

Minutes, Kirkland Alliance of Neighborhoods
May 12, 2021 Virtual online meeting, Zoom

Note: Action items are highlighted in **yellow**.

Neighborhoods attending:

Central Houghton	Lisa McConnell
Everest	Anna Aubry
Evergreen Hill	Johanna Palmer
Finn Hill	Bill Blanchard (KAN Co-Chair), Scott Morris
Highlands	Debbie Ohman
Juanita Neighborhoods	Leo Gilbert
Lakeview	Mark Still
Market	Ken Mackenzie, Liz Hunt
Moss Bay	Bea Nahon, Alex Chen
Norkirk	Jane Ainbinder, Janet Pruitt
North Rose Hill	
South Rose Hill/Bridle Trails	Chris Kagen
Totem Lake	

City Staff/Elected Officials attending:

- David Wolbrecht, Senior Neighborhood Services Coordinator
- Mary Gardocki, Park Planning and Development Manager

Guests:

7:02pm Introduction

- Co-Chair Bill Blanchard called the meeting to order

7:05pm Public comments

- Bea introduced Alex Chen, new chair of Moss Bay NA

7:06pm Parks, Recreation, and Open Spaces Plan update

- [Mary Gardocki](#), presenting
- Juanita Beach Park complete
- Totem Lake Park update
 - Scope: Boardwalk, trails, playground, restroom building, picnic seating, overlook
 - Budget: \$8.8M
 - Timeline: June 2021 completion
- 132nd Square Park
 - Scope: Restroom, playground, expanded parking, labyrinth, synthetic turf, lighting picnic shelters, reflexology area, play hill, stormwater
 - Budget: \$5.6M
 - Timeline: July 2022

- Larger community mtg planned to discuss lighting hours
- Evaluating re-use of playground equipment
- David Brink Park
 - Scope: Repairs, habitat restoration, access, shoreline softening, ADA path, pier grating
 - Budget: \$1.6M
 - Timeline: Construction begins July 2021
- PROS plan (Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan)
 - 6-year strategic plan
 - Vision for the City's park and recreation system
- Play It Forward campaign
 - "Imagine the future of Kirkland's parks, recreation, and open spaces"
 - Base content: demographics, trends, level of service (LOS), priorities
 - New for this planning cycle:
 - Community survey
 - ADA assessment and transition plan
 - Athletic field demand analysis and recommendations (incl. plans for synthetic turf)
 - Overall an 11-month process
 - Public and staff inputs begin in June
 - Output: Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) recommendations
 - Greenplay hired as consultant
- Q&A
 - [Liz] How are we doing on keeping up with level of service? Lots of people come to Kirkland for the parks.
 - It's a challenge. Example is the athletics fields, as we can't afford to purchase the amount of turf that we need. Synthetic turf expands capability by 60% because you can use it for more hours and under more conditions.
 - [Lisa] It's important to capture how renters and other non-property-owners use our public spaces. It's been vital this last year, for people who don't have a private space to use. We've also learned more clearly this last year that parks are important gathering places for meetings, protests, community gatherings, ... They're not just for recreation.
 - [Johanna] Are we also allowing for use of fields for unscheduled time?
 - Yes. Much of our public space is not scheduled.
 - [Anna] You mentioned the necessity of removing houses ...
 - We're not there yet! But we recognize that we will need to be creative in expanding our public spaces. This would be part of a mutually agreed negotiation.
 - [Ken] I see two categories of parks in Kirkland: neighborhood parks and general use parks, such as Crestwoods, where many of the users come from outside of the immediate neighborhood. The 132nd Square Park changes, for example, will change a neighborhood park into a regional park, with users coming from outside of Kirkland as well.

