



**Board Meeting Minutes
November 24, 2021
Teleconference via Microsoft Teams**

Attending: Brandi Gaines, Phil Megenhardt, Anquida Adams, Carrie Bauer, Suzie Burke, Amina Leighton, Raul Lezcano

Absent: Jessi Brookman, Sean Erhardt, Jamie Hoffman, Nate Mouttet, Paul Robinson, Ken Saunderson, Michael Wanaka

Staff: Caroline Sherman

Guests: Leo Griffin, Friends of Troll's Knoll; Jim Bentley, Former Wallingford Chamber President

Call to Order – Brandi

The meeting was called to order at 8:45AM by Brandi.

- A. Mission Statement was read out loud.
- B. President's Message: We have guests: Jim and Leo.

Jim: President of Wallingford Chamber, Financial Advisor, hobbyist pilot, runs other businesses as well.

News: We let Rachel go. She is no longer working for the Chamber. As an Exec Board, the decision was made to sever ties based on performance. Will work with the board here to determine next steps: membership program manager or executive director options are on the table. Will be thinking about it over the next month. Through many trainings and lots of hand holding, it didn't work out. Crappy time of year, but there's no good time of year. With Bold Hat managing holiday marketing, we are covered. Let us know if you have any questions.

Approval of October Minutes: Suzie moved to approve; Carrie seconded. A vote was held, and the October minutes were APPROVED.

Guest: Jim Bentley.

Brandi: We want to understand the Wallingford Chamber, and what can Fremont do to assist?

Jim: With COVID we hit the pause button. Board meeting in August. Will fire back up in January. Had trouble finding an admin person. Used to have Stephen, but his regular business is thriving so, he can't take it back on.

Brandi: Can add an ad to our jobs board.

Jim: Considered joining the two chambers. We have our membership, dues paying is 160-ish. Lots pay dues, but active members who attend monthly or quarterly events is the same 10.

Suzie: How it got started: called it the North Seattle Chamber of Commerce. Suzie went to all those meetings, as did Jim Daly. We figured out that Fremont had the growth place, so we split it up. Wallingford & Fremont did fine, but Green Lake didn't. No problem having a joint chamber & folks join up and are members of both. We could do it as part of the Fremont Chamber of Commerce, like Wallingford was doing for us. Then we have more members all around. We probably have some in both. The point is to represent all of us. We share City Council members. We would be stronger together. History speaks for it, too.

Jim: This is something the Wallingford chamber has talked about. It might make a lot of sense. We're close neighbors, we have the same issues. It could make sense to combine it into one, more powerful board & one more powerful chamber. We've discussed some of the mechanics of that. How would that work out? Transition over time? We'd have to figure that out. We have a tiny war chest still. One advantage of Jim being president, was that they wouldn't spend money on things that don't benefit the members. Haven't been spending any money & have saved over the last couple of years.

Suzie: Suggest putting a committee together, 4-6 people who have interest on both sides of the line. We share BF Day, Boys & Girls Club (Suzie made them get rid of the word "Wallingford".) We share an awful lot. The Wallingford Chamber has been more retail, Fremont more manufacturing/industrial over the years. Don't think of the money, think of how we best represent. Take out a map and see how much bigger we become. Some folks on the other side of the ship canal think they are in Fremont. Draw a bigger map and see what it is we can do to support for everyone.

Jim: From a representation standpoint Fremont has better representation. Wallingford has 4 board members. How would that intermingle? How do we do the marketing to the different neighborhoods? Hey, this is a good idea, and here's why. I like the committee idea and figure out how to evolve into it. Transition into it with no hard deadline. Getting ideas on how it would meld from everyone. We can put out an email to our membership, you to yours. Ask for feedback. If we get 1% response, that would be fantastic. Put on January membership. Will go to quarterly meeting basis with their membership until they see how the membership is responding to the COVID stuff. How are your meetings?

Brandi: Have had some get togethers outside. Having in-person holiday meeting in next couple of weeks. Indoor/Outdoor at Talarico's on the 8th.

Phil: Mentioning membership: have 160 dues-paying members. What is the minimum membership cost? Is there a top tier?

Jim: \$100/year based on the number of employees. Top is \$500/year.

Phil: Golden years were when?

Jim: The year before COVID.

Brandi: What kind of events are you holding? As we get a better response from membership, likely it will be fine. We'll discuss more.

Suzie: Slogan: Beat Ballard!

