

Pike Place Market Constituency Executive Committee Meeting Minutes October 30th, 2025

Attendance:

In person:

Jonathan Berner
Bruce Rutledge
Chris Scott
Nick Setten
Alex Rasmussen
Christine Vaughan
Gina Karaba

Online:

Emma Mulanix
Joan Paulson
Heather Pihl

Upcoming Guest Speaker Questions

Jonathan Berner opened the discussion, noting the group was on schedule and needed to finalize questions for the Director of the Department of Neighborhoods. Nick Setten stated he had already emailed his questions to Janis. Christine Vaughan had not submitted questions but wanted to address the use of WebEx despite accessibility issues and to discuss streamlining the application process, especially for small and first-time business owners. Chris Scott suggested asking about the independence of the MHC from the Department of Neighborhoods and questioned the requirement to submit questions in advance. Nick Setten explained the department's concern for propriety, which Christine attributed to the group's reputation.

Jonathan Berner remarked that it was reasonable for a public official to request questions in advance for a public meeting. Christine Vaughan clarified that this did not mean the agenda was closed. Gina Karaba expressed interest in asking why the Department still exercised authority over specific market matters, citing the seating dispute between the pasta bar and Pike Place Chowder as an example. Chris Scott believed the issue had been resolved, but Gina clarified the Department had intervened. Jonathan Berner stressed the need for evidence when asking pointed questions. Heather

Pihl suggested phrasing questions constructively, referencing previous requests to use Zoom for accessibility and proposing to ask if paper applications could be accepted or if the portal could be simplified. Heather offered to review and suggest edits to the questions.

Christine Vaughan agreed, emphasizing the importance of internal expertise and avoiding accusatory language. Jonathan Berner advocated for relationship-building and collaborative discussion. Christine suggested the executive committee formally invite Rachel, the executive director, and possibly Zack, to participate in the conversation, especially those involved in the application process.

Jonathan Berner noted that the PDA now handles all MHC application submissions for tenants, a change he had only recently learned about. Business owners cannot submit directly; only the PDA can, and landlord approval is required. Chris Scott related this to their own experience with office signage and suggested contacting Zack for assistance.

Christine Vaughan acknowledged the process could be cumbersome but saw benefits, such as preventing unauthorized subletting or renovations, and noted that PDA staff could assist tenants if applications were submitted on time. Jonathan Berner commented that streamlining the MHC process had little impact for him personally, as delays were more often due to the PDA, citing his own lengthy experience with a signage application.

Nick Setten redirected the group to focus on more questions for Director Chao, suggesting inquiries about the Director's relationship with the Market Historical Commission, differences from other commissions, and the Department's current role compared to its original mission of fostering grassroots community involvement.

Open House Discussion

Jonathan Berner transitioned to the topic of the upcoming open house on December 16, noting uncertainty about hosting it in the atrium due to pending legal review by PDA attorneys. Chris Scott asked if alternative venues had been considered, and Jonathan expressed frustration at inconsistent support from the PDA. Heather Pihl offered to check rental rates for Folio as a possible venue. Chris Scott and Nick Setten discussed using the event for community building and engagement, suggesting a clear program and inviting Rachel to speak. Christine Vaughan suggested including a food drive at the event. Jonathan agreed and discussed logistics, mentioning he had spoken to Rachel and EJ, who said they were waiting on legal review for the atrium. He asked Nick Setten to follow up as an executive committee member. Chris Scott speculated about

liability concerns, and Jonathan questioned why liability was only an issue for their group and not for PDA-hosted events. Chris believed they should be covered under PDA insurance, and Jonathan agreed, reiterating his confusion and frustration. He concluded that securing a venue was the urgent issue for the open house and thanked the group for their suggestions.

Nick Setten emphasized the importance of including educational elements in the open house program, specifically suggesting that Rachel should be given an opportunity to speak. He highlighted the value of discussing term limits, expectations, and mechanisms of public oversight, noting that one-third of the council is comprised of elected representatives.

Jonathan Berner asked for additional thoughts on the open house, confirming that refreshments would be provided and inviting further ideas, such as the inclusion of buskers. Nick Setten suggested the budget could accommodate paying buskers and proposed interactive activities, such as a sign-making or banner art project. Jonathan clarified that activities would be informal, such as a card game where attendees collect initials from council members to earn a button, with everyone wearing name tags. Chris Scott expressed hope that plans would be finalized by the following month. Gina Karaba suggested distributing different buttons to guests, with each council member providing a unique button.

Jonathan Berner asked for updates on the constituency logo. Bruce reported that Janis had given him some logo designs made by Madison, but Jonathan remarked that none of the designs were well received and suggested informing Janis. Nick Setten proposed inviting Madison to a future meeting to discuss the designs and gather feedback.

Jonathan Berner moved the discussion to scheduling, suggesting the Executive Committee meet on November 20th instead of the 27th, due to the December meeting falling on the 25th. Christine Vaughan noted that if the party on December 16th is successful, the group might not need to meet again that month. Jonathan agreed, stating that historically, December meetings are often skipped, and confirmed the Executive Committee would meet on November 20th.

Roll Call and Meeting Minutes

Jonathan Berner addressed the process for roll call at meetings, explaining that AI is used to take notes, with Janis editing and supplementing them. He mentioned a concern raised by Skip about reading attendance aloud during meetings to ensure accurate AI minutes, and asked if the process should be amended. Chris Scott stated he did not recall

roll call being read aloud prior to the use of Zoom. Christine Vaughan recalled that attendance was not mandatory unless voting, and emphasized the importance of maintaining a reliable record of attendees. Jonathan acknowledged the admin, Emma Mulanix.