- We actually have four categories: neighborhood parks, community parks, waterfront parks, and natural parks. Our shortfall is in the neighborhood parks.
- [Ken] How will you handle the population surge of 30% coming with the 85th Station Area build-out?
 - Great question! That’s in the infancy of being explored right now, and parks will be part of the overall planning effort.
- [Bea] Re: David Brink Park: Notice that there are no cars parked on Lake WA Blvd in the artist’s rendering ... [segue to next topic]

8:05pm Park Lane and Lake Washington Blvd. Pedestrian Promenade pilot program

- David Wolbrecht, presenting
 - Lake Washington Blvd. promenade
 - Council has been considering closing a lane of the Boulevard to create expanded pedestrian and bicycle access
 - Staff are holding off on our big outreach process
 - Council will consider on 5/18 a letter from Kirkland Greenways with recommendations on how and whether to proceed
 - David showed a draft website for collecting community feedback
- Options for Pedestrian Walkway: Summer 2021**

Option 1	Option 2	Option 3
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- Brief walkthrough of the three options (option 3 is “no action”)
 - Q&A
 - [Lisa] Disclosure: I was part of the Kirkland Greenways (KG) letter. We had trouble with some of the ways Council was approaching this study. Since it is a study, we need to pay good attention to data, and that wasn’t a clear part of what came from staff. What does success or failure look like? It takes more than two weeks to gather good data. KG is in favor of the study in general. Not doing it has opportunity cost. We want to ensure that the Council really understands the project and its goals.
 - On the website, the title is “Close parking lane,” which is accenting a potential negative. Language matters! – and it influences what feedback you get on a survey. Let’s emphasize getting people and businesses back on track.
 - [Alex] What’s the timeline for a summer project like this?
 - [David] I hope for clear direction from Council after the 5/18 meeting. Staff would likely return to Council by the June 15 meeting with feedback to inform a go/no-go decision by Council.
 - [Leo] Juanita NA got a presentation from KG and the group was completely in favor of the project. We agreed that a month was a reasonable minimum, for data gathering and to give people a chance to experience it. As a member of KG, I can also observe

that the KG response to this project is informed by the Council's deliberations on the Park Lane proposal. KG was dismayed by the Council's prioritization of cars over people. We absolutely support the Promenade idea. Note that the parking area is public space, not privately owned by anyone, and we see the great opportunities in opening that space for more creative use.

- [Ken] Where in Council and staff is the energy to drive this?
 - KG is the biggest advocate for it, and the majority of councilmembers were interested to hear more.
 - [Leo] The original promenade study proposal in 2014 came before KG was pushing it.
 - [Bill] I remember Karen Story bringing it up years ago here at KAN.
- [Bea] *Kirkland Outside of the Walls* also supported the idea of getting people outdoors, supporting healthy access to businesses, and this is a natural extension of that.
- [Lisa] Again, we need data. Who's going where, in what volumes? What changes during the study? That will go toward what long-term changes to make.
- Park Lane closure project
 - Council received feedback from a city survey and from local businesses
 - Their decision was for a modified version of what we did last year
 - Street closes at 6pm
 - Street reopens after all restaurants have closed for the night
 - This is the part that's different from last year
 - Public safety aspect: access for fire/police/EMS
 - Staff will be broadcasting the program on many channels
 - [Janet] Can you summarize what the survey revealed?
 - 67% supported closure
 - We did ask some demographic questions about "do you work downtown?" etc.
 - Council definitely listened carefully to the businesses; some businesses had concerns about severe impact, even shutting down
 - Council pegged this decision to apply to next year as well, so no change in policy is anticipated until at least 2023
 - [Leo] I feel that there's a lack of imagination on the parts of business owners and Council. Many other cities have vibrant walk/bike areas; look at the Pearl district of Boulder, CO.
 - [Jane] Can someone explain why businesses felt that the loss of a few parking spaces will hurt them so badly?
 - David relayed that was the feedback the businesses gave and posted a link to the [City Council meeting](#).
 - [Anna] When my husband and I have been on Park Lane, it's been packed. It's surprising to me that it would seem difficult for the businesses; maybe they're seeing something we're not seeing.

