

August 20, 2024

Constituency General Assembly draft minutes

6:15 p.m.

Attendance: Bruce Rutledge, Heather Pihl, Craig Eidsmoe, Babak Ziraknejad, Christopher Martin, Chris Scott, Chris Weaver, Nick Setten, Emily Pike, Alex Rasmussen, Davin Stedman, Andrew Carroll, Bob Braun, Gina Karaba, Jonathan Berner, Gordie McIntyre, Joan Paulson, Marley Rall, Christine Vaughan, Patricia Gray, Jessica Shapiro, Erik Pihl

Bruce called the meeting to order at 6:15 p.m.

#### Approval of agenda

Jonathan said he believed the budget brainstorm was to be at the end of the meeting, time permitting. Bruce said it will be moved to after New Business. Amended agenda approved by acclamation.

#### Approval of minutes: July 16, 2024

Nick moved to approve, Alex seconded. Nick thanked Heather for catching up the Constituency's 2019 minutes.

#### Election: At-Large Office

Bruce explained that the vacancy occurred because Jonathan vacated the position when he was elected Vice Chair. The term runs until July 2025, when it will open for election again. Bruce explained the election process for this vacancy, including nominations from the floor, and a vote of members present at the meeting. The nominees will have an opportunity to speak about their interest in the position and answer questions. Alex nominated Babak, Heather seconded. Gordie nominated himself, Bruce seconded.

#### Candidate statements:

Babak talked about his business, Pizza and Pasta. He said he has traveled a lot but the Market is unique as a place, and because of its people. He feels that there are a lot of topics that need to be brought forward and he can bring more transparency to what business owners may experience. He talked about the slow periods in the Market, such as this August, and said he would like to brainstorm on solutions. He believes in communications and transparency, and following the guidelines and rules in the Market. He spoke of his wife Golnaz's work volunteering on the Market Historical Commission, which has inspired him as well.

Gordie said he's been with the Constituency for five years, and for years in the 1990s. He was a bartender in the Market for 30 years, so he's familiar with a lot of people in the Market, particularly in the restaurant industry. He's familiar with the rules and bylaws, PDA Charter, Hildt-Licata Agreement and he's volunteered a lot in the Constituency office, which has added to his knowledge. He feels that the Constituency needs someone with a lot of history at the Market, which he can provide.

Questions for candidates:

Davin said he works in the North Arcade and DownUnder, both of which are subject to slow periods, and he wanted to know the candidates' perspectives on this August as a slow period.

Babak told about his background in finance and his documentation on their business finances, creating charts and graphs. He used to be able to predict next week's revenue and labor needs, but now it is different. He thinks it's partly because school has started already for some, including college. Also, he understands that during an election year and inflation, business decreases. He said their revenue is down significantly. He thinks people are tighter with their finances right now.

Davin asked if anything could be done through communication. Alex said the Listening Committee has been focusing on daystall but will be focusing on stores and doors next.

Davin asked Gordie if there's something to be done to help the service industry.

Gordie said he ran the Athenian for 20 years and used to know the numbers involved, but now. He said the restaurants are the ones that make it all possible, along with the fish sellers. He said the Listening Committee is more important. He said that he has depended on documentation from the PDA, and cited the importance of reports from the Constituency PDA Council representatives. He is interested in the At-Large position because he is interested in helping to go through the PDA's historic records, assisting EJ Griffin.

Gina asked them to respond about the 50-year plan and the idea of adding more restaurants.

Babak answered that there is no early warning system and that they need to rely on real-time data. He talked about how he provides data for his own restaurant. He said including more data points would help for cleaner data and better analysis.

Davin asked if social media can help solve some of it.

Babak said yes, social media would help. He used to see commercials on tv, and when they were aired, they got more traffic at the restaurant almost immediately, it seemed. He said when social media advertises their business, they get more traffic the same or next day.

Gordie said at the Programs Committee on the second Tuesday of month. Amy and staff are masters of tracking that data. He suggested attending the meetings, or at least reviewing the documents for the meetings. Regarding social media, he reiterated attending the meetings for the most up-to-date information. 50 year plan: It projects the growth of the Market as a whole. In his opinion, this is difficult to do because people in the restaurant are happy with what they do right now, while people operating the highstalls are not doing well; the craftspeople are restricted to the money they make - they are not able to make a living on what they make anymore. You have to have something outside of the Market. Amy's staff puts on workshops to show businesses how to make money using social media. He thinks the Constituency needs to revisit the Daystall rules and the Hildt-Licata Agreement.

