



March 29, 2023 Ratepayer Advisory Board (RAB) Meeting Minutes

Date: March 29, 2023

Location: In Person & Zoom Hybrid Meeting

Present (in person):

Tom Malone, CKM Associates
John Marasco, Security Properties
Randy Brinker, Sweet Mickey's, On the Park Apts.
Christine Ackerman, Hjarta Condominium
Lekh Burns, re-soul
Max Genereaux, Hattie's Hat, Sunset, Smoke Shop
Gretchen Swanson, Chase Bank
Barry Blanton, Greenfire Campus, Commons at Ballard

Absent:

Stephanie Carrillo, Equity Residential
Scott Koppelman, AMLI Mark24
Mike Kahrs, Resident
Mark Craig, Henbart
Michelle Rosenthal, Veris Law Group
Eric Nelson, National Nordic Museum
Brian Trickel, Providence Swedish Medical Center

Present (via Zoom)

Observers/Presenters:

Phil Lloyd, Seattle CFO
Scott Ingham, Ballard Alliance Operations Board
Kiana Ballo, Mike Stewart, Devin Reynolds, Wyatt Hoffman

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. Finances are tracking spot on so far this year. There are some renewal expenses that ran up in January.

Stewart added that there is grant funding from the City of Seattle to reimburse those expenses.

4. Ballard Alliance Update

Intro for Crime Prevention & Safety HUB Coordinator

Mike Stewart introduced Wyatt Hoffman, the new safety hub coordinator for the Alliance. He is going to be doing safety walks and ultimately working with business owners and residential buildings to help with crime prevention and in the aftermath of crime. This will include collecting data, submitting reports, bring a resource for businesses and residents. He will also be working in conjunction with REACH, the security team, and Councilmember Strauss's office. This should help the organization to be able to expand this type of work that the Alliance has been doing for a while but on a larger scale.

Economic Development

Devin Reynolds announced updates for economic development. Several businesses have been for brick-and-mortar spaces and many ended up signing leases in the district. Sophie has been working to update the commercial space database so that the Alliance can use that information to attract businesses and direct them to spaces within the district. The Alliance launched a new community survey. This survey focuses on when people are shopping and dining, what businesses people tend to visit and what businesses people think are missing from the district. This is also helpful for existing businesses to get data on what community members are looking for. Many of the responses mention shopping before or after events, which is great.

Gretchen Swanson inquired where to take the survey.

Reynolds replied that it is on the Visit Ballard Instagram and on the Visit Ballard website. It also went out in the newsletter and Sophie sent it to the apartment managers in the area.

Tom Malone discussed that it would be interesting to learn from existing residents what services they need in the area. This could be really useful if the results show that there are specific services that are wanted by many people so that the Alliance could recruit businesses that provide those services. There will be a significant number of new retail and residential spaces coming online soon with the new developments being built in the neighborhood which means there is opportunity to work with those developments to identify what is missing and what is needed. For example, the bowling alley, there are organizations that do this really well.

Reynolds added that Sophie put out some posters in the neighborhood that have a QR code to the survey as well. One bit that has been interesting is some of the things people say they want, actually already exist in the neighborhood so the Alliance can use that opportunity to promote existing businesses that people might not know are already here.

Reynolds stated that Heritage Distilling is moving toward wholesale business model which is why they closed their Ballard location.

Clean & Safe & New Coordinator

Reynolds presented updates for clean and safe. These numbers are just for Q1 of this year. The next section is comparing Q1 of this year to Q1 of last year, many of these numbers are increased in 2023 compared to 2022.

Barry Blanton asked why the numbers have increased this year.

Reynolds responded that Uplift NW continues to increase their efficiency, and the Alliance was able to get more grant funding from SPU for more clean and safe hours. With Wyatt on board, there will be more bandwidth to do more of this work as well. Every quarter these numbers are reported to SPU.

Stewart mentioned that the Alliance needs to make sure SPU knows the number of public cans overflow and convince them to place more cans.

