

August 15, 2023 Constituency General Assembly meeting

In attendance

Officers: Bob Braun, Bruce Rutledge, Nick Setten, Jonathan Berner Alex Rasmussen (online)
Jerry Baroh, Gina Karaba, Gordie McIntyre

Members: Chris Scott, Craig Eismoe, Johnny Hahn, Emily Pike, Max Urban, Jacob Abrisz,
Christine Vaughan, Skip Knox, Heather Pihl, Bob LAST NAME???, Erik Phil (busker) (online)
Joe Doney, Allison Peel, Rayana White, Haley Land, Bob Messina, Tinker, Joan Paulson, Jean
Bateman, Amy LAST NAME???, Karen Berner, Liz Hughes, Raluca Pop, Fanny Andrews, Lillian
Sherman, Rachel Powell

Guests: From Berk Consulting, Allegra Calder, Ben Han, Maddie Immel

Bob calls meeting to order at 6:04

Agenda is approved by acclamation.

Minutes are approved by acclamation

Berk Consulting

Bob introduces Berk Consulting.

Everyone present and online introduces themselves.

Berk makes a presentation. The Powerpoint presentation can be found on the Constituency
blog:

<https://www.pikeplacemarketconstituency.org/post/berk-consulting-presentation-to-the-constituency>

Haley asks for clarification about the 20 interviews.

Maddie explains that it is not 20 people interviewed, but 20 interviews of various sizes.

Jean says she doesn't see the original vision and mission of the Market in the Berk plan. It feels
like a public market anywhere.

Maddie acknowledges that the Market's uniqueness needs to be brought out.

Ben says he's hoping to hear about what makes the Market special from the Constituency
members tonight.

Jacob asks if we can examine other case studies.

Maddie says they'll be accessible via the PDA.

Skip talks about the uniqueness of Constituency, which should keep an eye on the Market as it evolves.

Heather says a lot goes on behind the scene to keep the Market intact. That part of the Market is not known, she says.

Chris asks Berk to explain DEI. Ben explains it is short for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion.

Ben asks what is “authenticity” in the context of the Market?

Alex says the Market provides him with a sense of community, purpose, and belonging. It’s one of the few places in the world where people can be authentic. Everyone is represented. The Market gives him hope in a world where there isn’t much. He mentions Jon Strongbow as an example of the kind of people who can find their true selves at the Market.

Nick mentions the residents, shoppers, rich, low-income. That’s by design.

Christine says we need to keep the farmers in the Market. Will need creative solutions and collaboration. She also mentions the small businesses and handmade crafts are key. We need flexibility.

Erik says the built environment and slight grittiness that hasn’t changed in 50 years. He compares with with Reading in Philly and the LA Farmers Market, which lack authenticity. Mentions movement of young farmers farming on small plots and the farming community in Skagit Valley. Chefs used to shop here.

Echoes Alex’s comments and adds an exclamation point.

Allison says as a ceramics artist selling in the craft section, she is grateful for the mild Seattle weather, the Market being open year-round, and the electric lights.

Gina says the Pavilion extends the aesthetics of the craft area. But there is not a lot of accessibility for handicapped people.

Ben talks about how so many of his favorite businesses on Capitol Hill have closed. Market is affordable and the best place to buy flowers. We need to encourage the “old growth” of the Market. He likes the labyrinthine quality of the Market. We need to make sure the Market is accessible to the young artists, musicians, et al. There is a secret sauce that you can’t quite define.

Jean stresses the ability to be who we are and grow. This is our family. We are here on the shoulders of really great people who were fighting for this in the 1970s. Mentions Thomas Revelle’s speech on a Market plaque.

Rachel mentions the charm of the grittiness (although it could be a little cleaner!). Talks about how it can be overwhelming to park and support the farmers. We need to improve our signage, she adds. The added space for craftspeople since the Covid pandemic has been a huge boost.

Skip puts the skunk on the table: Cars on Pike Place. The bicycle lobby is organized and funded. They want to take the cars out of the Market. But this is an ecosystem. Any change that is made will have unexpected consequences. Plus we need to discuss Climate Collapse. Plus you can't underestimate the brilliance of the people who drew up the Charter. They gave the Constituency 4 Council seats for a reason. He says it won't take much to ruin the Market's reputation. How do we maintain that fuzzy love for the Market?

