

Minutes, Kirkland Alliance of Neighborhoods  
June 14, 2023          Hybrid meeting: online and Peter Kirk room

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

Neighborhoods attending:

Central Houghton	Jennifer Loy
Everest	Walter Jaccard
Evergreen Hill	
Finn Hill	Bill Blanchard
Highlands	Launa Johnson
Juanita Neighborhoods	Margaret Bouniol, Leo Gilbert
Lakeview	Aaron Jacobson (KAN co-chair)
Market	Liz Hunt
Moss Bay	
Norkirk	Mari Bercaw
North Rose Hill	
South Rose Hill/Bridle Trails	Chris Kagen

City Staff/Elected Officials attending:

- Don Robinson, Sr. Community Engagement Coordinator
- Penny Sweet, Mayor
- Allison Zike, Deputy Planning and Building Director
- Kurt Triplette

Guests:

- Deirdre Johnson, SRH/BT
- Jim Hoff, SRH/BT
- Tina Moody
- Sue Contreras
- Sheila Cooney
- Brad Robinson, Evergreen Hill
- Gary Greenberg, Houghton
- Jaime Lusardo
- Tina

7:01pm          Introduction

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

7:05pm          Public comments

- Easter Egg Hunt is in peril due to the city starting to charge a fee for the use of the grass

7:06pm          State of the City of Kirkland

- Mayor Penny Sweet presenting
- Preparation and the city's responses to challenges
  - The city was prepared for emergency, before COVID came
  - COVID is now considered endemic
  - Housing challenges, corporate layoffs, other challenges
  - Google cancelling 85<sup>th</sup> Station Area plans
- \$1B budget
  - AAA credit rating
  - Good funding and reserves
- Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging
  - Hired new DEIB Manager and homeless services coordinator
  - Copies of the [DEIB 5-year roadmap](#) are available
  - Community Responders hired for mental health response; 24-hr crisis center is pending
  - Initiative for hiring diverse firefighters
  - Affordable housing targets, with initiatives and target tracking
    - Hundreds of units for families, seniors, wrap-around services
    - La Quinta Inn conversion to housing approved by Council in March
- Sustainability, transportation
  - Safer Routes to Schools funding
  - Sustainability Master Plan
  - WSDOT 32<sup>nd</sup> x I-405 onramps
  - Metro RapidRide K line
  - Totem Lake Connector Bridge opening next month
- Community events, parks investment
  - Youth programs
  - Parks Funding Exploratory Committee made facility and funding recommendations
  - 132<sup>nd</sup> Square Park: tripling playfield capacity
  - Renovations at Kirkland Performance Center
- Recognition and achievement
  - Expertise and regional leadership by members of the City Council (summary of experience and appointments)
  - Money Magazine: 3d best place to live in America
  - 425 Magazine: Best City
  - Governor's Smart Communities Award: Judges' Merit Winner for village at Totem Lake
  - New Amazon facility for satellite manufacturing, in the former Nintendo building northeast of Totem Lake
- Q&A
  - [Liz] How is our budget, after pandemic-era hits?
    - [Kurt] We used some reserves and federal rescue funding, and came out of the post-COVID recession more quickly than most of the nation. Much of our local economy adapted well to remote work, so there was less hit there as well.

