



## December 13th, 2023 Ratepayer Advisory Board (RAB) Meeting Minutes

**Date:** December 13th, 2023

**Location:** In Person Meeting

**Present (in person):**

Tom Malone, CKM Associates  
Christine Ackerman, Hjarta Condominium  
Lekh Burns, re-soul  
Mike Kahrs, Resident  
Michelle Rosenthal, Veris Law Group  
Barry Blanton, Greenfire Campus, Commons at Ballard  
Kurt Utterback, Regency Centers - Ballard Blocks  
Mark Craig, Henbart  
Max Genereaux, Hattie's Hat, Sunset, Smoke Shop

**Absent:**

John Marasco, Security Properties  
Gretchen Swanson, Chase Bank  
Randy Brinker, Sweet Mickey's, Resident  
Stephanie Carrillo, Equity Residential  
Brian Trickel, Providence Swedish

**Present (on zoom):**

Philip Lloyd  
Eric Nelson, National Nordic Museum  
Scott Koppelman, AMLI Mark24

**Observers/Presenters:**

Phil Lloyd, Seattle CFO  
Mike Stewart, Sophie Iannone, Wyatt Hoffman, Wren  
Wilson, Ballard Alliance team

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

Tom Malone called the meeting to order at 3:05pm. Tom described the processes that will be required for the BIA to transition into 2024, including appointment of an interim Board which will then need to approve updated By Laws for the new Board that takes effect in January.

All present (in person and via Zoom) gave brief introductions at 3:10.

**2. Public Comment**

None.

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

Phil Lloyd stated that we are running a little behind now, as we are expecting additional funding to come in through rates that have been assessed but not yet paid. We are in a good spot as we approach the end of the year with additional funds coming because of those collections as well as City reimbursement for grants, DON, and other funding that the Alliance front-loads.

Mike Stewart added that he is connecting with ratepayers to make for a more effective invoicing process for missing assessments. He mentioned an estimated range of ~\$37,000-\$97,000 surplus, with \$58,000 (as of 12.1) outstanding assessments in collections. The 2024 BIA budget is around \$990,000 with an additional \$275,000 from City funding. Overall, the budget is in a good spot heading into 2024 and the beginning of the next BIA iteration.

#### **4. Review 2024 Work Plan and Budget**

Mike Stewart presented the proposed 2024 Work Plan and Budget.

Clean Streets service increasing to 3x/wk (Jan-Oct) and 4x/wk (Nov-Dec). Currently in conversation with Uplift NW for 2024 contract.

Praetorian has been hired for patrols in the expanded boundary and have been working since November 1, 2023. This includes patrols and 24/7 response for stakeholders within the BIA boundary. This will continue throughout 2024.

The Alliance secured \$150K in funding for an Ambassador Program was advocated for and received through the City budget process in collaboration with CM Strauss' Office. We anticipate this role will assist with public safety and possibly other activities depending on selected provider. In total we've leveraged \$275K of City funds to support enhanced services (Ambassadors, De-escalation, and Safety Coordinator) in the BIA through 2024.

The Alliance team will be implementing light pole banners in 2024 and also conducting a feasibility analysis hanging planter baskets and other beautification efforts along NW Market St to enhance beautification/vibrancy. Hanging Planter Baskets will likely begin in 2025 as the planting season for them is right now. In summary, we are increasing services and enhancing spending on vibrancy in 2024.

The Alliance is working to implement a residential manager engagement program to ensure that we're learning what's happening in residential communities and provide a forum for information-sharing (best on-site security, alarm systems, etc.).

Mike Kahrs pointed out that this will definitely be useful for our residential communities located within BIA, but there are many outside of the BIA boundary that may benefit from this as well. Are we able to expand to include those residential communities?

Mike Stewart responded that we are fairly constrained with BIA funds and will likely need to ensure BIA funds are spent within the BIA.

Kahrs suggested expanding beyond the BIA boundary to build goodwill and provide some effective services to others in the greater Ballard community. He also asked about specific Council feedback regarding the renewal process.

