

# Fremont Chamber History

As told by Kirby Lindsay and Jessica Vets (with help from others)

## 1982

Fremont Chamber of Commerce founded by Suzie Burke, Jim Daly, Jim Freeman and George Heideman

**Biggest issues:** Zoning

**Meeting Place:** King's Row Restaurant on 39th and Stone Way

**Dues:** \$10/year

**Officers:** Jim Daly, the only founding member late for the first election, was chosen as first president in June and served four terms

**Communications:** Mostly phone tree, first published "The Bridge" newsletter

**Membership:** 50

## 1983

**Biggest Issues:** the location of the Burke-Gilman Bike Trail through Fremont was a controversial issue. The Chamber did not favor this.

**Organization:** A post office box gave the Chamber an official address, and regular monthly meetings kept businesses informed about public safety and zoning issues.

## 1984

**Biggest Issues:** Goal the improvement of the retail core of Fremont. Voters selected the paint color of the Fremont Bridge at the Fremont Street Fair Chamber booth, with blue & orange beating out green.

**Dues:** \$25 for companies and \$10 for individuals.

**Membership:** 100+

## 1985

**Achievement:** Chamber co-sponsored the Irregular Fremont Neighborhood tour

**Organizational:** established its current Board composition. The Fremont Economic Development Council was born again to design a five-year working plan.

## 1986

**Officials:** Marc Jones was elected president and served three terms.

**Organizational:** Vic Warren of WBA designed the Chamber's present logo for free.

**Achievements:** Community and business leaders, organized by the Chamber, successfully fought closure of B.F. Day Elementary School.

## 1987

**Events:** First running of the Briefcase Relay race with the Chamber Pot of Commerce trophy created by Mike Peck of Fremont Architectural Pottery.

**Organizational:** September reported a balance of \$1700 in treasury.

## 1988

**Issues:** The Chamber supported keeping float-planes on Lake Union

**Achievements:** Participation in the first Annual Bite of B.F. Day, with food vendors at the school and an entrance fee of \$10.

**Membership:** 170

## 1989

**Officers:** Suzie (Groves) Burke first female President.

**Achievements/Retail:** The Revitalization Plan for Fremont got a grant and generated a report, called the Living Neighborhood. Prepared by Gilmore Research, it proposed upgrades, a ten-year plan and a list of businesses needed for a viable Fremont retail core.

## 1990

**Officers:** Mike Peck took over presidency for two terms.

**Oktoberfest:** The second 19th Annual Oktoberfest fundraiser, organized by Ken Saunderson, featured the first closing of boating season ceremony.

## 1991

**Achievements:** In 1991 B. F. Day Elementary School re-opened after an extensive remodel.

**Programs:** popularity, among attendees and political speakers, grew for the June Picnic In the (Gasworks) Park.

## 1992

**Organizational:** Board elected to hire an Executive Secretary to generate reminders of impending meetings, facilitate membership recruitment, answer phones, collect and sort mail and do correspondence.

**Officers:** Jim Daly returned to lead the Chamber as its president, for his fifth year.

**Achievements:** Jon Hegeman designed "The Official Guide to the Curious Republic of Fremont"

## 1993

**Officers:** President Phill Briscoe

**Organizational:** Hired Kirby (Khale) Lindsay, owner of Ladybug Books, as paid Executive Secretary.

**Issues:** George Heideman led efforts on the Board to complete a comprehensive parking study for Fremont.

## 1994

**Officers:** President Pam Hinckley,

**Retail:** Charlotte Buchanan and the Retail Committee realized a Christmas season Shopping Spree contest.

**Achievements:** John Hoge installed the Fremont Rocket while Mike Peck organized a community-wide auction to pay for it. The Chamber along with Fremont Arts Council members protested the Seattle Comprehensive Plan with a Proclamation declaring Fremont an Independent Imagi-Nation and forming ARF, the Artist's Republic of Fremont.

**Organizational:** Charles Hadrann designed a funky new membership form while Jeanne Muir, as contracted by the Chamber, publicized Fremont to the world.

## 1995

**Events:** In 1995 the second Miracle On 34th Street, a Celebration of Life through Miniature Golf, took place as well as the Tour de Fremont Bike Race.

