



## DRAFT September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022 Ratepayer Advisory Board (RAB) Meeting Minutes

**Date:** September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022

**Location:** In Person & Zoom Hybrid Meeting

**Present (in person):**

Tom Malone, CKM Associates  
Mike Kahrs, Resident  
Mark Craig, Henbart  
Christine Ackerman, Hjarta Condominium  
Lekh Burns, re-soul  
Max Genereaux, Hattie's Hat, Sunset, Smoke Shop  
John Marasco, Security Properties  
Michelle Rosenthal, Veris Law Group  
Gretchen Swanson, Chase Bank

**Absent:**

Chris Beaudoin, Swedish Medical Center Ballard  
Stephanie Carrillo, Equity Residential  
Scott Koppelman, AMLI Mark24  
Barry Blanton, Greenfire Campus, Commons at Ballard  
Randy Brinker, Sweet Mickey's, On the Park Apts.

**Present (via Zoom)**

Eric Nelson, National Nordic Museum

**Observers/Presenters:**

Phil Lloyd, Seattle CFO  
Mike Stewart, Devin Reynolds, Kiana Ballo and Colton Davis

**1. Welcome and Introductions (Tom Malone)**

The meeting was called to order at 3:06 p.m. and all present (in person and via Zoom) gave brief introductions.

**2. Public Comments**

None.

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

Phil Lloyd presented the finance report. The Alliance has underspent so far this year but overall, it is running smoothly. We are currently 58% through the year but only spent at 54%.

Mike Stewart updated that the video work was planned to be funded through federal funding that we received but the grant did not allow for spending money on marketing, so we put more money toward the clean streets program which will offset the costs of the videos.

**4. Ballard Alliance Update**

## Business Development & Retention

Devin announced that he worked to connect multiple businesses to commercial real estate brokers to help them find space in Ballard. Nomad Boxing Club was able to secure a long-term lease, so it is great that they now have their own brick and mortar. He also worked to attract multiple new businesses to Ballard to fill retail gaps in the neighborhood.

Mike said that moving forward, after BIA renewal, one concept that came up in strategic planning is seeing what role the Alliance could play in business incubation space. The city is very interested in the concept we have created with Ballard Blossom. Patty Murray's office is also very interested in what we have done for business incubation and may have a grant program to help fund projects like this in the future. The smallest grants are around \$100,000 up to a million.

Devin said we have seen great success rate with recruiting businesses to Ballard and two of the pop-up businesses from the Ballard Blossom space have secured long term leases. Restaurants are more difficult because there is a limited stock of commercial kitchen spaces.

## Public Health and Public Safety

Mike announced that the Alliance worked to establish a Ballard Case Conferencing group with the City and CM Strauss to take a localized look at Ballard's high-utilizers and their needs. We are currently tracking 6-7 individuals and working to troubleshoot their specific issues. Petrina Ye unger is an example of this. When she was released, LEAD found that she would accept a tiny house and she was able to be placed in the Interbay tiny home village. She has stayed there for the most part, she has come over to Ballard a couple of times and broke her restraining orders at local businesses.

Petrina's case workers are working to place her into permanent supportive housing soon which would be great. She is making progress; we remain skeptical because we have been down this road before, but this is a step in the right direction.

Stewart indicated that one of the most valuable things about these meetings is being able to ask questions and get information from all the involved parties. This is for individuals that are perpetually causing severe issues. The Alliance is leveraging these relationships to work on other issues within the district. For example, there is an encampment behind habitude so now we are working with the mayor's office as a sidebar to these meetings for less severe issues.

Chris Ackerman said that there is a really bad situation east of the bridge over on Ballard Way. There is one individual near their building who is not a threat, but he does leave garbage everywhere. He lives in the front part of our garage right now and we must clean up after him every single day.

Mike indicated another effort we are working on is reopening Ballard Commons Park. There is still some work to do but the key thing for the council member is that it shouldn't be reopened until it will be sure that it won't refill with encampments. We established a 22nd Ave working group meeting to address the remaining individuals and plan small scale activations around the area to make sure there is positive activity. We have been planning some fitness events for the library plaza, an adopt – a – pet and volunteer recruiting event, kids' activities with illumination learning studio and potentially a small block party.