Stewart responded that we were approved via a unanimous Council vote and got a lot of good feedback from Council. CM Strauss and CM Nelson were very supportive of the BIA's efforts and endorsed the renewal.

Chris Ackerman agreed it would be interesting and possibly useful to include those condos & residential properties outside the boundary in the residential meetings, perhaps 1x/year.

Kahrs suggested consideration of holding a generalized meeting about e.g. safety for BIA members and open the invite to broader community. Legh mentioned that Merchants are also interested and brought up the BMRG corollary, which includes a variety of businesses that are not within the BIA itself.

Stewart continued reviewing the work plan, noting that our economic development work and data support via platforms like Fulcrum (commercial space tracking) and Placer.ai (customer/visitor tracking) will continue in 2024. The City may provide a license for Placer as a support in 2024.

Wine Walk & a Cocktail Trail events will continue which serve as a great way to introduce people to retailers while enjoying restaurant creations, all while having a social component. The Alliance will be reviving the Shop & Dine guide, looking to engage with Port on cruise ship travelers/promotion, continue to grow online/social media presence, and will plan to refresh the Visit Ballard brand in 2025.

The Visit Ballard website is still very strong and garners a lot of visit, but it will soon be time for a revamp. However, that work will commence in 2025 (possibly late 2024) to allow the Alliance to focus on highly visible and impactful projects including clean & safe, beautification, and holiday lights for 2024.

The Alliance is working now on Route 40 and related transportation issues including the Burke Gilman Trail and Strauss's proposal for Leary and Market. Additionally, the Alliance is engaging with SDOT and CM Strauss about Ballard Ave redesign that changed much of the parking earlier this month.

Stewart concluded with a discussion around public safety. With the new City Council there is renewed hope that support for increased safety in the City will gain support. Stewart reminded the Board that Tab 3 of the Board Binder contains the Alliance Staff Production Update which reviews specific work products over the last quarter in a bulleted form.

Malone opened the floor for discussion and questions.

Kahrs noticed that the BIA budget has increased for 2024 and wonders if that is because we're bringing in more revenue with the increased size of the BIA?

Stewart responded that this increase is partially due to the expansion of the boundary. Secondly, data used for initial BIA was pulled in 2015 (property values via KC Assessor's Office). The renewal included a requirement from the City to pull new data, which reflects increased property values which increases assessments across the board.

Legh queried: is there new construction that increased the budget as well?

Stewart responded that new construction is a factor as well. He reminded the Board that the life cycle is 12 years with this renewal. Each year, regardless of new construction, the assessment increases by CPI with a 3% floor and a 6% ceiling.

Tom indicated that we need to approve and adopt the 2024 Work Plan & Budget. Barry moved to approve – Rosenthal Seconds. None opposed, work plan is adopted.

## **5. Confirm Program Manager for 2024**

Tom reminded the Board that we are required to confirm the Ballard Alliance as the program manager for the Ballard BIA. Tom noted that BIAs in Seattle are respected and the work that Mike does is particularly well-respected.

Rosenthal moved for adoption; Blanton seconded. None opposed, Ballard Alliance is confirmed as program manager for 2024.

## **6. Review Revised By Laws**

Malone began the discussion around updating our By Laws. He recalled that when the BIA was first created we were brand new. Malone continued that we've had substantial turnover since inception, but likely not out of the ordinary as we've had a natural progression. Tom indicated that our new duration is 12 years which is a fair amount of time, not a long time, but suggested that our existing 3-year terms would be appropriate.

Kahrs noted a change to the representation in section 2.1.

Stewart indicated that the new draft By Laws include two semi-substantial changes: (1) updating to include the new ordinance & date enacted; and (2) Section 2.1 "Representation" is changed because our Ordinance language changed. The 2017 Ordinance specifically said no less than 1/3 residential and 1/3 commercial. The new ordinance doesn't include that language, so this edit is to ensure consistency with the new Ordinance. The current Board is roughly 50% representative of residential. The addition of Jen Moran from Carter Subaru will reduce this number to ~47% residential, which is congruent with the amount of residential properties represented within our district.

