

Central Houghton Neighborhood Association (CHNA)
Thursday March 23, 2023
Meeting Notes
Community School

1. **Meet and Greet.** Our first regular meeting in-person since the pandemic, opened with a 30-minute Meet and Greet at 6:30 in the gym at the International Community School. People were able to connect with their neighbors and CHNA Board members.
2. **Opening.** President Larry Toedtli started the meeting at 7 p.m. with over 50 residents and interested persons attending. He said the theme of the meeting was – transition. Transition to our first regular, in-person meeting in three years due to Covid-19. He also noted that this meeting starts the transition of the CHNA leadership since he is stepping down as president. The format of our agenda is also transitioning to focus on fewer topics so we can have more in-depth discussion and interaction during the meeting.
3. **The Future of the Houghton Village (Old PCC Site).** Larry introduced the first topic on the agenda for the meeting – The Future of the Houghton Village Shopping Center. The Houghton Village Center, which includes the old PCC store building, is located on NE 68th Street across from the Met Market shopping center. The City of Kirkland purchased the site last May and is seeking input on potential redevelopment of the center to provide public benefit.

Larry noted, that when he was first elected president of CHNA, the big topic in the neighborhood was the planning and zoning for the Houghton Everest Neighborhood Center (HENC) which includes the Houghton Village property.

He introduced our guests from the city.

Deputy City Manager for External Affairs, Jim Lopez gave a presentation and then led the discussion with meeting attendees.

Don Robinson, Senior Community Engagement Coordinator and Adam Weinstein, Director of Planning and Building recorded comments and assisted in responding to questions and comments.



Jim's [presentation slides](#) from the prior March 6 Town Hall are available on the [project web page](#). The following summarizes some of the presentation points.

- The site is 95,656 square feet and was purchased by the City of Kirkland for \$14 million. The city viewed this as a strategic opportunity to provide benefits to the community within a 10-minute walk of the site, which also has frequent transit service.
- The types of benefits that city would be interested in for the site include:
 - affordable and market-rate housing
 - non-profit program space
 - arts and cultural space
 - local-serving retail space
 - city recreational program space
- The zoning code requires that 75% of the ground floor be retail, restaurant, tavern, or office. Maximum height requirements start at 30-feet but can be increased to 35 feet if development includes one grocery, hardware, or drug store.
- The building heights can be increased to 50-55 feet (5 stories) with a Master Plan approved by the City Council through a legislative process, including a community engagement process. The Master Plan requirements are spelled out in Policy EV-10 of the Everest Neighborhood Plan (which is part of the City's adopted [Comprehensive Plan](#)). The Master Plan would require consolidation of the Houghton Village property with the Houghton Plaza property (the Koza Turkish Grocery and former Menchie's location). The development would be subject to the city's Design Review process.
- Jim noted that per R-5543, the city does NOT intend to use the Houghton Village Center for Permanent Supportive Housing (which has been approved for the former La Quinta Inn.)
- The city is participating in a variety of forums to get feedback from residents, schools, and businesses on what the community would like to see on this site.
- Attendees provided a range of comments on what they would like to see and their concerns:
 1. Before and After School care (Lakeview has a long waiting list), businesses promoting children's activities such as martial arts, gymnastics, dance.
 2. An international food court (like Crossroads Mall) with a wine bar, tables for dining in and the ability for takeout dining.
 3. Issues with traffic and small children walking to school. Sight line from parking lot, "no right turn on red" at 6th street and 68th, etc.
 4. Issues with parking (there is no on-street parking), the dangerous crosswalk from the Village to the Metropolitan Market area and the speed of drivers using 68th going eastbound up the hill.
 5. Many in the group asked how they would know the city listened to their concerns about students at Lakeview, traffic issues, etc. The group was informed that the City Council will make the decisions.

Please see the [project web site](#) for more information on the project, the schedule, and how to provide additional comments. You also can sign up for the city's email list for the Houghton Village project from the web site.

