort of thing. I've been back for a couple of conferences on campus. In fact, I was there for some sort of a meeting with, I think Sound Transit not too long ago and I was stunned to find a multi-story building being built on campus. And of course that was verboten when I was around.

Susan Hempstead: 00:09:07 Now there's a crane watch. How many cranes are up on campus?

Jim Hills: 00:09:13 The music building kind of looks the same but they did build some housing I think for students. Yeah. But the music building look had to look pretty familiar.

Dave Earling: 00:09:21 Well sort of, sort of. Kind of actually because they had changed some of the interior spaces to be different. But the instrumental rehearsal room was basically the same.

Jim Hills: 00:09:34 Yep. Felt like coming home. So music and then I have on my list realtor. Did that come next?

Dave Earling: 00:09:43 Well it came from, I've actually had applied and been accepted into the doctoral program at the UW. Even though I'm a cougar, I made that giant step.

Susan Hempstead: 00:09:56 Send your email comments to the Mayor, Dave Earling.

Dave Earling: 00:10:04 And decided that I was just burned out. The schedule I kept at the college was really horrific. Doing 30 concerts a year.

Jim Hills: 00:10:15 Wow.

Dave Earling: 00:10:16 Doing workshops, doing adjudication for high school groups, summer camps for Shoreline high school, and actually going to Alaska for three summers to teach in an arts program there. Being approved for the doctoral program with the frustration I had, I just had to take a break. And so I had been taking actually a real estate class and studied up, took the test, passed and worked at Edmonds Realty for a number of years before we had the opportunity to buy the company. And so I have a background in real estate and it was a valuable experience, but again, it was a theme that we've already suggested was watching it grow from a very small real estate brokerage to a moderate size and watched the success of the various agents that we hired and the interest they had in the quality of work that we did.

Jim Hills: 00:11:28 So we're going to get to some of the more political kinds of positions that you have had, but I'm really curious as before we get there, whether or not you view your time as a realtor as having any connection to or sparking or early interest in the kinds of things that you ended up doing later in terms of your board work specifically and I'll mention the growth management hearings board, because we'll have an opportunity to talk about that. But I'm wondering if the realtor piece of that, how that began to lay out a little bit of a foundation for things that you were interested in later.

Dave Earling: 00:12:08 Actually, I think...

Jim Hills: 00:12:10 You can say none.

Dave Earling: 00:12:13 I think probably...

Susan Hempstead: 00:12:14 Other than permitting and impact fees.

Dave Earling: 00:12:18 The biggest impact that it had was moving from actually the public sector into private sector and became involved one way or another with our community, Edmonds and I was president of the chamber for a couple of years. Again though the thread is, I think we had a chamber that was not on their toes, I guess being kind. When I found out that the chamber didn't meet during the summer because it was just too hot.

Susan Hempstead: 00:12:54 Well you know it's always sunny in 82 in Edmonds.

- Dave Earling: 00:12:56 Well that's true, but you just have to learn to cope with it. But I mean that sort of thing was stunning to me. And when I was still selling real estate and the broker there, I would go out and just talk to business people all through town and get them kind of interested in what's going on. And I don't remember the numbers, but when I found out from the person who was basically running our very small office in the chamber, and I asked her, "Well, how are we doing on our membership renewals?" And her answer was, "Well we haven't sent anything out yet. We always wait for a few months to see how many people will re up."
- Susan Hempstead: 00:13:45 That can't be good for cash flow.
- Dave Earling: 00:13:47 I was going to say what kind of empire are we building here? So anyway, we worked on that and we had a large contingent of people by the time I finished my second year there.
- Jim Hills: 00:14:01 So when you look at real estate now, you can't avoid looking at real estate now. Nobody in the region can avoid looking at real estate now versus when you were active as a realtor. What do you see as differences?
- Dave Earling: 00:14:16 Well, obviously the prices are different, but I see that over time, and this has been a transition that was going on well before my entry to real estate. The whole profession has become much more professional and people take classes, they're interested in the work that they're doing. They attend conferences. I still own a building where the real estate or the real estate company was when I left. And I check in every once in a while and they're just really good people doing good stuff.
- Susan Hempstead: 00:14:53 And when you talk with your neighbors and you're walking around downtown, you hear things, you hear issues, you see what's going on, what propelled you to want to be on the city council? How did you decide? I wanted to be part of the voice of governance for this community.
- Dave Earling: 00:15:09 Well that's a question that I really can't answer probably completely.
- Jim Hills: 00:15:15 Did you sit in on this before you win, ran or did you know what was going on?
- Dave Earling: 00:15:20 I still wonder why people come to the council meetings sometimes, but I think it goes back to the germ of wanting to be involved, wanting to be part of the decision making process.