- That's a good point. Restaurants were generally supportive. Retail shops were more resistant.

8:10pm 990 reminder, and NA government reporting responsibilities

- Bea Nahon, presenting
- State of Washington – Secretary of State
 - Due annually, \$10 per year
- Federal
 - Internal Revenue Service – Form 990N – due May 15 each year – no extension, no cost, all online
 - Failure to file can eliminate your tax-exempt status and it is not easy to restore
 - Finn Hill files 990 or 990EZ instead of 990N, as it is a 501(c)(3) while the others are all 501(c)(4)
 - Not yet filed:
 - Everest
 - Evergreen Hill
 - North Rose Hill
 - Totem Lake
- City of Kirkland
 - Annual business license, due date varies
 - Must be done through the State Department of Revenue Website, \$10 annual fee
- State of Washington -- Department of Revenue
 - Annual combined excise tax return due April 15
 - Can request “active nonreporting status” to eliminate this requirement
 - This requirement only exists because of the City's business license being tied to the State system

8:15pm 85th Street Station Subarea Plan update

- Committee presenting
- [Bill] KAN committee met with Jim Lopez
- [Ken] What's really driving this plan?
 - Transit-oriented development (TOD) is important to the city
 - But we haven't yet heard a succinct statement of why this particular project is so attractive to the city
- [Ken] We asked for an opportunity for people to speak without time limits to the City
 - Speaking session scheduled for May 26
 - 1.5 hours, people limited to 2-3 minutes
- [Anna] We wanted to get more of an opportunity for conversation with the Council, and this is not it. Disappointed in the outcome.
- [Liz] Our action items were ignored. I understood that Jim would circle back to us with when the meeting would be, what format it would be. I understand that we're not the only stakeholders here! The next thing I saw was a de facto posting on NextDoor.

- [Bill] We're pushing Jim and the City to a place they're not comfortable with. Jim wanted to talk to Kurt Triplett about KAN being a body that can come to Council and speak as a consortium.
 - We wanted more public input.
 - We also want greater consideration given to the Neighborhood Plans. We put a lot of work into them.
- [Janet] I think we should reframe our desire as a “public meeting” rather than a “public hearing,” because there are rules around public hearings.
- [Ken] We need an opportunity to speak to City Council and make a decent presentation. Two to three minutes is not enough; it is effectively an attempt at muzzling. “You can always write a letter” is dismissive and patronizing. We need a conversation, which doesn't happen in this format.
- [Bea] If you're going to ask the public for their voice, ask what they think, then it has to mean something. I was discouraged after the Park Lane fiasco. We need a forum where people have more than two minutes and it has to have an impact.
- [Leo] I agree with Ken and Bea about needing a better format for public input. I'm in favor of TOD in general; density distributed through the city results in miserable traffic and sprawl.
- [Anna] In conversation with Jim Lopez, we let him know that KAN is not united in a single opinion, so Leo: we're not throwing your voice out. It does seem, though, that public input is often treated as a checkmark, and then staff/Council can move on to the next thing.
- [Lisa] [Posted a link to the city's definition of [public hearings](#)]
- [Lisa] Why is this Station Area Plan being pushed so hard/fast right now?
 - [Bill] One accelerator is the Google building.
 - [David] The city received a time-bound grant for the area planning, though I believe we already lost that grant due to extending the original project timeline .
 - [Ken] I've been trying to get a copy of a letter from Google to the city laying out some parameters for their expansion. Mayor Sweet has said that Google is a great partner and we need to work with them. I'm concerned that we're establishing a precedent for tall buildings based on the desires of one business, with a fast-tracked “bookend” process.
 - [Lisa] I'm uncomfortable with corporations driving city policy.
- [Liz] This is a huge plan, hundreds of pages, impact on houses, traffic, all sorts of things. In this plan, we have a bus stop that goes up/down I-405; can we get more of a sense of the benefits of this bus route? I don't know that it does anything that I need. Does it go where people want to go? I'm all about living in a transit area, but let's make sure the transit does what we want it to do. Will there be good supportive transit feeding it? What's the housing/office balance? We already have big developments in the area; does this really benefit our city? Ken brought up parks earlier, which is also a good point.
- [Bill] What do we want KAN to do? If I could wave a magic wand, what would you like to see?
 - [Ken] Put the “bookends” discussion on hold. Get serious answers to Liz's questions. The plan seems to offer lots of office space; has the city truly

