

Minutes, Kirkland Alliance of Neighborhoods

February 8, 2023

Hybrid meeting: online and Peter Kirk room

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

Neighborhoods attending:

Central Houghton	Lisa McConnell, Larry Toedtli
Everest	Anna Aubrey
Evergreen Hill	Johanna Palmer
Finn Hill	Bill Blanchard (KAN Chair)
Highlands	
Juanita Neighborhoods	Doug Rough
Lakeview	Aaron Jacobson
Market	Ken MacKenzie, Liz Hunt
Moss Bay	Jean Large, Bea Nahon
Norkirk	Janet Pruitt
North Rose Hill	
South Rose Hill/Bridle Trails	Chris Kagen

City Staff/Elected Officials attending:

- Don Robinson, Sr. Community Engagement Coordinator

Guests:

- Mary O'Hara, King County Solid Waste
- Kalyn Brady, King County Solid Waste
- John Tymczynsyn, Kirkland Planning Commission
- Deirdre Johnson, SRH/BT
- Brad Weed, Kirkland Greenways
- Russ Boyes (online)

7:05pm Introduction

- Chair Bill Blanchard called the meeting to order
- Round-the-horn introductions

7:19pm Public comments

- None

7:20pm Northeast Recycling and Transfer Station Project

- Mary O'Hara presenting
- Project overview
 - Outdated current Houghton facility
 - Reviewed 70K parcels in the study area, narrowed down with criteria from the Siting Advisory Group and other stakeholders
 - 3 locations identified:
 - Current Houghton site

- Houghton Park & Ride
 - Woodinville site
- SEPA (State Environmental Policy Act) process
 - EIS (Environment Impact Statement)
 - Identify and analyze impacts
 - 3 public meetings held (one online)
- Question (Deirdre): Why are there no sites from Redmond or Sammamish on the current list?
 - Redmond sites eliminated by administrative decision, rather than by EIS
- Action alternatives:
 - Action alternatives 1A and 1B
 - Existing Houghton site, with or without demolishing the existing location first
 - Action alternative 2
 - Woodinville
 - Action alternative 3
 - Houghton Park & Ride
 - Action alternative: No action
- What's next
 - EIS technical analysis
 - Draft EIS, late 2023
 - Final EIS, Spring 2024
 - Final site decision, Summer 2024
 - Design begins, Fall 2024
 - Construction begins, Summer 2027
 - Station opens, 2029
- Questions
 - (Larry) Alternative 3: Kirkland has been looking at the P&R for an aquatic center. Recent memo has designated the center of the site as reserved for DOT development for an I-405 onramp.
 - We have a meeting scheduled with DOT. If we eliminate #3, we don't have to add another alternative site to replace it.
 - (Deirdre) The Woodinville site included a successful business, and then someone in Woodinville suggested a neighboring site with wetlands that likely prohibit building there. Shouldn't KCSW step back and consider viable sites to replace that site?
 - No response.

7:42pm Park Lane

- Brad Weed presenting
- Kirkland Greenways: Advocating for safe and active transportation choices for people of all ages and abilities
- "Evenings on Park Lane" program
 - Summer 2020, pandemic program
 - Summer 2021 survey, 1200 responses
 - 2/3 called for 24/7 closure, April-October

- 20 businesses wanted evening-only closure to continue
- Consultants engaged in Winter 2022/23
 - Ongoing feedback sessions for input
- Evolution of Kirkland downtown
 - Downtown was a shipbuilding area
 - Became a shopping and daytrip destination
 - Car-oriented development; the Starbucks lot was a gas station
 - J.C. Penney as anchor for retail
 - Commercial Street turned into Park Lane, became a one-way street
 - Original committee vision: “a pedestrian-only specialty retail environment”
 - 2015: After decades of flooding, street buckling, and diseased trees, the city reinvented Park Lane
 - Video clip with interviews
 - Street raised 6” to eliminate curbs, integrate car and pedestrian areas
- Greater Downtown Urban Center
 - 2019: Kirkland applied for Regional Growth Center designation
 - King County approved
 - Pending approval by the Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC)
 - Makes the city eligible for a broader range of federal funding
 - Stretches from the water up to Rose Hill
 - Moss-Bay Neighborhood Plan specifies a “core area” including Park Lane: “Land uses should be oriented to the pedestrian, both in terms of design and activity type”
 - Maintain and enhance pedestrian activity
 - No drive-through facilities
 - Refuge from automobiles
 - Develop perimeter parking, with surplus parking allowed by developers
 - 2021 update of neighborhood plan: “pedestrian-oriented streets,” “less reliance on personal automobiles” “reducing or limiting the cost of vehicle ownership”
 - Policy MB-32: Specific to vision of Park Lane as pedestrian-only
- Examples of similar developments
 - Jersey City
 - University Village, the privately owned mall in Seattle: retail diversity, child play areas, weather refuge
- Proposal by Kirkland Greenways
 - Determine predictable hours to pedestrianize
 - Promote full throttle activation, year-round
 - City staff commitment
 - Connection to Cross-Kirkland Corridor, Library, other surrounding assets
 - Develop retail enhancement strategies
 - Help businesses prepare for urbanization of the area

