



## June 26th, 2024 Ratepayer Advisory Board (RAB) Meeting Minutes **\*\*DRAFT\*\***

**Date:** June 26, 2024

**Location:** In Person Meeting

**Present (in person):**

Tom Malone, CKM Associates  
Mike Kahrs, Resident  
Barry Blanton, Greenfire Campus, Commons at Ballard  
Max Genereaux, Hattie's Hat, Sunset, Smoke Shop  
Brian Trickel, Providence Swedish  
Kurt Utterback, Regency Centers - Ballard Blocks  
Randy Brinker, Sweet Mickey's, Resident  
Christine Ackerman, Hjarta Condominium  
Legh Burns, re-soul  
Michelle Rosenthal, Veris Law Group  
Gretchen Swanson, Chase Bank  
Paul Osher, Rachel's Bagels & Burritos

**Absent:**

Eric Nelson, National Nordic Museum  
Scott Koppelman, AMLI Mark24  
Stephanie Carrillo, Equity Residential  
Mark Craig, Henbart  
Sophie Iannone, Ballard Alliance

**Present (on zoom):**

Philip Lloyd  
John Marasco, Security Properties

**Observers/Presenters:**

Phil Lloyd, Seattle CFO  
Mike Stewart, Wren Wilson, Will Cadra, Wyatt Hoffman

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

A meeting of the Ratepayer Advisory Board was held in person on June 26<sup>th</sup>, 2024, at the Commons at Ballard Apartment Building. Meeting was called to order by Tom Malone at 3:07pm. Round of introductions as Paul Osher is new to the Board.

Mike Kahrs led the Board in a rousing rendition of Happy Birthday for Wren Wilson.

**2. Public Comment**

None.

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

Mike Stewart reported that Q2 is a little under-spent, mostly explainable by timing issues and onboarding of security contract & cleaning contractor, which will ramp up during leaf season. A couple categories are over-spending slightly, but overall we are tracking well.

Phil Lloyd reviewed the Finance Report for this portion of the second Quarter of 2024, 5 months into the year. Expenses through Q1 and Q2 to-date accounted for 35 percent of the annual budget, which was slightly under the projections. The expenses are following normal trends and are tracking well. While \$990,000 represents the budget, \$144k has been spent through Q2 thus far.

#### **4. Minutes Approval**

[Approval of Minutes]

Gretchen Swanson moved to approve the March minutes.

Michelle Rosenthal seconded.

All approved, motion passed.

#### **5. Ballard Ave Discussion**

Tom Malone introduced the conversation around Ballard Ave, centered on issues relating to street cafes and the Farmer's Market. Stewart provided an overview of the issues which center on the new layout for the Farmer's Market as a result of street cafes, perceived circulation and revenue issues for the Farmer's Market, retail, and restaurants.

Discussion has been ongoing in the neighborhood and occasionally contentious. On Tuesday, June 24<sup>th</sup> another meeting was held following an email sent from the Ballard Farmer's Market. Ballard Avenue business owners MK Byrne and Desiree Oldani put together a survey for business and property owners on Ballard Ave. 76% of retailers feel the layout of the market is negatively impactful, and while 71% are supportive of street cafes, many responses discussed beautification of the existing pergolas and parking as a long-term and ongoing challenge on the corridor. After presenting the survey results retail and Farmer's Market representatives worked together to consider different changes to the Market layout that may work better for everyone.

Stewart relayed that street cafes do in fact prove very useful for many businesses and visitors. SDOT will not remove street cafes unilaterally and recently developed rules for updates, along with adjusting the parking on Ballard Ave; there is an upcoming meeting on July 11 regarding parking/design changes. One open question is whether angled parking works on the 5300 and 5400 blocks. Lower Ballard Ave, where SDOT has said angled parking doesn't work, has similar width to upper Ballard Ave. If angled gives 15 spaces it's worth pushing, if 3 spaces perhaps not. Landmarks Board approved design guidelines regarding street cafes, SDOT updated their permitting rules and gave June 30<sup>th</sup> as a deadline for existing pergolas to begin re-permitting. SDOT is understaffed and with the hiring freeze the permit process is currently slow. Some in community are communicating the SDOT deadline as "if not done by June 30<sup>th</sup> the street cafe has to go," which is not accurate per SDOT. No street cafes currently meet new design standard and San Fermo's deck/porch is the first, with others in process.

