

**Pike Place Market Constituency
General Assembly Meeting Minutes
March 26th, 2026**

Attendance:

In Person:

Rachel Lichtenberg
Gerry Johnson
Austin GodwinJonathan Berner
Alex Rasmussen
Emily Pike
Graham Marmion
Chris Scott
Christine Vaughn
Gina Karuba
Austin Godwin
Jonathan Berner
Bob Braun
Janis Jordan

Virtual:

Joan Paulson
Erik Pihl

Opening

Bob Braun called the meeting to order at 6:26 p.m., proposing to move Gary Johnson's presentation immediately after the approval of minutes. With no objections, the agenda and minutes were approved as posted.

PDA101 Primer

Gary Johnson apologized for limited time and offered to return for further discussion. He presented a PDA101 primer explaining that Public Development Authorities (PDAs) are established under Washington state law (RCW 35.21) primarily for urban renewal projects, with the Pike Place Market PDA as an example. PDAs are authorized only for cities and counties, excluding school or port districts. Johnson emphasized PDAs'

compliance with state laws, including the Open Public Meetings Act (OPMA) and Public Records Act (PRA), and noted the PDA's ability to create its own procedures distinct from the City of Seattle's, provided public works requirements are met. He highlighted the importance of cooperation with the city when city funds are involved. Austin Godwin asked about the term "we" regarding the PDA Council and constituency; Johnson clarified it applies to the Council and committees, and cautiously to the constituency, which has a narrowly defined role including electing some Council members. He noted most PDAs have discontinued constituencies, making this group unique.

Johnson reviewed the PDA's charter purposes and powers under state law, including borrowing and issuing tax-exempt debt, but lacking taxing or condemnation authority. He stressed strict compliance with OPMA and PRA to avoid negative consequences, praising in-house experts Karen and EJ and recommending regular training for Council members.

Graham Marmion inquired about "policy or rulemaking body" definitions for committees without decision authority. Johnson explained that whether such groups constitute a meeting under OPMA depends on subject matter, warning that informal gatherings of a majority discussing committee business could inadvertently constitute a meeting.

Jonathan Berner added that a party planning committee not discussing official business would not be subject to OPMA.

Jonathan Berner opened discussion on defining policy-making boundaries, noting potential risks when council members form majorities on committees. Bob Braun clarified that informal discussions on non-decision matters are acceptable, but a majority meeting to create nominee lists is inappropriate. Berner suggested clear legal counsel statements would aid active functioning. Johnson proposed developing generic guidance, noting bylaws likely pose no issues since decision-making rests with the PDA Council. Austin Godwin added that constituency opinions, such as letters, are acceptable if not decisions. Christine Vaughan noted such actions typically follow open public meetings for authorization.

Johnson addressed serial meetings, explaining that informal sequential communications (e.g., email chains, group chats) among members can violate OPMA. He cited a Seattle City Council case involving legal challenges over serial meetings. Braun reiterated the group's lack of real decision-making authority, with communications mainly advising or advocating to the PDA, reducing risk but requiring vigilance.

Braun summarized that the group's main decision-making power is electing four PDA members and approving charter changes. Johnson noted bylaws were legally vetted but

conducting business in open public sessions enhances integrity and public perception. He discussed legislative changes allowing blended meetings with video participation and introduced the PRA's broad disclosure requirements, advising members to assume all communications could be subject to disclosure, especially regarding nominations. Graham Marmion asked about data governance for surveys; Johnson recommended consulting Karen and noted PDA-related data is likely subject to disclosure. Braun commented on limited secrets within the group, but Johnson cautioned about broad disclosure requests.

PDA Council Committee Reports

Gina Karaba reported on a recent retreat emphasizing community involvement and alignment of passed resolutions with the agenda. Alex Rasmussen updated on planned construction for the market front deck, including replacement, new furniture, and sunset-view railings under extended warranty. He noted approval of day stall rule changes adding restrictions on AI art to preserve handmade crafts, modernizing language, implementing a late cancellation fee, and increased collaboration between staff and proposers. Gina Karaba shared that artists can now claim available tables on market day without prior sign-in, moving closer to previous roll call practices. She described a new table reassignment sign-up procedure to reduce delays. Gina expressed concerns about the market master allowing some 2D artists to sell mass-produced work if a percentage is handmade, questioning when this change occurred and emphasizing the advantage 2D artists have in reprinting images. Bob Braun noted mass-produced work has long been allowed historically. Jonathan Berner added that 2D artists historically had to own printing facilities. Gina recalled requirements for handcrafting and limited edition prints to preserve originality.