And of course I then, as Jim knows, I was on the council for quite a while. I was on for 12 years and through a variety of mayors, different kinds of leadership styles, trying to work together with whoever else and people don't think about it, but when you're in an elected position, you don't choose your friends. They just show up and you've got to do what you need to do to have people work together.

Susan Hempstead: 00:16:07

And that was the infancy where people were talking about regional transit and regional mobility and it led your first experience in representing Edmonds on this sound transit machine. And people weren't exactly sure what that is. And I'm sure a lot of people on the board at that point, where is Edmonds and why is Edmonds a part of this dialogue and conversation? When you look at regional growth and mobility, you have this wonderful lens from your time on the council and with Edmonds Realty and the growth management hearings board. When you look at your participation with that board on sound transit from when it was, when was it 1996 1999 somewhere there to what? It's transformation today. What is your perspective? What is your lens of how that that plan has progressed?

Dave Earling: 00:17:05

Well, the plan has progressed even though it's been difficult. I mean we just had some challenging elections and that sort of thing. It's really interesting and fun to watch attitudes change and I could highlight it by most of the change has gone South and it's just now coming North. But at the time watching communities who perhaps opposed or didn't understand it or didn't want any part of it. When the light rail in particular comes through, people suddenly become believers and they want it. And that's a real challenge because we have a pretty stimulating tax package pass. But I can still remember in the formation of the first sound transit board and the big decision that we had to make in Snohomish County was whether or not we wanted to have a commuter rail, which is the other rail product and just runs on the BNSF lines.

Dave Earling: 00:18:15

We had a real, I guess not confrontation, but real stimulating conversation with the other two board members at that time, which were Bob Drewel. And then Ed Hansen and Ed Hansen had some really good people working with him who were convinced what we should do is just add more buses. And while that has some merit, as we've all found out traffic, whether you have a lot of buses on the freeway or not, the buses don't go any faster than however the cars decide. That's how fast you're going to go. And so Ed and I actually had an interesting conversation with Joni Earl in the room who was about to

become the COO or CEO, excuse me. But at that time she was just trying to facilitate progress.

Jim Hills: 00:19:13 And wasn't she in Mill Creek at that time?

Dave Earling: 00:19:16 No, actually no. We hired her away from Snohomish County because Drewel had hired her to basically keep his shop in order and she does that magnificent job. And the final conversation came down. Ed looked at me and said, "Dave, if a sounder is going to be in this, I'm going to be a no vote." And I still remember looking back at Ed and saying, "Well Ed, if it's not in then I'm a no vote." And then we both left the room and Joni solved the problem.

Susan Hempstead: 00:19:54 As she's been doing quite since. And when you look...

Jim Hills: 00:19:57 Let me just take a quick second and identify some of those names that you just mentioned because insiders will know, but maybe not everybody knows. And so Bob Drewel at the time was Snohomish County?

Dave Earling: 00:20:08 Exactly, the Snohomish County executive, he was elected for three terms. He's actually one of the people in leadership positions that I most cherish working with because he was a problem solver and he sometimes he did it with his friendly slap on the back and a good handshake and you walked out of his office thinking, "Gosh I hope I got what I just asked for."

Susan Hempstead: 00:20:34 Or, "What did I just do?"

Dave Earling: 00:20:34 Exactly.

Jim Hills: 00:20:37 And Ed Hansen at the time was...

Dave Earling: 00:20:41 He was the Mayor of Everett just did a fine job and that's not the point because all three of us knew where we were and what we were doing, but it was a good experience to go through because they have different leadership styles. But as I said, Bob is one that I've really admired even today.

Susan Hempstead: 00:21:04 Sorry. If you look at that Edmonds station and what it has become in terms of economic development with Sunset 190 and Hunni Water and Top Pot Donuts. Is that the legacy that the three of you were looking forward to when a Sounder commuter rail was envisioned?

- Dave Earling: 00:21:22 Well at least was I was convinced, and I'm still convinced though that area of the down towards the water is a neighborhood waiting to happen. And some of the pieces are there. I mean you didn't mention, but very important to me is the new art museum that we actually have and it has been a terrific draw. It's gained notoriety up and down the West coast.
- Susan Hempstead: 00:21:49 The Library foundation hosted an event there. It's fantastic.
- Dave Earling: 00:21:52 Oh sure. Yeah. It's just fabulous. And one of the real joys, I went to the last exhibition, this is kind of interesting to me at least. The work of Andrew Neumeister was my art appreciation instructor at WSU in my freshman year. And just to walk through and sort of look at when I was there and he was doing art and then how his style changed over time. Just remarkable.
- Jim Hills: 00:22:29 So what you had just described with sound transit and talking about Edmonds station and the other player in around there is the port of Edmonds, which isn't the city. And I'm wondering if during those 12 years as a council member, that was a training ground for looking and working. As you had mentioned, you don't choose your friends on the council. They just show up. Whether that those were 12 formative years for you on how to build coalition, how to look at Ed Hansen in the eye and stand your ground. How to know if it was going to be a 4-3 vote on the council. Whether those 12 years as city council, what you learned there.
- Dave Earling: 00:23:12 First of all and trying to work together. It's a real good exercise. It really began though. One of the most important pieces of success, if you're going to be an elected official, is the relationships that you build over a long period of time. And when new council members come on, some of them they think because they've been elected, they sit in the chair and they suddenly can change anything at any time that they want to. And there's a process though of trying to work with people and simulate what their concerns are. Assimilate, that's the word I'm looking for and try and work with people, but all the way through from even when I was teaching and I was active in the association of music educators and got into a leadership role there, it's the relationships that you build over time and I can't emphasize how important that is, at least to me, and I think to most other leaders that I've talked to over time, that's a really important ingredient to success.
- Susan Hempstead: 00:24:36 When you look at that, that recipe for success in Edmonds, you have the Edmonds library and you have the Francis Anderson center and the Edmond center for the arts and the soon to be, I

