



Board Meeting Minutes
March 25, 2020
Teleconference via BlueJeans

Attending: Brandi Gaines, Phil Megenhardt, Paul Robinson, Amina Leighton, Carrie Bauer, Suzie Burke, Sean Erhardt, Sarah Kennedy, Nate Mouttet, Ken Saunderson, Michael Wanaka

Staff: Whitney Moore, Caroline Sherman

Guests: Fremont Arts Council: Dayna Ducey, Bridget LeGarde and Lymarie Perez; Fremont property owner Brian Regan; City Councilmember Dan Strauss & aide Peter Nguyen

Call to Order – Brandi

The meeting was called to order at approximately 8:35AM? by Brandi.

A. Introductions -- skipped

B. **Mission Statement** was read out loud.

Approval of February Minutes: A vote was held, and the February minutes were APPROVED.

Guest Speakers

A. Fremont Arts Council (FAC)

Troll Support:

- Bridgette: The FAC is looking for financial help with the upkeep of the Troll (erosions issues). October 31, 2020 @ 7PM is Trolloween, it's the troll's 30th birthday. FAC wants a bigger celebration this year (variety act show). Can we partner to do something between Trick-or-Treat and Trolloween then drive traffic to businesses after?
- Sarah Kennedy asked if we could merchandise anything Fremont Troll related to amplify these promotional efforts.
- Suzie Burke suggested we look for ways to combine Trolloween and the Moisture Festival? Cheryl Angle is great at fundraising.
- Bridgette: She and Jenn Wenrich are looking at ways that FAC & Moisture Fest can collaborate and raise funds together. Also working with other non-profits looking for ways to work together. Not sure to how to do that.
- Sarah offered Fremont Vintage Mall as a partner in selling Troll-branded, Steve Badanes-approved merchandise to raise money to support the upkeep of the Troll.
- Carrie Bauer suggested having "troll bites" at various restaurants ahead of the event to help feed the Trolloween parade as it moves towards the Troll.

Solstice Parade

- Bridgette: Solstice is not cancelled yet, they are in a waiting pattern, the next milestone is April 13th.

- Phil encouraged them to connect with Chris Swenson, City Special Events Office soon for advice. He also indicated his desire to work together to make this event happen (fully acknowledging that we don't know about the summer at all). He's been in touch with Mac DaVis. It would be good to all talk together about the decisions needed to move forward and share input and ideas. The City NEEDS Solstice weekend to kick off summer. It's bigger than just the businesses. We rely on up to 200 vendors. Don't know if those small businesses will be around to have a booth!
- Sarah: I'm happy and eager to serve as a liaison between FAC & FCC. We want to work with you all and have a better relationship with FAC.
- Bridgette: I agree. Our board mtg is March 31st. We are going to reach out to Chris Swenson. When we decide/are notified what we can do, we'll let you know.
- Phil: I hear you as to the decision you have to make as a board. Can we be part of the conversation to help make the decision? Don't want you to work in a vacuum.
- FAC: I'll take this back to the board that you want to collaborate and help.
- Brandi: We could follow up next week after your board meeting to discuss. Brandi will set up meeting and invite Phil, Sarah, Dana, Bridgette and Lymarie to the call.

B. City Councilmember Dan Strauss

Fremont Walkabout Update—Not covered

Make 45th through Wallingford a bus corridor & eliminate parking? —Not covered

COVID-19 Resources

- Dan: Wish we were meeting under better circumstances.
- At walking tour 3 weeks ago, very different conversation about how to support small businesses, maritime & Chamber. With COVID lots to address. Before COVID, small businesses were important to me. Part of a small business task force. At that time, focusing on what was important: sign fees, patio fees, etc. all from different departments. How can I best support the communities of Ballard, Green Lake, PhinneyWood, Fremont, the U District, etc.
- All of this is on pause. Impressed with resources you've already provided to your members. Anything not listed, our staff can be available, as we put our policy initiatives on hold. We'll do our best to help channel what comes through.
 - Have repurposed community development block grant funds. Prohibition on city to provide gifts to business, so we are redirecting federal funds to businesses.
 - Before COVID, I was working hard on long-term issues like housing, homelessness, etc.
 - For short term issues please contact him to get a faster turnaround. COVID has thrown a wrench into things, so we are here to help small businesses navigate how to get help.
 - Link to Small Business Resources on City Council website:
<http://www.seattle.gov/council/issues/coronavirus/-/covid-19-information-and-resources#support-for-small-businesses>

Homelessness and Wastewater Dumping

- Suzie: On homeless issue, we want you to know that SPU is doing an RV wastewater dumping project. They haven't recognized that the dumping is going into Salmon Bay and

the ship canal. There is a list of where we want to relocate new trash cans. In this environment it would be great.

- Dan: that is great info to know. Brandi, if you can put us in touch with the list. Dan will advocate for us on this.