- [Margaret] Hiring, to replace lost staff during COVID
  - [Kurt] Staffing has been our #1 challenge: “The Great Shuffle” rather than “The Great Resignation.” People left by changing their lives, moving away. We’re doing better than most for retention and hiring, but it’s a constant struggle.
  - 1.5 years ago, we had ~80 vacancies, down to ~30
  - Grounds crews, such as maintenance workers, are especially hard to find
  - Q: Could we apply funds for contractors, seasonal or otherwise?
  - Council funded 14 new positions, and yes, we’re considering contracting. We’re in negotiations with the Teamsters, the union for many of our Public Works positions, to stay competitive in our offerings. By state law, you can need union permission to engage contractors.
- [Tina] Are we hiring an Economic Development Director?
  - [Kurt] We have an economic development team, including Jim Lopez and myself. We don’t believe we need a staff position with that title. Bellevue is out recruiting big companies to come to town, and our needs are smaller in scope.
  - [Tina] Kirkland has lost some quality small businesses.
  - [Penny] Relative to many other local cities, we’re doing pretty well.
- School Resource Officers (SROs): will they be going away?
  - [Penny] We’ve been working hard on getting the right fit. We’re proud of the program we created, but there has been pushback (inside and outside of the schools) about having officers onsite.
  - [Kurt] The 2018 city initiative was right after the Park City shooting. We always paid ½ of the cost of SROs. At one point we had six SROs, and eventually the Lake Washington School District said they couldn’t afford that many. And then there was the George Floyd killing by a police officer, and the SRO program was an issue for the BIPOC community. LWSD asked to cut down to two SROs. We want three and want them to have all the training that an SRO gets, but they’ll be more like liaisons: interacting with the schools and responding to calls, but not regularly onsite. It’s a district-wide shift.
- [Sheila] Kurt, are you available to meet with downtown businesses?
  - [Kurt] Yes.

7:49pm Neighborhood Safety Project (NSP) update discussion

- Don Robinson presenting
- 10 years of a successful program
  - KAN is responsible for the program
  - Current funding is \$350K/year and won’t change now
- Rectangular rapid flashing beacons (RRFBs)
  - Safe mechanism for pedestrian safety

- Used to be ~\$50K, now \$150K-\$200K
- We did solar at first, but they weren't reliable
- Have to do a bunch of ADA stuff: curb ramps, etc.
- Question: Do we want to retain the intention of the program as funding of many small projects, or do we allow large projects (like RRFBs) that require a larger piece of the funding?
  - Projects are graded by Transportation Master Plan point system: technical scoring by rubric (which includes pricing as one measure)
  - Not considering adjusting the rubric right now; could consider that separately
  - Better to frame the conversation around "high-value" projects
- Original intention: Engage the community
  - City has a prioritization process, based on crash statistics, metrics, etc.
  - City set aside a pot of money for community prioritization
- [Margaret] I was surprised that in the NSP process, we voted for projects, but then there wasn't a step for compromising or negotiating after the vote
  - [Don] Yes, after voting comes the ranking, and then we proceed from there. The process doesn't account for changing mid-course. KAN can change the process.
- Q: I'd like to see more crossing flags at school crossings
  - Crossing flags come from a different funding source, not NSP
- Decision for tonight
  - Current policy: \$50K cap on projects
  - KAN can vote to maintain or change that cap
  - [Jim H.] Recommend returning to a small-project focus, though with perhaps a bump of the cap to \$60K-\$65K
  - [2 speakers] Agreement that the NSP program should focus on smaller projects
- Summary of comments: Recommend return to smaller funding, excluding large projects
- Motion: [Liz] Amend the NSP to have an increase in the price allowed for an individual project, to accommodate inflation cost. Seconded [Walter].
  - Amended by Liz, as described by Don: Return to enforcing the original cap, and then apply an inflation raise.
- Vote to amend the motion: 8 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstain
- Vote for the motion: 8 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstain
- Don to return in the Fall with a proposed inflation-based raise for the cap

8:24pm      Comprehensive Plan - Transportation

- Allison Zike presenting
- Comprehensive Plan update process
  - Cities are required by the state to update periodically
  - 2023 focus: community engagement, getting feedback
  - DEIB goals: 5-year plan
  - City is required to accommodate growth through land use elements
    - 2044 targets for increase: 13,200 housing units, 26,490 jobs