**Officers:** President Kathy Moeller

**Achievements:** volunteers initiated an Art About on first Saturdays and an increasing frequency of Business After Hours (BAH). The community hotly debated proposed purchase of Open Space property at a price considerably higher than appraised value, until the Chamber agreed to help sell a bronze sculpture of Lenin.

## 1996

**Achievements:** The Chamber held an auction for B.F. Day in 1996 at Hale's Ales and raised \$13,000.

**Retail:** The Board purchase copies of the latest edition of the Walking Guide to Fremont as designed by Jon Hegeman to distribute as well as "Center Of The Universe" signs to sell.

**Parking:** Raymond Glandon finally got Space Chips, the official currency of Fremont and U-Park, to help alleviate parking concerns.

## 1997

**Officers:** Melissa Hines President

**Oktoberfest:** Board convinced Phil Megenhardt and Bold Hat Productions to resurrect the Oktoberfest fundraiser.

**Retail:** Hysterical Markers sprouted up around the neighborhood,

**Achievements:** Denise Fogleman and area businesses instructed children at B.F. Day on how to run a business for the first Village.

## 1998

**Officers/Organizational:** Erin Kohlenberg President helped hire Neave Karger-Megenhardt as the new Executive Secretary.

**Issues/Parking:** Community discussions, and newsletter reports, concerned much needed repairs on the Fremont Bridge Approaches and the Board fought parking meters for Fremont, again.

**Achievements:** Theresa Weidemann helped Jon Hegeman and Josh Logan lure two Dinosaur (topiaries) to graze alongside the Ship Canal.

**Holidays:** The Lake Union Center held the First Fremont Holiday Lighting in Adobe Plaza

## 1999

**Achievements:** The Chamber once again gave its support for a Trick-Or-Treat event for 1999. Diana Jones and Michelle Barrier initiated the Upper Fremont "Highlanders" promotion. The Chamber supported a fourth annual Kids' Day! In Fremont, featuring a Spelling Bee and guests J.P. Patches & Gertrude.

**Officers:** Jim Daly Day on August 6th became one of many efforts to show affection to (self-proclaimed) 'Godmother' Jim before he succumbed to cancer.

## 2000

**Officers/Organizational:** George Heideman served as President for two years starting in 2000, and Emily Richardson took the job as Executive Secretary.

**Website:** The annual discussion of what to do with the web site, ably tended by Tom Sparks, spawned the annual designation of a committee to investigate.

**Issues:** The Fremont Sunday Market came under attack and in reaction to a rather thoughtless comment, the Chamber Board officially voted themselves as the Wrong Kind Of People.

## 2001

**Website:** The Chamber hired John Nordstrand to maintain the web site

**Organizational:** Angela Light came on-board as Executive Secretary in officially rented office space.

**Retail:** Samantha Lane helped organize retailers and a Fremont Sidewalk Sale.

## 2002

**Officers/ED:** President Russ Mead led efforts to hire the Chamber's first Executive Director, Bill Elder.

**Dues:** raised to \$50 for Individuals, and companies paid staggered amounts based on employee numbers up to \$200 for a Sustaining Membership.

**Achievements:** Community meetings, including Chamber Board meetings, moved to History House, an area museum the Chamber helped as fiscal agent on grant applications.

## 2003

**Officers:** Marco Tubic took over as President

**Organizational:** a Strategic Planning Meeting and adoption of a formal Mission Statement.

**Retail:** After two years, FROG (Fremont Retail Organizational Group) officially hopped onto the Chamber bandwagon as a standing committee.

**Marketing:** The Walking Guide To Fremont became an official project of the Chamber.

**Parking:** Efforts to educate and avoid an RPZ (Residential Parking Zone) in Fremont began

**Achievements:** Regan Peck got enthusiastic support for a Fremont First Friday Art Walk.

## 2004

The Chamber started 2004 assisting Fremont Public Association efforts to make the Fremont Fair a more effective fundraiser. Solicitation of donations to pay for roadway improvements proposed in the Circulation Plan got underway, as the Board foresaw the impact of the Fremont Bridge Approach Replacement project. In trade for the job as Editor of the Chamber newsletter, Kirby Lindsay agreed to return as interim office staff, and she lasted almost a whole month.

