



2020 Ratepayer Advisory Board (RAB) Meeting Minutes

Date: September 23rd, 2020

Location: Zoom Meeting

Present:

Tom Malone, CKM Associates
Lanne Stauffer, Ballard Square Representative
Lekh Burns, re-soul
Mike Kahrs, Central Ballard Residents
Barry Blanton, Greenfire Campus, Commons at Ballard
Michelle Rosenthal, Veris Law Group
Kasia Konieczny, Swedish Medical Center
Christine Ackerman, Hjarta Condominium
Davis Carvey, NOMA HOA
Eric Nelson, National Nordic Museum

Absent:

Scott Koppelman, AMLI Mark24
Stephanie Carrillo, Equity Residential
Mike Anderson, Compass Housing Alliance
Jim Riggle, Olympic Athletic Club

Observers/Presenters:

Phil Lloyd, Seattle CFO
Dan Strauss, Peter Ngyugen, District 6 Council Member
Lisa Byoune, Chloe Gale, REACH
Mike Stewart, Devin Reynolds, and Kiana Ballo

1. **Welcome and Introductions (Tom Malone & Lanne Stauffer)**

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

2. **Public Comments**

None.

3. **Finance Report (Phil Lloyd, Mike Stewart)**

Philip Lloyd presented the finance report. Halfway through the year, things are a little different for the overall organization without a significant chunk of funding from SeafoodFest. However, the BIA funds are tracking well. Separately, the Alliance received a PPP loan and is in the process of applying for a couple of King County grants to help fill the gap of SeafoodFest. The rollover budget from last year also helps meet any deficits we face this year.

4. **Ballard Alliance Update**

Devin Reynolds gave updates on the clean streets program. The clean streets program was paused in March since many of the workers are vulnerable to COVID-19. Some statistics are from my reports and reports from security, but the numbers are a little different than usual. There are

significant increases in sharps collection, already this year collecting more than we did throughout all of 2019. Part of the increase could be due to the fact that our security team also picks up sharps, but regardless, the uptick is substantial. Also, public can overflow and graffiti tags are up significantly over last year.

Mike Stewart added that Millionair's Club Charity did come out four times since stopping our regular service. It seems about time to ramp that back up, as long as they are comfortable restarting work on the streets of Ballard. Just before things started shutting down, we saw an uptick in crime with break ins and owners were concerned about closing their businesses and boarding up their windows due to COVID-19. Since we paused our clean streets program, we brought on the private security to help give business owners peace of mind. They are currently out seven days a week, they have certain check in points along the perimeter of the BIA and we get detailed reports from them about their patrols. It has been successful in deterring crime and there have been some instances where they needed to call the police. Again, we were able to do this since we dialed down our clean streets service and we will not be able to sustain the daily security for the rest of the year.

Stewart also stated that the Ballard Commons Park encampment grew to a density never seen before and in addition, had an outbreak of Hep-A within the population residing there. The navigation team made 30 site visits to the park and succeeded in getting shelter for over 20 individuals while clearing the encampment. It took weeks of dialogue with the Mayor's office and Council Member Strauss to get the situation in the park addressed. It is starting to build up again in the park, just a few weeks after having the encampments cleared. This issue is absolutely a concern for the Alliance and for all the BIAs because there is such uncertainty at city hall and it doesn't seem like there are great long term solutions for these problems right now. The real question is what is the short-term solution for neighborhoods dealing with these situations. The executive directors of the Seattle BIAs meet twice weekly to discuss these issues, including one meeting in which council members participate. This involvement to date has been helpful as it provides council members with a clear understanding of the city's most urgent problems than they would otherwise.

Tom Malone replied that when dealing with this problem, many people and businesses were getting desperate around the park. Bartell's, QFC, and On the Park apartments felt it was necessary to also contract private security due to the situation at the park. There are all sorts of tents and homeless individuals in the park again and we will probably be dealing with a similar situation as we did earlier this year very soon.

Davis Carvey confirmed that NOMA has had nothing but problems with people trying to break into their building and has contracted with ADT to get a sophisticated camera system. Residents here are greatly appreciative of efforts dealing with the park.

5. Council Member Dan Strauss

Council Member Dan Strauss and Peter Ngyugen join the call.

Dan Strauss thanked Mike, Michelle, Lanne, and Tom for being able to join phone calls with these emerging processes.