- We don't have to add a lot of housing, but it makes sense for us to add some in strategic areas, such as transit-oriented developments
- [Margaret] Are housing units differentiated by size/capacity, and jobs by part-/full-time?
  - [Allison] No for housing. I'd have to check on the jobs.
  - We'll probably be adding smaller housing units, as infill in dense areas
- Scope of the Comprehensive Plan
  - Goals and policies
  - Not specific codes, zoning, etc.
  - Goal -> Policy -> Design guidelines -> Codes
- Themes from public outreach
  - Provide opportunities for more housing, especially affordable housing
  - Focus growth in areas of the city that already have a lot of activity, existing neighborhood commercial centers, and along major roads and transit
  - Create a land use pattern and transportation network that makes it easier to live near neighborhood commercial uses and community facilities
- Potential land use policy concepts include:
  - Citywide affordable housing requirements
  - Stimulate production of missing middle housing types
  - Density increases in existing neighborhood commercial-oriented sites
  - More allowances for small-scale neighborhood commercial uses and/or home-based businesses in low-density residential neighborhoods
  - Reducing and/or restructuring parking standards
  - Increasing public access to Lake Washington and other natural areas
  - Become a more "Complete City"
- Community-Initiated Amendment Requests (CARs)
  - Planning Commission will conduct review on June 22
- Neighborhood Plan Updates
  - Juanita
  - Kingsgate (Evergreen Hill)
- What's next?
  - Take the Land Use and Transportation survey, if you haven't already
    - And the Housing and Human Services survey as well
  - Economic Development team plans to come to KAN in the fall
  - Planning Commission and City Council briefings periodically for the rest of 2023
  - Send thoughts to Allison
- Q&A

- Views are an important part of Kirkland residence. Can there be land use protection of residential views, with higher buildings coming in?
  - [Allison] Yes, it's hard to balance preservation of Kirkland character while accommodating growth. The Comprehensive Plan does not address protecting views, but it does address key points of quality of life in the city.
- [Jim H.] What is the position of Kirkland's Equestrian Overlay, relative to state law?
  - [Allison] It is worth considering whether it makes sense to have RX35 (35,000 ft<sup>2</sup>) lots, when the rest of the city is much smaller lots. We'll be considering it.
- [Sue] The Mayor talked about what a shame it was that we lost the Google development on Rose Hill. But many of us didn't want such high buildings!
  - [Allison] We're focusing on Phase 2 of the Station Area Plan right now, the outer bands, which are more 65'-85', topping out at 150'.

8:30pm Roundtable

- Everest: (Walter)
  - Summer picnic planned
- Evergreen (none)
- Finn Hill (Bill)
  - Dennyfest Aug 16
  - Goat Hill land acquisition project continuing
  - Planning a mailer to 220 new residents
- Highlands (Name?)
  - Need a plan for dog waste in the parks
  - Norkirk Summer Picnic coming up in August
- Houghton (Jennifer)
  - Homeless encampment on the Cross-Kirkland Trail; worked with the city to clean it up
  - Kirkland Police came to the last NA meeting
  - 30-50 people at our in-person meetings; have held two now
    - 750 people on the mailing list
- Juanita (Margaret)
  - Welcoming Juanita event in the fall
  - \$100 awards to students at Juanita High
- Lakeview (Aaron)
  - Rebuilding the NA board
  - Planning to have our first meeting in a while
  - Perhaps get volunteers to plan a picnic in the fall
- Market (Liz)
  - Rebuilding the NA board
  - New people coming to the NA public meetings

- Presentation on city tree regulations at the last meeting
- Hoping to do a picnic in September
- Moss Bay (none)
- Norkirk (Mari)
- SRH/BT (Jim)
  - Returning to in-person meetings, at Ben Franklin in the fall
    - Planning for hybrid broadcast as well
  - Planning a candidate forum in September
  - Funding an ice cream truck as a one-time event to promote community connection; handing out flyers with free ice cream and popsicles for kids
- Totem Lake (none)

8:57pm      Forming a new downtown neighborhood

- What would it take to form a new neighborhood and neighborhood association?
- The neighborhoods are defined in the Comprehensive Plan, and their Neighborhood Plans are part of the Comprehensive Plan
- Ultimate decision is City Council

9:01      Sharing KAN knowledge

- [Launa] Is there a way for us to share methods, tips, etc.?
- Aaron following up, to see if there's a volunteer effort to be started

9:13pm      Closing

- Adjourned at 9:14pm
- Next meeting September 13, 2023