



CITY OF KIRKLAND

Planning and Community Development Department

123 Fifth Avenue, Kirkland, WA 98033 425.587.3225

www.ci.kirkland.wa.us

MEMORANDUM

Date: January 3, 2007

To: Planning Commission

From: Paul Stewart, Deputy Planning Director

Subject: Planning Commission Retreat and Planning Work Program

Introduction

The Planning Commission retreat is scheduled for January 10, 2008 from 5:30 – 9:30 pm at the meeting room at McAuliffe Park. The park is located at 10824 NE 116th Street and the entrance to the facility is from 108th Avenue NE.

The objectives for the Commission's annual retreat are to:

- Review the work and accomplishments of 2007
- Discuss future trends and where the City is going.
- Discuss specific topics of interest
- Review the Draft Planning Work Program
- Identify discussion items for the joint meeting with the City Council (scheduled for February 19th, 2008).

Review of 2007

In 2007, the Commission addressed a variety of topics and completed work on major projects that reflect some very creative approaches in planning – particularly housing. Based on extensive work by the Planning Commission, last year the City Council adopted regulations and incentives for small lot housing and historic preservation for the Market and Norkirk neighborhoods. Another milestone was the adoption of the Cottage Housing regulations. The Commission took an active and thoughtful role in both of these projects. Attachment 1 is a summary of the Commission meeting topics.

The Commission also spent considerable time on private amendment requests (PAR's), particularly in the second half of the year. In 2007, seven of the Commission meetings included study sessions on various private amendment requests.

The projects the Commission worked on in 2007 include:

- Adopted new Commission rules of procedure.
- Small lot single family and historic preservation regulations for Market and Norkirk (adopted by City Council).
- Market Street Corridor Design Regulations (adopted by City Council).
- Reformat of the Chapter 92 – Design Regulations (adopted by City Council).
- Review of Private Amendment Requests (threshold review and study sessions).
- Comprehensive Plan Update (city initiated).
- Cottage Housing Regulations (adopted by City Council).
- Shoreline Master Program Update.
- Miscellaneous Zoning Code Amendments (Adoption by City Council on January 15, 2008).
- TL 9 Zoning

Given the nature of the projects undertaken in 2007, at the retreat, the Commission may want to briefly review and discuss Commission and staff procedures. Are things generally going ok? Where can we improve? Are we providing the appropriate information? Are there ways to engage the public more effectively? Can we be more productive or efficient with our meetings?

Also at the retreat, Eric Shields will provide a summary of the various development projects that have been completed or approved recently as well as projects of interest in the pipeline.

Trends – Where are we going?

Someone once said: “*The trouble with our times is that the future is not what it used to be.*” At the December 13th meeting, the Commission expressed an interest in having a general discussion on looking at changes and trends and being more proactive in anticipating and addressing them rather than being reactive. The retreat will be a good opportunity to do some brainstorming on what has been happening in the city over the past few years, what are the influences, and what new ideas or approaches we may want to consider as we look down the road over the next horizon. Staff is suggesting a short “flip chart” exercise to capture these thoughts and ideas.

Discussion Topics

Housing

On January 2, the City Council was to receive a status report on affordable housing and provide direction to staff on affordable housing incentives and requirements (See Attachment 6). However, due to the lateness of the meeting, the Council postponed the discussion to their annual retreat in March. While our affordable housing incentives have been in place for over 3 ½ years and we have provided additional affordable housing incentives and requirements in Totem Lake and NE 85th Street corridor, to date no one has actually done a project. There is currently an application for a project in the Totem Lake Neighborhood that is intending on using the incentives. The question before the Commission and the Council is what additional strategies and steps need to be taken. The attached Council memo provides a good background for the discussion.

Neighborhood Plans

In 2007 we completed work on the zoning and design regulations for the neighborhood plans for Market and Norkirk. We had intended on beginning work on the Lakeview Neighborhood Plan in late 2007, however several complex design review project applications were submitted for review and staff time was devoted to processing them. Staff should be ready to begin the Lakeview Plan in the spring of 2008. We would like to be more efficient with our process and are hoping to keep the time frame to around 18 months. At this point, we intend to bring the work program, approach and schedule to the Commission at an April meeting. Attachment 5 is the current schedule of neighborhood plan updates.

Private Amendment Requests (PAR's)

In general the City considers citizen initiated proposals once every other year with the annual review of the Comprehensive Plan. The next opportunity to propose a private amendment request is in December, 2008 for review and consideration in 2009. Every so often we receive requests to amend the text of the Zoning Code. Staff is suggesting that we include these requests as part of this process.

As we saw in 2007, PAR's take considerable Commission time to process and review. They are an opportunity for consideration of rezones and plan changes outside the regular neighborhood plan process. Administratively, we set Dec. 1st as the deadline to submit requests. In 2007, other requests came in to the City Council after the deadline. At the retreat, it would be appropriate to discuss the timing of requests, the process to review them, and how to respond when requests come in after the deadline.

Working with the City Council

The retreat is a good opportunity to reflect on the interaction between the Council and the Commission. Over the past year, having Commission members attend the Council meetings to transmit the Commission's recommendations has been very helpful. Not only does it provide the rationale for the Commission's recommendation, it also enables the Council to get a flavor of the Commission's discussion on the key issues. At the retreat are there other thoughts, comments or observations for Commission to discuss? In addition, what other topics or items does the Commission want to discuss with the Council at the joint meeting in February?

Planning Work Program

The proposed 2008-2010 Planning Work Program is included as Attachment 2. Attachment 3 is a summary of the tasks on the work program. *(Note: Attachment 4 is the previous work program adopted in August, 2007.)*

The key projects involving the Commission for 2008 consist of:

- Completion of the City-initiated Comprehensive Plan update.
- Completion of the private amendment request and the Planned Action Ordinance for the applications in and near the downtown.

- Completion of the Hart, Nakhjiri, and Congregational Church PAR's.
- Initiation of the Lakeview Neighborhood Plan.
- Completion of the TL9 Zoning.
- A series of code revisions (SEPA, subdivision and zoning)
- Affordable Housing Incentives and Regulations
- TOD Zoning and Comprehensive Plan amendments for the South Kirkland Park and Ride.
- Shoreline Master Program Update
- Revisions to the Tree and Landscaping Regulations.

An issue that may surface on the Commission's schedule relates to the downtown. There has been considerable public interest recently in addressing issues associated with downtown development (retail activity, height, design, etc.). While a work program task is not currently scheduled, this may be a specific or focused project in 2008.

Annexation is another item that may affect the schedule and work program. The City Council has had several study sessions over the past few months and has not yet determined whether to go forward with placing it on the ballot. If annexation does occur new issues such as neighborhood plans for the annexation area and Zoning Code changes could be before Commission.

Attachments

Attachment 1: Summary of Commission Agenda Topics for 2007

Attachment 2: Proposed 2008 – 2010 Planning Work Program

Attachment 3: Planning Work Program Summary

Attachment 4: Adopted 2007 – 2009 Planning Work Program

Attachment 5: Neighborhood Plan Schedule

Attachment 6: Memo to Council on Affordable Housing