Small Businesses, Water Meter Fees Relief

- Brian Regan: We have some restaurant tenants who have been shut down. Some have their own water meters that they pay, and want to shut those off, to stop the minimum fees. Can they not have to pay to just have the water meter?
- Dan: Excellent nuance that would get lost. He'll pass it on.
- Suzie: The legislation that talked about minimum fees was all about individuals, but it impacts small businesses as well. There should be a minimum amount of the water meter that is a freebie in this situation.
- Dan: I agree with you wholeheartedly. I will advocate for this, because it's a commonsense approach.
- Sarah: It's really great to meet you! Thank you for attending and coming into the store.

Supporting the Arts and Small Businesses

- Phil: Can you help with FAC's request for support for a Fall event? The Halloween event is a nice thing for the City. When we know we are allowed to come together again for events, the Fremont Fair & Solstice parade and Trolloleen are there for everyone.
 - As treasurer, I look at our future, how will this business stay in business if small businesses close, or can't pay their employees, never mind pay \$160 to join the Chamber. Can the City help businesses like ours?
- Dan: Long term crisis and solutions. We should work closely to see what resources are available. Mayor has set aside \$1M for Arts. It's for the Aquarium to the Rep to FAC, etc. But it's not enough to weather the storm. When we talk about dues vs volunteering, it's a longer-term conversation.
 - I'll be convening meetings with constituents and City reps. When things aren't working, these meetings are a great way to bring folks together to hash out solutions. I can use my resources to help you find solutions.
- Chamber is creative at getting the City to get to good solutions.
- Suzie: The OED should be more involved in this, than they. Sarah Scherer is new and frisky and used to run the Maritime Academy. But she's walking on eggshells because the OED isn't there. That's one that could grow in how they can help the city connect with small businesses.
- Dan: Worked with Bobby Lee at Oregon State University. Real asset to have that relationship. Brings knowledge and expertise about the maritime community to Dan.
- Brandi: We can reach out to Dan. Brandi will share Dan's info/links, and will share list of trash cans, etc. to Dan's office. Are you providing any virtual coffee chats with individuals and small businesses?
- Dan: it's taken 2 weeks to get ourselves buoyant. Reach out to Peter.

C. Brian Regan, Fremont Property Owner Local Security for Closed Businesses, SPD

- Brian Regan: tenants are concerned about what might happen at night when the street is dead and empty with the potential for looting. Some want to board up windows, and they have on Ballard Ave. It's not a good look.
- Suzie: Thinks boarding up is a BAD idea. It draws attention.
- Sarah: I don't want to come down at 3am for ANY reason.
- Brian: You want to feel your business is secure. We have had some break-ins. It's been slower than the usual rate, quite a few in Ballard, though. Boarding is totally discouraged. But landlords can't really do that—if their tenants get broken into, then whose fault is it? To assuage the fear factor, we'd like to hire a private security patrol, because the tenants don't believe the police have the resources. Ballard BIA has moved forward with a patrol every night. Mike Peck, Phil Suetens and I have got a bid from ?? for \$8,400/month with a marked car cruising every night. Would like to join with the Chamber to help make this happen in Fremont.
 - We've filed police reports and been in touch with Officer Boys. But as far as any guarantees that they will increase patrols.
- Suzie: We have our own folks patrolling our own buildings. We feel your pain. Nighttime feels like the bigger issue. Let's find out what they have to say.
- Brandi: We will loop Nic in. Our budget is really tight. BIA is a different model and funding is different. We will talk to Officer Boys and we'll discuss whether private security is the way to go. Cameras, etc. We'll take it on as an action item and follow up.
- Dan Strauss: This is an issue he raised with the Mayor's office. He'll raise security issues with the Mayor on his call today. Resources with SPD are short. They are staggering their staffing so that if one officer is to contract coronavirus, they are not spreading it. He'll raise this issue.
- Suzie: I invite you to join us. We are the biggest precinct in the city and the nicest. We need your help on this because we are geographically challenged, being so large: one SPD Precinct for 3 city council districts!
- Dan has already talked to the other two council members for the north end, Alex Pederson and Debora Juarez on this issue

Financial Report – Phil

Checking in with board members and their businesses:

- Sarah: had an interior design company come in and spend \$2k! Very exciting!
- Brandi: Michael, Sean. How are you doing?
- Michael: can only do loans, can't sell from the store. Can only sell online with personal delivery.
- Sean: Part of a global franchise, largest in the world. How the founders communicate about struggles in 38 different countries. Trying to have a cohesive message with all these different franchisees. We here are struggling tremendously, and how to communicate with membership. That's where we're at.

2020 Budget Scenarios--Phil

- Phil: Worked on the budget yesterday with Caroline. We stopped sending out automatic renewals. We sent out a notice that if you can't pay, take a break. We have received a couple of checks this month. One was from a member that used to be at the \$300 level but

paid at the \$50 level. So, they believe in the chamber, but can't afford right now to participate at the higher level. Membership most likely will not dry up. But the decision to join with their dollars is a hard one.

