

CONSTITUENCY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING
Thursday, April 27, 2023, 6-8pm

In attendance

Officers: (In classroom) Bruce Rutledge, Gordie McIntyre (Online) Russell Monroe, Jerry Baroh, Joan Paulson, Nick Setten, David Ghoddousi

Members (In classroom): Chris Martin, Heather Pihl (Online) Skip Knox, Erik Pihl, Bob Messina

6:32 p.m. Call to order

6:32 p.m. Agenda approved by acclamation.

6:32 p.m. Secretary did not submit minutes to approve.

6:33 p.m. No public comment

6:33 p.m. Election update

Bruce announced that David Ghoddousi will not run for re-election to his PDA seat.

Nick said that there was not much of an update from Bob Braun at the general meeting. Bob will update everyone at the next meeting.

The group discussed the status of membership renewals. Gordie & Bruce agreed to update the membership list over the weekend.

6:39 p.m. PDA 50-year plan update

Nick & Gordie give a summary of the visit by Mary to our general membership meeting during the previous week (see *general April 2023 meeting minutes for more detail*).

Skip says that after a presentation by the PDA to the Market Historic Commission, the MHC requested more regular, informal contact as the plan goes forward.

Joan mentioned a governance review by Gerry Johnson at the last PDA meeting that omitted significant layers of authority. She sees this as indicative of how the review process will play out. She says Nick caught the comment by Gerry that the mayor can override decisions made by the PDA which could lead to changes to the Charter. She noted that the 1971 Initiative vote was not part of this conversation. She sees danger ahead as the PDA veers away from the purpose of the Market as delineated in that 1971 Initiative.

Erik mentioned that he attended a presentation by Mary and Devin to Friends of the Market. He says he has concerns about the PDA's public engagement. Instead of a listening session by Mary, it felt like a download session. It felt like they were checking the boxes. They aren't taking time to listen in a meaningful and authentic way. He believes the planning is about getting to a levy process. Devin offered an example of a local resident who said he loves the Market and hasn't been there in 6 years. They said we have to teach these people about what the Market offers. That doesn't seem like the right approach, focused on telling, not listening.

David G. agrees with Erik. (His audio is muffled.) He mentioned that the PDA meeting before this Constituency meeting was very important for understanding the 50-year plan.

Nick says the PDA Ex Comm meetings will be the best place to see the work taking place on the plan.

Heather was also at the Friends of the Market meeting with Mary & Devin. She says they were told about the plan, which is not the same as gathering feedback. She recommended that the board of the FOM meet with the consultants, and she hopes the Constituency board do the same thing.

She also mentioned that new MHC Commissioner Grace Leong is excellent. Heather hopes the Commission and the PDA Council can have a joint meeting to ask questions back and forth, just like the ports of Seattle and Tacoma get together periodically.

Heather continued to talk about today's PDA meeting and some concerns she had with things Gerry had said. He talked about the governance structure in the Market and how to get ordinances or Commission guidelines changed, you had to go to city council. Heather said that in regards to Commission guidelines, that's not true. The Commissioner amends guidelines after holding public hearings. He spoke about the difficulty of working with the Commission to change the Market's windows, but he was telling people what he had been told. Heather, on the other hand, was at every single one of those meetings. She reiterated that the Commission's guidelines are in place to preserve the historical nature of the Market while also allowing for radical change. The plan for the windows did not meet the guidelines. She mentioned the availability of composite for the windows, which wasn't available 15 years ago. The problem won't go away unless it is addressed.

Gerry also discussed the difficulty with replacing longtime businesses, but Commission guidelines say the commission "may" deny owners with other businesses outside the Market. The key word is "may." There is latitude. The Commission did deny an application for an Ethan Stowell restaurant that would have been his 11th. Instead, they opted for Sushi Kashiba. The Commission did approve a woman with two clothing businesses. She argued that she needed to keep her Capitol Hill venue just in case the Market doesn't work out, and the Commission approved her.

Bob M says he spoke at the PDA meeting about the simplistic questions asked by Berk at a recent open house. He's concerned about how Berk wants to talk to individuals but not groups. He says we need to be wary of the PDA spreading the idea that the MHC is difficult to work with. It's not true.

Skip says something seems to be missing in the PDA outreach. Methune and others seem to lack respect for regular folk. Goodwill for the Market could be destroyed in a minute.

Bruce says we should reach out to Methune and Berk and see if they'll come talk to us. Nick agrees.

Gordie says we should invite the International District PDA to come listen too. He says they also may have a Constituency.

Skip says we should say to them that we intend to partner with you. Just talking isn't enough.

Chris agrees and says that our 4 PDA reps should emphasize the fact that they are Constituency PDA reps so that the consultants know that we have a voice.

Nick & Russell agree.

Skip says we can't lose sight of the fact that the Constituency is the voice of the people, and the people need to feel like they have been brought along, not just asked to vote from time to time.

7:22 p.m. Old business

Nick talks about the Change.org petition about the Constituency election in 2020. It looks like the person who created the petition closed it but may not have fully deleted it. Nick sent an email to see if we can get it deleted.

Skip asked about whether non-attending officers have been contacted after a motion was passed at the last meeting.

Bruce mentioned that Adora was attendance at the last meeting. David Ott has not been attending.

Gordie asks Jerry if he'll run for David's PDA seat. Jerry says he's thinking about it but says Chris might be interested. Chris says he will not run, doesn't want to be bad-mouthed.

Jerry suggests writing a letter to the non-attending officers.

Bruce says Zack wants to participate but has been traveling lately.

Joan mentions a memorial service event for Jon Strongbow on May 2. Bruce adds that it will be at the Market Theater starting at 4pm.

Nick mentions that Rachel Marshall, founder of Rachel's Ginger Beer, passed away this week.

Some discussion ensues about the poor quality of the audio. Some adjustments are made, and the audio seems to improve before the meeting is adjourned.

7:35 p.m. Meeting is adjourned