

**Pike Place Market Constituency
General Assembly Meeting Minutes
November 18th, 2025**

Attendance:

In Person:

Babak Zirakanistad
Golnaz Mohammadi
Alex Shapleigh
Skip Knox
Chris Weaver
Erik Pihl
Heather Pihl
Bob Messina
Nick Setten
Karen Berner
Joan Paulson
Austin Godwin
Graham Marmion
Alex Rasmussen
Rachel Lichtenberg
Chris Scott
Jonathan Berner
Davin Stedman
Gina Karaba
Bob Braun
Janis Jordan

Online:

Christine Vaughn
Bob Wagner
Sam S
Daniel Thal
Kavitha Jeveenandam

Opening

Bob Braun called the meeting to order at 6:15 PM, confirmed the agenda was available, and with no opposition, approved it by consent. He then moved to approve the

minutes distributed by email; with no amendments requested, the minutes were approved. Janis Jordan noted an election-related document had not been updated due to a transition but assured all materials were present and would be addressed.

Guest Speaker: Alex Shapleigh

Bob Braun introduced guest speaker Rachel Ligtenberg, who introduced Alex Shapleigh, the new Director of Design, Infrastructure, and Customer Management. Ligtenberg highlighted Shapleigh's extensive experience with historic buildings and preservation processes.

Alex Shapleigh expressed enthusiasm for his first Constituency meeting, shared his Cincinnati roots and nearly 30 years in architecture and retail design, and emphasized his commitment to preserving the market's unique community and character. He cited past projects including the Puck Building in New York and Uline Arena in Washington, D.C., emphasizing community storytelling and integration. Shapleigh outlined a strategic timeline: 2026 focusing on current priorities and budget approval, 2027 preparing for a levy initiative, and 2028 presenting the levy to voters.

Rachel Ligtenberg noted familiarity with FAM (Financial Asset Management) and invited Alex to share top-line 2026 investment plans. Alex highlighted three main priorities, including elevator modernization starting January 5th. Gina Karaba requested clarification on which elevator; Alex explained renovations at LaSalle and San Antonio buildings would occur consecutively, acknowledging temporary access impacts but emphasizing long-term benefits.

Shapleigh detailed deferred maintenance projects addressing operations, guest experience, and safety, including repairs to cameras and doors, refreshing high-traffic public spaces like the main arcade, and enhancing the Soames Dunn Courtyard with community input. He referenced preparatory work based on a 30-year infrastructure study covering plumbing, electrical capacity, and potential year-round area use.

Questions for Shapleigh

Alex Rasmussen praised Shapleigh's respectful approach and engagement with the Market Historical Commission (MHC). Shapleigh confirmed active MHC participation and plans for early collaboration in design processes. Jonathan Berner inquired about assessing hidden infrastructure issues; Shapleigh cited the 30-year plan initiated post-2008 levy as the foundation, acknowledging challenges in minimizing operational disruption while addressing leaks and electrical capacity.

Heather Pihl raised concerns about ongoing pest issues in Soames Dunn Courtyard and urged wildlife habitat preservation amid landscaping changes. Shapleigh agreed with

the vision of a quiet, lush “secret garden” space, referencing a similar project at Uline Arena.

Gina Karaba appreciated Shapleigh’s openness to feedback and supported enhancements including living walls and activating shuttered spaces.

Skip Knox asked about contingency planning for economic downturns or crises. Shapleigh acknowledged uncertainties and emphasized market resilience, with priorities adjusted to essential work during difficult times. Knox requested explicit contingency points be included in plans.

Shapleigh discussed investment approaches considering capital unavailability during major events. Ligtenberg recalled his earlier concerns and highlighted the organization’s conservative financial approach, strong reserves, and CFO Sabina’s experience.

Austin Godwin asked about integrating climate sustainability with historic preservation amid Seattle’s warming climate. Shapleigh confirmed sustainability is integral to future planning, involving environmental and energy specialists. Ligtenberg cited reprioritizing the single window project to improve financial sustainability and energy efficiency.

Alex elaborated on the window project’s challenges and plans for a campus-wide energy efficiency effort respecting historic guidelines. Nick Setten urged continued community engagement, preservation of the Ernest Sherman Memorial Bird Sanctuary, and noted ongoing design review discussions.

Babak Ziraknejad inquired about prioritizing low-cost, quick-win projects and low-carbon strategies. Joan Paulson questioned Shapleigh’s familiarity with the Market Historical Commission guidelines and the 2018 Hilton Agreement; Shapleigh was familiar with guidelines but not the Hilton Agreement. Joan explained the Hilton Agreement’s role in designating event and craftspeople expansion areas and noted conflicts with the current Plan F proposal for restaurant spaces.

Erik Pihl raised concerns about confusing after-hours signage discouraging customers. Shapleigh acknowledged the issue and ongoing discussions with MHC and stakeholders, committing to address it.

Bob Braun closed the session, thanking participants and inviting Alex to report progress in about three months.

Strategic Planning and Programs Committee Meeting Report

Alex Rasmussen reported on the December 4th Strategic Planning and Programs Committee meeting, highlighting upcoming events: Magic Between the Market (Nov 29), Biggie Pudding Caroline Competition (Dec 7), and an all-ages holiday night market (Dec

11) featuring farmers, food vendors, a DJ, Santa, and crafters. Four new crafters, including one from the Native Mentors program, will start January 4th.

