



Belltown Community Council General meeting minutes

March 9th, 2016.

Belltown Community Center, 415 Bell Street, Seattle, WA. 98121.

Meeting called to order by Dean McColgan, President.

Dean McColgan welcomed everyone. Food was provided by Meekong Bar this evening. They have a grand opening on 3/14. <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100011092170501>. We try to promote new businesses within the Belltown area, so please let us know of any.

Announcement: Heidi Schaibberger, Donor Resources Representative for Downtown Seattle, Bloodworks Northwest. She organizes blood drives in Downtown Seattle. There will be a blood drive on 3/10/16 from 9am to 3pm, closed from 11am to noon for lunch, in the Belltown Community Center. There are lots of openings. The Zika virus has impacted blood supplies. Blood donor centers in the area will be shipping blood to Puerto Rico.

Question: Someone had concerns about being contacted a lot by phone and another asked about how you would know when drives are coming up.

Answer: When you donate with Bloodworks Northwest, you will receive notifications about upcoming drives. There is the opportunity to contact them should you not wish to receive notifications.

Dean McColgan talked about ways to get involved in the BCC. We can be contacted via the website www.belltowncc.org and facebook <https://www.facebook.com/belltowncc/>. There are opportunities to be on committees: housing, parks, safety and transportation and he welcomed committee members. Approval of minutes were bypassed at this time.

Board Introductions: Tracy Roberts, Secretary; David Levinson, Board member; Liam Hallihan, board member; Keith Kentop, Vice President; Dean McColgan, President. Terique Scott, board member is not present at this time, arriving later.

Speaker: Calvin Goings, Chair of the Transportation Committee, BCC:

If you are interested in transportation, they want more involvement. Sandy and Anton who are also on the committee, were introduced. They cover roadways, sidewalks, etc. Talked about ST3 proposal and rail, commuter, bike services in King, Snohomish and Pierce counties. Voters approved ST3 package. There will be a light rail extension from Downtown Seattle to Ballard. Options of Belltown and South Lake Union (SLU) were discussed. They met with planners and it appears SLU has more steam, avoiding Belltown entirely. Belltown has nearly 10,000 residents and 20,000 people work here. Tourists come through Belltown en route to the Pacific Science Center. They are disappointed in the focus being on the SLU route. The transportation committee are proposing a Belltown Connector, connecting Westlake to Uptown. They have been working on this for the last couple of months.

Question: What is the Belltown Connector?

Answer: Streetcar. Decision has not already been made but a draft plan is to be released at the end of the month. They are coming to this late. U

Underground from Downtown to Ballard is leaning towards the SLU direction. Volume in Belltown is more diverse and higher numbers as residents go.

Anton Babadjanov: SLU will have more works. Passed out handouts on statistical data collected that shows transit benefits areas similar to Belltown.

Calvin: This connector will be the extension of the line planned from Pioneer to Westlake. March 24th, there will be a ST board decision on the draft and by June, should have final initiative.

Speaker: Paul Dobosz, Belltown United/DSA/Metropolitan Improvement District:

Belltown Survey Results. Belltown United Branding study commissioned by the Downtown Seattle Association (DSA). People's needs, who live, work and play in Belltown. Handouts of the results were provided.

Survey monkey was from Early December and closed 6th January, 2016. There were 188 entries/respondents and there were primarily owners of their residencies, were older, more affluent and were women.

The strongest level of concern was homelessness, drug activity and rents. Low level of concern was the number of bike lanes, property maintenance and graffiti.

Home owners and affluent were more concerned about homelessness and less concerned about rents.

Women were more concerned about speeding vehicles and street lighting.

Quality of public services: Poorest rated were police presence and police protection. Highest rated was fire protection and recycling.

Additional Services, mentioned most frequently: Increased police presence, sidewalk repair, improved public transportation options, control drug activity, services for the homeless and need for a grocery store. Samples of what was written: Need of police presence where transients openly use drugs and alcohol and sell drugs; Poorer bus service on 2nd Ave with no bus services that go to the ferries; Need safe places for kids to ride bikes and play.

Street Level Businesses responses: About half would like to see an additional street level business: Larger, full line food merchant, book store, small local businesses, businesses catering to residents - hardware, shoe repair, drug store. They have concerns about rising commercial leasing rates. Samples of what was written: Can't do a full scale shopping in convenience stores, more local small shops, zoning for food trucks, street vendors and other temporaries that encourage street life.

Feeling part of a vibrant neighborhood. 3 out of 4 agree. Stronger among males. Reasons given for: Know and interact with neighbors, lots to do, diverse population. Reasons for not: Too much growth, various civility issues.

Samples of feeling part of a vibrant neighborhood:

- Plenty to do
- Love different people who live here, including low income people in available housing options, need to feel safe going out at night.

Large majority are aware of local offerings. Preferred communication options are email and website.