Mike K asked: How do we prevent the park from going back to what it used to be?

Mike S responded that we will have to demand that the city won't let it return to the way it was.

Mark added that Cal Anderson park had a similar situation and they have done an excellent job keeping that park clean and open. Mike K indicated that he would like to know what that protocol is and how they have managed that. Legh added that it is partially a jurisdictional issue with parks and SDOT.

Tom said that the tents came second, what came first was Ballard Commons Park being used as a gathering place for people after getting breakfast at the church. How do we make sure that the park is used for its intended use as a recreational space.

Gretchen asked if the church is still doing meal service? Legh suggested that construction of their new building will begin soon. Any day now they are going to start construction for their new building. John added that Security Properties has a deal that was just completed so they are going full speed ahead, but the city is quoting 22 months to get a master use permit and we just made our application on August 10th. Hopefully that gets fixed, but he indicated that 18 months is probably the best case for starting the tear down. It is John's understanding that they plan on moving the edible hope and meal service as soon as they can.

Mike S said this will be an interesting test to see how CM Strauss can help with this. Tom added that CM Sara Nelson as well could be helpful with this.

Mike S indicated that Edible Hope is looking at a new permanent space for their meal service. I don't know if they have a relationship issue with the food bank, but it seems like it would make sense for them to partner.

Legh asked if there was any update on the play area in the park? Mike S responded that there is progress, but we don't know precisely when they will break ground; sometime in 2023.

### Clean and Safe

Devin presented cleaning metrics that are year to date as of earlier this week. Compared to numbers from last year's totals, this year is already up over those numbers. One variable is that there is more activity in Ballard now compared to last year. Hours are up for the uplift northwest but still it is a significant increase considering we are just now entering Q3. Devin thinks the same cleaning crew has been here for a while now and they have become more efficient. One issue to point out is that there have been issues with waste management not picking up garbage cans after the farmers market on Sundays.

Mike K offered that another option would be to get more cans for the Sunday market if they are constantly overflowing or more cans for Ballard Ave in general.

### Marketing and Promotions

Colton presented that the Visit Ballard website maintains a strong presence and capturing many new users. The social media accounts have been growing steadily. We have been posting lists of different things in Ballard like businesses with happy hour or ice cream to catch people's attention.

We are working on building content for the new Ballard Alliance website which should be ready for launch soon. We've created a Ballard marketplace survey to learn about business owner experience using the website we developed and are working on making upgrades to the website so business owners can upload their own items.

The Alliance continues to circulate the Ballard shop and dine guides. We launched a promotional campaign for the promotional videos that we created last year which had great success and we secured an ad for Ballard at concourse D at SeaTac; both with grants from the Port of Seattle.

Mike S indicated that the marketplace is a great promotional tool for businesses and getting eyes on Ballard businesses.

#### Advocacy, Urban Design, Transportation, etc.

Mike said that the Alliance continued its outreach in advance of the Sound Transit decision for the light rail alignment. The main thing we want to communicate with them is that the density if west of 15th so a station any further east than 15th doesn't make sense. There are 1449 units currently under development on this side of 15th and that is going to have a huge impact on this area. The bridges are no longer an option with the coast guard's restrictions.

The current battle is really between 15th and 14th and Sound Transit is still saying that 14th is cheaper but we would like to see those numbers but either way, West of 15<sup>th</sup> \ is where the people and businesses are. We don't want to see the industrial land be impacted by the station location.

Understanding the Sound Transit Board, we have to keep our eye on the 15th Ave ball. Ballard is the one neighborhood that has been unified for what we want. The Board decision point is pushed out until February 2023, and our goal is to establish monthly meetings with key ST staff. We don't want to be blindsided by them as they drive to a decision point.

The Alliance also had a brief discussion with Patty Murray about this issue and she is on the transportation subcommittee.

Metro Route 40 revisions were discussed, and Mike S provided an overview. Route 40 is one of the most trafficked bus routes in the city. Instead of doing a conditions report, SDOT just started looking at solutions to improve the route time with no strategic planning at all.

