



Approved December 2020 Ratepayer Advisory Board (RAB) Meeting Minutes

Date: December 9th, 2020

Location: Zoom Meeting

Present:

Tom Malone, CKM Associates
Legh Burns, re-soul
Mike Kahrs, Central Ballard Residents
Barry Blanton, Greenfire Campus, Commons at Ballard
Michelle Rosenthal, Veris Law Group
Christine Ackerman, Hjarta Condominium
Davis Carvey, NOMA HOA
Eric Nelson, National Nordic Museum
Scott Koppelman, AMLI Mark24
Kasia Konieczny, Swedish Medical Center
Mark Craig, Henbart

Absent:

Stephanie Carrillo, Equity Residential
Jim Riggle, Olympic Athletic Club
Mike Anderson, Compass Housing Alliance
Lanne Stauffer, Ballard Square Representative

Observers/Presenters:

Phil Lloyd, Seattle CFO
Phillip Sit, Office of Economic Development
Dan Strauss, District 6 Council Member
Mike Stewart, Devin Reynolds, Anndrea
Dohring and Kiana Ballo

1. Welcome and Introductions (Tom Malone)

The meeting was called to order at 3:00 p.m. and all present gave brief introductions.

Tom Malone welcomed a new member to the board, Mark Craig. The Alliance first began working with Mark on developing the Ballard Commons building. Mark has been a very helpful and good contributor to Ballard for many years.

Mark Craig thanked Malone for the introduction.

2. Public Comments

None.

3. Finance Report (Phil Lloyd, Mike Stewart)

Phil Lloyd presented the finance report. At the 11th month mark, the Alliance is on track to spend the \$600,000 for this year. There is flexibility in the different line items this year, with the PPP loan in the

spring and without SeafoodFest, the budget is skewed compared to normal. The BIA report reflects this rollercoaster of the year. The Alliance has had some help chasing down delinquent ratepayers with a push for collections, ultimately collecting about 98% for the last four years which lead to a \$25,000 surplus.

Stewart added that the Alliance was resourceful this year and was successful in securing PPP and some grants which helped offset some costs. Also, remaining to be collected is about \$47,000. There is one account that is valued at about \$20,000 that will still be paid this year.

Malone asked if there are any questions about the budget.

Barry Blanton inquired about what the budget looks like relative to businesses that have had to close due to COVID.

Stewart replied that the Alliance's funding assessment is based on the property owners not on the business. The short answer is that it should have too much of an effect. As another point to note, Devin and Kiana canvassed the ground floor vacancies in the BIA, at that point in time there was 12 businesses that have closed and not even half of those closures are directly related to COVID, but there will surely be more in the future.

4. Allocate Surplus for Grassroots Organizing

Stewart announced that as the Alliance is putting together the budget, there may not be the backup funding guarantee with SeafoodFest next year. SeafoodFest provides about \$150,000-180,000 to the budget in a normal year. Hopefully, there will be an opportunity for some sort of SeafoodFest in 2021, the Alliance is currently looking at different options for that event, potentially moving the event into August or September.

Stewart added that the Alliance may need to do some grassroots organizing in 2021. Right now, the idea is to earmark \$20,000 for grassroots organizing, which could be matched with some reserve funding as well. The city is currently in a crucial point for public safety. It seems that the Alliance and other BIA's have been putting together concrete proposals for safety in our neighborhoods without any help from the city. The notion would be to identify which individuals care about our neighborhoods, educate them about policy issues, and have them ready to go when it comes time to advocate to city council.

Malone agreed, the Alliance needs to coordinate with people who are concerned about these issues. There is a large group of people who are worried about the way Seattle is drifting right now. In November there is going to be a very significant election with a new mayor and other important positions. With new buildings coming to the neighborhood, there should be more funds available to the Alliance as well.

Stewart added that the council and mayoral race are important, but these dollars are not for political campaigns.

Mike Kahrs stated that he is concerned about this concept, going in with preconceived notions, there may not be one best solution right now.