4. **CHNA Moving Forward.** Haris Husain, current vice-president, provided an overview of changes in the Board of CHNA that would be voted on at the Annual CHNA Meeting in May. He noted that the intent is to have more people involved so the work of the Neighborhood Association can be shared. This would allow more people to be involved in the activities that they are most interested in. The current list of prospective Board members that have volunteered to serve include:

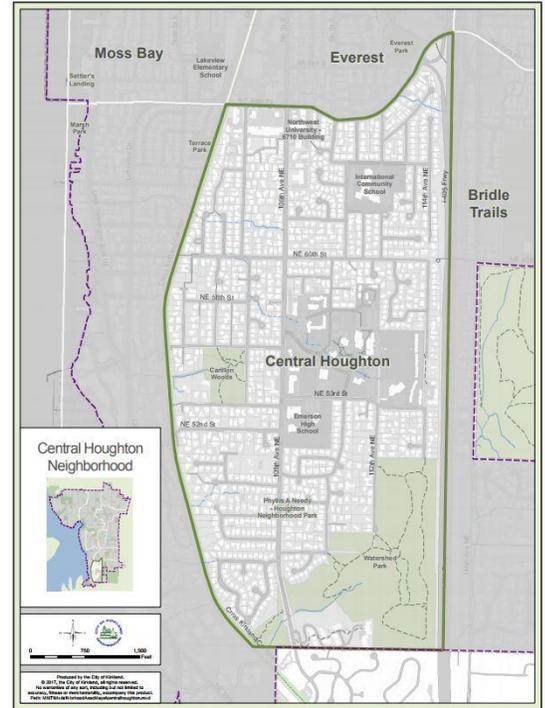
- Co-Presidents will be Haris Husain and Jennifer Loy
- Treasurer will be Dietmar Schimmel
- KAN Rep will be Lisa McConnel (a former President)
- At-large Board members will include Malia McCabe, Greg Young and Elizabeth Brooks.

Haris stated that the goals of the new leadership include:

- Maximize community reach around topics of interest.
- Maximize neighbor cohesion.
- Maximize participation, with as much time as people can give.
- Ramp up engagement with the city and the community.
- Promote Houghton growth and development consistent with the values of the community.

The leadership is working on recruitment of members, improving communication with newsletters, email, social and in person meetings. We will be looking to set up options for receiving donations beyond the grants we can get from the city in order to provide more activities.

If you are interested in assisting as a Board member or in other roles, please contact us at centralhoughton@gmail.com.



5. **What's Happening on the Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) Project at the Former La Quinta Inn as Part of The County [Health through Housing Initiative](#).**

At its March 21, 2023 meeting, the Kirkland City Council voted to approve the agreement with King County that would turn the former La Quinta Inn into a permanent supportive housing facility.

The Kirkland City Council passed [Resolution 5522](#) to establish the city's terms and conditions for maintaining support for the County PSH facility. CHNA held a special meeting on December 6, 2022 so our members could share their comments on the draft agreements for the facility. CHNA also [submitted a letter](#) to the City Council as part of the January 17, 2023 Public Hearing on the Public Supportive Housing Agreement (PSHA) and associated documents.



The City Council reviewed the proposed final draft of the PSHA at their March 21, 2023 meeting. (*The presentation and discussion of agenda item 9a begins at approximately 2:12 of the [Council Meeting video](#).*) Much of their review focused on whether criminal background checks should be required in addition to King County's proposed screening process for potential residents of the facility. There was discussion on public safety concerns versus increased barriers to people experiencing homelessness. Two primary amendments related to requiring criminal background checks were discussed and voted on.

Councilmember Pascal proposed an amendment that would require criminal background checks if a prospective resident is on the national or state sex offender registry but is not determined to be ineligible for the PSH site at the former La Quinta Inn or the County determines, at any point in the suitability screening process, that the prospective resident's conduct or history clearly demonstrates presents a risk of violent behavior propensities. The criminal background check would be considered in the final determination by King County whether that person would be eligible for the Kirkland PSH facility. Councilmember Pascal said his resolution introduces when a background check should be required. "In other words, it contained a threshold analysis and recognizes there are some individuals that we absolutely need to learn more about." This amendment passed 7-0.

Councilmember Nixon proposed an amendment that would require a criminal history background check of all prospective residents. This amendment failed on a 2-5 vote, with Pascal and Nixon voting in favor.

Houghton residents attending CHNA's March 23 meeting voiced concerns over:

- The importance of criminal background checks and how well the Permanent Supportive Housing provides behavior modification therapies and services.
 - Jim Lopez reiterated that 65% of the referrals for the facility would come from the local networking of social service agencies.
 - Some members of the community also voiced concerns around the secrecy of this project prior to King County purchasing the hotel for Supportive Housing.
6. **Next Meeting, May 9, 2023 (Tentative).** We are checking the availability of locations to hold our next meeting within our community. This may affect the date and time. We will let people know as soon as we can after we have confirmed the date, time, and location.

We will elect our new Board at that meeting.