Jonathan says one thing that makes the Market unique is the relationship between the crafters and the PDA, which are not just a landlord. That was proven in how they handled Covid. They gave flexibility on rent – 18-24 month grace period. They let us set up a payment plan. They ran classes to help us learn how to sell online. They have been incredibly supportive, unlike any other landlord he's ever had.

Ben says this group is the heart of the Market, the crafters, the buskers, the bartenders (who he has an exceptional love for). How has everyone adapted during the pandemic, he asks. How have you been and what can we do?

Jonathan mentions that the PDA gave crafters \$5,000 with lots of strings attached. Bought a knitting machine, which has doubled his business, making him \$15,000 to \$20,000/month. He says he hopes the consultants will look into the severe inequities on the craftline and what constitutes "handmade."

Skip says the governance is not to support the Market but to guide it. If it ain't broke, don't fix it.

Tinker says all her craft is handmade and that is the way the Market should stay, in her opinion. She takes issue with Jonathan wanting to sell knitting needles.

Gina is concerned about the rise in the CNC machines.

Nick clarifies that the consultants are coming up with various scenarios but not making any decisions.

Christine says there is a division between what is important for individual crafters and what keeps the Market authentic. She says it is not the PDA's job to make sure everyone makes a living at the Market. They need to provide the environment but results will vary. It's a balancing act.

Rachel is concerned about selling things that are not handcrafted. She mentions Marnin Saylor, Chukar Cherries, and others who have moved into other spaces to sell non-handmade

products. She doesn't want to see the Market's standards lowered. Signage announcing that the craftline is all handmade would be helpful.

Chris recommends that all Constituency officers read the Charter.

Maddie encourages everyone to take the Pike Place Visitors survey.

Emily mentions the survey is hard to access.

Maddie says so far 1,403 surveys had been filled out.

Gina says our bathroom signs are not well understood. It's a common issue.

Skip contends that the survey answers belong to the taxpayers. When can we see them?

Allegra says the survey belongs to the PDA. You can make a public records request.

Bob thanks the Berk consultants for the discussion.

Streetcar update

Nick says there was an outpouring of voices from the Market community asking the council to not vote in favor of funds for a streetcar survey. The Council agreed and voted down the funding. Nick says that it is not about being anti-streetcar but about planning in a way that is sensitive to the Market.

Emily asks why we voted to oppose the funding.

Nick says we felt that the funding wasn't warranted.

Joan says electrified vehicles going up and down 1st satisfied transportation needs. Another alternative should be pursued.

Jacob talks about his hometown in CA, where a Seattle streetcar is in the museum. He explains his understanding of the feasibility study and that the money that was going to be allocated was earmarked federal money. 1st Ave should also have solid transit options.

Heather speaks about all the changes since the last streetcar. She says the plan for the current streetcar is flawed. Its impact to load/unload and circulation on 1st will choke the Market. She points out that the overhead wires from the electric buses are still on 1st.

Chris talks about the streetcar along Alaska Way that was ended because streetcars need streetcar barns.

Nick moves to extend the meeting to 8:30. Bruce seconds.

Crafter Proposal by Jonathan

Jonathan asks what is on the agenda for the September GA? Hearing that it is open, he asks that the discussion be moved to the first item on Old Business for September. Nick seconds.

Speaker Series

Nick talks about inviting speakers to future General Assembly meetings. He mentions a member suggesting a talk on the streetcar issue by a former SDOT official.

Bob Messina explains why he thought inviting Jim Whisner, a citizen activist, would be a good idea.

Chris suggests inviting PDA officials – marketing director, daystalls person, et al.

Old Business

Joan says we have to prepare a budget for the Constituency.

Public Comment

Haley said he really appreciated the discussion tonight and hopes Berk sees value in it. He says he has not been impressed with how the discussion has unfolded thus far. This was the sort of discussion we need more of.

Joe wishes the Market a happy birthday.

Joan says the 50-year plan has been about top-down decision making.

Bob adjourns the meeting.