Malone responded that it is less about educating people and not trying to impose upon others, the goal is to raise the issues with a concerned group of individuals and get them to participate, rather than to impose a specific solution to them. The solutions might be different but identifying people who care about these major issues is important.

Chris Ackerman inquired how many people are anticipated to be a part of this group.

Stewart replied it is uncertain but looking at the magnitude of hundreds.

Kahrs asked who is going to be managing this and how much authority do you give up in a grassroots organization.

Stewart responded that it is not creating an organization but organizing people, the Alliance would also get help from consultants as well.

Consensus from the board is to approve the use of surplus funding for grassroots organizing in 2021.

5. Ballard Alliance Update

Devin Reynolds stated that the Millionair Club Charity changed their name to Uplift NW. In 2020, the Alliance redirected the clean service to trash, sharps, and sanitary clean ups, less on telephone pole cleaning. There are also numbers from the private security hired this year, as of last month service went down from every night to 20 nights a month. Security also helps collect sharps in the district.

Stewart discussed that the Alliance has spent a lot of time advocating to the city to deal with the encampment in Ballard Commons Park. There is also an encampment right now at the Ballard Blossom building and the Alliance put in significant effort to get the city to address a certain individual that has severe mental health issues. The city is adding some additional REACH workers which could help but there are not many places for people to go.

Reynolds added that there are two things that the city will not address during COVID, one is graffiti removal and remediation, and they are not moving campsites.

Blanton asked if it would be possible to have a comparison of these numbers to last year. These statistics would be valuable to share with the city and council.

Reynolds replied sharp collections are up almost 200%, graffiti is up as well but those are the two main items that are different than last year.

Stewart stated that the Alliance was approached by the Ballard Brewed Coalition about their Ballard Safety Survey, they had started this process and reached out the Alliance to help amplify. The survey received responses from 88 businesses, the highlights are 75% of respondents reported an increase in crime, with an average of about 40 crimes per day. These are significant numbers with reported financial losses of more than half a million dollars. The Alliance put this together in a summary letter to city leaders on the 17th and have not yet heard a response from anyone. The Alliance did some news outreach about the survey and got a good story of the Seattle Times. The Alliance will keep amplifying the voices of business owners and residents.

Malone discussed that his office building lost a big tenant, and the biggest factor of their move was the safety issues. This building was broken into for the first time in 40 years, this was a very professional crew, they jimmed open a front door. Malone's office was hit, a personal check book and a kindle were taken from his office. Ballard is being hit in a way it has never been hit before.

Blanton mentioned that in this meeting there have been discussions about issues at Bartells, there is no sneakiness about it.

Mark Craig added that the 7,000 reported crimes reported in this survey is huge, staff and employees have fallen into not reporting crimes to the police because the police are not responding. It is extremely important that these crimes are reported to the police.

Stewart agreed that there is much more activity than what the police are reporting, Scott Lindsay looked at the numbers for 911 calls, things like assault, theft, rape are way up and sometimes those things do not make it all the way through, so it is as if those things never happened. Additionally, the number of police in Seattle has remained relatively flat, next year will have roughly the same number of officers as 2009. The Alliance spoke out yesterday against the decriminalization of misdemeanor crimes from council member Herbold's proposal during the briefing, there was no action taken and council member Herbold anticipates that it will be brought up again early next year. The Alliance also did a neighborhood safety walk with Chief Diaz; starting on lower Ballard Avenue and walking north. It was noticeable that the types of crimes change according to location, lower Ballard Ave is seeing a lot of organized break ins, further north businesses are seeing issues with people with mental health and addiction issues having outbursts and harassing people, and as you get closer to the park you see even more of that.

Reynolds mentioned that it was the Alliance's third safety walk this year.