don't think they're calling it a senior study anymore, but the Waterfront community center, all of these key civic institutions that are supporting and building community. When you take a look at that, what does that mean to you and how does that speak to you and how did that come about?

- Dave Earling: 00:25:06 For me, really the focus we've had at Edmonds and this sounds like an election pitch, but when you look around and try and figure out where a community should go to be successful. We have this great base in Edmonds of the arts and it started with things like the Cascade Symphony, like the Edmonds Arts festival. We've really focused on in my eight years on trying to expand that and we've had success. We were just named and I'm going to drop put the name of it is now as the first city in the state to have a independent creative district. Thank you.
- Susan Hempstead: 00:25:55 It's fantastic.
- Dave Earling: 00:25:56 And I'll be mentioning that tonight when I present the budget because that is knowing that we don't have a big bunch of big box stores, we don't have shopping malls. We have to be creative in how we generate the revenue to satisfy the expectations of the people that live in Edmonds.
- Dave Earling: 00:26:18 And the way in which I think we've really come together is that we've found that by keeping the small town atmosphere, there's contrast. If you go to the East side of small town atmospheres that suddenly have tall buildings, that changes the whole feel of those communities and if you come into Edmonds now it's going to be low in the downtown area. We've made some zoning changes so that up on highway 99 at Westgate, larger projects can come in. Some of me actually more than two or three stories. If it's on highway 99 we currently have, just on highway 99 we have two major apartment complexes and I think it total something over 400 units that there'll be, but that ties into a question that you alluded to Susan, that you've got to think to the future and how we can accommodate.
- Dave Earling: 00:27:24 If you haven't told your listeners very often by 2035 we're going to have another 220,000 people in Snohomish County and if you've paid any attention to the region, it's all sort of exploding over the last several years and we've got to be able to anticipate some of those changes that are needed to find more places for people to occupy.
- Dave Earling: 00:27:54 And in Edmonds we're pretty well built out. We don't have a lot of sprawling land like Marysville or Arlington or Lake Stevens and so we've got to figure out ways that the people who want

to live in Edmonds, we can accommodate them and having these apartment complexes of interest. Now we have another fairly good sized apartment units being built at Westgate. Again, some changes we've made there.

- Jim Hills: 00:28:24 Along Highway 104 there.
- Dave Earling: 00:28:25 Yes. Right. And you know the occupancy is going really well. After about the first two weeks I talked to someone who was working there and they were 30% full already and I mean it takes a while to have that happen, but success breeds success and more will come.
- Jim Hills: 00:28:49 I want to stop you there because we're going to take a quick break. I'm going to come back and we're going to touch on more about your role as mayor and I do want to dive into some of those board pieces because I think some of the things you've just been talking about, zoning and other things that are preparing for the future are things that you've been putting in place for years. So we'll be right back with Mayor Dave Earling, Mayor of Edmonds.
- Dave Earling: 00:29:10 I'll be here.
- Speaker 6: 00:29:11 Join business people from around the region who are taking advantage of free expert business advice through business pro classes from Sno-Isle Libraries. Find a business pro class at a library near you by searching online for events at Sno-Isle Libraries.
- Speaker 2: 00:29:28 We love hearing from our listeners and subscribers, especially if you enjoy it, a guest or have a suggestion for a future topic. Drop us a line at CheckItOutPodcast@sno-isle.org again, that's CheckItOutPodcast@sno-isle.org and let us know what you're thinking. Don't be surprised if we read your comment or answer your question on a future podcast episode.
- Jim Hills: 00:30:02 And we're back with Mayor Dave Earling. Mayor of Edmonds. Dave, I would loved to have you talked a little bit about some of the roles you played on various boards, some of those have paid positions, some of them been volunteer positions. You had community transit, you had sound transit, you had, what else do we have? Edmonds public school foundation, senior services of Snohomish, Washington, Washington conservation voters. And there's one that I bet very few know what it means. It is a completely esoteric kind of title, the growth management

hearings board. What is the growth management hearings board and how long were you on it and what does it do?

