

Minutes, Kirkland Alliance of Neighborhoods

December 13, 2023

Hybrid meeting: online and Peter Kirk room

Note: Action items are highlighted in yellow.

Neighborhoods attending:

Central Houghton	Lisa McConnell, Gary Greenberg
Everest	
Evergreen Hill	
Finn Hill	Bill Blanchard
Highlands	
Juanita Neighborhoods	Margaret
Lakeview	Aaron Jacobson (KAN co-chair)
Market	Liz Hunt, Ken Mackenzie
Moss Bay	Bea Nahon
Norkirk	
North Rose Hill	
South Rose Hill/Bridle Trails	Deirdre Johnson, Chris Kagen

City Staff/Elected Officials attending:

- Jim Lopez, Deputy City Manager (and Norkirk resident)
- Don Robinson, Senior Community Engagement Coordinator
- Erika Mascorro, Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging Manager

Guests:

- Sue Contreras
- Catie Malik
- Launa

7:03pm Public comments

- None.

7:03pm Introduction

- Chair Aaron Jacobson called the meeting to order
- Round-the-horn introductions

7:05pm City update to KAN

- Jim Lopez, attending at KAN
  - Welcome whenever
- Erika Mascorro
  - Can come give a (delayed from November) presentation on diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging (DEIB)
- City updates, on the regular KAN agenda
  - (Aaron) Recommend reinstating a regular agenda place for city updates, for Don or any other City personnel to give updates

- Liz: This seems to have been a robust way of bringing information to KAN for consideration and dissemination
- (Sue) What's happening with the little red house on 6<sup>th</sup>?
  - (Jim) Purchased, likely going to be a park
- (Gary) Ran into someone on the CKC who claimed to be doing a tree inventory for the city; any idea what that's about?
  - (Jim) No, will find out.
- (Deirdre) What's happening with the Houghton Park & Ride lot?
  - (Jim) Purchase is still underway, confident that it will go through.
  - Considering short-term uses like pickleball courts
  - Great topic to come back to KAN with!
  - (Deirdre) SRH/BT had submitted ideas
- (Sue) Wooden trolls – can we get one?
  - (Jim) It would likely look like securing the artist, then going through the Arts Commission (Erika is the coordinator for that)
  - Related note: If we inherit a giant metal seahawk head (from Lumen Field), where should we put it? They're offering it for free
- (Lisa) Erika, as you find successful outreach and connection methods, please let KAN know, as we are continually working on that
  - Example: Renters, people of color
  - We could hold a Neighborhood U to spread the information

#### 7:0pm Roundtable

- Everest
- Evergreen
- Finn Hill (Bill)
  - Green Loop project: Proposition 1 did not pass, and that had some funding in it, but we're moving forward
  - Want to work with the city to streamline permitting for events
    - Christmas Ships are coming on Monday; we wanted to serve hot chocolate and the city says we have to be certified vendors, so that may not happen
    - DennyFest, the annual party, ran into issues as well
- Highlands
- Houghton (Lisa)
  - Residents are unhappy with plans for the PCC site
  - Renaming 108<sup>th</sup> Ave. as Houghton Boulevard?
  - Neighborhood Safer Project proposals discussed at last meeting
    - Lots of good ideas, communication, neighborhood involvement
- Juanita (Margaret)
  - Going through the visioning process now for Plan Update
  - Would like to have more engagement through social media, such as NextDoor
- Lakeview (Aaron)
  - Building relationships with neighborhood businesses, e.g., Carillon Point

- (Lisa) Houghton was looking at submitting a joint Neighborhood Safety Project for the entrance to Lakeview Elementary School
  - (Don) It's not currently on the list
  - Lisa will follow up
  - The next phase of NSP will be around the end of January; Don will send out notice a month in advance
- Market (Liz and Ken)
  - Stores to Shores Greenway route is still problematic, trying to work with the city on it
  - Minutes go out to our mailing list, 400+ people
  - Lots of residential constructions, short plats, ADUs
    - Sidewalks being added to streets sometimes narrow the streets and impede lanes
- Moss Bay (Bea)
  - Nothing to report
- Norkirk
- SRH/BT (Deirdre)
  - Neighborhood Safety Program submissions
  - Tree code violations
  - Street racing on Fri/Sat nights
  - Good reach in social media with our public meeting minutes (Betsy Lewis secretary); 350 people reading on NextDoor, as well as our 200+ mailing list
- Totem Lake

7:40pm Election of a second co-chair

- Aaron presenting
- With appointment to the Planning Commission (effective this Saturday, ends 2025), Aaron will need to abstain from some KAN topics that relate specifically to the Planning Commission
- Concern for Aaron's ability to hold both positions
  - Aaron still has issues he'd like to work on in the frame of KAN, including a survey to establish demographics
  - (Bill) People in the past have resigned their Neighborhood Association and KAN roles when taking on a City commission position
  - (Aaron) Recognizes that it's a lot of commitment, so prioritizing
  - (Bea) I'm comfortable with the dual roles, and your time/priorities are up to you
  - (Margaret) What would the potential conflict be?
    - Example: Discussion of the Comprehensive Plan
    - If a topic like that comes up, Aaron would recuse from discussion and would be willing to leave the room
    - Aaron could remain in the room as a resource, though, able to answer questions
  - (Liz) Station Area Plan as an example (and Neighborhood Plan Updates)
    - A subgroup of KAN became very involved