Unfinished Business

Bob Braun introduced unfinished business with the style guide discussion. Janis Jordan explained the guide aims to standardize fonts, text colors, and branding across documents and the website, addressing current inconsistencies affecting clarity and approachability. She presented preliminary proposals for font sizes, header styles, and color schemes using Futura Rounds font and complementary greens, emphasizing this was an initial draft.

Jonathan Berner asked about font availability; Janis confirmed it is included in Microsoft products and Canva but not Google Docs. Bob Braun suggested adding a small black

outline to green headers for readability and supported moving forward with the guide and informing users of the direction.

Janis said she would expand the guide and circulate it for feedback. She discussed creating a SharePoint site with IT to centralize document storage and improve accessibility, proposing differentiated access for executive and general members.

Jonathan Berner asked about SharePoint; Janis described it as an online folder system integrated with Outlook, with Austin Godwin noting he had already created a folder for open house planning. Janis offered to coordinate with Joe to organize working group folders. Bob Braun closed unfinished business and opened new business on the upcoming motion in the General Assembly.

New Business

Janis Jordan introduced Skip Knox's motion to rename the Executive Committee to the Operations Committee, requiring a bylaws amendment. Bob Braun deferred to the group on adding it to the agenda.

Alex Rasmussen asked about the rationale. Knox explained the Executive Committee performs administrative tasks without true executive power, with decision-making resting with the General Assembly (GA). Gina Karaba asked if "executive" might feel exclusionary; Knox had not observed this. Graham Marmion noted the committee's policy and communication roles and expressed concern that "Operations Committee" might understate these. Jonathan Berner supported retaining "Executive" to signal powers and accountability and encouraged public debate. Knox argued that possessive terms imply responsibility the committee lacks. Janis Jordan encouraged the motion as positive member participation. Gina Karaba found the discussion educational. Knox noted early timing was to prepare members for broader conversation. Janis and Knox agreed committee creation is operational and subject to GA approval and oversight. Christine Vaughan questioned whether bylaws assign responsibility to the Executive Committee between meetings; Berner and Marmion indicated they do not. Vaughan recommended placing the motion on the next agenda for discussion and vote with proper notice, possibly aligning with the July election. Austin Godwin sought clarification; Braun confirmed today's decision was only on adding the motion to the agenda. Graham Marmion supported removing "executive" language but raised concerns about recruitment impact and proposed researching effects before the next meeting. Jonathan Berner proposed informally calling the question to add Knox's motion to the agenda without specifying content, allowing amendments at the meeting, as Gina Karaba noted.

July Election Prep

Janis Jordan outlined election planning, emphasizing the advantage of early preparation. She raised questions about forming a nomination committee, budgeting, and requested input on past experiences, suggesting an April announcement and May nominations. Bob Braun noted bylaws delegate election responsibilities to the Secretary-Treasurer and encouraged Janis to present a proposal referencing past practices. Chris Scott recommended revising the candidate questionnaire to focus on values with inclusive language; Janis agreed and added nomination committee members should not be candidates.

Austin Godwin suggested a publicly accessible election calendar, supported by Braun for agenda inclusion. Graham Marmion recalled past broad outreach efforts to recruit beyond active members and advocated reviving them. Alex Rasmussen cautioned emphasizing engagement of those connected to the market. Janis summarized she would draft a full election proposal for GA vote, solicit volunteers, establish a timeline, and encouraged candidate recruitment and governance improvements.

Merchants Association

Jonathan Berner reported on Conrad Steinbrueck's efforts to revive the Pike Place Market Merchants Association, securing office space and developing a roadmap. He proposed inviting Conrad for an update at a general meeting and offered to serve as liaison between the Merchants Association and market governance bodies, similar to Austin Godwin's role with the Historical Commission. Alex Rasmussen supported this liaison approach. Bob Braun agreed to add the Merchants Association update to a future agenda.

Public Comment

During public comment, Skip Knox raised concerns about unpaid work by a carver involved in tunnel pole restoration, citing delays by Ballast Intrigue and the Parks Department's lack of payment. He urged the constituency to address the issue and requested it be included on the GA agenda if unresolved.