Reynolds discussed that Waste management is supposed to service Ballard trash cans seven days a week but that is not always what happens so it could partially be related to inadequate service instead of inadequate number of cans. There also should be brand new trash cans next year.

Meeting Minutes

Blanton moves to approve the minutes as presented.

Swanson seconded.

Motion approved by all.

Public Safety Cont.

Stewart stated that the Safety HUB Coordinator position is funded for two years with the city. The Alliance is putting together a 90-day plan for Wyatt to get established in the new role.

Stewart continued that the Alliance was mentioned in the Seattle Times piece about the high utilizer program. The Alliance's main concentration was on Petrina Yeunger. She has not been in Ballard in a while, and she has been receiving mental health treatment. Focused work on encampments is focused on the library and the park. So far, only one tent has popped up in the park and it was gone the next day. For the last 10 days the city's unified care team has been out to the library hauling stuff away. Ballard is getting good attention from the city. In talking with our REACH worker, she said she has relationships with most of the people that are around the park and library. From her vantage point, it is a resource problem because there are not enough shelter beds and housing for all of these people.

Ballard Commons Park

Stewart thanked board members for being a part of the park reopening on March 11th and 12th. The Alliance worked with Councilmember Strauss and the Parks Department for this fun old-fashioned park opening. Many businesses participated as well. There were protestors standing in front of the stage yelling stop the sweeps on Saturday. After that, everything went smoothly. In the park, there is new café lighting, repairs to the skate bowl, and games. The play area will break ground this spring. Sophie is working on activation events for this summer and the movies in the park will return in August. Kiana had the utility box rewrapped in the park. The Alliance is looking to do some projects in the park during the Seattle One Day of service.

John Marasco added that Edible Hope has been talking to the food bank about relocating their meal services during the construction of the new St Luke's development.

Public Art

Kiana Ballo announced utility box project updates. The utility box in Ballard Commons Park was re-wrapped earlier this month. This box was originally wrapped in 2020 but about a week after installation, the vinyl wrap was destroyed. The design was created by artist, Sarah Robbins, and features icons and themes related to the park and the neighborhood. The utility box on the SE corner of NW Market St and 24th Ave NW is still planned to be wrapped. The selected artist for this project has had some personal emergencies which have delayed the progress of artwork for the vinyl wrap. Design is about 90% completed and should be ready for installation soon.

Reynolds added that Urban Artworks got a grant to work with youth in Ballard this year which will culminate in a mural in Ballard. The Alliance connected Urban Artworks with Mox Boarding House which will be their meeting space and the location of the mural. Urban Artworks is also working with a foster care non-profit to paint a mural, the Alliance connected them with Assembly to paint their north-facing wall.

Public Realm Enhancements

Reynolds stated that the Seattle One Day of Service is coming up and the Alliance has plans to do a community painted mural on the pump house structure in Ballard Commons Park. This was a plan that was developed in 2020 that got put on hold due to the pandemic. The Alliance is also looking to have volunteers remove graffiti from signs in the neighborhood during the event.

Reynolds continued that holiday lights were removed in February. The Alliance is working to rehab the kiosk at Bergen Place by replacing the panels and repainting the structure. The Alliance has approval to use two of the panels; one for public art, and one for a shop and dine map of the neighborhood.

Marketing & Communications

Stewart presented marketing updates. The Visit Ballard website has been very active. Instagram also has very strong numbers and continues to grow following, Visit Ballard has over 6,000 followers now. The standalone Ballard Alliance website was launched separate from Visit Ballard, this will be a great resource to highlight what the Alliance is doing and gain more visibility. The gift card program is live, over \$2,000 in gift cards have been sold. The Visit Ballard ad will be back in Seatac in Concourse D in Q2 for the spotlight ad program. The Ballard Alliance branding and Ballard Bulletin newsletter format has been refreshed. The Alliance secured an advertising campaign with Majestic Bay theater to play the two-minute About the Ballard Alliance video. It will air before every screening for 12 weeks for a very reasonable price. Colton also connected with a company called The Bulletin that allows the Alliance to advertise on digital display readers in residential buildings. The Alliance is now advertising in several buildings in Ballard now, which is a great way to promote Alliance events and programs to the Alliance's target audience at a very reasonable price.