Emma Mulanix explained her process for editing AI-generated minutes, noting that she assigns statements to speakers by reviewing Zoom recordings and only those who speak are recorded as present in the AI summary. She clarified she does not add information from a written sign-in sheet, as she was unaware of its existence. Christine Vaughan suggested combining the in-person sign-in sheet with the Zoom participant list to ensure a complete roll call. Jonathan agreed and instructed Emma to include both the sign-in sheet and Zoom attendance in the minutes, specifying whether attendees were present in person or via Zoom. Emma agreed to these instructions.

Stakeholder Committee

Jonathan Berner thanked Emma and moved to discuss the stakeholder committee. Gina Karaba described the importance of the stakeholder committee, referencing her experience during the Western Waterfront expansion and expressing concern that current design decisions are made without input from those who use the infrastructure. She advocated for the inclusion of dedicated users and "super agents" on the committee, noting that past surveys were leading and unresolved issues remain from previous projects due to lack of consultation with the stakeholder committee. Nick Setten asked if Rachel had been approached about incorporating users into Zoom meetings. Gina confirmed she had repeatedly requested this but was ignored, and recounted negative experiences with recent pavilion and table redesigns. Chris Scott inquired about other committee members, and Gina named Haley Land and Ann Brown as participants. Chris asked about Haley's perspective, and Gina replied that Haley had not been very involved recently but had acknowledged the issue when last present.

Nick Setten expressed concern that forming a committee would result in unproductive discussion without tangible outcomes and suggested asking PDA representatives to bring the issue to the PDA Council, particularly regarding the need for a design review committee. Gina responded that her motivation for proposing a committee was to address these concerns. Chris Scott advised that a framework should be established before forming any committee, warning that without a framework, the committee could become merely a place to vent frustrations or, as Nick added, an "echo chamber." Christine Vaughan noted that while dissatisfaction with recent decisions was clear, she lacked information on how many participants were satisfied with the process or outcomes, making it difficult to gauge the scope of the problem. Gina highlighted issues

with recent design decisions, stating that users of the pavilion were not consulted before changes were made, and that community votes were disregarded.

Stakeholder Committee Cont'd

Chris Scott proposed holding a special meeting next year to involve crafters affected by changes, inviting them to discuss their experiences. Nick Setten reiterated his preference for alternatives to forming a committee, such as organizing a special meeting to gather feedback from crafters, which PDA representatives could then report back to the council. Jonathan Berner summarized Nick's position, suggesting the solution is to include crafters and market participants on the design review committee. Gina replied that they are not permitted to join that committee. Jonathan acknowledged this limitation and restated Nick's suggestion: PDA members should express concerns to the council and advocate for community representation on the design review committee. He agreed that forming a separate committee would likely be ineffective and could become a forum for complaints rather than action. Nick warned that such a committee could lead to apathy.

Gina disagreed, citing her experience on a previous committee that made recommendations, though Nick suggested those recommendations were likely ignored. Gina clarified that while the committee was not PDA-led, it did have some influence, but ultimately decisions were made without their input. Nick Setten moved to extend the meeting by 15 minutes, which Jonathan Berner confirmed without opposition.

Gina brought up another issue: buskers were able to override crafters' requests regarding performance locations, with decisions made by a small group of buskers rather than through broader input. She explained that this motivated her to propose a stakeholder committee, as she felt previous committees had some impact. Heather Pihl encouraged Gina to continue organizing and providing feedback to the PDA Council, noting the importance of collective input and the emergence of new voices in the market community. Gina stated she would be willing not to serve on the committee if it posed a conflict, and emphasized the value of input from experienced market participants. Jonathan concluded that there was insufficient support in the room to form a committee at this time, but noted that nothing prevented individuals from forming a committee independently. He encouraged Gina to use her PDA position to represent the broader community, not just her own interests. Gina clarified that her proposals were based on the needs of others, even if they did not align with her personal preferences, and reiterated her desire for a committee to address specific issues affecting crafters. Jonathan stated that the specifics of the slabs were not a priority for the group's discussion, to which Gina

replied that her intent was to have a committee address such targeted issues and bring recommendations to the design committee.

Nick Setten encouraged the group to distill their concerns into three main talking points, emphasizing the importance of focusing on core issues. He suggested making public comments, engaging with the MHC, and building a consortium with other PDA representatives to address committee concerns, while maintaining momentum for new participants and representing the broader community. Gina stated that she does not feel included in any decisions made by CEGO. Jonathan prompted Chris Scott to speak. Chris acknowledged Gina's point about the master design affecting the entire market and suggested forming a coalition with others impacted by the master plan. Christine Vaughan proposed inviting design review committee members to a meeting to explain their decision-making process. Chris agreed, adding that stakeholders from specific market areas should be included in discussions relevant to them. Nick clarified that he does not control the design review committee. Chris responded that Nick is still part of the governing body. Christine reiterated the value of inviting design review committee members or, if they decline, inviting Rachel to speak about committee selection and responsibilities.

Public Comment

Jonathan Berner thanked participants for the discussion and moved to public comment, noting there were none. He then set the agenda for the next General Assembly meeting, confirming it would be held on November 18th and would include a speaker from DON and preparations for the open house. Chris Scott asked if Madison should be invited to discuss the logo in person. Jonathan clarified that the open house would be on December 6th and confirmed the meeting schedule. Christine Vaughan moved to adjourn, the motion was seconded, and with no objections, the meeting was adjourned.