Gina Karaba explained the individual has not submitted invoices due to lack of ability and internet access to organize receipts. Janis Jordan offered to assist and suggested contacting Heather to facilitate communication. Knox stressed assigning someone with a clear timeline to resolve the issue, noting previous attempts. Karaba expressed optimism

for resolution; Janis confirmed she would coordinate with Heather and the artist. Graham Marmion acknowledged Janis's help but noted this is fundamentally an accounting issue and encouraged volunteers with accounting expertise to assist. Christine Vaughan proposed renaming "public comment" to "concerns of constituency members," which Marmion suggested could be phrased as "comments on topics not on the agenda."

Knox shifted discussion to bicycles on Pike Place and the ongoing street obstruction test, questioning if it is too late to influence decisions and urging the constituency to clarify and communicate its position amid new members. Braun noted the street issue remains open and including bicycles is appropriate. Rasmussen added SDOT's test barriers are scheduled until September 30th, after which a decision will be made. Vaughan mentioned the PDA Council had proposed establishing a position before the test concludes.

Gina Karaba expressed concern that the Department of Neighborhoods and SDOT are attempting to control the street, advocating PDA retain day-to-day authority for flexibility. Braun recalled two previous letters sent to City Council and Mayor affirming PDA and related bodies' successful street management and urging the city to leave them in control, suggesting the new mayor is an opportunity to reiterate this.

Knox proposed the city transfer street ownership to the PDA, allowing direct management while the city retains utility maintenance, resolving management issues. Graham Marmion reminded PDA Council representatives to uphold the constituency's formal position from last April supporting PDA governance over Pike Place and advocating reduced personal vehicle traffic while accommodating business and emergency needs.

Gina Karaba agreed but emphasized refreshing the message for the new mayor, noting aggressive parking enforcement causing delivery driver issues.

Janis Jordan noted the meeting was at time. Jonathan Berner moved to extend the meeting by 10 minutes; Braun amended to 15 minutes, accepted by Berner. Berner proposed adding to the next GA agenda a discussion on sending another letter reaffirming PDA management of Pike Place. Braun and Knox supported this, with Knox noting its usefulness for the new mayor.

Chris Scott introduced a future motion idea regarding two constituency members previously censored by the PDA Council. He suggested censored members should be barred from running again for constituency executive committee seats and expelled if currently serving, citing concerns about effectiveness and confidentiality breaches. Jonathan Berner inquired about existing officer removal provisions; Scott responded removal exists but no mechanism prevents censored individuals from running again.

Berner acknowledged scenarios where PDA might censure someone for requested actions, noting potential prohibitions. Scott clarified censorship was for opinions expressed. Berner opposed automatic triggers without considering circumstances; Scott asked if Berner wanted trials for such cases. Braun added that the electorate can reject candidates based on prior conduct, negating exclusion provisions.

Gina Karaba suggested the council could block individuals from serving if they violated processes, especially regarding closed-door sessions; Christine Vaughan supported this, noting such individuals could still lobby City Hall. Scott asked about proactive measures; Braun responded bylaws amendments would be necessary. Scott emphasized motions to amend bylaws must be formal. Braun affirmed the organization's open democracy and openness to floor motions. Berner opposed the proposal but acknowledged debate value. Karaba reiterated council could block access to closed sessions if sensitive information was improperly shared. Berner concluded existing removal mechanisms require council action, which had not occurred due to dysfunction.

Agenda & Closing

Janis Jordan reviewed the agenda, including approval of minutes, member comments, a Merchants Association guest speaker, the name change motion with discussion and vote, annual election announcement and proposal, committee reports, Market Historical Commission reports, and updates. She emphasized time management.

Christine Vaughan and Graham Marmion discussed a letter on street use and bike lanes, noting it lacked provisions for customer shopping, especially in winter, but addressed access for disabled visitors, emergency services, and deliveries. Braun clarified the letter was intended to outline elements for PDA consideration, not be exhaustive. Jordan noted limited time for discussion and public comment. Berner suggested extending the meeting to 8:30 p.m. to avoid procedural delays; Austin Godwin seconded, expressing concern that five minutes for public comment was insufficient given multiple business concerns and sensitivities around Victor Steinbrueck Park.

Vaughan mentioned the Historical Commission extended a pilot program until September 30th, suggesting the letter could be postponed until May. Berner agreed, noting no action would occur before then. Jordan requested reminders at the next meeting; Godwin offered to include a reminder during his Historical Commission report. Gina Karaba raised concerns about amplification noise, noting she had documented it and spoken with a police officer who said the activity was protected free speech but did not address volume limits. Bob Braun responded that city code limits amplification to 75 feet; he measured noise audible at 110 feet, indicating excessive volume. Karaba noted

the issue occurs at the market's north end but is widespread. Braun concluded the discussion by thanking everyone.