Jonathan asked if the candidates thought that the Constituency had a role in promoting or not promoting the Daystall Tenants Association and the Market Merchants Association.

Gordie answered that it used to be that the PDA used to be a small organization and the Market Merchants Association put on big events and parties in the Market that were paid for by the Merchants Association. The Daystall Tenants Association used to have people in charge of it. No longer. There needs to be a lot of archival work done to make the records accessible and legible to the public. He said there are people around the Market that have records from earlier. He is trying to get them given to the Constituency until they are given to archives. He is hoping that this can be budgeted for.

Babak said he has been excited to hear that the Merchants Association may get restarted. He said no matter the type of business, it's all one Market and survival. Without profit, there won't be a Market. He said the Merchants Association can be a voice for the businesses. He and his wife are interested in joining efforts or restarting it themselves.

Vote:

Babak - 16

Gordie - 5

Presentation: Heritage Sign Project

Link to heritage sign presentation:

<https://app.getresponse.com/click.html?x=a62b&lc=hfzNf3&mc=JH&s=BKzlOkQ&u=QLOtz&z=EhmXJL9&>

Nick introduced Patricia Gray from the Market Foundation. Nick explained that this project is a collaboration between Friends of the Market, the Foundation and the PDA. History Link is providing text for the signs. The new heritage signs that will replace historical markers removed earlier.

Patricia explained that they have been working on the signs since 2019. She went through the graphics and explained the locations and intent.

Alex expressed appreciation for the inclusion of buskers in the graphics.

Patricia said one group that hasn't been included is the indigenous history. She said there is to be signage on the waterfront, Overlook Walk, and at Victor Steinbrueck Park. Gina said that the Duwamish are invisible around the city, and get rolled into everything else without their own identity. Heather asked Patricia about the educational materials at Victor Steinbrueck Park. Patricia said she didn't know, because it was separate. Heather said that Princess Angeline had a residence where the Market parking garage is located. Patricia said that HistoryLink is working with the waterfront on text for the signs, and is waiting on a tribal council to decide about it. Gina asked if the council includes the Duwamish. Patricia answered that it includes tribes from Puget Sound.

Emily asked if there are old heritage signs that will remain. Patricia said that the old ones in the DownUnder will remain. She said the history is accurate, but maybe they will be looked later at as well.

Jonathan likes the approach: clean, attention-grabbing, not lots of text. It doesn't look brand new but also looks up to date. He appreciated the great job they are doing.

Babak agreed with Jonathan's comments. He asked if there would be lighting for the signs. Patricia said the north pergola and information booth could use lighting, but it's not possible with the kiosk signs.

Chris Scott asked about graffiti resistance. Patricia said they are designed so that graffiti can be easily wiped off.

Nick suggested an offset to a graphic.

Joan said it needs to be better communicated that the City established the Market as a place for producers to sell directly to their customers. There isn't enough about the threat of urban renewal to the Market. Urban renewal was top down, whereas the beginning of the Market was bottom up. The 1971 vote was important because it created a different plan that mandated bottom up decision making, not top down urban renewal. That tug of war continues today. There needs to be more about bureaucracies that work together; the Market is unique. Patricia said there will be extended storytelling on a separate website linked by a QR code on the signs.

Emily had a suggestion about adjusting another graphic.

Chris Weaver appreciated the inclusion of the Japanese farmers in the heritage signs. He suggested changes to the graphics by the elevator on Western. He suggested that the QR code also lead to an audio tour.

Christopher Martin thanked Patricia for the presentation. He agreed with the comment about adding the QR code. He asked about having information in different languages.

Christine said she hopes that the signs can be scratch resistant as well, in addition to graffiti resistant.

Gina suggested more information on the Market being saved and said she thought it was more important than showing who is scrubbing the floor. She said this information should be really visible rather than making it available offsite through a website.

Alex said he thinks it's important that the maintenance people are included in the graphics.