Dave Earling: 00:30:47 Sort of big picture. The growth management hearings board helps make land decisions throughout the state. It was going through some reorganization during the time I was there. And to answer your question, I was there for about five and a half years.

Jim Hills: 00:31:07 How does one get on it?

Dave Earling: 00:31:09 One gets on it by getting a call from somebody and say, "Hey, there's a vacancy on the growth management hearings board. Would you consider going on?" And at the time I was working at a think tank and frankly enjoying that quite a bit and turned it down but then I got a call again, I don't know, maybe a month or two later asking if I would consider it again. And to do that, you interviewed with some folks in Olympia and then the governor who was Governor Gregoire at the time appointed me to the growth management hearings board. And really what you're doing is making land use decisions throughout the state, which can be appealed by the way.

Dave Earling: 00:31:54 And occasionally one would be appealed back to the board and if that didn't work they can go to court but that's really what it does.

Jim Hills: 00:32:05 And it stems from the states' Growth Management Act, right? Which came in the nineties.

Dave Earling: 00:32:13 Actually one of the main generators of it, an important person who was then in Olympia was Maria Cantwell and Maria was one of the architects of the growth management movement in our state.

Jim Hills: 00:32:29 When she was a state legislator?

Dave Earling: 00:32:31 Correct.

Jim Hills: 00:32:31 Out of Mountlake Terrace?

Dave Earling: 00:32:32 Yes.

Jim Hills: 00:32:33 Right. And so if I could, so let me just quickly kind of describe what I think the growth management act did and why we needed a hearings board was, again, the year escapes me. 90? 94? Somewhere in the early nineties and it basically drew a line

around urban and developed areas and said that anything inside the line needed to look and act like a city, anything outside the line needed to look and act like not a city. And, and there would be this line and inside there could be growth. And outside of the line we were protecting...

- Speaker 3: 00:33:19 The environment and the rural setting.
- Jim Hills: 00:33:22 The rural setting, right? And the growth management hearings board was set up to hear those and adjudicate those concerns, right?
- Dave Earling: 00:33:33 Right. And by the time it got to the growth board, it had been through that as an example, the municipality that some decision was made and somebody didn't like it. And so they would then appeal to the growth board. And it's a relatively inexpensive process. Well, I mean there's still expenses that they have to encounter, but the board itself is made up of attorneys, former electeds. They try and keep a relative balance of Republicans and Democrats so that there's sort of a political agreement. The board I worked on was made up of another attorney and Margaret Pageler, who was a former city council representative of Seattle. So that was a group that we worked well together. They're both very bright people, probably had better minds than mine wrapped around some of the issues that came into it.
- Dave Earling: 00:34:45 But I found it really an enriching experience because you end up, again working with people. One of the frustrations was I was appointed after I had served on the council for 12 years and two things I've mentioned. One is I got this call from a city council member on, I'll just say on the East side of Lake Washington who, "Boy, Dave it's great to talk to you. What's going on? Oh by the way, we've got a problem here in Edmonds and there's going to be something before you." And I said, "Sorry, conversation over." Because it's really an important point that the growth management board makes is that you can't lobby them. You can do it in court or in the hearings. But I lost a lot of friends, potential friends when word got out that I couldn't talk to them.
- Susan Hempstead: 00:35:44 So Jim listed a number of the volunteer and service boards that you've been a member on, but I'd love to spend a minute and talk through some of the more informal roles of where you've shared your service. And it comes back to when you were at a Shoreline community college and really connecting with students and engaging and you have never lost that. And as a parent of a fourth grader at the time, who's now 15 you came to her school, you came to her fourth grade class to talk about

government and governance and civics. And I was hoping that Soundview school is just one of many schools that you came to share what it means to be a public official and to consider what governance is of a city.

Susan Hempstead: 00:36:32 And I'm sure all these students ask you, can you add another recess to the day? Can you put a crosswalk outside front of my school?

Dave Earling: 00:36:40 I'd love to give council members recess as well.

Susan Hempstead: 00:36:43 See, recess would solve everything. But could you please share that experience because you have made an integral part of your day to get out and share with students what governance of city of a community is about and how they can participate. And it's been a very special gift.

Dave Earling: 00:37:02 Well, thanks for saying that and it is a piece that I'm really fond of. The automatic answer from my executive assistant, when somebody calls in and says, "Could we have the Mayor come to this school or that school?" The answer is, "Well, we're going to make it work."

Susan Hempstead: 00:37:21 Carolyn's amazing.