**Holiday:** Corky Merwin, Kathy Moeller and Lisa Perry created the first annual Lenin Lighting for Christmas with the help of Jon Hegeman, and to the delight of a huge audience.

## 2005

**Holiday:** The Board spent 2005 dissecting Lenin Lighting costs but in the end we lit him up again.

**Achievements:** The Chamber also supported the Music In The Sculpture Garden, as well as continued support to the Outdoor Cinema.

**Organizational:** Sarah Nelson took over office duties, and moved the Chamber to shared space with the Neighborhood Service Center. The new Oversight Committee worked to guide her, and then her replacement, Lillian Tangen.

**Parking:** The Board fought off Pay Stations (a new name for parking meters), again.

## 2006

**Achievements:**

## 2007

**Officers/ED:** Michael Jerrett is hired as Executive Director as a result of strategic Planning meeting.

**Issues:** Aurora Bridge Suicides, bridge barrier project begins. Fremont Bridge and Fremont Circulation plan.

## 2008

**Officers/ED:** Jessica Vets is hired as executive director

**Parking:** Keep Fremont Free Campaign is started by Suzie Burke and Ken Saunderson to stop pay meters being installed in Fremont (again).

**Achievements/Retail:** Hosted two tours of the business district for the concierges of downtown Seattle hotels. Promoted J.P. Patches Day and installation of a Waiting for the Interurban statue

**Membership:** 156

## 2009

**Programs:** New Fremont Health and Wellness group is started by Chamber. 40 people attend fist meeting

**Parking:** Meters finally come to Fremont after a long and hard fight, we manage to reduce the number of paid spaces from over 700 to only 72.

**Retail:** Walking Guide distribution is increased to include over 50 hotels and visitor centers in downtown.

**Membership:** 189

## 2010

**Events:** Solid Ground announces in 2009 that they can no longer run the Fremont Fair and asks Fremont Chamber to take over the event. FCC does successfully.

**Achievements:** Lenin Lighting is made sustainable by giving budget to installation of lights and a process for the event.

**Retail:** Walking Guide is grown to 118 listing the most listing to-date

**Membership:** 198

## 2011

**Events:** Second year running the Fremont Fair, no issues and event continues to grow under Bold Hat Productions

**Programs:** Monthly Fremont Geek Meetup is added as a Fremont Chamber regular meeting

**Officers:** Marko Tubic finally decides to step down as President at the end of 2011.

**Retail:** Walking Guide is grown to 119 listings, beating 2010 by 1, with new redesign to match Fremont.com site.

**Achievements:** Aurora Bridge Barrier is finally completed. New Fremont.com website is launched in December.

**Membership:** 219

## 2012

**Events:** Third year running the Fremont Fair, no issues and event continues to grow under Bold Hat Productions

**Programs:** Monthly Fremont Geek Meetup is added as a Fremont Chamber regular meeting

**Officers:** Ken Saunderson takes the role as president.

## 2013

**Events:** Fourth year running the Fremont Fair, no issues and event continues to grow under Bold Hat Productions

**Programs:** Our biggest year yet, with 51 programmed events.

**Officers:** Ken Saunderson remains as president for a second term.

## 2014

**Events:** Fifth year running the Fremont Fair, and Bold Hat Productions adds a Solstice Concert Series on both Friday and Saturday nights. And the first year that Hopscotch is added to the Fremont Chamber major events, we now have three – Hopscotch, Fremont Fair and Fremont Oktoberfest.

**Programs:** Continuing the pace on programs monthly meetings continue to be well attended.

**Officers:** Phil Megenhardt takes the role of president, with Marko stepping in as Events Chair to ensure there is limited conflict of interest.

## 2015

**Events:** sixth year running the Fremont Fair, and Bold Hat Productions continues the Solstice Concert Series on both Friday and Saturday nights. The second year that Hopscotch is part of the Fremont Chamber major events, and Fremont Oktoberfest has it's second best year ever.

**Programs:** Continuing the pace on programs monthly meetings continue to be well attended.

**Officers:** Phil Megenhardt continues as a second term as president, with Marko held the role of Events Chair most of the year, turning it over to the Board at the end of the event season.

