



DRAFT September 2020 Ratepayer Advisory Board (RAB) Meeting Minutes

Date: September 23rd, 2020

Location: Zoom Meeting

Present:

Tom Malone, CKM Associates
Lanne Stauffer, Ballard Square Representative
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
Mike Anderson, Compass Housing Alliance

Absent:

Stephanie Carrillo, Equity Residential
Jim Riggle, Olympic Athletic Club
Kasia Konieczny, Swedish Medical Center

Observers/Presenters:

Phil Lloyd, Seattle CFO
Dan Strauss, District 6 Council Member
Deputy Mayor Casey Sixkiller, Sabrina Bolieu
Haley Keller, Kristie Kisbey, Roger Lorenze,
Maggie McKelvy, Operations Board

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.

Tom Malone announced that unfortunately, Lanne Stauffer has had to step down as co-chair

2. Public Comments

None.

3. Finance Report (Phil Lloyd, Mike Stewart)

Phil Lloyd presented the finance report. This year is still a little underbudget on. The Alliance got PPP funding in the spring, so some spending was redirected to meet the forgiveness requirements, this

caused us to under bill year to date. The Alliance also had less expenses due to the cancellation of SeafoodFest.

Mike Stewart added that the Alliance is at about 60% of the budget but usually should be at about 66% for this time of year.

Lloyd stated that spending will get to 100%, this is definitely not the year to leave money on the table. Malone asked if anyone have any specific questions.

Mike Kahrs inquired about funding with SeafoodFest.

Stewart responded that for next year it is uncertain in terms of SeafoodFest. The Alliance is going to move forward in a cautious way. As an organization, the Alliance is going to look at a few different options including a full-scale option, a small-scale option, and not having the event. Also, for free community events, the Alliance receives the benefit of safety officers at no charge from the City, which saves of about \$40,000. If changes are made to the SPD budget, that may change in the future. If there is social distancing required, we will likely not do the event. The Alliance is going to plan for different contingencies. This year, some sponsors were maintained. The key steps moving forward are doing a cost analysis for the BIA and working on building out the full budget for next year.

Barry Blanton noted that under management, the Alliance has spent nearly 95% of what was budgeted for the year.

Lloyd mentioned that it might run a little over, but he can watch that. Some things had to be swapped around due to the PPP loan. This is a year with more variance than a usual year.

4. Ballard Alliance Update

Stewart stated that there are a lot of things happening, but certainly within two months the city will be without a navigation team. This has been one of the tools business districts have used to keep our neighborhoods vibrant. The Alliance put together a small business pledge in coordination with the other business districts to push out to the mayor and city council. Dan Strauss is invited to this meeting to talk about his plan for homelessness and Ballard Commons Park. Also, members of our operations board have been invited to attend this meeting while Dan is speaking. Deputy Mayor Casey Sixkiller will be on the call today as well, he is very interested in sharing his perspective from the mayor's office and to get a better understanding of Dan's plan. The goal today is to try and connect all of these dots together. When communicating with Dan in particular, the Alliance is often put in the middle of the council and the mayor's office. It is necessary to hold both the council and the mayor's office accountable for things that continue to happen on our streets including theft, graffiti, and violence. Today, it is encouraged to ask both Casey and Dan the hard questions and communicate directly about the issues Ballard faces.

Malone added that he and Mike had a very candid conversation with Dan Strauss last week. Ballard Commons Park needs help now and Dan was asked what he is going to do about it. If you look at the document, Dan promised, he put the blame on the mayor for not doing enough and did not provide information about how he intends to fund his plan for homelessness. The one place where Dan is agreeable, is that the mayor is the executive and has the ability to provide the remedies for this situation whereas the council cannot.

Blanton asked if the council member knows that the deputy mayor is going to be a part of this meeting.

Stewart responded that he does know. Just to show a component of the math behind Dan's plan, King county was able to place 650 individuals into motels for 5 months as a part of their emergency response, which cost \$880,000 a month just for the down payment and rent. The point is that this is quite extensive and perhaps it can be a piece of the puzzle, but it is an important question to ask Dan about his plan.