Strauss announced updates regarding the funding for the Seattle Police Department. SPD is fully staffed at this time, fully staffed for every budgeted position at this time. When we talked about defunding SPD, we need to be very clear that this is not a defunding of first responders and we actually need faster response times in Ballard. CM Strauss indicated that, when he looks at the duties for our police responders, there are various aspects - low acuity and low criminal calls like mental health, traffic enforcement, criminal investigation, and securing safety. What really comes to mind is, do we need an officer with a gun to respond to all of these calls. CM Strauss had a meeting today to continue to dive into the SPD budget, these conversations are continuing and he maintains that the council is not talking about decreasing public safety.

Malone inquired about the homeless issue in the park.

Strauss responded that there has been a decade leading up to this emergency situation with the homelessness crisis in Seattle. Dealing with this issue has been extremely frustrating by the lack of response from the city with homelessness, and every time a resolution is proposed they say it is too expensive, even though when we know that if we address the root of the problem can actually deal with our problem. CM Strauss said the city still has FEMA dollars to deal with this problem, but we aren't using them. We have not taken advantage of hotel and motel rooms to place unhoused people, which I know the Ballard Alliance has advocated for. My office is exploring legislative solutions. The answers are before us and we have known the answers for the last five years.

Malone asked about the payroll tax recently passed by council and why we shouldn't be concerned.

Strauss stated that he joined in and cosponsored that bill and has been successful in that realm in a number of ways. This bill is focused on stimulus for small businesses, assessment would not be done this year and collection of revenue would not be until 2022 so there is time to recover from COVID before collecting payment. This bill will help provide food, housing, and assistance for immigrants and refugees which have not been provided support like other communities. Strauss indicated he played a critical role in strengthening the level playing field aspect of this bill, that if the state passed a similar bill that we would repeal this city's. He said regional solutions are the way to go. There are potential amendments to increase small business funding, we are looking at providing B&O relief and assistance for small businesses.

Malone asked Strauss if there anything he would like to bring to the board's attention.

Strauss answered that The Ballard Alliance is very important to him, we have a standing monthly meeting and it is a great opportunity to see you all. The benefits the Alliance brings to the neighborhood are seen. Dealing with street closures, there will be new guidelines with sidewalk café streets next week. Paid parking will be reinstated in the city to help parking stalls turn over more. One other piece of good news, it does sound like the Ballard P-Patch is within the last \$200,000 of reaching their goal.

Stewart thanked Strauss for engaging with the Alliance.

6. Ballard Alliance Updates Cont.

Stewart detailed that the Alliance spent time advocating for the retention of the navigation team and has been working a lot of crime prevention through environmental design leading up to

the COVID-19 closures. We have been working especially with the new owners of the Magnum Storage building which has been a hot spot for crime/graffiti.

The Alliance is working to produce 700 Ballard branded masks and making those available to Ballard restaurants and retailers to use for their employees and we are working with Seattle Metro Chamber to procure complimentary PPE for Ballard businesses.

Malone inquired if there was feedback from businesses about the security.

Stewart assured that we got a lot of positive emails and phone calls from business and property owners about the security. Legh actually called to say that one of the property owners who hasn't been a big fan of us said that we have been doing a great job.

Legh Burns asked if neighborhood security will continue.

Stewart responded that we are not going to be able to continue security seven days a week but we can talk about how to continue that service in the future.

Chris Ackerman mentioned that even with security tagging has been up, have they run into anyone doing graffiti?

Reynolds indicated that they have seen some suspects but the taggers are very quick and tagging is up all over the city. Since they are so fast it is hard to catch them in the act.

Barry Blanton asked about pooling resources for security. Both the Commons and Bartell Drugs are using the same company for security. Perhaps together we can make the security look like it is a little more bolstered.

7. Lisa Byoune and Chloe Gale with REACH

Stewart introduced Lisa Byoune and Chloe Gale from REACH for taking time to join the call. Paige, our previous outreach worker accepted a new position within the organization, and Lisa has replaced Paige starting about three months ago.

Chloe Gale acknowledged that the Alliance set the model on how to invest in your community to start dealing with homelessness in your neighborhood and now REACH has started working in many neighborhoods around Seattle because of this. We have three crises going on right now, COVID-19, racialized violence and an impending economic crisis so anticipating that homelessness is likely going to get worse before it gets better. REACH definitely had a big discussion in March about how to deal with COVID-19, we closed our resource center but have been consistently outside doing outreach and helping people get shelter and housing while many other service places had closed their doors. Tom Douglas partnered with REACH to provide 500 meals a day to unhoused folks in Ballard and we delivered over 37,000 meals over the past three months. There are a couple of exciting new things REACH is investing in -continuing to grow our housing options, motels are a great opportunity to obtain more motels to help get people shelter and to staff those motels to help support people who need constant support. REACH is also expanding its LEAD services and expanding our street response for encampments that brings together all the resources people need.

