



CITY OF KIRKLAND
Department of Public Works
123 Fifth Avenue, Kirkland, WA 98033 425.587.3800
www.ci.kirkland.wa.us

MEMORANDUM

To: David Ramsay, City Manager

From: Kari Page, Neighborhood Outreach Coordinator
Marilynne Beard, Assistant City Manager

Date: February 4, 2010

Subject: GROHN EMAIL REGARDING 2010 NEIGHBORHOOD CONNECTION PROGRAM IN THE NORKIRK NEIGHBORHOOD

RECOMMENDATION:

City Council approve the attached response letter to Liv Grohn regarding the 2010 Neighborhood Connection Program in the Norkirk Neighborhood

BACKGROUND DISCUSSION:

History of Neighborhood Connection Program

The Neighborhood Connection Program was created in 2000 with an annual allocation of \$100,000 from Capital Improvement Program Funding. In 2008, the annual allocation increased to \$125,000. The program targeted four of the 13 neighborhoods each year and cycled around the entire City in three years.

The goals of the program include:

- Provide neighborhoods with resources to address needs;
- Strengthen the relationship between City Hall and the neighborhoods;
- Support the neighborhood associations in expanding their membership;
- Increase awareness of City services; and
- Build partnerships to improve Kirkland's neighborhoods.

Although the popularity of the program has been fueled by the capital projects funding, the program addressed hundreds of non capital citizen inquiries each year. Only thirty percent of the requests typically end up on the ballot for the neighborhood to prioritize for their Neighborhood Connection Program funding allocation (\$25,000 per neighborhood).

Since the Program's inception, the program has addressed over 2000 requests and completed over 85 small capital projects totaling \$900,000. The projects fall into the following categories:

- \$167,000 Pedestrian improvements: asphalt walkways, gravel paths, sidewalk connections
- \$160,000 Pedestrian crossings: sidewalk bump outs, traffic islands, flashing beacons, overhead signs

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| \$150,000 | Park capital investments: playgrounds, gazebos, swings |
| \$102,000 | Traffic calming: islands, street narrowing, and radar signs |
| \$82,000 | Street lighting |
| \$65,000 | Park major maintenance: resurfacing basketball courts, hoops and backboards, resurfacing trails |
| \$61,500 | Art: sculptures (including "Save the Animals") |
| \$50,000 | Benches: along city right of way |
| \$32,500 | Park vegetation: removal of invasive plants and re-vegetating with native plants |
| \$30,000 | Landscaping and street trees along public right of way |

City Council Budget Reduction Decision

During the 2009/2010 budget process, the City Council discussed eliminating the Neighborhood Connection Program funding completely (as part of the budget reductions for the biennial budget). In addition, the Neighborhood Matching Grant Program was reduced from \$3,500 to \$615 per neighborhood.

However, after much deliberation the Council decided to include \$25,000 in the biennial budget so the Program would not disappear entirely. The thinking was that keeping the "line item" in the budget would recognize the Program's importance even during these hard times and create a slate for future increases once the City's financial condition recovered. The Council adopted the 2009/2010 biannual budget with no program funding in 2009 and \$25,000 for 2010.

Staff met with the Kirkland Alliance of Neighborhoods in early 2009 and obtained consensus on funding the Norkirk Neighborhood in 2010. The Norkirk Neighborhood is the last neighborhood to complete the third cycle around the entire City. All other neighborhoods have received three cycles of funding.

Norkirk Neighborhood Connection Program 2010

At the February 3, 2010 Norkirk Neighborhood meeting, the group discussed project ideas to compete for the \$25,000. Examples of project ideas submitted to date include:

- Re-landscape the traffic islands to reduce maintenance costs and remove bulky vegetation reducing driver's site distance.
- Leverage funding with neighborhood volunteers to improve a vacated street end
- Sponsor one or more concerts in the park.
- Install benches at the pea patch in Tot Lot Park and popular Metro bus stops.
- Create an outdoor fitness course at one of the neighborhood parks.
- Implement a forest restoration project at Crestwoods Park using volunteers and possibly goats.
- Restore some level of garbage service in neighborhood parks.
- Return a portion or all of the funding to the City to help with the budget shortfall.

Returning the money to the City has been suggested in the past, but never before under these kinds of City budget conditions. The program empowers the neighborhood association to make the final decision on what goes on the ballot for voting. From the discussion at the February 3 meeting, returning the money to this City is a likely possibility. The Norkirk Neighborhood will further discuss these and other ideas submitted by their neighborhood at their next meeting (April 7) prior to finalizing the ballot.

After that time, a postcard will be mailed to all Norkirk residents directing them to the online ballot site to learn more about the projects and vote.

EMAIL FROM LIV GROHN:

From: Liv Grohn [livgrohn@verizon.net] Sent: Sun 1/24/2010 8:44 PM
To: Amy Walen; Bob Sternoff; Joan McBride; Doreen Marchione; Penny Sweet; Jessica Greenway; Dave Asher
Cc: Larry Springer; Roger Goodman; Kari Page; Eric Eng
Subject: Neighborhood Connections Program

Honorable Mayor McBride, and Honorable City Council members,

I am a bit at odds with the continuation of the Neighborhood Connections Program for 2010.

While I recognize that the annual funding has been reduced from 100K to 25K and only one neighborhood is receiving funding this year (mine-- Norkirk) it seems less than prudent to be using scarce city funds to purchase art or other discretionary items--even though they might improve our quality of life.

This concept is a wonderful program--when times are good. But in these tough economic times, it simply does not seem wise particularly when noting employee job losses and cuts to other programs which we all know actually do have a direct affect on our communities.

Thank you for your consideration.

Liv Grohn
338 Tenth Avenue
Kirkland, WA 98033
hm: 425.828.9445
cell: 425.736.8011

February 17, 2010

Liv Grohn
338 Tenth Avenue
Kirkland, WA 98033

D R A F T

Re: Neighborhood Connection Program

Dear Ms. Grohn:

Thank you for your email to the Kirkland City Council expressing concerns about continuing the Neighborhood Connection Program for 2010.

During the 2009/2010 budget process, the City Council did discuss eliminating the Neighborhood Connection Program funding completely (as part of the budget reductions for the biannual budget). In addition, the Neighborhood Matching Grant Program was reduced from \$3,500 to \$615 per neighborhood.

However, after much deliberation the Council decided to include \$25,000 in the biannual budget so the Program would not disappear entirely. The thinking was that keeping the "line item" in the budget would recognize the Program's importance even during these hard times and create a slate for future increases once the City's financial condition recovered. The Council adopted the 2009/2010 biannual budget with no program funding in 2009 and \$25,000 for 2010.

Staff met with the Kirkland Alliance of Neighborhoods in early 2009 and obtained consensus on funding the Norkirk Neighborhood in 2010. The Norkirk Neighborhood is the last neighborhood to complete the third cycle around the entire City. All other neighborhoods have received three cycles of funding.

As you may know, the program empowers the neighborhood association to make the final decision on what appears on the neighborhood's ballot for voting. Over a dozen project requests have been submitted to date including returning the funding to the City. Your recommendation has been added to the list of potential items on the ballot. The Norkirk Neighborhood Association will further discuss these and other ideas submitted by their neighborhood at their next meeting (April 7) prior to finalizing the ballot.

Thank you for sharing your concerns. Please stay involved with your neighborhood as the process continues. Should you have further questions about the Neighborhood Connection Program, please contact Kari Page, Neighborhood Outreach Coordinator at (425) 587-3011 or kpage@ci.kirkland.wa.us.

Sincerely,
KIRKLAND CITY COUNCIL

by Joan McBride
Mayor