Dave Earling: 00:37:22 And it's really fun to do that. But again, it's important to sort of keep in touch with everybody. And actually it's fun a couple of times that I've, in the last year gone into schools, the parents are there too. And so there's that sort of interaction. I know when I was at Soundview school a couple of times, I think it was really fun. And there's parents there, there's faculty there, but most important is the kids and the experience they have because by the time they get to a certain age, and maybe it's in the third or fourth grade, they begin to understand what in the world of mayor is.

Dave Earling: 00:38:08 And you know when they're younger than that, the parent will say, well this is the Mayor of Edmonds. And they'll say, well, so what? Because it doesn't mean much to them. But it's really, I think, important that even at the elementary school level to begin to have people understand that government can be touched, that government...

Susan Hempstead: 00:38:31 Is accessible.

Dave Earling: 00:38:32 Is accessible. And it's really an interesting part. And frankly, getting away from just the school settings, it's also important

with some of the other work that I've done with the seniors, I was on the board for the senior, or they call it Homage now, but I was chair of that board for a couple of years. It was fun to see it change and grow. And the Edmonds school foundation. I was on the original board for the school districts foundation and at the end of the first year, I don't know, I mean maybe raised four or \$500.

- Susan Hempstead: 00:39:17 Hey that's positive.
- Dave Earling: 00:39:19 I then was elected president for the next year.
- Susan Hempstead: 00:39:22 Victim of your own success.
- Dave Earling: 00:39:27 This funny story coming back to the enterprise newspaper. I made the decision that we were going to raise \$100,000 that year and we worked hard and it's the end of the year, we were at 92,000 or something like that. We had a series of events that were successful and so I was invited by the Enterprise newspaper to do an interview with them and the interview went well and actually what was written from the interview was great, but at the time the Enterprise newspaper had their headlines written at Centralia or something.
- Jim Hills: 00:40:13 Some place different.
- Dave Earling: 00:40:14 Yeah, whatever it was. And so the headline comes out front page, the enterprise, "Public foundation falls short."
- Susan Hempstead: 00:40:25 Perspective as an amazing thing, isn't it?
- Dave Earling: 00:40:28 But again if you read the story, it was fine. But again, making those kinds of connections build as we've talked about before, the relationships that are so important if you're going to be successful in any sort of leadership role, because that's the way you develop your credibility with a broad based number of people.
- Jim Hills: 00:40:53 Absolutely. We touched a little bit on sound transit and community transit. You participated there, you mentioned Homage, which used to be called Snohomish County senior services now they've transitioned. And eight years as mayor, you're coming to the end of your term, you're not deciding to run again. Is that right?
- Dave Earling: 00:41:18 Correct.

Jim Hills: 00:41:19 So what does that mean for Dave Earling? When does your term end?

Dave Earling: 00:41:24 Ends December 31st.

Jim Hills: 00:41:26 Not soon enough?

Susan Hempstead: 00:41:28 He's got a lot of work to do.

Dave Earling: 00:41:33 That's an interesting question, Jim, because when I announced to my senior staff that I would not be running for a third term, I said, "But don't let that misguide you because we're going to have a very full year." We need to finish the year. It's a commitment we made to the public and I want to finish the term with success, and that's really where we're pointed.

Jim Hills: 00:41:58 You mentioned earlier that you're presenting the budget tonight. We're not exactly sure when this episode will air but talk a little bit about, well, I've often heard that, show me your budget and I'll show you your priorities. What does your budget look like? Can you talk about that? It'll be after the fact.

Dave Earling: 00:42:21 Yeah, well, no, and maybe I'll reflect a little bit on this year's budget, which is in the general fund is around \$44 million and with all of the other utility bills and so on there, that's those separate funds. I think our number of this year was 109 million that you're responsible for. And I take that responsibility very seriously and fortunately have had really fine finance directors that have kind of helped through that, but it's this year's budget will have some changes that I'll propose. We've done a study, for instance, not very sexy to talk about, but we've done a study with the municipal buildings and the conditions that they're in, in Edmonds. We've had a really thorough analysis and we find out that there's probably 6.5 million in deferred and needed maintenance on the various buildings around town. And so we've constructed, and I know this won't hit the air too soon, so we've put together a program where the first year we'll spend one point \$5 million on taking care of some of those issues.

Dave Earling: 00:43:38 That's an example of some of the big decisions that the council will have to be involved in. We've also purchased, as most people know by now the civic field, which we're going to turn into an eight acre downtown park. And what a great opportunity for the community and the region actually. But that's a \$12 million project. We started the community center that will house seniors during the day and in the evenings we'll be open to our community. That's \$16 million. So there's big

stuff, but if you don't put to the future, you're going to end up with something mediocre.

Susan Hempstead: 00:44:29 I don't know if most of the listeners know, but the Edmonds library is actually a building owned by the City of Edmonds and Sno-Isle Libraries provides the staff, the resources, the support programs. Is the library on the list for consideration? I'm just curious, as long as you're here.

