



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: May 9, 2008
Subject: Interim Options for Processing Design Review Applications

RECOMMENDATION

I recommend that the Council review the options described below, select one of the options and direct staff to implement it. Options 2-4 must be enacted by ordinance at a subsequent meeting.

BACKGROUND DISCUSSION

With the recent resignation of four members of the Design Review Board, the DRB no longer has a quorum and is unable to function. As a result, design review applications cannot be processed until at least one replacement member is appointed or an alternative review process is established. There are currently two active design review applications that are on hold until this matter is resolved. Listed below are several options to resolve this situation.

1. Recruit to fill vacant positions. The recruitment process is expected to begin on Monday May 12 and take approximately five weeks – three to advertise and two to interview and appoint. According to the City Clerk, variables in this schedule are the number and qualifications of applicants and the ability to schedule interviews.

It may be difficult to find four qualified applicants, especially under the circumstances of the recent resignations. However, it wouldn't be absolutely necessary to fill all four positions. Filling just one position would create a working quorum and allow design review applications to be processed.

Even if the DRB appointment process is expedited, the resulting board will have only two experienced members, since one of the three remaining members was just recently appointed. It will take some time for the new Board to get up to speed.

Note that the requirements for the qualifications for the Board in Kirkland Municipal Code 3.30.020 require that the Design Review Board "include design professionals and building/construction experts, and residents of Kirkland capable of reading and understanding

architectural plans and knowledgeable in matters and buildings and design.” The KMC goes on to state that the Board “shall at all times have a majority composition of professionals from architecture, landscape architecture, urban design/planning, or similar disciplines.”

2. Use Administrative Design Review. The Zoning Code establishes an administrative design review process that is typically used for small projects. With ADR, staff reviews projects against a set of specific design regulations, rather than broad design guidelines. The process allows staff to exercise less discretion than with the Design Board review process. The ADR process also does not involve a public hearing and there is no City appeal process.
3. Create a hybrid of Administrative Design Review and Process IIA. The lack of a public hearing for administrative design review would be inconsistent with public expectations in many instances. To provide an opportunity for public involvement, the ADR process could be supplemented with a Process IIA Hearing Examiner decision. In this process, staff would conduct ADR and present our recommendations to a Hearing Examiner who would conduct a public hearing and make a final decision. The decision would be appealable to the City Council. This is essentially the same process that was used for the Juanita Village project.
4. Hire a temporary design review official. Another alternative would be to hire an architect to temporarily serve in place of the Design Review Board. All aspects of the process would remain as they are now, except that the final decision would be made by a single individual rather than by consensus of a group of board members.