Events

Ballo announced event updates. The Ballard ArtWalk continues to garner steady participation and social media following continues to grow. Hullabaloo returned this year in February featuring 13

retailers at Leif Erikson Lodge for two days of end of season clearance sales. The Alliance sold beer from Lucky Envelope on Friday to shoppers and sold out before the night was over. The Alliance had another successful Wine Walk this weekend. This event featured 15 businesses and wineries with 600 participants. For this event, the Alliance continues to fine tune details. The Alliance got sponsors to help cover the costs of 6-bottle wine totes to give out to participants to encourage bottle sales, which ended up higher than the previous event.

Transportation

Stewart announced a big win with sound transit, Ballard will be getting the tunneled light rail approach with a station on 15th. It is basically a done deal, and it was passed. What the sound transit board said in the EIS is that this is the preferred alternative. Not a lot of updates for metro route 40. There will be more information soon and it remains high on the Alliance's radar list.

Burke Gilman Trail Update

Stewart stated that Councilmember Strauss issued a statement to the mayor's office and SDOT to complete the missing link in an alternative route to the Shilshole route because it has been tied up in litigation for so long. Strauss wants a solution, and his idea is to use Leary to Market. It is almost exactly what was studied in the EIS previously, the only difference is the access point on 17th. Strauss asked the mayor's office and SDOT to get to 60% design in six months. It is not clear if the mayor's office is going to do that. There is a good argument that this was already studied so why waste breath on this. The city still prefers Shilshole. The Cascade Bicycle Club is not a fan of Strauss's proposal, many local businesses as well. The Alliance will likely draft a letter for businesses to sign on.

Malone added that Market Street is constantly under assault. There is concern because for many organizations, Market Street is the only access street, when changes come, it is very difficult to move people through and access businesses along the street. Remember what happened with the repaving of Market Street west of 14th. Keeping Market Street flowing as smoothly as possible is a high priority for many organizations.

Stewart discussed that the chamber had been named in the lawsuit regarding the Shilshole route many years ago but then decided to be neutral about 8 years ago. Most people want the bike lane to go on Shilshole where it was intended to go in the first place. Most people are going to ride that route anyway because it is the shortest and most natural route for cyclists.

Malone stated that the same people continue to oppose it, nothing has changed over the years. The city lost on a couple of proceedings including the shoreline management act and the court of appeals.

Stewart mentioned that the mayor's office is fully aware that either way they are going to face opposition no matter which route is ultimately selected.

5. BIA Renewal

Stewart announced that the Alliance is at 35.1% of approval signatures for the BIA renewal so far.

Malone stated that it is difficult getting these signatures and the goal is to get 60% of the owners to agree to the Alliance's petition. The second set of petitions were just sent out. There are also some significant requests from important players that account for about 10%. There are a couple more months to get this done. There is an option to create a plan B district boundary in the event that the Alliance does not get to 60% with the proposed boundaries. Right now, the Alliance is proceeding in as planned but a month from now, there may be more interest in a slight modifications. If you have any influence with any of the key players, reach out to them.

Stewart discussed that petitions are coming in and the Alliance has been working the phones. People are seeing the petitions and the Alliance will continue to work for their attention. Ballard Blocks are key for renewal, they are supportive, but they are concerned about the cost of their redevelopment's impact on their assessment. In the core and on Leary the Alliance has good support. Residential buildings are key as well. Greystar manages several buildings in Ballard and the Alliance has had good conversations with someone local that is high up there while also doing individual outreach to those buildings. They need to sign given everything the Alliance has done for them. Right now, progress is going as expected and it is fair to say that the Alliance is over halfway there.

Blanton added that the timeline is predicated on the council's budget cycle and making sure to get their attention before it turns into budget season.

6. New Business

N/A

Meeting adjourned at 4:33 p.m.