Escalated feelings seem to have calmed at this time and the Farmer's Market will switch existing format on or around July 7<sup>th</sup> to test the new layout and see how it works for the community.

Mike Kahrs asked whether all restaurants have outdoor dining & if not, does parking remove the possibility of getting a street cafe? Legh Burns replied that not all restaurants have one, and if a restaurant adds a street café then the parking would be removed. Max Genereaux added that if you have one right now you need to apply to SDOT for updated permit & then run it by the Landmarks Board. Tom Malone relayed that the conversation we thought we would have today is *quite* different from the conversation we're actually having because of the developments at the June 24<sup>th</sup> meeting; the process will have to play out to see whether the changes are effective. Prior to COVID no Ballard Ave meeting could be held without parking coming up and we're returning to that a little bit. We understand street cafes are important, the Sunday Market is important, and the Alliance will continue to serve a convening role in the discussions. Malone discussed the SDOT plan for a curbless street (several years ago), relaying that Dan Strauss is reviving the idea. There's a lot going on now, which is good because it means there's a lot of vitality even though there's a variety of issues to balance.

Stewart will continue to assist and monitor the conversations but take no formal stance one way or the other.

## **6. Alliance Team Updates**

### Clean and Safe

Questions came up around Praetorian's contract with Ballard Blocks. Kurt Utterback clarified that 2 officers are stationed at Ballard Blocks 24/7. Those officers don't go into tenant spaces and are focused on the public areas.

### Advocacy and Community Engagement

Mike Stewart provided a Route 40 update: SDOT is moving forward with construction while making some small concessions (e.g. reducing the curb extension in front of Annie's Art & Frame). The Alliance received documentation that was requested and is still working on the 24/7 bus lane component, as that is the most impactful in the neighborhood. FTA's application does not indicate 24/7 bus lanes anywhere, but SDOT's interpretation of "improve reliability by 5-10%" is that the only way it can be achieved is through 24/7 bus only lanes. Data is not hard data along every segment but instead speaks to studies showing "general" improvements with various types of infrastructure changes.

An Op-Ed with Seattle Times is in process, Stewart will sign, Pete Hanning of Fremont will sign, looking for Maritime representative and will give a heads-up to the Mayor's Office before publishing as a courtesy notice in hopes that they will pause to consider the requests. Wedgwood 35<sup>th</sup> Ave NE bike lane removal is precedent for continuing to challenge the 24/7 bus only lanes even though project construction has already begun.

Chris Ackerman asked whether this compares to 45<sup>th</sup> in the U-District? General traffic lane reduction there has caused traffic issues. Stewart pointed towards Rainier Beach as an example: some traffic backups at ~9 minutes, and increased speeding issues as people's frustration builds.

Stewart provided an update on the Burke-Gilman Trail Missing Link: Leary to Market is not good. Working on some alternatives to Dan Strauss' plan, which has funding up to 30% design (which is close). We will be watching the Transportation Levy. Ballard Landmark (the building) has been talking to SDOT, which has said that on Leary there is significant work that would need to be done including undergrounding power poles and other expensive work. These impediments may increase pressure for the original Shilshole route.

Bus Lanes and BGT are currently two top issues for the Alliance in addition to safety.

### Public Safety Advocacy

Stewart introduced idea of an SPD rest stop and discussed relationship with Captain Aagard who stopped by yesterday (June 25<sup>th</sup>) to chat and see how things are going. To make the rest stop reality the Alliance needs to make some materials purchases, install a new door keypad, etc. The goal is to incentivize officers to spend more time in the neighborhood and to send a signal of support to patrol officers.

