



Approved May 1, 2020 Ratepayer Advisory Board (RAB) Meeting Minutes

Date: May 1, 2020

Location: Zoom Meeting

Present:

Eric Nelson, Chris Ackerman, Lanne Stauffer, Tom Malone, Davis Carvey, Legh Burns, Andrew Epperson, Barry Blanton, Aaron Klaus, Jim Riggle, Mike Anderson, Mike Kahrs, Scott, Mike, Kiana
Andrew Epperson from On the Park Apartments and Aaron Klaus from Ballard Commons representing the apartment community around Ballard Commons Park

Absent:

Tom -

Issue: Ballard Commons Park Encampment

Yesterday's count on tents added up to 27

Komo news did a 5 minute special interviewing Ballard residents called "Where is Dan Strauss"

A woman was carrying a pistol saying she no longer feels safe with the circumstances

We may need to ramp up our efforts regarding dealing with the situation in Ballard Commons Park

Mike - The situation is exacerbated by the outbreak of Hepatitis A in Ballard Commons Park

The City and County have responded by bringing a handwashing station and port-a-potties to the park, along with doing vaccinations but the vaccination process takes two shots so there is an issue of getting the follow up inoculation weeks after the initial once has been completed

We sent a letter to the Mayor and cc'ed Dan Strauss asking the mayor to get hotel rooms for people in the park to get them out of the park and we asked for the library bathrooms to reopen. That letter went without response for two weeks, until we heard from the deputy mayor.

The problem with the encampment is not just the tents, it has precipitated break-ins, aggressive behavior, graffiti, etc. It has become a ticking time bomb and the park is absolutely unsafe. We've also got a significant economic impact for the apartments and businesses surrounding the park.

In our conversations over the last 5 days with deputy mayor sixkiller (?) we want the park cleared of encampments, the deputy mayor said many of the people in the park are interested in being relocated into housing. Since that conversation, several openings at the Bitterlake tiny house camp have become available and deputy mayor said that 17 people have been relocated to the Bitterlake camp but we have not noticed that there has been any reduction in presence at the park.

We have talked a great deal about what we want to ask from the mayor. We want to propose that the park is cleared, one approach we could take with the mayors office is that we tell the city that they need to clear the encampment and get as many people into shelter as we can. We would offer to share the cost in hiring a SPD officer at the park monitoring the park assuming they have the express authority to remove any obstruction in the park or around the park.

We have hired security 7 days a week for Ballard, they are armed, and very proactive in addressing situations. They cannot address homeless situations or people in the right of way. Both On the Park and Ballard Commons have also hired security.

Andrew – We are very interested in bringing on additional armed security to supplement unarmed nightly patrols. We have had several break ins in the last few weeks and I'm spending a lot of capital on fortifying our entryways with metal because it has gotten destructive on how people are breaking in. We are probably going to bring on armed security for both the inside and outside of the building. We have over 500 people living here and every day they ask what is going on with the park and I have nothing to tell them.

Aaron – I'd be lying if I said some of these things aren't things we deal with on a daily basis. What we've done more recently is hired security for the lobby, bartells and the garage, basically doubling our security to give the illusion of security. As soon as our residents go outside, there is nothing we can do to protect them.

Tom – Where we are now is that Dan Strauss wants to take only long-term solutions, and he deems this a short-term solution so he has deflected to the mayor.

Chris – I avoid that area all together, there are also some tents growing where Leary meets Market Street.

Tom – Does anyone agree that this is a desperate situation that requires a clear and hold of the park with increased pressure on the mayor to help us reach a solution.

Davis – I agree and we are also increasing our security here at NOMA.

Barry – I think that is the right approach.

Jim – I don't think you are going to get support from Dan Strauss ever.

Tom – If we have any strategy that might work it would be putting pressure on the mayor. The deputy mayor said they would like to do the clear and hold but he is worried that Dan Strauss will work to reprimand the navigation team.

Mike – The navigation team is on thin ice especially with the current city council, they are worried about losing the only tool that has offered some relief from these encampments but that is not our issue.

Tom – Lanne and I want to sign on as representing the organization and support this action to clean up this park.

Mike – Two other things, we are going to start working on another letter to the mayor for you all to sign on and cast out to your residents to get signatures, as well as messaging and getting individual emails to the mayor as well. Barring any massive break through with the mayors office, we will really start working on that on Monday. The other issue we are working on is the SDOT Market Street Repaving Project, pushing to get that project delayed for 18 months.

Meeting adjourned at 10:38 am.