Stewart announced that the Millionair Club Charity is up and running and will be back at full speed on October 1st. The Alliance paused that service earlier this year but will be bringing them back in time for fall leaf clean up. Devin reported at the last meeting that this year has already exceeded the number of sharps collected in all of 2019. The security team has helped deter 20 burglaries this year. The Alliance needs to dial their services back starting in October, going from 7 days a week to 20 days a month. Security has been well received by business owners.

Stewart stated that the Alliance worked in collaboration with our BIA partners around the city to launch the Seattle Small Business Pledge. So far the pledge has received 500 signatures in support. It was created to ensure that the voices of small businesses are heard by local leaders and to make sure neighborhoods have a safe environment for businesses, customers, and employees. It is absolutely necessary to solve for systemic racism in the government but at the same time, public safety for all citizens needs to be ensured. If there are cuts to SPD, a plan is needed to deal with these major issues of safety on the streets. The mayor has stated publicly that she supports small businesses. The Alliance is working to collect stories from Ballard business owners, there have been many instances event just this week. This is very much a key focus to try and help solve the issues in Ballard and reason with city council.

Davis Carvey responded that there is the same problem with residents. At his building there is have been lots of break ins to people's cars, and packages being stolen, people wandering the halls.

Chris Ackerman agreed. One of the alcoves in her building is being utilized as a drug den and the maintenance crew have been afraid to go in there because it is just not safe.

Stewart added that part of the pledge does include residential problems as well. The Alliance will do a round of outreach to you all to get what you are seeing as residents in this district.

Ackerman stated that it is great to bring visibility to this pledge, but inquired if is there any teeth to this pledge.

Stewart replied that there is not, it is mostly just to bring this issue back to the forefront of the conversation for council with the upcoming budget. The intent is to leverage the media to demonstrate that they are not listening.

Blanton inquired if, since Dan is coming into the meeting, should he be asked to sign it today.

Stewart responded that is great. Dan Strauss has been asked directly and he evaded the question. It would be great to ask him directly again today.

Stewart recalled the Alliance's effort with Ballard Commons Park during the Hep A out break that took place earlier this year, after eight weeks of advocating to the City, the encampment was cleared. It was cleared and many people accepted shelter, but many did not. The park was cleared, lasting about three

weeks or so. Now we the park is even worse, the worst in its history. The Alliance organized safety walks with leaders and the feedback is not great. It is a very difficult situation and advocacy related to the park continues both to Dan's office and the mayor's office. It appears that the city is really leaning on CDC guidelines to not remove people from where they are, but this is not a tenable situation in the city. It is necessary to gain an understanding of what their plan is.

Blanton asked if it would be advisable or not to have this picture up on the screen while Dan and Casey join the call.

Stewart replied if everyone agrees, this video could be brought up right as they join.

Anndrea Dohring announced updates for Ballard Alliance Marketing and Promotions. The Alliance has been working directly with all of the wonderful businesses in the district, the consensus is that the following weeks are going to be critical with holiday shopping. The top priority is driving in persons sales to these businesses and doing some heavy promotion for online sales. This year it is necessary to change up some of the events we normally do due to COVID. Trick or treating will be replaced with a Halloween Harvest food drive so businesses can be a location for food donations for the Ballard Food bank. There will also be a coloring contest for kids for Halloween. Ballard Gives and Small Business Saturday will happen as usual. The Tomte Trail Passport will be slightly altered this year, the tomtes will be in the window so people do not have to go into every store, but it still gets people out into the district. HolidayFest, will look very different than usual. Holiday lights will still be up for the season.

Michelle Rosenthal asked if local restaurant owners have been contacted about their plans for outdoor dining.

Dohring responded yes, there have been discussions about promoting the to go orders, and businesses are allowed to have canopies and heaters.

Rosenthal inquired if there is anything the Alliance can do to help like selling restaurant gift cards.

Dohring replied that she is working with businesses owners to sell gift cards on the website.

Kiana Ballo announced updates for Advocacy, Urban Design and Transportation. The Ballard Blossom Mural Project is completed. Ballard Blossom has been vacant for about eight months, it had a fire back in December, and has generally been an eyesore for a while. After talking with the property owner, he was on board for us to cover this building in a mural. Once the RFQ was published, it got about 30 artists to apply for this project and the committee selected five mural artists. For this project, the property owner supplied the lift, NOVO paint helped supply paint, Annie's Art and Frame bought 100 cans of black spray paint for the artists, and CenturyLink sponsored this project for \$3,000. The murals look really great and cover every side of the building. In addition to the contributions from local businesses, there was also a GoFundMe campaign to raise money to compensate the artists. An additional \$3,600 has been raised that way.