Anndrea Dohring announced that the Alliance created a new program recently. Legh Burns had been looking for a way for retailers to give back to restaurants since they are struggling. This was a direct response to the restrictions on restaurants. The Alliance developed a campaign called the Love Your Local Loyalty Card. This program features 24 businesses, both restaurants and retailers. What it offers is appreciation to our loyal local customer base. How it works is that for transactions, a customer receives an envelope with either a 10% off their next purchase at select businesses or a golden ticket gift card to a business of up to \$100. This is an incentive to continue shopping and dining in Ballard while people are in the neighborhood. This program began on the 7th and will run until January 31st. The Alliance is running ads for this program and the Ballard Marketplace website on KEXP radio and online with heavy social media promotion.

Stewart added that a key to this program is that this is for in person transactions. This could be extended past the deadline if we see great success. Also, the Alliance is updating the Ballard Marketplace with holiday gift ideas and strongly promoting it. Kudos to the Alliance team to getting this program out so quickly.

Legh Burns discussed that this happened in a matter of days, it was a half-baked idea and the team really ran with it.

Malone mentioned that the media in general has also been encouraging shopping at local businesses. People are really looking to support their local stores.

Ackerman stated that her community is doing a secret Santa and the rule is that the gift has to be purchased in Ballard.

Dohring mentioned that the Alliance initially went into this season with a different plan but had to adapt with the new restrictions. Businesses seem to be very excited about the Love Your Local Loyalty Card. Kiana Ballo announced that the Alliance participated in the All-Chamber After-Hours event hosted by the Seattle Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce in October. The Alliance featured the Nordic Museum, the Ballard Cut and Peddler Brewing as a part of the presentation. The Alliance also hosted a virtual networking event last month which was well received by guests.

Ballo stated that a few normal programs were still able to happen this year including the Ballard Gives and Tomte Trail programs, although the Tomte Trail had to be altered slightly by having Tomtes in storefront windows instead of being inside of the businesses. Additionally, in coordination with the Ballard Merchants group, the Alliance put together a Halloween Harvest Food Drive. The food drive had good business participation, many businesses had to do several runs to the food bank and many are continuing to collect food although the program has technically ended.

Dohring gave special mention to Eric and the Museum for providing three prizes of family memberships for the Tomte Trail winners, the passport mailbox has been filled with the completed passports. There has been a huge uptick in use of the Ballard Marketplace site. Daily users have gone up nearly 30% and people clicking buy now on items has more than doubled. The Alliance also partnered with the National Nordic Museum to create a promotional video which will run about 80 times on KCTS.

Reynolds stated that the tree lighting will be the same program as last year; there are a little over 200 trees being lit in the BIA. This year has been very active with public arts including a large-scale mural project on the Ballard Blossom building. At no cost to the Alliance outside of staff time, the Alliance got five artists to paint the building and raised over \$5,000 to compensate them. The Alliance also had an artist out to repaint a storefront mural that was tagged.

Stewart discussed another huge initiative for the Alliance this year, the street cafes. The Alliance worked hard to get the city to allow street cafes while also negotiating with the farmers market. The Alliance has been advocating to the city to allow heating in the streateries, this is helping keep Ballard Ave alive.

Stewart mentioned that the ST3 progress has been pushed back with COVID, but the Alliance will continue to push hard for the tunnel option on 15th for the Ballard station. The Alliance is also participating in a city-wide strategy to preserve maritime and industrial lands.

Malone added that sometime in the late spring, Sound Transit will be publishing the EIS and financial numbers for ST3. Sound Transit changed the designations for what they call their preferred route, they now have the bridge at 136 feet as their preferred alternative. When asked about the expense of the raised bridge compared to the tunnel but they said they are still trying to work that out. The financial hit on public transit with COVID is a concern. The light rail station will be the most significant thing the impact Ballard in the next 50 years.

Stewart stated that Seattle Public Utilities is also working on creating the combined sewer overflow tunnel.

6. Review 2021 Draft Work Plan & Budget

Stewart announced the 2021 Draft Work Plan and Budget. The budget for next year is \$615,000, compared to \$600,000 in 2020. With Ballard Blocks 2 coming up this year, the Alliance will have some additional assessment from that coming in soon. There is the threat of not having SeafoodFest and additional grants that help support the BIA activities in 2021. The Alliance needs to do everything possible to support businesses through the pandemic.