Dave Earling: 00:44:46 Well, there's sometimes some negotiation that has to take place.

Susan Hempstead: 00:44:51 Okay, so we'll keep talking about that. Thank you.

Dave Earling: 00:44:56 I'm sure if I remember correctly, some of that 6.5 million problem we have involved some with that building too, but don't ask me for specifics, but we'll get back to you on that.

Jim Hills: 00:45:10 Well, yeah, Susan's role here is strategic relations. So yeah, she'll go to work.

Dave Earling: 00:45:15 She knows about relationships.

Susan Hempstead: 00:45:16 I know where to find you.

Jim Hills: 00:45:21 So speaking of libraries, well actually before we get to that, I want to ask, we did talk about what's the next step for Dave. You are also husband and father and grandfather.

Susan Hempstead: 00:45:34 Football fan.

Jim Hills: 00:45:35 Football fan. I occasionally see social posts from warmer climates. I don't know how it can be warmer than 82 and sunny in Edmonds all the time. But you always seem like you're looking for some place to relax in when it's warm. Oh, so what's next?

Dave Earling: 00:45:52 That's a question that I can't thoroughly answer yet. It's an interesting process to go through because when you've been doing something for eight years, you're trying to...

Jim Hills: 00:46:04 When something is so all-consuming.

Dave Earling: 00:46:07 Well, exactly. And on what I'll do later on is coming in sort of interesting ways. I'm getting the sort of calls that I think you're supposed to get saying, have you ever thought about doing X or would you be interested in doing Y? And I'm real blunt. I say, "Look, I'm finishing, I'm going strong until the end of the year.

We'll talk about any other opportunities that might pop up after that." My wife, by the way, folks, we on December 27th we will be married 50 years.

- Susan Hempstead: 00:46:47 Aww, congratulations!
- Jim Hills: 00:46:48 That's awesome. Congratulations.
- Dave Earling: 00:46:52 Yeah, it's especially awesome knowing what she's had to put up all this time, but she's convinced and I think she's probably right, you need to have a getaway.
- Susan Hempstead: 00:47:02 Clean break for a while.
- Dave Earling: 00:47:04 For a while. I don't remember January 5th or 6th we're going to get on an airplane, fly to San Diego and the next morning we get on a boat and we'll be on that boat for 16 nights. And be a chance just to kind of get your head straight out and figure out what the heck you might want to do next. I'm really excited about that. Probably the single enjoyable experience I've had in travel. One time years ago we had 20 days on a boat in the Mediterranean and I'm a history nut and so being able to stand where the first Olympic games are playing, it just crushes me and we were in Turkey, we were in North Africa, Spain. Did the whole Mediterranean and I think it's a great place to back up and really think things through and set priorities. My family, you asked about Jim. I've got a wonderful wife, Susan. We have three kids.
- Dave Earling: 00:48:17 One is a local attorney, one lives in Arizona. We were down there last weekend to see our grandkids and my other son who maybe some of you have met, Eric is now in Idaho and he's got a some sort of an executive position on the team for Blue Cross Idaho, I think it's called and it's great to have him closer. He came from new Orleans where he had been living for quite a few years and it's just great to have our kids together at least three hours, no more than three hours flight away.
- Jim Hills: 00:49:00 Although it does sound kind of clever of you to plant a kid in Arizona and one in New Orleans. I'm not sure if Idaho has quite the same... [crosstalk 00:49:10]
- Dave Earling: 00:49:10 The only I can say about Sarah, who lives in Arizona is that she lives in the high country, so instead of being 103 it's only 93 during the summers. But it's a great family. I'm an only child and so having family is terribly important to me and it's frustrating to a certain extent when they're living away, but they need to

do what they're doing. I don't care what the kids do as long as they're happy.

Susan Hempstead: 00:49:40

Good, fatherly advice. And grandfatherly advice.

Jim Hills: 00:49:44

We're coming to the end of our time. I've got a couple of questions that I'd love to broach with you. And they both focus on personal experience and viewpoints as we have. So I don't think that in your elected positions you've been elected to a partisan seat. Right? You did mention the growth management hearings board, or they mentioned trying to keep a balance between Democrats and Republicans. I've always thought of you as a moderate Republican. I'm not sure exactly how you would self identify there on your political spectrum, but I am really curious about how you view the current atmosphere environment around partisanship because you are a great example of how to work together to get things done. And as you say, leave it better than you found it. So I'm interested in how you look at partisanship as it's currently playing out now.

Dave Earling: 00:50:48

Well, that's the second part of the question. The first part is yes, I am a moderate Republican and as I said to you before we started our conversation here, there's probably 12 of us left across the state, but I'm one that's always wanted to try and find solutions instead of, well, I was going to say instead of winning, but if I can win, I'll do that too.

Susan Hempstead: 00:51:20

It's a collective 'we' winning.