planned for residence in the area? If we truly put “affordable housing” next to the office space, then the highly paid software engineers won’t be living there, so they’ll be commuting in while the residents will be commuting out. Is that the best idea?

- [Bill] What are the boundaries, the reasonable requests that we can ask of the city?
 - [Lisa] I would like to continue to have conversation with staff (Lopez, Triplett) and Council on behalf of concerned citizens.
 - [Scott] I sympathize with the frustration of time-limited commenting at public meetings. It would be helpful if KAN as a group can go to the city and ask for XX minutes, which we can organize internally how we fill it. Staff/Council should be required to respond to questions in the same forum. Example is the tree ordinance, where we do time-constrained comments and write letters, but staff gets to do a full presentation.
 - [Anna] We did talk to Jim (and David) about having some unfiltered time to get our concerns to Council.
 - [Anna] Liz had really good question that we need answers to. Ken, too. Let’s start there for the nuts and bolts of the concerns.
 - [Leo] Have we tried to get on the actual agenda, rather than being relegated to the public input section? [Liz] Yes, we did ask for that, didn’t get it.

8:54pm Neighborhood Services Program

- David Wolbrecht, presenting
- Neighborhood Picnics
 - If you do have plans, please engage [Nicci Osborn](#) in Parks & Community Services
 - Understood: Summer plans are tenuous for everyone!
 - Due to pandemic restrictions, Nicci will need to know your planned scope for your event and your plan for safety precautions.
 - To help guide your thinking, you can reference [Weddings, Funerals, and Events COVID-19 Requirements](#) from the State

8:55pm Round the Horn

- Bea: The first meeting of our working group for our NA Plan update is on May 17. Curious to know if other neighborhoods also had their NA Plan Update Working Groups include people who are not residents of the neighborhood or not residents of Kirkland?
- Anna: NA mtg coming on the 25th. NA Plan Update group meeting on the 18th.
- Johanna: At next NA mtg, hot topic is the 132nd Square Park becoming a community park rather than a neighborhood park.
- Leo: Sept 12th Welcoming event at Juanita Beach Park. We’ve reserved the park and are excited, hoping the weather holds.
- Ken/Liz: Planning for next meeting, local topic re: a property owner with a community path across their property that they would like to remove.

Neighborhood Plan Update was approved in December and has just been posted. Noting that there's a strong uptick in developers interested in building cottage developments.

- Jane: Meeting in a couple of weeks. Trying to come up with COVID-friendly events, such as a Lego scavenger hunt, for community engagement. Wanting to get a Norkirk Greenway project to connect "Stores to Shores." Putting together a survey of residents on that.
- Chris: Hottest topic is the Houghton Transfer Station. The wind is blowing in the direction of the station expanding on the existing site, and we're heeding the advice of people like Claudia Balducci counseling us to negotiate for all the mitigations and compensations that we can get. The 85th Station Area is of course a hot topic; at last night's public meeting, the major questions regarded zoning: how will multi-family and single-family zoning shake out under the proposed alternatives? Finally, it's exciting to see the first Greenways being built, with turned stop signs and a raised intersection table behind the high school. We did a live Zoom poll at the meeting for people to prioritize Greenway art choices, if budget only allows statuary art or an intersection mural, instead of both. (Mural won.)
- Scott: Tiffany Tremblay was a great speaker at our last meeting. 54 people at the mtg!

9:11pm Closing

- Adjourned at 9:11pm
- Next meeting: June 9, 2021