- We worked on Best, OK & worst-case scenarios. You're looking at the Summary. This chamber has reserves! We worked on this several years ago and thought it would be for projects, but now it's to make sure we are a relevant strong business voice into the future.
- Michael: it's a blessing we have this reserve. A lot of people that are members now--a lot will go out of business. This situation could last until July or August and a lot of businesses will not weather the storm.
- Sarah: Anything we can do to give any small business to weather the storm would go a long way in our standing.
- Suzie: We have to do all of the above. Small biz doesn't quite have the money in the bank that we have. The reason that we've worked hard to get money in the bank is that we have employees, you have to be able to pay them whether you have a lot of business or not. That's why we're hearing from businesses that have to pay out that's very risky for them. Our stance for our tenants is to let them use their deposits so they don't have to pay right away. Also encouraging them to go online and go after the new resources becoming available to them. They have to figure out what they can do NOW as soon as they can offer something new. Putting your stuff online helps build demand. We have to be a little hopeful.
- Phil: Reserve: Roughly \$109k in Money Market account. Look at Best Case Scenario. Revenue engines:
 - WG. If we were to do a 2021 WG, it could look differently. That said, we might be able to get \$3k advertising & sponsorship.
 - Meeting incomes: cancelled meetings for March, April, May. First Meeting: Maritime Picnic: 40 ppl. Conservative #. Not sure what that will look like. Then monthly mtgs with 15 people knowing membership will be down and whether folks will want to get together.
 - Membership income: eliminated any income from April & May. Slashed membership. Slashed membership from 230 to 160 members, and most of them are coming in at the \$160 & \$50.
 - Phil has no idea what the Oktoberfest income will be or Fremont Fair.
- Brandi: good conservative approach.
- Phil: Worst case: total revenue of \$12k. Eliminates all meetings for the rest of the year. Resources that we want to allocate: do we want to have meetings? Who would do the work? Retain contractors to do this work. Kept Whitney's hours the same and shift her over to membership relations from sales.
- Brandi: We will meet as Exec Board and discuss all of this.
- Phil: We just need to get to the next month. We do have some expenses we're going to eliminate. Everything in BLUE we have to pay to function. We are a pretty lean organization, not a lot of fat. Need to work with contractors to understand capacities they have and what resources we want to re-allocate with regards to mission. How we spend to keep things going.

- Suzie: looking at more hopeful case scenario. There are some businesses that want to keep things going and want to help the community. Whitney can help communicate the good things that are going on and keep our hopes up. Roxie's breakfasts, etc. Keep our bigger members happy that we are doing stuff.
- Phil: Yes, that huge. Moving from membership sales to membership promotion/relations. Flip Whitney's time and give her really clear direction over the next two weeks and beyond. We need a comprehensive plan for after this 2-week quarantine. Showed Membership projections. It's not impossible to do.

Programming

- Ken: We cancel April and May in terms of programming. Put Program contract on hold. So, we will not be billing the chamber for those months. Even with Picnic on the Dock—waiting on City and going forward, what does that look like? Been averaging 40 people at meetings. We really need to work that connection and community. Will have to hold off on in-person meetings. Explore using technology to transmit meetings. Maybe get Bobby Ray (?) & Sarah & Dan Strauss to talk about how businesses can help and be helped, and be member driven. Ken will explore as a volunteer.
- Brandi: focus on members, what resources can we provide. Staff appreciation.
- Sarah: They've done a great job of promoting every business. Kudos!
- Phil: Buy Facebook ads. Start ads to start talking about how Fremont is still the Center of the Universe.
- Caroline: Consider #BigBang when we can gather again.
- Suzie: Work with Fremocentrist.com. Kirby's getting a big boost on her site right now.

Signing Authority—Phil to send update

Open Business from Last Meeting

- ~~2020 Action Agenda~~ – POSTPONED
- RHI update—did it happen? Did Paul Shanrock attend/present? (not covered)
- ~~Schilling Cider Passport Program, request for printing \$\$~~ – POSTPONED

Office Reports—see handouts

- Membership & Office Management – Caroline
- Marketing & Membership – Whitney

Committee Reports

- Programs Report – Ken
- ~~North Precinct Advisory Council—Kurt Kapusuzoglu~~ (not in attendance)

Announcements and New Business—Brandi

- Health Crisis: How can we support our members? —Ken (covered by CCM Strauss)
- Moratorium on member dues? —Ken (Phil covered in budget and we agreed via email to not require dues for April and May; should we delay June too?)
- ~~Family Works Supper table sponsorship~~—Paul (not covered)
- Award Ideas from March – who and why?

- a. Christine Olson, Sfingaday for her unrelenting efforts to promote the community & support the safety of the neighborhood. Handwashing stations for the homeless!
- b. Brandi agrees! She seconds Sfingaday 😊

Adjourn—Brandi

Thanks for your time. This worked well and we got better participation.
Call ended at 10:02am

Minutes submitted by Caroline Sherman