40% made additional comments, focused most often on:

Homelessness

Disruptive activities including drug and safety issues

Manage growth, keep character of Belltown

Increase police presence

Control rent increases

Samples of general comments:

- Homeless people are part of the community and need inspired response for help and support.
- Solution to homelessness should be priority at the least providing public toilets.
- Can we have a police car sitting near the dog park at night doing paperwork?
- Need more police presence. Per newspaper article, Seattle has the same number of police officers today as it did in 1970.
- New development is slowly overtaking this neighborhood. Maintaining its character is a challenge.
- Crazy expensive, but how nice to have smooth streets, safe bike lanes, wide level sidewalks (crack free), aesthetic uniform street lighting and feel safe walking home in the dark.
- Belltown is ignored by the city and not achieved the status granted a neighborhood: clean, safe, welcoming, comfortable all hours and seasons.

Everyone at the meeting received a summary of the report.

Q/A's: Increased number of residents can be addressed at a different time of the year. With a tracking study, you do it again in a year at the same time. May need to change questions. Normally you don't want to do a study during the holiday season. There was a time constraint, which is why it was done in Dec/Jan. Have summary and communicate results on website to let people know and encourage more to do it again. Having a better proportion of renters may give different results/survey. Focus group might be useful.

54% of owners did the survey. 40-45% earn >\$100k/year. The next step is to address the concerns. Keith will take the results to the city, to agree on a letter, BCC, Friends of Bell Street Park, etc. There are 100 positions open in SPD (Seattle Police Dept) which they cannot fill.

Speaker: Jennifer Casillas, Public Space Manager, MID:

Talking about Park Activation. Dean McColgan stated the parks that are in Belltown, P.Patch, Tilicum and Bell St Park.

Urban Parks Partnership Update. Handouts of the 2015 report were given out. DSA and MID have been involved for a long time. DSA are managing areas/parks. There were 928 food truck visits, 44 childrens programs. Bringing kids to parks is a big win. 49 fitness classes and activities, including yoga and zumba; 309 concerts; 465 hours of music; 480 minutes of string/quartet music; Movies in the park; Chess tournaments; Table Tennis; Throwback Thursdays- connect Four, etc; New tables and chairs; New trash cans.

Try to do surveys twice a year, in the summer and holidays. 82% felt safe in the park, 85% felt Westlake was clean and welcoming, 77% felt similarly about Occidental Park, 95% plan to return. They have full time staffing 24/7.

So far this year, they have had an Ice Sculpture, around Valentine's Day and Blue Sky Passage which was designed and done by one of their staff in house. Will have basketball, Irish dancing and pie eating to name a few, that will be happening this year.

They have been given 5 years to manage the park. They are also taking over 5 more: Tilicum, Bell Street, Victor, Cascade and Freeway. Downtown Parks Coalition met with people in the community. Will help with staffing in Bell Street to integrate parks in downtown quarter. Seattle Art Fair will be coming in August. Looking to do murals on walls. If you know of any businesses that would be interested or know of a wall that would benefit from a mural, get in touch.

Q/A's: As summer gets closer, will have a calendar of events on the DSA page. Planning on doing a monthly one.

Announcements:

Jane Savard: Have filed a grant for urban parks and another filed for improvement. They have a schedule for other grants and you can email Jane to get information. She will need volunteers when it comes in.

Speaker: Angie Brady, Office of City of Seattle Waterfront:

Presented slides about work on the waterfront, the tunnel project and Seawall replacement project. The latter is expected to complete in 1.5 years. Project to replace Colman Dock will start next year and will be a 5 year plan. Expansion of Pike Place Market is under construction. The Aquarium want to expand. 26 blocks of infrastructure is being replaced. Since 2011, they have been engaging people to give their input for plans of the Pike Place Market, roadways from stadiums to Bell street. 6-9 months for the 99 to come down. Viaduct completed end 2018. It will take 3 years, up to 2020/21 to do the parks, building promenade, 2 lane bikeway, east/west connections/access to and from the waterfront. Seneca St will need repairs, improvements after the viaduct and ramps are removed. A pedestrian bridge from Western to the Waterfront will be built.

Improvements to Bell Street from 1st Avenue, west, to match the rest of Bell Street. Improvements will be made to buildings that sit either side. The team designed the High Line Park in NYC.

<http://inhabitat.com/interview-architect-james-corner-on-the-design-of-high-line/>

On Alaskan, there will be 2 lanes each way and will be pedestrian focused. Overlook Walk will connect the market to the waterfront. Overlook will open 2017. There will be light penetrating surfaces, allowing light down for habitat by the seawall. The bluff at Lenora will have the fencing remain as it is now. It will need retaining walls and planting to prevent erosion.

Environmental review: Revised Outlook Walk to accommodate expansion of Aquarium. There will be narrowing of the roads south of Yesler. There is a public meeting May 10th at Seattle City Hall. There is a Public Comment period from April 18th - May 18th.

Corridor design phase 1 needs to be completed by 2018. East/West connections phase 1 to be completed by 2019. This is all reliant on tunnel timing.

Any questions? Go to www.waterfrontseattle.org for comments. Design work, renderings can be seen online.

Meeting was adjourned.

Minutes taken by Tracy Roberts, Secretary, BCC.