Lisa Byoune declared that she has gained so much respect for Ballard the more time she has spent learning about the community. So far this year, work has included educating unhoused folks about COVID-19 and keeping them updated about the new updates and handing out masks. A lot of people need medical attention, not only mental health but dental work and other things, lots of time has been spent helping people get into the dentists and get access to their medication. Earlier this year, a lot of time was spent helping people get their stimulus checks, especially as many of them are non-filers, every time someone got their stimulus checks we also got them ID's. REACH is helping get people hygiene, employment, phones, medical attention, housing, etc. Lisa indicated that people are in Ballard because they have grown up here and this is their home.

Stewart asked about where things are today in terms of availability for housing and shelter for unhoused folks? That can help shape and guide us to advocate for the necessary resources.

Gale said that once COVID-19 happened, the people who were in shelters, remained in shelters. Many places closed their doors or reduced their numbers. The opportunity for new shelter beds have been low. Motels are a great opportunity to get shelter, especially if they are staffed with support and resources. Some new building options are moving in where we have been able to move in about 40 people county wide with Plymouth. There has also been no public transportation, so it has been hard to get people there. Gale said it has been really consistent; the data shows that about 70-75% of unhoused people are local and the number of people from out of state is very small.

Ackerman responded that a good number of our houseless people suffer from mental health and addiction. Are we anywhere near getting these issues addressed?

Byoune stated that right now it is hit and miss. It depends on if people are willing to help, REACH works with HOST to connect them with mental health services.

Ackerman replied bless you for the work you are doing.

Blanton added that we appreciate you being out here. Relative to people suffering with mental health issues, they are not in a good place to make decisions about dealing with their mental health. People tend to call the police, but how do we help people who are not competent enough to accept the health they need.

Byoune stated that that is what HOST does, but we have been leaving voicemails and they have not been getting back to us since COVID-19.

Gale added that that question is appreciated. HOST does a different type of outreach than we do, they don't approach people the same way we do, they really know how to deal with people with mental health issues. There is also a mobile health crisis team that is helpful to. Our community needs to fund housing and mental health care.

Blanton inquired if that would that be locally, statewide?

Stewart answered that locally, council member Andrew Lewis is proposing some legislation for a first responder program to deal with these issues. There is a program in Eugene, Oregon called CAHOOTS and the city is taking a deeper look into this program and the potential to replicate something similar.

Blanton mentioned that we need to redefine what public safety means.

Malone thanked Chloe and Lisa for joining the call.

8. Ballard Alliance Updates Cont.

Anndrea Dohring reported that this year initially started out with a huge schedule of events and programs earlier this year but once COVID-19 happened, the Alliance had to figure out a way to best serve our community of businesses and residents. We realized a lot of businesses didn't have an option to do online sales, we immediately went into launching the Ballard Marketplace as an online sales portal for our businesses. We worked with DEI Creative since we have a strong relationship with them, and many other BIA's around Seattle have adopted this set up for their own neighborhoods.

Stewart mentioned that there was a robust marketing campaign to go along with this.

Dohring discussed as storefronts began opening back up, we lost a little bit of momentum with the Marketplace so we integrated the Farm It Forward program to take donations to buy fresh food from the Ballard Farmer's Market and donate it to the Ballard Food Bank. This has been a reciprocal benefit for many parties in our community and kept the Marketplace website relevant. We also added a curated holiday feature to help promote the website which we rolled out prior to Mother's day. We also started this Ballard Photo Challenge with the goal of getting folks out into Ballard and engage in a safe way while promoting our local businesses. We've got 37 businesses partnering with us on this, we have it set up to run this program for 8 weeks and we can modify it over time. It has been pretty successful so far and the winners have also already gone out and used their gift card prizes, spending even more money in our local businesses.

Stewart provide an update that the Alliance was successful in achieving a postponement of the Market Street Repaving Project. The first part of the project than happened last year was absolutely devastating. The new repaving project would have been devastating for Ballard businesses, particularly as they will spend the rest of the year and beyond working to recover from the economic fallout brought on by the pandemic. All our advocacy was absolutely critical in getting the city to agree to pause the project.