Kahrs remembered debating originally about concern of underrepresentation of various sectors and suggested that we can include language along the lines of "ideal goal is equal or proportionate" to commercial/residential representative.

Malone offered that some board members have multiple irons in the fire, being both property owners & business representatives and also work in the BIA (e.g. Tom). It is important to ensure that residential, commercial, and business are represented but cutting it into thirds seems overly prescriptive.

Kahrs suggested we could also set minimums of ~20% or similar.

Burns offered can we add language that states ideally we're looking to ensure board composition that is consistent with the neighborhood.

Blanton indicated that has served on boards that use something of a matrix to develop understanding of Board composition to keep track of who's representing what part of the neighborhood so as vacancies occur we'll know what we're looking for.

Rosenthal suggested that with a range of 11 - 17 members, the percentage may fluctuate over time.

Ackerman indicated that she prefers the language in the current draft.

Stewart said he shared a list of Board members with OED regarding the appointment of the interim advisory board. We are absolutely looking to ensure parity & tracking.

Tom asked of the Board: do we want to adopt By-Laws now or think it over and adopt in the future?

Kahrs made a motion to approve adding language to section 2.1: "the board shall strive to appoint various representatives of varying sizes and types". Blanton seconded the motion.

Tom called for a vote. 9 votes in favor (in-person), 2 votes in favor for (online). Amendment is approved.

Ackerman pointed out that current edits do include 1-, 2-, and 3-year limits. Taking out limits means that a board with no turnover gets stale over time.

Malone indicated we had that conversation previously but ended up with turnover anyhow. If it's 12 it's possible that some members would remain for all 12 years, but would bet that some members will turn over.

Legh suggested that Tom's right that a lot of the challenges we experienced over the past 7 years were unforeseen, so likely happen with a 12-year term as well.

Blanton said that low turnover can lead to groupthink, but we could keep term limits and remove the limits on re-election to keep options open.

Ackerman suggested we should strike the requirement to not be able to serve again though.

Kahrs agreed and moved to strike the language after "serving" 3<sup>rd</sup> line down to 5<sup>th</sup> line down.

Utterback suggested that maybe we move the discussion to next year as it seems we've already had a lot of discussion about it, would give folks more time to consider.

Kahrs suggested this seems like something we should rush as the ByLaws laws will take effect with new board.

Malone summarized and suggested that we consider and take up the ByLaws at our next meeting.

## **8. Appoint Chairperson**

Ackerman made a motion to continue with Tom as chairman. Blanton seconded. "Thirded" by Rosenthal and "Fourth'd" by Mark Craig.

The question was asked: does Tom wants to continue serving in this role? Tom indicated that, yes, he is not tired yet, and is happy to continue in this role.

A vote was called: all in favor; non opposed.

Malone retains chair position & thanks the group for the comments.

Stewart suggested a brief break.

## **9. Alliance Team Updates**

Tom Malone called to reconvene at 4:20pm. He prompted the Alliance team to proceed with program updates.

### **Economic Development**

Sophie Iannone presented updates on economic development and business support. The Alliance outreached to several businesses interested in Ballard and successfully landed Smokey Hot Soup, a West African food business. The team also met with the Office of Economic Development and the Small Business Administration to create a small business resource packet for new and existing businesses.

Iannone explained that the Alliance team had continued using Fulcrum to track commercial spaces, vacancy status, and business attributes. Findings from research indicated a 3% vacancy rate on Ballard Ave, compared to a 6% vacancy rate on Market Street. Findings were being used to guide conversations on vacancy filling.

Mike Kahrs asked where data was sourced from.

Iannone responded that data was from various sources including observational walkthroughs, online commercial listings, and conversations with commercial brokers. Data on businesses was collected via a business exit survey, the Ballard Community Survey, market analyses and more.

### **Clean and Safe**

Wyatt Hoffman provided an overview of cleaning statistics from Uplift Northwest.

Mike Stewart presented safety updates. Praetorian Security began patrolling the expanded BIA boundary and made introductions to various businesses. Praetorian was contracted for the year with possible alterations along the way. There was potential to utilize Praetorian for ambassadors and/or de-escalation training.