**Staff:** After eight years Jessica Vets decides to step down as executive director at the end of January 2016.

## 2016

**Events:** seventh year running the Fremont Fair, and Bold Hat Productions continues the Solstice Concert Series on both Friday and Saturday nights. The third year that Hopscotch is part of the Fremont Chamber major events, and Fremont Oktoberfest continues.

**Programs:** Continuing the pace on programs monthly meetings continue to be well attended.

**Officers:** Pete Hanning steps up to serve as president. Paul Doak resigns as Treasurer and Phil Megenhardt steps into his shoes. Susan Fuller, Kerston Swartz, Andrew Arthur, Barbara Luecke and Victoria Odell finish their terms and leave the board at the end of the year.

**Staff:** Caroline Sherman and Trisha Rarey carry on the work of the office in the roles of Office Administrator/Membership Guru and Programs & Marketing Wizard respectively while the Board explores hiring a new executive director.

**Membership:** ~265

## 2017

**Events:** Eighth year running the Fremont Fair, and Bold Hat Productions continues the Solstice Concert Series on both Friday and Saturday nights. The fourth year that Hopscotch is part of the Fremont Chamber major events, and Fremont Oktoberfest continues. Our Picnic in the Park event beat all records for attendance this year.

**Programs:** Continuing the pace on programs; monthly meetings continue to be well attended.

**Office:** The Chamber rolls out its new website, designed by member Culture Foundry, in September and is a heartily welcomed update.

**Officers:** Pete Hanning serves a second term as president. Paul Robinson, Stanley Jaskot and Carrie Bauer join the board.

**Staff:** Caroline Sherman and Trisha Rarey are officially contracted to handle the office, membership, programs and marketing.

**Membership:** ~243

## 2018

**Events:** Ninth year running the Fremont Fair, and Bold Hat Productions continues the Solstice Concert Series on both Friday and Saturday nights. The Fremont Oktoberfest continues. We moved our Picnic in the Park event to the Picnic on the Dock at the Seattle Maritime Academy and it was very successful, pulling in many industrial businesses.

**Programs:** Ken Saunderson takes over the role of Program Coordinator and revamps the meeting offerings. Monthly meetings are well attended and interesting speakers and formats are introduced.

**Office:** The office moves from a sub-let at 309 N 36<sup>th</sup> Street to a small office at 720 N 35<sup>th</sup> Street.

**Officers:** Pete Hanning serves a second term as president. Paul Robinson, Stanley Jaskot and Carrie Bauer join the board. Tim Tackett of PCC replaces Jennifer Beus to fill out her term on the board.

**Staff:** Caroline Sherman and Trisha Rarey are officially contracted to handle the office, membership, programs and marketing. Molly Gallagher replaces Trisha mid-year.

**Membership:** ~232

## 2019

**Events:** Tenth anniversary of the Fremont Fair, and Bold Hat Productions continues the Solstice Concert Series on both Friday and Saturday nights. The Fremont Oktoberfest has record-breaking attendance. Picnic on the Dock continues to be a draw for many industrial businesses.

**Programs:** Continuing the pace on programs; monthly meetings continue to be well attended with top-notch, local speakers like Amy Nelson of The Riveter and Etienne Patout of Theo Chocolate.

**Community:** The Chamber is influential in removing a homeless encampment and improving police presence in Fremont. Through the Mayor-backed Tour, the Chamber helps bring better traffic and sanitation solutions to Fremont. Chamber also hosts the Fremont Tour tourism event, bringing downtown hotel concierges to Fremont and showing them the downtown area.

**Office:** Whitney Moore joins Caroline Sherman in the office with a focus on Membership and Social Media. Twitter hits 3,252 followers, Facebook builds to 873 followers, Instagram has 765 followers and LinkedIn platform building up to 119 followers. Google My Business and Yelp pages claimed and built out.

**Officers:** Pete Hanning continues as president. Nate Mouttet joins the board in September as an at-large member for the remainder of the year.

**Staff:** Caroline Sherman and Trisha Rarey are officially contracted to handle the office, membership, programs and marketing.

**Membership:** ~235