Rosenthal added since the artists are only being raised through the GoFundMe, please consider sharing with your friends and colleagues.

Ballo also announced that the second half of the utility box project has finished the installation of three utility boxes. One box near the 7-Eleven on Market Street with a design left over from last year's project,

and two boxes on 57 th (one near QFC and the other in Ballard Commons Park) with a new artist, Sarah Robbins. Most of the boxes look really great. There has been increased vandalism to the utility box wraps this summer. The utility box wrap in Ballard Commons Park has spray paint all over it, including one whole side of the box within 48 hours of installation.

5. Deputy Mayor Casey Sixkiller and Sabrina Bolieu

Malone addressed Deputy Mayor Sixkiller. As you know, Ballard Commons Park is a big issue for us. Dan Strauss said he would put together a plan to deal with this issue for both the long term and short term. In his plan he placed great responsibility on the Mayor to fix this issue and the Alliance often feels like it is getting caught in the middle between the mayor and the council. This conversation would be beneficial for all parties involved.

Casey Sixkiller responded that number one, as deputy mayor, he oversees most of our big operating departments and he is a resident of district 6 so he is more familiar than most with the problem areas in the community. Second, he read with great interest council member Dan's letter. Understanding that Ballard Commons Park and other places around the city are experiencing many of the similar difficult conversations. With respect to the navigation team, the mayor's office is still analyzing what this means moving forward with the council's vote to cut SPD's budget. The city is spending a lot of money right now trying to be responsive to the situation, especially with challenges with COVID. Things the city would normally do to help homeless individuals were not able to happen this year due to COVID. The double edge sword is that when COVID came, the city converted all of the shelters to 24/7 shelters. Each bed's annual cost is usually \$22,000, with motels it is more like \$45,000 per person per bed per year. With 600 rooms or so in the region, the city is the one providing the funding to make this program work. Next week the Mayor will transmit her budget to the council next week. The good news is that people are coming into shelter and they are staying safe there, which has been great, but it has really made very clear the challenges of trying to move people through the system. Shelter is supposed to be a temporary thing but the ability to move people on has been very difficult both because of COVID and supply. The good news is that in the coming years there will be many new developments with permanent supportive housing for both the city and the county. The other thing is rethinking what the city's outreach strategy looks like and how to prioritize where the limited resources can go. The city needs more near-term options to help move people inside, especially with winter ahead. It is not true to suggest that homelessness did not exist in Ballard until Ballard Commons Park. The mayor's office is trying to figure out the right way to manage the available resources but also trying to figure out how that works without the navigation team. Often people do not want to come inside. The mayor's office is still in the react mode from the council decision last night. The other thing is that because of COVID, the city has not been able to conduct any navigation teamwork without making sure there are shelter beds available. Even then, there is not a 100% acceptance rate for the offer of shelter when conducting sweeps.

6. Council Member Dan Strauss

Dan Strauss stated that when the Ballard Commons was cleared before, the deputy mayor did a darn good job of getting people into shelter. This meeting is not for finger pointing but the mayor's office and city council need to be using all of the available resources to get people inside. The cut of the navigation team has been probably been discussed, which he did not vote for, but the compromise bill to keep the navigation team fell short.

Malone replied it feels like Ballard gets caught in the middle of the argument between the city and the council. The whole community is feeling burdened by the lawlessness and is hurting right now. The

neighborhood needs help and needs it now. Can it get done overnight, no, but something can be done quickly. You are both very familiar with the problems here.

Sixkiller responded this is not about anyone getting caught in the cross hairs between the council and the mayor. The city in the process of doing analysis and figuring out how to use available resources moving forward. There are multiple objectives that the city aims to achieve throughout the city. One example is hygiene, almost every place the city has put a hygiene stations, the surrounding community mad at the city for putting it there but the advocates for the homeless population are saying the city is not doing enough. There is so feedback that the city does not know what to do with it. Obviously, there needs to be a larger conversation about how to engage and the community impacts. There needs to be a conversation both in the covid space and the long term, but there are tradeoffs. This group can help the city think through some of that stuff. The city has already spent \$150 million a year for dealing with this problem. There are some other ideas as a part of the city's budget proposal that will be presented next week. The city needs to do a better job framing what some of the operational limitations and answering some of those unanswered problems.