The Alliance conducted a safety walkthrough with Captain Aagard and was maintaining a proactive and strong relationship with SPD. Engagement was good and the Alliance would continue to press forward. There was a more hopeful attitude surrounding SPD coverage considering the current City Council and BIA partners. Stewart emphasized the need for educating the incoming Council about the Alliance's work and why it's important. Stewart noted that Tim Burgess stressed to all department staff the importance of BIAs and the variety of services provided to stakeholders.

### **Public Realm**

Wren Wilson presented public realm updates. There were 600+ likes for the most recent public art mural in the alleyway behind Ballard Avenue. The Alliance worked with Urban Artworks to acquire wall space on the Shilshole side of Magnum Storage, and put ~1000 sf of artwork on that wall through the Youth Apprentice program.

Wren Wilson updated the group on opportunities for planter baskets along NW Market St. Wilson shared that the process was more complicated and time consuming than anticipated. The timeline for permitting and planting did not align for a 2024 launch.

Barry Blanton commented that the flower basket provider in Pioneer Square also provided watering. The Alliance for Pioneer Square paid for the project.

Mike Stewart responded that vanity poles would make the process easier, as SDOT and City Light poles had a variety of attachments that made the permitting process much more complicated.

Wren Wilson updated the group on light pole banners and noted that artist Paige Pettibon created a design inspired by Indigenous + Scandinavian heritage.

Michelle Rosenthal asked if the banners would rotate to include both designs.

Mike Stewart responded that each banner would alternate between designs.

Sophie Iannone provided a brief update on Holiday Lighting, note the Alliance worked with Clean 425 to light over 200 trees and the belltower in Marvin's Garden.

Mike Stewart gave a brief update on Ballard Commons Park and added that Seattle Parks and Recreation planned to host a playground opening event in April of 2024.

### **Transportation Advocacy**

Mike Stewart provided updates on transportation advocacy. The Route 40 coalition had created a website and hired a traffic engineer to get traffic counts. SDOT had not slowed progress on their plan.

Mike Stewart shared updates on the Burke-Gilman Trail, and shared that CM Strauss was still looking into a Leary to Market alternative. Many indicated that they were not in support of this proposal. Stewart anticipated the trail would be a big policy issue for the Alliance moving forward.

Mike Stewart provided an update on the Ballard Ave Redesign. Two-hour parking was gone, and the street had largely commercial/general load zones. Bollards were installed in areas that used to be load zones to create a walkway, which was not really being used. The fire lane was part of the conversation as 20' was required. The Alliance was actively working with SDOT and CM Strauss on immediate revisions and the restoration of 2-hour parking for the longer term.

Max Genereaux clarified that SDOT was cooperative with Ballard Ave issues, but not on Route 40.

Mike Stewart agreed.

### **Marketing**

Mike Stewart gave an overview of Visit Ballard, sharing that engagement was up 32%. Year to date, the Instagram amassed 7,200 followers. Facebook had 2,900 followers.

Mike Stewart added that lots of events were coming up. Wine Walk sold out at 650 participants. There was a 24k gross revenue to help fund BA activities. Holiday Fest was successful and had around 200 participants. There were free photos with Santa and treats for the community. Cocktail Trail also sold out at 450 participants. 10 bars/restaurants + 10 retailers participated. There were 20 volunteers and 20k gross revenue to support BIA activities. Stewart added that Alliance events helped to buoy the BIA budget, and events helped to draw attention and visibility to the Alliance as a community partner.

Eric Nelson added that Julefest performed well in 2023. It was a nice jump and good to have the Alliance team present.

**10. New Business**

Mike Kahrs suggested a new business item – parking. Kahrs questioned what the CD Stimson lot was being used for and/or whether a partnership could exist there. Continual reduction of street parking was a challenge in the district.

Mike Stewart replied that he had a discussion with Dan Whitaker on that exact topic.

**11. New Business**

None.

**Meeting adjourned at 4:51**