Dave Earling: 00:51:22

Well... There's a cartoon years ago and I don't think it's around anymore and oftentimes had a band director standing in the middle of the room with his cap on and on the podium and I'll never forget one of the cartoon strips had him standing there looking, I guess at his group raising his hand and he said, remember the object of good music. The next frame was empty while he was standing there. And the third frame said is to win. And I think all of us have a competitive edge. We would like things the best for whatever position they're taking. But when we look at the landscape now, especially if we're talking nationally, the sort of dichotomy of good intention simply isn't there.

Dave Earling: 00:52:30

The dichotomy for me is people are there to govern and through the political confrontations that are taking place, nothing's getting done. And there's an element of that in Olympia, although it's at least everybody ends up making decisions in Olympia because, well you have to, but I mean the Democrats are in control in Olympia so they can accomplish a

broader agenda. There's still compromise that goes on within a group like that. But I don't have the answer of how you get back to doing things right, but we need to work our way back in to where people with common sense are making common decisions and not chasing their tail day after day and trying to come to some sort of meaningful conclusion.

- Dave Earling: 00:53:33 And that's one of the reasons that I've enjoyed city council that I've enjoyed being mayor. I've got a lot of Democrats on my city council, but for the most part we try and be respectful. There's some important clashes that have gone on with an interesting dynamic is not running for the third term. I still have to put up with all of the political stuff.
- Susan Hempstead: 00:54:01 With all that open, honest and transparent conversation.
- Dave Earling: 00:54:10 And we've got the two mayor candidates, in this case sitting on the dais every Tuesday night. And so there is the inevitable, "My thoughts are better than yours. I'm right and you're wrong." That sort of thing. Ongoing confrontation. I'm sure it'll be a different set, but even with the election here in a few weeks, there will still be a different tension that exists between whoever is elected and trying to get to January 1st.
- Susan Hempstead: 00:54:43 And when you look ahead post January and you'll be in San Diego and getting on a boat, what's the head for Edmonds as your community? You still be a resident, you'll still be visible there. Number of the things that you have championed that are put into place, but what do you see for Edmonds as a community and your community?
- Dave Earling: 00:55:05 And this'll sound really corny. Edmonds is a rare gem. If you stop and think about our Puget Sound area, how many cities can you drive to and have a small town experience? And it's not very far away. It's 14 miles to Seattle. It's just a great opportunity and that's the reason that we really put a focus on having Edmonds a daytime destination, so that people can come there if they're sort of fed up with the congestion and people and Seattle and maybe even over on the East side and get away from it all. Where can you drive for a half an hour and find a small town? And even though when I came out of the real estate industry, some of the long time folks in Edmonds thought I was just going to rape and pillage the whole town as an elected official and my philosophy is you go where you can find success and we don't have big box stores. Again, we don't have high rise.
- Dave Earling: 00:56:17 We need to really build on what we have with the Edmonds center for the arts, with our resident artist community, with the

museum that I mentioned that we have an art museum now. All of those things along with the seaside setting, it actually has a beach. You can walk in the sand and that's just kind of a rare combination and I want our community to do that, to stay that way, but also accept the fact that you're going to have to do projects. Susan, you probably remember, and Jim, you do too. When we did our first roundabout in the city of Edmonds. I though the world...

- Susan Hempstead: 00:57:00 I think it made national news.
- Dave Earling: 00:57:02 The world was on fire. And I'll just share this and then I'll get out of the way on your question. I was walking into the QFC at West gate, and this was probably...
- Jim Hills: 00:57:18 Brave of you. Sometimes.
- Dave Earling: 00:57:19 ...Probably two, maybe two weeks after we had opened it. And I was walking in literally the sliding doors and all of a sudden a hand came down on my shoulder and you could hear it and feel it and it's the sort of thing that I'd want to turn around and sort of punch a guy. But the guy stood there and said, "I just came here, I saw you come in and I want to apologize. I fought the roundabout forever and I just been through it probably a half dozen times and it's great."
- Susan Hempstead: 00:57:54 Growth. Everybody can grow. Grow from experience.
- Dave Earling: 00:57:59 We have major projects going on because we need to anticipate how we can shape the community. My long term thought on growth is that you either grab it by the throat and shape it the way you want it or it happens to you anyway. And I think that the town has done a good job. I give the council credit over the last four years in particular of making some decisions that will allow us to grow, but within the context of what we expect Edmonds to be, look like and satisfy people.
- Jim Hills: 00:58:38 That sounds like the definition of leave of better.
- Susan Hempstead: 00:58:40 Yeah, that's exactly right. Well, Jim and I were joking that both of us have Edmonds home mailing addresses, but we do not get your governance as Edmonds residences living in the unincorporated area. But before we go, I just want to thank you. I want to thank you for your stewardship and your friendship and really the transformation. You bring such an authentic leadership skillset and style. And when I applied to work at the library, you were so kind to offer me advice that I

took and still use to this day. And I will never forget my daughter coming to your office as she was selling girl scout cookies and you bought a box of thin mints from her and that is quintessential Dave Earling. You are always willing to give of yourself and share and I hope personally we can keep in touch but really want to thank you on behalf of the library community and the community for your leadership and Edmonds. So thank you.