Bob Messina said he's impressed with the artwork and the humbleness - people doing their work. He said the First Ave kiosk will have the Save the Market march with people holding signs, very iconic. He added that it's still resonating that the Market was saved. He would like to see that same sign on First Ave in a larger rendition. He said it's monumental, heroic. It would make us feel more included. It would be a great exhibit if the Market was saved. Big scale - on a wall, in a mural, magnified. The photo of Victor marching with people is a great example.

Andrew suggested a change to the text, swapping it for greater impact.

Heather agreed with Bob's comment, that if it's possible, a larger version of the kiosk sign about saving the Market on a wall somewhere would be great.

Andrew added that as stated earlier, there is a lack of signage about the grassroots movement that saved the Market and suggested changing the words saving “community” instead of “buildings.” Davin agreed, and likened it to what’s happening in Seattle now, and the future.

Patricia asked that additional suggestions be emailed to the Foundation, at [info@pikeplacemarketfoundation.org](mailto:info@pikeplacemarketfoundation.org). She added that two positions are open at the Foundation, and encouraged that people check out the job descriptions on the Foundation’s website.

### Old Business

Jonathan said he did not have an update from the Listening Committee.

Joan said Victor Steinbrueck Park will be open later this month. She said its closure has been a hardship on the Market.

Heather said she heard the park will reopen in October.

Christine added that a mitigating factor has been that the Park has the intention to reopen the park before the poles return. There has been an effort on the part of Friends of the Market’s Advocacy Committee and private individuals to ensure that the Market Historical Commission’s authority is respected and that Parks get the Commission’s approval to reopen the park.

Bob Messina said at the most recent meeting of the Parks Board of Commissioners, the Chair said that there would be a soft opening of Victor Steinbrueck Park minus the totem poles. There will be an official opening at the end of the year. The meeting recording is available on the Seattle Channel. Regarding the educational materials Patricia mentioned earlier, Bob thinks it’s the Lushootseed word for welcome and basket weaving patterns carved into the wood. He never heard them mention educational materials.

Gina said she is worried about preachers with megaphones in the park. She suggested changing the law so no one can use amplification to speak downtown, or to get the acceptable decibel levels lowered. Waterfront has those rules in place. She said that there is no amplified speech allowed there.

Alex said he thought there should be some exemption for musicians. He said it could be hard for buskers such as magicians with headsets. Gina said they don’t enforce anything with musicians but that their rules point to amplified speakers.

Bob Braun explained that the current decibel level is measured from 75 feet. If it can be heard from the east side of the street corner, then it's in violation. He said the preacher is way in violation of the 75 feet. He said the solution is to call 911 and that the number of calls matter. Discussion ensued. Bob confirmed that for the purpose of the First Amendment, the measurement is from 75 feet.

Christine said that amplification is not allowed in the park without MHC approval. Gina said it happens all the time. Christine said then it is an enforcement issue.

### New Business

Budget brainstorm:

Nick suggested broad categories: admin stuff (website, mailing service), outreach (brochures). He said Chris Scott uncovered a budget planning document from November 1993. He went over the kinds of expenditures, including postage, supplies, paper, meeting supplies. He suggested starting with that as a baseline. Bob Braun noted Election Runner, Survey Monkey. Bruce said not much postage is needed.

There was discussion about a QR code and improving the website. Nick noted that website hosting fees have increased. Jonathan mentioned online registration and that a QR code would be an appropriate use for that, whether it's on the website or not. There was a discussion about expanding the website and membership registration software. Heather suggested tying the website to the Constituency's goals. She asked about the goal of increasing the membership and noted that the membership is over 700 members now. Chris Scott suggested workshops on activism. He added that the Department of Neighborhoods has training available, the People's Academy.

There was discussion about expenditures related to helping people understand the differences between Market organizations. Davin suggested that it could be made fun, suggesting a Tom Skerritt video, writing a song.

Nick suggested tabling the discussion for now, and creating a top ten list of budget priorities, with a discussion about the Constituency's goals. Bruce said it will be on the Executive Committee agenda to do some refining of the budget ideas.

Heather suggested including in the budget some money for a little food to share at meetings.

### Public Comment

Davin said he has been working with Roosevelt from Moment of Time, a Doowop group. He is looking to create an event, the Doowop DownUnder, on Nov. 14.

Jonathan asked if one of the PDA reps could give Russell a nudge to see if he can make it to more Constituency meetings.

8:18 p.m. Adjourn meeting