Maritime Academy's encampment is an ongoing issue, rooted in the fact that the City is not enforcing the parking restrictions there. An encampment resolution happens, and the area stays clear for a short time, but is re-encamped shortly after. One idea we're putting forward is to convert the parking to Paid Parking as the City *does* enforce those restrictions better than others. An additional challenge is that it's on the ROW so the Academy can't manage the lot privately.

Mike Kahrs observed that with the Shilshole Marina the City put up signage for temporary no-parking with stickers removal. 24/7 no-parking for about 7 days is very effective. Wyatt Hoffman agreed that this does seem to work for a time, however, once the restriction is lifted the area is 'fair game' again.

### Residential Engagement

Wilson discussed Residential Engagement meetings that we've started this year and highlighted SPD's attendance and discussion about Crime Prevention at the most recent meeting with ~10 residential community managers attending. The intent is to build a connection to multifamily residential in the community and Wilson has been seeing an increase in calls and contacts with managers since we've started these meetings.

Kahrs asked if the invites are building management or HOA? Wilson replied that both are on the invite list.

### Breakfast in Ballard

Stewart discussed another new meeting series hosted by the Alliance focused on general gatherings for community in Ballard. We offer a modest breakfast, there's no charge, and we see ~40 people at an average meeting. Uplift Northwest and City Attorney Ann Davison have been among guest presenters so far. Continuing to look at other events like happy hours or after-hours.

## Economic Development

Stewart presented for Sophie Iannone today (absent) who is continuing all tracking and research on Economic Development topics. Iannone will be sending out community survey again this year to get a general sense of community desires. Access to Placer AI allows us to examine foot traffic at events or specific locations.

Max Genereaux asked how far back Placer AI data goes. Stewart replied around 2016 or 2018. Genereaux said it would be fascinating to see the trends on Ballard Avenue. Barry Blanton added it would be interesting to see whether we've completely rebounded from Covid.

Ballard was recently selected as a neighborhood that will receive a retail study from OED (at no cost to us). OED is interviewing consultants for the work who will develop a report on retail mix, possibly as detailed as storefront designs and interior store feels.

Kahrs asked a survey question: are merchants getting zip codes from people who are purchasing? Gretchen Swanson replied that if you use Chase for CC processing they do that for free! Kahrs was bringing this up as a possible way to get zip codes from customers if that data isn't already available from CC processing.

Chris Ackerman asked whether the retail study is more about current businesses or are they looking at opportunities/empty spaces for recruitment? Stewart replied that it's more about current businesses but may include topics like retail mix and gaps in the neighborhood. Genereaux asked if they are working for the Alliance? Stewart replied that the consultants are working in partnership with us and OED. Randy Brinker asked what the study will provide once it's done? Stewart said that Iannone will have the best answer to that question, but will include an assessment and analysis of what's working and what isn't, retail mix, and possibly specifics about things that can be done to improve retail displays/storefronts etc. Iannone is the best contact for these questions.

Small Business Incubation: Stewart relayed that we expect to hear back from the Small Business Administration next week. The Alliance is establishing a small advisory board before beginning tenant recruitment and moving forward. We are currently looking for ground-floor in the core of Ballard, 2600-2800 sqft, and using this funding to cover ~40-50% of the lease cost. Once acquired the Alliance will sub-lease the space as small incubator spaces for lower-than-market rent for about a year, at which point a business is hopefully able to secure market rate space. If successful, we can look for other funding partners.

Genereaux asked if the OED study plays into this? Stewart answered that it could, but there's no specific correlation.

## Public Realm

Wren Wilson relayed that we are re-vamping the Bergen Place Kiosk (thanks to Max Genereaux!) with a community-painted mural. Genereaux has been doing a lot on the project to fix things that weren't built the best originally. 10 volunteers came to paint on One Seattle Day of Service and now we need to install the painted panels.

Wilson highlighted the placement of new flower planters (9 in total) around the intersection of 22<sup>nd</sup>/Leary/Market. That pilot is going well so far, and the Alliance is partnering with Uplift Northwest to fill the self-watering planters on a biweekly basis.