Blanton responded that it is important that the Alliance is in a good position when this the pandemic is over.

Stewart stated that the 2021 budget made some cuts for clean environment work, cutting service down to five times a month. Also, the mayor has set aside some money to augment the work of the BIA's and the Alliance may be able to get some money from them to support Ballard clean services. For Ballard Commons Park, the parks department is supposed to step up with cleaning. SPU is paying for some labels for trash cans that will be neighborhood branded. Currently there is a gap of service with the REACH worker, hopefully there will be a new person to fill that position soon. For business retention and development, the plan is to hit the ground running the pandemic is over.

Hopefully, next year the Alliance can restart the wine walk as well; it is a fun event and a nice little fundraiser. Another goal for next year is to create a notification system for alerting business owners about upcoming infrastructure projects. For marketing and promotions, the Alliance is looking into producing some tourism video vignettes and expand existing programs. The plan is to do this work internally to get videos on a low budget, video is good for engagement.

Advocacy and Urban design will be focused on Sound Transit and holding off the repave market street project. Another important thing is to begin the strategic planning process in advance of reauthorization in 2023. This will be similar to what was done in 2013 but now the Alliance has a great staff and needs to figure out if and how to expand the BIA boundaries. The Alliance needs to engage with businesses that are not currently in the boundaries.

Blanton added that it looks great, and the Alliance has a terrific track record going into reauthorization.

7. Affirm Program Manager

Blanton motions to approve the manager to continue.

Chris Ackerman seconds.

Motion approved by all.

Kahrs moved to prove the 2021 budget.

Davis Carvey seconds.

Motion approved by all.

8. Council Member Dan Strauss

Malone thanked Council Member Dan Strauss for joining the meeting.

Dan Strauss announced that City Council completed the budget a couple of weeks ago. Highlights for District 6 is getting two additional outreach workers, on top of the one outreach worker that the Ballard

Alliance hired. This meant that some of other priorities were cut to get these approved, including approving more people in the waitlist for the Fresh Bucks program. One thing that did not make the budget is security dollars to District 6, but apparently hiring private security with city dollars is illegal. There also was the drug bust near Ballard Commons Park recently.

Malone responded that not everyone knows, but there was a big drug bust.

Stewart added that the information he received was different than what was on the SPD blotter, he was told there were four arrests made near Ballard Commons Park and 21 grams of fentanyl was confiscated. However, the fentanyl information was not on the blotter. It seems like conflicting reports.

Malone asked Strauss to speak to his plan for homelessness.

Strauss replied that he has shared with his plan previously; the City needs to get enough shelter for everyone to have an adequate place inside so people do not have to live on the street. On the high end, this would require another \$100 million a year but it could be argued that the City is already paying the price of this.

Malone inquired if there is any time frame this plan. Specifically, for Leary Triangle and Ballard Commons Park.

Strauss responded that he is working with businesses owners surrounding those areas right now. The City needs to get connected people to services; when encampments are cleared, they are often reinhabited. The problem has not left the neighborhood because we have not addressed it.

Blanton asked if all the beds that are available today have been filled.

Strauss stated that on any given night there are usually only 1-2 beds left open. Kudos to the mayor for investing more money for shelters than previous mayors.

Blanton added kudos to Strauss for the outreach worker specific to mental health. That is a big deal. Thank you.

Malone asked Strauss for feedback regarding the briefing on the legislation from council member Herbold.

Strauss responded that he is not on that committee and has been working on supplemental budget, so he will need to go back and watch that hearing. Passing ordinances and passing the budget is the main power of a council member, so often council members quickly move to passing an ordinance but that is often a blunt tool.

Malone asked if there are any other questions for Dan. It is 5:00 now.

Strauss thanked Michelle and Gretchen for setting up the voting activation event.

9. Meeting adjourned at 5:02 p.m.