Daystall operations are exploring partnerships with art schools and business programs to attract new craft business owners. The annual rules review begins with a January 6th proposal deadline and April 1st implementation. Rasmussen will distribute engagement schedules. A designated craft demo space is under consideration to allow extended demonstrations without daily setup, pending MHC approval. Heather Pihl supported the demo space concept with reversible changes and funding mindfulness. Gina Karaba expressed enthusiasm for new vendors and efforts to incentivize crafter recruitment. She also referenced the recent FAM meeting.

Budget Updates

Christine Vaughan provided a budget update: PDA Council will consider a conservative budget projecting \$31,137,000 in revenues, \$24,049,000 in expenses, and a net operating result of approximately \$4,887,054 after debt service and reserves. Commercial income is expected mainly from percentage rent; residential income is cautious due to elevator work. She announced successful reissuance of 2015 bonds at lower interest rates, yielding cost savings and increased working capital. The December FAM meeting is canceled; urgent matters will go to full council.

Acknowledgment for Nick Setten

Bob Braun recognized PDA Council member Nick's resignation and invited acknowledgement of his service. He provided updates on ad hoc committees, noting the handbook project's expected completion by March and readiness for printing.

Engagement Committee Report & Survey Discussion

Jonathan Berner reported that the Engagement Committee postponed the approved open house to the January constituency meeting due to the need for an election following Nick's resignation; the body consented. The committee continues collaboration on funding guidelines and payment assistance.

Heather Pihl emphasized outreach beyond downtown Seattle, urging engagement with neighborhood councils and early scheduling despite winter attendance challenges. Jonathan Berner explained the Engagement Committee's expanded role in improving hybrid meetings and proposed a motion to launch a Constituency Meeting Feedback Survey covering procedural fairness, technology, meeting management, voting, and member suggestions. The survey results will be compiled into a report for future presentation.

Bob Braun opened discussion. Skip Knox suggested professional survey review; Janis Jordan and Graham Marmion volunteered assistance. Braun proposed and later withdrew a friendly amendment to review the survey before distribution, noting prior constituency approval.

Heather Pihl expressed concern about the survey's expanded scope beyond online voting. Marmion clarified online voting was part of the original scope. Janis Jordan supported the survey to clarify misunderstandings, emphasizing no bylaw changes were intended. Nick Setten and Chris Scott supported the survey as an opportunity for Executive Committee engagement. Bob Messina echoed concerns about vote counting challenges and meeting length.

Christine Vaughan supported the survey but opposed proceeding without prior member access to questions.

Graham Marmion emphasized the scientific nature of survey design and warned extensive revisions would compromise integrity. Skip Knox stressed the need to understand membership demographics, which the survey lacked. Christine Vaughan questioned why the survey was presented as a motion rather than a report. Jonathan Berner explained the motion ensures transparency and explicit permission; failure would delay the survey until January. He confirmed the motion authorizes compiling a report with no further action decided.

Janis Jordan suggested establishing baseline hybrid meeting procedures. Nick Setten recommended including motions in minutes before meetings. Heather Pihl proposed adding a question on participants' ability to operate hybrid controls. Alex Rasmussen and Babak Ziraknejad supported the survey; Ziraknejad encouraged members to complete it at their own pace. Skip Knox planned to vote yes but intended to revisit the motion later. Christine Vaughan changed her vote to yes after hearing questions read aloud. Graham Marmion agreed to include Heather's suggested question as a yes/no demographic item. Jonathan Berner confirmed a friendly amendment was accepted. Bob Braun called for objections to voting; Gina Karaba supported including a question on hybrid meeting technology familiarity and praised the survey. Janis Jordan assisted with vote counting; the motion passed unanimously.

Austin Godwin reported that Shugs is relocating to the former confectionery space near Nissan Bakery and Lands of Origin, featuring a private party room and plans for brewed beers, wine, champagne, espresso, and homemade ice cream sandwiches, with construction expected by spring 2026. Kitty from El Barracho introduced menu updates including bacon-wrapped vegan hot dogs and a separate ordering kiosk for staff gratuities, along with design changes to window decals. Lisa, a business owner and

commissioner, proposed changes to the east side of the Champion Building, including garage door replacements, repainting, lighting additions, and relocating Pink Door's smoking area. Radcliffe and Matt from SDOT had briefed on physical protective barriers for the right-of-way within market jurisdiction ahead of the World Cup, noting an 85% reduction in non-essential vehicles during a pilot while maintaining ADA parking and customer pickups. Barrier options discussed included art installations and seating, referencing Pioneer Square bollards. Public comments to Austin's report showed mixed support and requests for more data on commerce impact. Commissioners emphasized their authority over street decisions and agreed to form a working group led by John Boy to develop a temporary, removable solution.

Special Election in December

Janis Jordan outlined special election procedures to fill a six-month council position, distinct from regular elections. She distributed position descriptions, emphasized reviewing bylaws and qualifications, and encouraged nominations and self-nominations. Voting will occur online and in person at the December General Assembly. A candidate forum will be held with timed introductions and responses. Skip Knox inquired about election information distribution timing. Bob Braun asked for objections to extending the meeting to 8:25 PM; none were raised. Janis Jordan confirmed detailed election information would be sent by November 19th. Braun praised secretary and admin Emma for their work and confirmed election procedures were adopted by consensus. Nominations were invited. Braun reassured ample time remained. Gina Karaba asked if the council member must represent a specific role; Braun clarified any public member could be nominated for the constituency representative to the PDA.

Closing

Janis Jordan confirmed the upcoming executive committee meeting remains scheduled for this Thursday despite Thanksgiving.

Bob Braun adjourned the meeting.