

Kensington Municipal Advisory Council  
Draft Minutes, Meeting of April 25, 2005

Attendance:

Richard Karlsson, acting chair  
Catherine Reed  
Christopher Brydon  
Gordon Becker, acting secretary

The minutes from the March meeting approved were approved four votes to none without change.

Public comment was solicited. During this time, Catherine announced that an earthquake preparedness pamphlet available was available. A question from the public concerned suggestions for distributors of earthquake preparedness supplies. Catherine responded that the fire department was the best resource for that type of information, and that local stores have many of the supplies that make up an earthquake preparedness kit.

Richard summarized the ordinance that guides the KMAC's recommendation-making for the benefit of the council and the public. He then summarized the process by which variances are granted including the required findings, consisting of a statement why an applicant would be deprived of a justifiable use of their property without issuance of the variance. The variance process should not provide special privileges, and must be compatible with zoning.

The KMAC then addressed the first consent item regarding the property at 531 Kenyon. Catherine recommended approval based on the finding that the position of the house on the lot necessitated a variance to for the applicant to use the property. She noted that the use conforms to zoning. The item was approved four votes to none.

The KMAC next took up the item of the property at 70 Eureka. Richard noted that the design changed since the KMAC previously reviewed the application. The applicant, Joseph Recht, said that objections to the design centered around the mass and imposing nature of the house, including its position close to property lines. In response, the applicants moved the upper story addition to be the set back 20 feet from the street. They also removed a feature window and altered the roof line to be more consistent with other buildings in the neighborhood.

Richard asked by how much the second story was reduced. Mr. Recht responded that the story was about 700 square feet smaller through shrinking the master bedroom and removing a bathroom.

Richard asked if the project still required variances and was informed in the affirmative. These are required due to the position of a bearing wall in the house and the position of the existing garage relative to the street. Mr. Recht said the east side would be built without impinging on the east side setback.

Catherine asked about the size of the house in relation to others in the immediate vicinity. Mr. Recht said that the new house would be larger than the uphill and downhill houses, but not much larger. Catherine was told that the ceiling height would be eight feet four inches and that the roof slope would be four to 12.

A neighbor, Susan Groszkiewicz, stated that she appreciated the lowering the roofline but suggested that up to 80 percent of the houses in the neighborhood were single story. Richard responded that the ordinance did not prohibit the addition of a story, but required taking into account the impact of the structure on neighbors.

Mr. Recht submitted several letters indicating that neighbors did not object to the project.

Catherine made two motions:

1. Due to the gradient of the lot, the KMAC recommending approving a structure with more than two and one half stories. The project does not create special privilege not enjoyed by other neighbors.
2. As the existing garage encroaches on the setback, work on it would not create a special privilege. No variance was recommended for new window on the east side of the house.

The motions were approved four votes to none.

Catherine moved that the development permit be approved with the following conditions:

1. The house would incorporate a new ridge as shown on plan sheets 1A6 and 2A6 and no greater than 22 feet 2 inches above the existing living room floor. The plans were dated March 10, 2006.

The KMAC voted four to none to approve the motion.

The next item involved the property at 209 Stanford. The applicant, Susan Monary-Wilson, sought to enclose a porch thereby triggering development plan review.

Ms. Monary-Wilson was asked about the dimensions of the enclosure and responded that the porch was about 47 square feet. The area of the house exceeds the threshold guiding design review, a situation that owner inherited when she purchased the house one year ago.

Ms. Monary-Wilson was asked if she was adding a staircase and responded affirmatively. The staircase will be used to incorporate in-law unit into the body of house.

The KMAC moved approval of plans dated March 30, 2006 without conditions. The motion passed four votes to none.

In additional public comment, an audience member said he was unable to print the minutes from the last meeting. The KMAC responded that the minutes are usually available on the Web site. Two people requested minutes from last meeting, and Richard offered to send the minutes to them.

The KMAC voted four votes to none to adjourn. The KMAC adjourned.