Wilson is also working to install light pole banners and SDOT finally granted our permit in last 2 weeks. Currently moving to procure and install the banners that were designed in conjunction with Coast Salish artist Paige Pettibon.

Tom Malone asked: what's the maintenance process for these looking like? Referring to flags in Bergen place, these things take a beating being in the sun. Stewart answered that we're assuming ~2-3yr lifespan, some initial funding for replacements from Covid Recovery and ongoing they'll be covered by the public realm budget. Blanton asked how much, ballpark, for one? Stewart replied perhaps ~\$300-\$400 for one individual banner? Blanton mentioned that when these are starting to near mid-late lifespan you may be able to find community members that would like to purchase them, which would help to fund the purchase of replacement banners. Malone agreed that is a great idea & also allows for updating the design every 2-3 years.

Holiday lighting: the Alliance is working with same vendor this year but adding 68 trees to expand the boundary as well as "pendants" on Ballard Avenue that will light up in different colors. Currently working to secure a bid from the contractor. Stewart said that roughly every 3<sup>rd</sup> tree will have pendants (1 large or 2 small). Trees on Ballard Ave are challenging because of how the branches currently are, so this may help with the overall aesthetic. The goal is also to get higher up in the branches than last year.

### Marketing and Promotions

Stewart presenting for Anndrea who is back with the Alliance remotely part-time, VB has 21K users in Q1, almost 300 new followers on VB Insta, ~100 on FB. Many marketing campaigns for various events (Wine Walk & Hullabaloo), created branding for new events as well. The Alliance applied for and received \$25K grant from Port of Seattle for fly/cruise market. Cruise ship marketing will be targeted for the 2025 cruise season.

Genereaux asked how we are targeting cruise passengers? Stewart relayed that the method is targeted digital marketing.

Small business marketing: we are currently refreshing our shop and dine guide, which will highlight ~700 parking spaces off-street. Genereaux asked if the parking app highlight our offstreet lots? Malone added that we actually have a lot of off street, but people don't know about it. Kahrs added that it may require coordination with owners of the Lot. Stewart relayed that the lots will be shown in the guide under the parking category. In addition, the Alliance has also continued its campaign to highlight small business "spotlights: through our social media channels.

### Events

Will Cadra talked about Ballard Summer Cocktail Trail this June. 450 people attended to sample 1 or 2oz cocktails that were voted on by attendees to see which would be featured at

SeafoodFest. Cocktail Trail coincided with ArtWalk so it was a very busy Ballard Ave. Cocktail Trail tickets sold out in advance and it serves a dual purpose of driving visitors to Ballard and also creates revenue for the Alliance to apply to its programs.

De-escalation trainings are paused for the Summer but we'll be starting back up in Fall. Chris Ackerman noted that Hjarta sent a HOA member who said it was very well done. Legh Burns relayed that they sent 2 employees who also benefitted from the event.

SeafoodFest Vendor update: 48 food biz, 68 arts/crafts/NonProfits, 28 sponsor booths, pumped!

Tom Malone asked about issues with Trident procuring salmon. Stewart replied that it's happening despite supply chain issues. 2,300lbs of sockeye and we're adding beer-battered shrimp this year. Max and Emily and Roque are leading the food and beer efforts. Sand will be placed on the street and fish smoked on smokers right in front of the Ballard Alliance office.

VIP Passes for Board Members and tickets for seafood items that we serve. Mike Kahrs asked whether the amount of vendors or anything has changed? Cadra replied that we've seen a modest increase in both arts & crafts and food vendors.

## **7. International Downtown Association Conference**

Stewart talked about the IDA conference coming up on September 10-13. Conference is for organizations like ours, DSA, Alliance for Pioneer Square. IDA's Conference is in Seattle this year and we are hosting some pre-conference tours as well as 2 sessions during the event itself: 1) tour celebrating culture in place-making 2) Ballard to U District tour 3) clean streets & social impact session 4) strategic planning for organizational development and district success.

## **8. New Business**

None.

**Meeting adjourned at 4:47pm**