Tom indicated that we have had several meetings about this, and we have not been treated well. It is very clear that they made a decision back in 2015 about what they were going to do including bus lanes on Market and Leary. We have seen what happens when they do that, they just did this on Rainier Avenue, and it seems to be causing problems. Imagine Market Street and Leary with bus only lanes on either side. It is very clear that they had the plan in place and that everyone knows that the gold standard in improving time for transit is bus lanes.

Tom pointed out that the buses on Leary are moving along just fine, there is no back up for the route 40 at any point. We hired a consultant to help us and she pointed out that they are supposed to do an assessment to see what the need is but SDOT did not do this. They have not yet answered any of her questions as a consultant. Sara Nelson has agreed to help us work with the city. We have our weapon which is Mike Stewart and we are going to unleash the kraken.

Mike said that the next steps are to continue meeting with elected officials and then put together a grassroots campaign for business owners and residents like we did with the repave Market Street project.

Mike updated that we have been working with SDOT and Strauss for Ballard Ave reconfiguration. SDOT just made some upgrades and traffic calming measures. The upgrades seem to be working well. SDOT already did a survey about the upgrades, and it has had an overwhelmingly positive response. The phase two of the design charette will be in mid-September to continue the discussion of what the future of Ballard Ave will look like.

Legh mentioned that with all this change it is working well for cars, but bikes are still going the wrong direction and someone is going to get hit. Mike S indicated that SDOT was aware but has not yet acted on a solution.

## **5. BIA Renewal**

Tom led the conversation: as you know this BIA was formed six years ago and next year will be the seventh year. We need to renew to be able to continue the work that we do. We have begun a process to put together a strategic plan for renewal. The goal is to create a renewed BIA that can deliver on the goals and objectives developed during the strategic planning process. There are several options for how to expand and we have decided on a reasonable expansion to the west, to the south, and to the east. These are our proposed boundaries (viewing map) but if other places want to join our area, then we would consider that as well. The bottom line is that we are considering the budget and revenue that would be tied to the areas that are encompassed by the BIA. We are also looking to go for a 12-year renewal period with two five-year periods to reassess the assessment rates for property owners. We don't have to do anything at after the five-year periods, but we can if we need to ensure that the organization can function effectively and properly compensate staff to continue the work.

Mike K asked if we can we bring in new members at any time?

Mike S responded that we could bring in up to 10% each year without going through the whole renewal process.

Tom shared that we need to get 60% of the assessed value to get approval. If we can get our existing group to all agree that we have done a good job and that they will renew, we are very close to that 60%.

Legh asked if there is precedent for the 12-year renewal?

Mike S responded that U District is 12 and MID is considering 10 years. Tom added that 12 years within the realm of reason.

Mike S also indicated that we look at expansion to 14th and the brewery district, but we don't want to bite off more than we can chew. The areas we chose make a lot of sense to add to the boundaries. Like Tom said we have good support with our existing boundary which will help. The objective is to expand and provide a more long-term sustainable pathway for the organization moving forward. We want to be able to do more of what we already for services and programs and have an even bigger positive impact than we already do.

Mike said that we will be coming back to the Board very soon with a proposal to come to a consensus opinion and made revisions from there. Our ask is to get together with you all this month just to focus on this issue and do a deep dive on the proposal. We are going to have a meeting with the Office of Economic Development in advance of that to make sure we don't hit any roadblocks early on. Assuming we get to consensus after this month as soon as mid-October we could start getting petitions. Once we hit 60% we can take it to the city to get a hearing and get council approval. This needs to be completed by September of next year before they get into budgeting for 2024.

Mike S asked of the Board what do you think are the most important things that the alliance does?  
Responses were:

Mark: clean and safe

Tom: advocacy to the city

Mike K: responsiveness

Michelle: representation

Mike K: business support is a critical element

Michelle: promotion, revitalization

Legh: beautification

Michelle: making Ballard a destination and overall effectiveness

Chris: for residential it is quality of life

Gretchen: fun social events

## **6. New Business**

N/A

**Meeting adjourned at 4:59 p.m.**