- Dave Earling: 00:59:37 Well thank you. That's very kind of you to say. And cynically I should say well that's true but I mean it's really messages. I get those kinds of messages almost every day somebody comes up and says thanks for your service and they'll even want to have a conversation about it.
- Jim Hills: 00:59:56 So this is a library podcast. So we might have to ask one library question. Other than are you going to fix the roof?
- Dave Earling: 01:00:05 Is there a problem with the roof?
- Susan Hempstead: 01:00:07 Not today, it's sunny and 82 today.
- Jim Hills: 01:00:13 Is there something that you remember about libraries, reading something that as you grew up, is there... This is a question that we ask most of our guests. Is there something that you recall as a child, as an adult, that you saw happening, something you remember about that was meaningful to you about libraries?
- Dave Earling: 01:00:33 Well, I think as I've mentioned in one other comment that had to do with the sense of history that I have and I'm interested in, and I still remember, and this is years ago when I was living in Spokane, I still remember going to the library, the Spokane public library, and being able to get ahold of almost any history piece of information I wanted. And believe it or not, that was before the internet. And so just that as a warehouse of knowledge is one that I've grown to really appreciate. And I'd say the same thing.
- Dave Earling: 01:01:14 When I got to high school, I would go over to the Bing Crosby library to study. And again, history is there. I mean you walk in there or the Spokane library and there's a sense of the building in the Spokane library, it had been there for a long time and you get that sense when you walk in. And with Bing Crosby obviously we know who he was, but it was wonderful just wandering through the halls there, looking at all the photos of him and the people that he worked with and was around and having, having the appreciation that he always has for Spokane,

Washington. And that's the sort of appreciation I want to be able to have when I looked back at Edmonds, Washington.

- Jim Hills: 01:02:09 Dave Earling, thank you very much for being here.
- Dave Earling: 01:02:12 Thank you sir. Thank you Jim. Thank you Susan.
- Susan Hempstead: 01:02:14 Great afternoon. Thank you.
- Speaker 2: 01:02:17 Your donation to the Sno-Isle Libraries Foundation reaches across generation lines, helping prepare children for their first year of school and bringing reading materials to the elderly and home bound. A foundation gift provides seed funding for innovative library programs for potential entrepreneurs and small business owners, teenagers, new immigrants, and lifelong learners. Please consider a onetime gift becoming a monthly donor or establishing a Memorial gift to the Sno-Isle Libraries Foundation.
- Jim Hills: 01:02:55 Well that was for me really fun. I'm thinking it was for you because I think both of us have strong connections to Mayor Dave Earling, Mayor of Edmonds. That was really interesting.
- Susan Hempstead: 01:03:05 What a joy and really what a wonderful opportunity for our listeners to have an hour of his time talking about where he's been, the roles and the community stewardship that he has always kept top of mind throughout his professional life.
- Jim Hills: 01:03:22 So lots of people get into public service and there are few like Dave who exemplify public service and is totally committed. Early on I said something about the word community is the thread, maybe the other C-word, commitment. He's just totally committed to it.
- Susan Hempstead: 01:03:45 He has these wonderful personal principles and tenants of how to engage with your community and be part of your community. And even just going to the schools and talking with students about what it means to be a mayor. Who is a mayor? Why should you care who a mayor is? What is the city council? And it's such a micro lesson of the checks and balances of the legislative and executive branches of government and governance and communities are changing. And the models that we used to know and how we would engage with government and community is evolving and changing. It will be fascinating as we're citizens in this community to see where it transitions next.

- Jim Hills: 01:04:30 I think the other part is he did 12 years as a city council member and another eight as mayor, 20 years in city council meetings. I've sat through many of those. I know that you have to, you've seen those. That is commitment. To be able to do that with the goal of making the place better than he left it. It's exciting.
- Susan Hempstead: 01:04:54 I think the other item is for Edmonds as a community. He talked a lot about it being a small town feel and with the population growth that is coming and forecast in the civic institutions of the library and admin center for the arts and the Francis Anderson center. What are the services, programs and amenities to serve this growing population while maintaining the open space and the small town feel, given the tremendous push that will be coming.
- Jim Hills: 01:05:24 We've got a tremendous legacy and we're going to move forward as a city and work with them as a library and here we go. Mayor Dave Earling. Thank you.
- Speaker 2: 01:05:36 That's this week's episode of the Check It Out! Podcast. Don't forget to join us next week for another episode. Thanks for listening.