

Hearing examiner denies St. Edward Seminary FEIS appeal

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Saint Edward Seminary in Saint Edward State Park on the Kirkland and Kenmore boundary.
Reporter file Photo

Kenmore Hearing Examiner Phil Olbrechts has issued his recommendation of approval to the **Kenmore City Council on the matter of Daniels Real Estate's site plan application for the St. Edward Seminary property and denial of an appeal on the final environmental impact statement (FEIS) for the project by a group of Kenmore residents.**

"Based upon the findings of fact and conclusions of law determined and concluded in this decision and recommendation, it is concluded that the FEIS is adequate under the 'Rule of Reason' and applicable EIS State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) rules and that the site plan application meets all applicable review criteria," the 50-page document prepared by the hearing examiner reads in part.

"Based upon this conclusion, it is decided that the appeal on FEIS adequacy is denied, and it is recommended that the city council approve the site plan application."

The City of Kenmore prepared the FEIS for the project. With the site plan, city staff added 27 conditions before the hearing examiner review process, and the hearing examiner added five additional conditions, including requiring Daniels to prepare a parking monitoring plan for the project.

Traffic, parking and disruption to the environment around the seminary have been the biggest concerns surrounding Daniels' plans to turn the seminary into the Lodge at St. Edward. Daniels entered into a 67-year lease agreement with Washington State Parks for the property earlier this year.

Olbrechts' decision and recommendation came on March 24, three weeks after a two-day hearing was held at Kenmore City Hall.

The city council will take up the issue of Daniels' site plan application at its April 17 meeting. However, since the hearing examiner has closed the record on this issue, no public comment, written or oral, can be taken on the site plan at that or any other meeting.

"The city council cannot engage in ex-parte (out-of-hearing) written or oral communications with opponents or proponents of the application," a statement from the city's attorney reads. "These prohibited communications include emails, letters, telephone calls and posts on social media." More information about the project, including the full text of the decision and recommendation from the hearing examiner, documentation of the appeal and the FEIS, can be found at www.kenmorewa.gov/LodgeatSaintEdward. **Video of the hearing can also be found on the city's website.**