

NEIGHBORHOODS

Highlands

By Karen Story



Highlights from city council visit

Thank you to the Kirkland City Council for attending the March 15 Highlands neighborhood meeting. The council addressed our questions about emergency preparedness, the railroad corridor, annexation, downtown Kirkland development, noise walls, sidewalks, traffic and numerous other issues.

Full answers to all of the questions can be found on the city's neighborhood services Web site: <http://tinyurl.com/2prw2c>.

Highlights from the meeting:

■ The city is actively working on plans for better communications and services during emergencies. The best way to access emergency information will be battery operated or hand crank radios and land line phones. It takes a couple of days to get a shelter up and running, so it's very important for people to be prepared to take care of themselves for at least three days.

■ The city is planning to organize training for shelter workers. The city also offers citizen emergency worker training (CERT). Two new classes begin April 18: one in the afternoon, and one in the evening. For more information, contact Robin Paster at 587-3659 or rpaster@ci.kirkland.wa.us.

■ The city is working on a "map your neighborhood" project. Residents will receive a flyer in the mail telling them how they can create an emergency response team in their immediate neighborhood.

■ The Public Works spokesperson, Ray Steiger, apologized for the numerous delays on the 112th Avenue N.E. sidewalk project, and promised that the city is doing everything they can to complete this project as soon as possible.

■ The city is trying to come up with solutions to the speeding problem on the "big curve" at the corner of N.E. 87th and 116th Ave. N.E. (See photo.) Mailboxes and fences are frequently hit by cars going around that corner too fast. Until a better solution is found, the police will be more actively patrolling the corner.

■ Recently, King County, the Port of Seattle and Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad (BNSF) reached an agreement that will allow the county to take ownership of the BNSF right-of-way. Initially, the corridor will become a trail. Eventually it may be used for commuter rail.

The existing rails are warped and worn out, and will be removed. Some people expressed concern that discontinuing trains could allow connecting 111th Avenue N.E. through to

Forbes Creek Drive. The council assured us that there are no plans to do so, but can't guarantee that a future council wouldn't recommend this.

■ In response to public complaints about crime and drugs, the police have increased monitoring of the downtown transit center area. They've made some arrests, and have issued numerous warnings.

■ Some people feel that downtown Kirkland is starting to feel like a big city, and is losing its charm. The council members explained that the state growth management act requires cities to concentrate growth within existing urban centers, to help minimize sprawl and automobile use.

If you are interested in this issue, consider attending the downtown strategic plan meetings. More information is on the city Web site at www.ci.kirkland.wa.us.

■ The city feels that the replanting of the I-405 corridor has been inadequate, and they will be discussing this with the DOT.

■ The Natural Yard Care Neighbors program is a series of three evening seminars that are held in April and May. For further information about the program, contact Jenny Gaus, senior surface water utility engineer, at 587-3850 or jgaus@ci.kirkland.wa.us.



In the most recent accident on the corner of N.E. 87th Street and 116th Avenue N.E., a vehicle lost control and knocked over a tree and a bank of mailboxes. The city is investigating solutions to the ongoing speeding problem.

Photo by Grant Erwin

kirkland.wa.us.

You can also contact Jenny to report any remaining storm debris in the street rights-of-way. Cleaning up storm debris in public rights-of-way is the responsibility of the adjacent property owner.

Crime in the Highlands

Two homes in the Highlands were burglarized in March. The front doors were kicked in at about two in the afternoon and small valuables such

as jewelry, electronics, and passports were taken. These incidents come on the heels of other recent property crimes such as mail theft and car prowls.

We've started a Highlands crime committee to brainstorm ideas for reducing crime in the neighborhood. You can get information by being on our mailing list. Go to www.kirklandhighlands.org to find out how to sign up.

There is excellent information on the internet about preventing home

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Consider purchasing locking mailbox to reduce theft

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burglaries. Two good sites are <http://www.crimedoctor.com/home.htm> and <http://tinyurl.com/2r2jnr>.

As for mail theft, if you're considering an individual locking mailbox, Security Safe & Lock on Main Street in downtown Bellevue sells them. Check out their Web site at www.security-safe.com, or go to their store to see the boxes before you buy. They will give a discount for multiple boxes. Box prices start at \$160.

If you can't afford to replace your current mailbox, there are other ways

to minimize your risk of mail theft. Don't leave mail in the box overnight. Put outgoing mail in a secure box, or mail it from work. Ask your bank to let you pick up ATM and credit cards, and new checks, instead of mailing them to you. Opt out of pre-approved credit card offers at www.optoutpre-screen.com.

When you're away from home you can sign up online to have your mail held by the post office. Go to www.usps.com, click on Hold Mail and fill out the form. Your accumulated mail will be delivered on the date you specify.

You can also set up a free fraud alert that may help prevent unauthorized credit applications. Go to www.equifax.com and search for fraud alert.

While we're on the subject of mail, the King County Solid Waste Division tells you how to reduce junk mail. See <http://tinyurl.com/3ab4qe>.

Congratulations

Congratulations to Sue Keller, who has been selected to serve on the Kirkland Park Board! Sue is a passionate advocate for trees and

open spaces, and says, "I look forward to serving in an advisory role to the city council as it pertains to our gem of a park system and the programs that enhance our quality of life. I especially look forward to focusing on the tree canopy in our parks following our devastating winds of the last year, and the exciting plans for an indoor recreation facility."

Sue previously served on the I-405 expansion committee, and has been the Highlands representative on the Kirkland Alliance of Neighborhoods (KAN). Cindy Bienz-Scott has volun-

teered to be our new KAN representative — thank you Cindy!

E-mail list

If you're on the Highlands e-mail list you'll hear about what's going on in the neighborhood and the city, whether it's a local crime, a training opportunity or a neighborhood picnic.

To sign up, go to www.KirklandHighlands.org and follow the simple instructions. Your email address is kept private, and you won't be inundated with e-mails.