Blanton inquired if the mayor intends on signing the small business pledge.

Sabrina Bolieu replied that the mayor is supportive and has released a statement fully in support.

Malone asked Strauss if it would be fair to say that Casey was not in support of your policy in that it might not be realistic. How can you work with the mayor to solve the issue of crime and homelessness in Ballard Commons Park?

Strauss responded that he put out his plan for dealing with this situation, per the Alliance's request. When he constantly gets the response that the plan is not realistic or financially feasible, there is an explanation for his stance. With that, when looking at six months from now, that is aligned with the time that the regional homelessness authority will be set up, Seattle cannot wait for that. While \$150 million a year is being spent on homelessness, but this money could be better spent by prioritizing housing first. It is important to give people a spectrum of options and with that, you cannot continue to live in our public spaces. The city's libraries, busses, and parks have become defacto housing for the unhoused population, but the city cannot continue to nip and tuck around the edges of this problem.

Ackerman inquired how much of the money the city spends on homelessness goes to mental health and drug abuse issues? There is a huge population that do not want to be housed, they just want to live on the street and do drugs and alcohol. There are people that are vulnerable that are literally afraid to leave their houses. The trash, the smell, the abuse, people are afraid. Until the city and state can address the mental health treatment, nothing is going to be solved.

Strauss replied that the city needs to be able to have a solution that gives people options.

Kahrs stated quite frankly, as a lawyer, informationally speaking, the city cannot force someone into treatment unless the city uses the criminal system.

Strauss discussed about mental health specifically, first the mobile crisis team would be able to take someone to a secure facility, but they must first be referred by an officer. Sending an armed officer as the first response, often escalates the situation and is not the best use of officer's time. In Eugene with CAHOOTS, they respond to 20% of 911 calls, Seattle needs to be able to send the mobile crisis team and

remove the police officer filter to because to utility that resource fully. With involuntary commitment, there are no secure detox facilities in King County, there is one in Chehalis and one in Spokane.

Ackerman mentioned these people need help and they need it badly. From family experience; drug addiction is not an isolated problem and Washington does not have an effective way to deal with this in our state.

Strauss stated when people have housing, they will take their problems inside. The problem of drug abuse used to be indoors and now it is on our doorstep.

Rosenthal responded that those points are all agreeable. It is appreciated that Dan put out a plan and the city does need to address this. The thing that is difficult to understand is that Dan's plan relied heavily on the navigation team, while fellow council members voted to eviscerate the navigation team.

Strauss replied that the navigation team has been the gate keeper for the shelter resources that the city has, acting as a gate keeper has made them the center of that wheel. People can still use resources like REACH for referrals.

Stewart inquired with this plan, your attention to the timeliness of the solutions is appreciated but what about the cost and how does this plan move forward.

Strauss stated that he has a meeting with the mayor tomorrow to discuss solutions. This is something that cannot wait. In terms of budget, he will have to get back on that. There are cost savings to addressing this issue for addressing this in a whole scale way.

Ackerman asked if Dan has a plan for being an influencer on fellow council members.

Strauss responded yes. Fellow council members conflate the navigation team with sweeps. When the navigation team is connecting people to resources and shelter, that is the proper use by design. It is important to describe to fellow council members how the navigation team can be used without conducting sweeps.

Eric Nelson inquired about law enforcement's role in these situations.

Strauss stated that the city council is not in the chain of command with SPD.

Stewart announced at the end of the day, it is agreed that this is a train wreck waiting to happen. What we all are trying to communicate is how concerned we are about all of this. We do not want someone to die in Ballard Commons Park before the city starts to pay any attention to it.

Strauss agreed.

Blanton stated he knows about CAHOOTS, he lived in Eugene. It is not going to solve all of the city's problems. Where is our support from the city for us?

Strauss replied good question Barry, the way the question was phrased is an operational question that was not asked when both Mom and Dad (the mayor's office and city council representation) were here.

Blanton responded he is not a child, Dan.

Strauss announced that there are two topics for the meeting with the mayor tomorrow, one is next steps for working together and the other is next steps for dealing with homelessness.

Malone replied thanks Dan for coming and giving extra time to this meeting.

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