



CITY OF KIRKLAND
Planning and Community Development Department
123 Fifth Avenue, Kirkland, WA 98033 425.587-3225
www.ci.kirkland.wa.us

MEMORANDUM

To: David Ramsay, City Manager
From: Eric Shields, Planning Director
Date: January 4, 2008
Subject: E-mail from Helen Roller

RECOMMENDATION

Authorize that the attached letter (Attachment 1) be sent to Helen Roller and that this informational letter also be sent in response to future correspondence relating to the Park Place proposal. The correspondence received from citizens will be forwarded to the City Council in a timely manner.

BACKGROUND DISCUSSION

Ms. Roller sent the attached e-mail (Attachment 2) expressing her concerns about the private amendment request for redevelopment of the Park Place site. It is expected that Council will be receiving a number of these e-mails and letters in the future since the PAR review process will be continuing through August of 2008. Staff is recommending that an informational letter like the one that is proposed to be sent to Ms. Roller also be sent in response to future correspondence. These response letters will be signed by the Mayor. The correspondence from citizens will be forwarded to the City Council as it is received.

cc: ZON07-00016

From: Helen Roller [mailto:hroller@rollergroup.com]
Sent: Friday, December 14, 2007 1:45 PM
To: Kirkland Council
Subject: Downtown development!

Hello, Concerned Council Members,

I have lived in Kirkland since 1983, and the thing I admired and respected most, when I moved here, was the building code. I appreciate the limits on height, and especially the requirement for open spaces.

I have lived downtown since 1991, and I am very concerned about the current and proposed development of our city. We are changing from being a "funky" downtown, to being Bellevue North. This totally takes away the former charm of our neighborhood, and it frightens me to see it go further, with even taller structures.

- Mr. Howe's requests for variances flies in the face of all of us who live in this community. Why does he demand to have 8 stories, when even the recently built Heathman hotel has only five? (Even though that is getting too tall for the character of the lake neighborhood.) Why do they feel entitled to such a variance? PLEASE don't set this precedent for higher buildings!!

I would respectfully request that Touchstone be held to the same standards that are only fair and reasonable for the others in the neighborhood. Why are they allowed to come in here and develop whatever they want? Where is the formerly strict code?

We desperately need to maintain setbacks from the street and park. Our open spaces are part of what makes Kirkland. To have taller buildings, closer to the street, would make Central Way into more of a canyon below 6th street than it already is. The current Park Place office building is high enough, visually, for the area.

As for the need for more office space, I have noticed many new buildings with space for lease for Spring 2007, not yet leased.

Can Touchstone put its high rises in Totem Lake? That is a dismal, but large, area that is begging for good development!

As a side comment, I resent the comment from the July meeting that indicates the only people who care about the 8 story hotels are the condo owners with views.

This is an insult! I do not have a view. I care about our open spaces, and my daylight!

My family uses the Peter Kirk Park frequently, since my 9-year old was born. Touchstone should not be allowed to carve out parts of the Park for entrance into Park Place.

Regarding parking....aren't the proposed 3500 spaces overkill? University Village has been recently advertising that they have 2000 spaces, usually enough to accommodate them. Last time I looked, that was a much bigger area than Park Place.

Do we really want that kind of density in Kirkland? Where will everybody go when they leave all those spaces?

I live close enough to Park Place that I walk over there almost daily and use many of the conveniences available. Also, I have not seen a movie theater in the plans, either. Are we still going to have a theater in Kirkland? The current management of the theater is doing a fabulous job of updating and keeping current with new releases. We frequent this theater for almost all (90+%) new movies that we see.

The sketches look like there is some open space, due to the parking all being underground (?) but the space, covered by concrete, does not look as inviting as patches of lawn and mature trees.

There is a lot of reference to "superior retail". What the heck does that mean?!! What happened to Kirkland as a funky place to go, and friendly place to walk to the various, kitschy, specialty shops? That is what we need to support.

Please, as a council, I beg you to make the reasonable decision, not the greedy one, and represent your constituents that appreciate the almost-formerly funky Kirkland. If you don't, I fear the next elections of council may just reflect our disgust with the runaway development.

Mr. Howe refers to Kirkland as a "bedroom community". Yeah, so?! It is MY bedroom he is trying to destroy!!

Thank you for your consideration of this letter.

Helen Roller
422 4th Ave.

January 15, 2008

DRAFT

Ms. Helen Roller
422 4th Avenue
Kirkland, WA 98033

Dear Ms. Roller:

Subject: Proposed Touchstone (Park Place) Development

Thank you for your recent e-mail concerning the Comprehensive Plan private amendment request (PAR) for redevelopment of the Park Place site. Your correspondence expresses several issues about the proposal by Touchstone to amend the Comprehensive Plan and Zoning for the site. The Touchstone request includes a building height increase from 3-5 stories to 4-8 stories as measured from the grade of 6th Street and Central Way and allowance of taller buildings next to Central Way and 6th Street. It also includes a building setback reduction from 20 feet to 0 feet on Central Way and 6th Street, and possibly from 10 feet to 0 feet next to Peter Kirk Park. There may also be requests for flexibility in other regulations such as lot coverage. An explanation of the review process for the Touchstone PAR is included in this letter.

The City accepts Comprehensive Plan PARs biennially. The City Council then decides which PARs will be studied further. The PARs that are to be studied go through a full analysis by the Planning Commission and a public review. The Planning Commission holds a public hearing and makes a recommendation to the City Council. The Council then reviews the recommendation and makes a final decision on whether any changes should be made to the Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Code.

In July of 2007, the City Council made a decision to further study the Park Place PAR. At that time, the Council also passed a resolution which directed the Design Review Board (DRB) to play a role in advising the Planning Commission on this proposal. This was done to take advantage of the contribution that the design professionals on the DRB could make to the review process.

The typical role of the DRB is to review projects for consistency with the design guidelines in the Kirkland Municipal Code and the neighborhood plans and design principles in the Comprehensive Plan. In this case, the DRB will review and provide direction on conceptual development plans submitted by the applicant. The primary issues that the DRB will focus on will be the site layout and building massing.

An environmental impact statement (EIS) is being done for the Park Place proposal as well as for two other proposals located in the vicinity of the downtown (the Altom and Orni PARs). The EIS will analyze the potential impacts of the proposals on land use, aesthetics, transportation, public services, and water and

sewer utilities. The end result will be a planned action EIS that is expected to be issued in June 2008. The EIS will be used by the Planning Commission and City Council to help in their decision making process. It is anticipated that the Council will make a decision on the proposal in August 2008.

The City Council appreciates you taking the time to express your concerns and ask questions. We encourage you to stay informed and involved as the Comprehensive Plan Amendments proceed through the required legislative process. We hope that you will attend meetings and address the City Council, Planning Commission and DRB during the public comment periods provided at these meetings.

The City's website (www.ci.kirkland.wa.us) is a good source of information regarding the Comprehensive Plan Amendments and this particular project. The Council, Planning Commission and DRB meeting agendas are posted to the site. You may want to subscribe to the e-mail bulletin to receive updates about this project.

On behalf of the City Council, thank you for your correspondence. Your e-mail and this response will be shared with the entire Council, the Planning Commission and the DRB. If you'd like to discuss your concerns further, please contact Angela Ruggeri, Project Planner at (425) 587-3256 or at aruggeri@ci.kirkland.wa.us

Sincerely,

KIRKLAND CITY COUNCIL

By Jim Lauinger
Mayor

File #ZON07-00016