- Recusing is fine, but it also means that Aaron as a KAN leader would not be helping to drive the issues
    - (Liz) It's important to me that a co-chair, then, be a full co-chair and not just filling in gaps
  - (Ken) I'm concerned by Aaron's wording, signaling influence of the City's view
    - Example: Neighborhood Plan Update process is influenced by the cost to city staff and their work plan
    - (Liz) A KAN (or NA) leader should be neutral on issues, for the purpose of leading discussion and engagement on issues
    - (Ken) I believe there needs to be a healthy tension between KAN and the City structure (staff and commissions)
      - (Lisa) I disagree; I don't see it as a conflict of interest but a difference of opinion. KAN is not necessarily neutral and that's OK.
      - (Deirdre) I do see it as a conflict of interest.
      - (Bea) "Conflict of interest" technically relates to personal financial interest, and that doesn't apply here. I don't see a problem here.
      - (Chris) Commission members are likewise supposed to be free thinkers, community members volunteering their time and welcomed for their independent opinions. I don't see that that's any different from what we ask and expect of KAN members.
      - (Margaret) Kirkland is famously understaffed. I'm dismayed by any framing of City staff as adversarial. And Aaron could bring KAN information about discussions at the Planning Commission level.
- Call for a co-chair
  - Bea: Willing to be an co-chair for the current election cycle (until May)
  - Vote to ratify Bea's appointment:
    - All approved; no opposed, no abstain

8:05pm      Interaction between KAN and the City

- Summary of topic
  - (Gary) When Allison spoke about Neighborhood Plans a few months ago, there was an impression that neighborhoods (and KAN) will be deemphasized in favor of a homogenized city
  - (Ken) The past relationship of KAN and the city has been a two-way street: communication out to residents, and also gathering information and sentiment
    - I feel the City now sees KAN only as an outward communication mechanism
    - And the City wants to streamline and reduce neighborhood planning

- (Liz) When outreach meetings happen these days, we're hearing "the plan is already done" and there's little opportunity for input
  - How do we get input and involvement earlier in planning processes?
  - Example: Crosswalk across 100<sup>th</sup> Ave.; it was eliminated from the plan, and now it's an uproar to get it back in
  - "You should get involved in the Comprehensive Plan" is not a reasonable answer; need access and influence during actual planning
- Planning Work Program
  - (Margaret) Does KAN actually look at the Work Program?
  - (Ken) Example: The Capital Improvement Plan has an item for reworking sidewalks on 7<sup>th</sup> Ave. KAN said, "That sounds great, let's get involved!" The response was, "Get involved in the Comprehensive Plan." But that means that by the time input is solicited, the design is 30% done and you can't materially change things.
  - (Margaret) I see, you want to get involved in the design phases, lower down than the CIP.
- History, and how to reshape our relationship with the City
  - (Bill) A decade ago, Kari Page would bring us ideas and schedule the principals of those ideas to come to KAN. We need to find a way to get back inside City Hall, get Don to fulfill that role and responsibility.
  - (Bea) We had quarterly meetings with the mayor, deputy mayor, and city manager. There should be no surprises.
  - (Lisa) Staff overwhelm explains a lot of the disconnect. There's been less communication in the last five years, worsened by COVID but starting before that. We need a Kari Page again.
  - Can we create a better relationship with the City Manager's office? Maybe Jim Lopez/ assistant deputy? Maybe John T. on Council?
- Reshaping our relationship
  - (Ken) KAN is not a city organization; we need to be independent. We need to represent the neighborhoods back to the City. That should include providing resources (people) to get involved in planning early.
  - (Lisa) We need to identify what issues KAN really wants to address. Neighborhood Plans are certainly up front.
  - The City is already pretty good at flowing information out to neighborhoods.
    - It could be improved. For example, the Houghton neighborhood was the last to hear about the opening of Fire Station 22, two weeks before it happened.
    - But we really need to work on the reverse: flowing information toward the City
  - (Liz) We can get past this growing adversarial posture to the City. Thank you for everyone coming to be in this conversation.
- Actions
  - Revive regular meetings between KAN leadership and City staff

- Continue deliberations in KAN to refine what we want to address and how
- Neighborhood Plans
  - We heard from Kurt Triplett what the City wants to do with Neighborhood Plans
  - We need to refine what we want to do with the Plans
  - (Lisa) The recent movement toward standardizing the neighborhoods, such as Jay Arnold saying that he thinks all neighborhood centers should have a common plan, does not pass the sniff test
  - (Bill) We used to have real input, and sometimes we still do, as with Finn Hill influencing tree code
  - (Lisa) This is exactly why we need to have a robust Neighborhood Plan process; that's where you surface these conversations
  - In terms of staff time and availability: What does the City staff prioritize above neighborhoods? Shouldn't there be dedicated resources for us?
    - Detailed staffing is probably not something we can take on.
  - (Bea) The appropriate goal should be meaningful impact, rather than robust input
    - She is meeting with some staff between now and the January KAN meeting

8:59pm Closing

- Adjourned at 8:59pm
- Next meeting: January 10, 2024