- Help residents and surrounding communities as well
 - Collaborate, rather than forming competing camps
- What's next?
 - Brad speaking with Sheila Cloney, representing downtown merchants
 - Nobody wants cars ripping through downtown!
- Questions/Comments
 - (Bea) The city has added parking, and people still say there's not enough parking. We all want an activated downtown with successful businesses. We're not talking about closing the street, rather about opening it to new opportunities. That can inform how we approach issues such as garbage collection, deliveries, disabled access, etc.
 - That's right. If businesses have unmet needs, then those have to be solved.
 - (Leo) If you've seen an urban space like this, it's wonderful (Examples: Boulder CO, Asia, Europe). Many successes. If we never try it, we'll never see that success.
 - The Boulder project, as in Santa Barbara, met a lot of initial resistance, but has been enormously successful.
 - (Lisa) Covent Gardens and Faneuil Hall in Boston are examples as well, and remind us that we need year-round protection from weather to make a viable winter solution. And remember: Park Lane is actually two blocks long, and we need to consider the entire length of it. May require redevelopment of the buildings on the east block, to enhance their frontage on Park Lane. I love the Park Lane businesses and don't want them to go away; give them what they need to be successful.
 - (Ken) The road used to be a creek. Lake Washington Blvd is a major thoroughfare; our downtown is not a cul-de-sac, it's a through route. That complicates the idea of repurposing any of the area.
 - (??) I don't think anything we do will get rid of Lake Washington Blvd traffic, despite intentions to shift transit modes.
 - (Anna) I'm pleased with what's been done so far with Park Lane: shifting to one-way, brick surface, flexible closure. Let's keep an open mind about extending these ideas to other areas of Kirkland. The businesses need to stay alive and well, and if the businesses require car access, we need to continue to provide that. And how do we build safe and accessible bicycle access?
 - Flexible closure allows us to experiment with solutions; we can try various options and narrow to a solution that really works. The city staff need to ramp up their support, in things like garbage collection. (They recently added fancy foot-activated garbage cans and removed standard ones, resulting in fewer collection sites overall.)
 - (Janet) Is there a timeframe?
 - Consultant report is due to Council for consideration in June. Council could decide to study further, fund current ideas, or anything else.

- (Leo) Re: the fear of traffic getting worse: alternative modes can be a growing option. Improving other modes can be a great solution to the lousy traffic.
- (John) Planning Commission will continue to consider how to make this downtown area competitive with Totem Lake and other vitalized areas.

7:20pm City of Kirkland Community Appreciation Night

- Bill Blanchard presenting
- Nominations
 - Consider your neighbors, residents, activists, people who make this community great
 - KAN committee will choose from nominations
 - Nomination forms to come; watch for email, including dates for submission
- Categories
 - Leadership
 - Above and Beyond the Call of Duty
- Wed, April 26, 2023
 - At the Kirkland Performance Center
 - Save the date
 - Food and good times!
- Invitations
 - KAN, Neighborhood boards will be invited by default

8:30pm Roundtable

- Everest (Anna)
 - The PCC site (Houghton Center) is actually in Everest ...
 - Lisa will forward a compilation email pulled from the Everest and Houghton records
 - Everest Board is meeting right now to determine when the picnic will be this year
- Finn Hill (Bill)
 - 50 people at our first in-person meeting in years
 - Elections
 - People do want to meet in person again
 - Finn Hill Green Loop moving ahead
 - Keep finding funding ...
 - Goat Hill pathway is still under consideration
 - DennyFest: August 26
 - Music, food
- Juanita (Doug)
 - Bothell City is endorsing their end of the proposed Juanita Pathway
 - Stipulate that they want a written path and salmon protection
 - Goal includes connecting major employers, schools, destinations
- Market (Ken, Liz)
 - Liz is transitioning to chair position

- Planning to revitalize the board
 - Smallest neighborhood in Kirkland
 - Looking for topics that will attract and energize the residents
 - PFEC (Parks Funding Exploration Committee) continues to meet; Liz and Aaron participating
 - Easter Egg Hunt in April
 - Community Garage Sale later in April
 - (Ken) Evergreen Health board of directors is considering a major bond measure to expand; watch for news
- Evergreen (Johanna)
 - Lots of construction, but no big redevelopments
 - Want the 132nd Square Park open as soon as possible
- Lakeview (Aaron)
 - Housing in the former La Quinta site
- Norkirk (Janet)
 - First in-person meeting in three years!
 - Food, social engagement
 - Liz presentation on the 85th Station Area Plan
 - Packed Heritage Hall: 30-40 people. Seems that people really want to get together again.
 - (Don) Jane reached out to get addresses of everyone in the neighborhood, which Don can provide (no names, just physical addresses), for mass mailings things like newsletters
 - Board has added five new people; strong participation now
 - Garage Sale in April, picnic in summer
- SRH/BT (Chris)
 - Google backed out of the Lee Johnson site development; neighborhood intrigued as to what will happen now with 85th Station Area Plan
 - NERTS is a big topic, as usual
 - Starting planning for a summer picnic
 - Good reactions to the pop-up dog park at Snyder's Corner
- Houghton (Lisa, Larry)
 - City considering development at the former PCC site
 - Considering a "Working with the City 101" workshop
 - Let Larry and Lisa know if you're interested in participating
 - 2018 KAN communication strategy training was a good predecessor
 - (Don) **Town Hall planned for March 6, live or virtual**
- Moss Bay (Jean, Bea)
 - Happy Hours in the months when we don't have a formal meeting; very successful
 - Lots of interest in Park Lane
 - (Bea) Would like to see more people coming to KAN meetings virtually
- Totem Lake
 -

8:54pm Neighborhood Services (Don)

- PFEC recommendations are due to Council in March
- Neighborhood grants
 - Redesigned the technical support for the project submissions
 - Easier to use and submit receipts
 - Training videos coming
- Mayor’s State of the City speech, will be posted Friday
- How to get involved and interface with the City: “The Kirkland Initiative”
 - Kirkland has an 8-week program
 - Inclusive and fun
 - Don will work with Bill and Larry T. on a condensed version for KAN
- Community Appreciation Night
 - <See prior topic>

9:01pm Closing

- Adjourned at 9:01pm
- Next meeting March 8, 2023