Kiana Ballo detailed information about the second part of the Ballard Utility Box Project. Three more utility boxes will be wrapped this year, including utility boxes near QFC and Ballard Commons Park. The Ballard Public Art Committee conducted the same public engagement process as last year to select the artist for the new designs.

Stewart identified other things we are doing to support businesses through COVID-19 like keeping businesses informed about resources, PPP and PPE.

Reynolds said that back in March, we started seeing some businesses board up their windows with plywood and we saw that as an opportunity to paint the boards putting together the

Ballard Storefront Mural Program. We worked with 25 storefronts and 14 artists for this project. Only one board got tagged.

Ballo added that within a week of starting this project we had paint going up on the plywood. We were the first neighborhood to get storefronts painted and we got a lot of media attention for this project.

Dohring acknowledged that NOVO painting was to thank for donating supplied for this project.

Ackerman inquired about what has happened to all the artwork.

Reynolds stated that ultimately, the plywood boards are owned by the businesses and property owners and are custom to fit their windows. We encouraged businesses to keep their boards in case another shutdown happened.

Legh Burns declared that hundreds of people come down to take photos and see the art. That was a really successful event and with great execution.

Malone stated that a fair amount of budget has been allocated for security in Ballard. How significant do you think should be on our budget?

Burns responded that the security was beneficial in deterring crime, but I think we need to balance keeping our street cleaned as well.

Malone asked if anyone had a strong opinion about it.

Blanton replied that it might be a good idea to leverage others who have hired security and work together. Also, the more good activity there is, the less you will need this kind of security. As more people come out, we need more cleaning and less security. It is a balance we will have to find.

Stewart maintained as we start opening up, we will start shifting the balance, it is a good idea to work with others using security. We have the ability, if this is something, we hear that people really want, to go to the city to seek a rate increase as a possibility to fund more security.

9. By-Laws Revisions

Malone announced proposed revisions to the by-laws. Basically, the by-law revisions come down to two things. We updated the by-laws to provide for zoom meetings that those will count as legal meetings for us to transact our business. There have been a couple of times to call for special meetings but before we did anything we needed to get feedback from the board, we think that adding this section to be able to call meetings in short notice would be very useful to us. The second change is to deal with the officers, we have term limits, this second amendment basically eliminates that. Tom indicated that we are better off to not have term limits and recommended passage of the revisions.

Carvey moved for both.

Blanton seconded.

Motion approved by all.

9. General Session – Getting Ballard Going

Lanne Stauffer presented a general discussion about what is going on in Ballard right now. Unfortunately, there are quite a few businesses we have heard that are closing.

Ackerman replied from a resident standpoint, we love 17th being closed and it has been really beneficial. Many of my neighbors said that they have seen more of Ballard than ever before. It is good to see we are going to be opening up some more permitting for outdoor seating. What has been the discussion about closing Ballard Ave for dining?

Stewart responded that we spent a good deal of time exploring this and talking to the city, we put pressure on the city to make the sidewalk and curb space available for businesses to use temporarily. The Alliance did some initial survey work and heard a majority were interested but many also had many concerned about deliveries and access. What we have now heard from the city is that a 20 ft fire lane would have to be preserved on the 45 ft lane at all times, which only leaves 12.5 ft for businesses to use (on each side of the street) and that is hardly more than what the city has already proposed with the sidewalk cafes, especially with tables having to be 6 ft apart. At this point we are thinking a full street closure on Ballard Avenue is not the best option for our businesses, especially since shutting down the street would be very expensive and impact some businesses and deliveries. There is already a war being waged between the Farmer's Market and the businesses on Ballard Ave with the new COVID-19 set up.

Burns added that you would have to remove all of the parking as well with signage and parking enforcement. It is too bad.

Stewart agreed that is why we are encouraging the streetery parking spots, it can be used every day of the week and it seems like a better option for everyone. This opportunity is available for retail businesses as well, on Market Street in addition to Ballard Ave.

Malone asked if there are any other comments.

Blanton stated the best thing to do is be ready for whatever might happen by being as informed as possible.

Burns added that as a ground floor retail tenant, he dismantled his shop and repainted everything, the floors are buffed, and it has never been this clean. The reopening was a monumental lift. We have a lot of reservations with our employees and with myself. It has been a mixed review of being open again but not being completely comfortable. The last thing, is that with the sidewalk stuff, I have to staff that and it becomes a little cost prohibitive so I won't be spilling out into the street.

10. Meeting adjourned at 5:09 p.m.