Brandi: We partner with Mike at Ballard Alliance & Eugene Wasserman on issues, like Route 40 proposal. Strength in numbers and getting Jim involved with Councilmembers Dan Strauss & Alex Pederson.

Jim: I have a great relationship with Alex.

Suzie: Sarah Nelson is coming on board in January.

Brandi: Great to have divergent opinions from Dan Strauss, too. As does Alex and Sarah, etc. Whether Dan is fighting hard enough on our behalf on Route 40. Getting as many folks as possible on our sides to listen to our concerns is huge. Great that Jim works well with Alex.

Suzie: Toby Thaler is on Alex's staff, and Toby was with the Fremont Neighborhood Council for years. He's wonderful. We need them able to help each other, and to know that we're expecting them to work together as a group. The North end is different than a lot of the rest of the City.

Brandi: Start meetings at beginning of year after your Jan mtg. Important to have equal representation. I'll be on the committee, Suzie will join.

Caroline: Hook Sam O'Brien (KeyBank Wallingford) & Jim Bentley up.

Financial Report – Phil

A. October Highlights

B. Doing well. Got good \$\$ from Oktoberfest. Meeting income is good. We budgeted very conservatively and are doing well. Strong Candidate Event, Fremont Oktoberfest, Membership income. Looking good, keeping expenses down. Caroline and I met a couple of weeks ago and worked on the 2022 budget. We are looking at hiring a contract executive director for a couple of reasons: 1) we as a volunteer board, we don't want to manage employees. We had a transition with Whitney leaving, Brandi has been doing more than any president in recent history for value to our members, etc. It's not sustainable. When we went through the hiring process when hiring Rachel, we thought: if we had the money, we wouldn't do such a patch job and could have a person grow into the job like Whitney did. Due to our 5-point plan, she stayed focused and grew the position. Looking at the budget, you'll see a draft before the end of the year. What we paid for that marketing position and Ken for programming, there's enough funds to conservatively hire an executive director position. I believe we can do it and it won't be a stretch.

C. Caroline is an amazing person, but she's not full time. Things ending up on her plate not in her wheelhouse due to not a strong transition to Rachel. Want her to be able to focus on Membership & build these. I believe that we'll be able to have interviews and a person in place roughly January/February interviewing and having someone in place by March. Would be a great transition to 2022.

D. All is well on the financials.

E. Brandi: Building out scope of work for both ED & Caroline's role. The board needs to define these and hours and have a really good structure.

F. Phil: Financially this can happen. How it happens is a different conversation.

G. Suzie: Make sure we get a contract, and they have to supervise themselves. Some folks don't fit the mold. We're looking for a go-getter. Describing the job as Sales. You've got to use the social media and all that stuff to do Sales. As long as they know what the mission is, and the Chamber has a good a good mission.

H. Anquida: Sales is good. We do a good job with events during COVID. We're not doing great, if someone is struggling. We need to have enough stuff besides events to make sure folks can stay. Do surveys? How can we have a better space for people to say it's worth it beyond just being seen.

- I. Brandi: We need someone to shout that value out. We need someone to come in and take charge and provide value. Use Kent Chamber as a model—they have it working really well down there. In order to attract and retain, we have to provide value.
- J. Phil: Fremont Chamber is not in trouble. Kirkland, Auburn & Kent are doing their thing. How do we even advance by hiring an ED versus just a marketing director? What is the value proposition? We talk about that all the time, and how people can be involved and engaged. We have a plan but have been moving slowly on it.

Fremont Events

- A. Holiday Shopping/Festivus/Lenin Lighting – Phil
 - a. Brandi and I began engaging on community engagement. Tried talking to Katrina Eileen. Good conversation. Amina and I are having a conversation with Mischief. Fun thing about Fremont Fair is that we are having the Fremont Fair. Planning on it. Working on sponsorship. If all goes well, vendor registration portal will be open in January, and we'll be selling booth spaces. Working very hard to see who's still around and make connections with new vendors. Feeling we'll have a very strong Fremont Fair. Talking to music folks. Everyone gains. Even right now, under King County guidelines, we can still do a Fair. If gated, still have to show vax proof. Beer gardens might be slow, but we still have to ID everyone anyway.
 - b. What we did in 2021, we turned the Fremont Fair into Art Week. Will continue that marketing. We have so much art content we can build a whole week around it. The Fremont Solstice/Fair will kick off Art Week through Solstice. It's always the weekend before official Solstice.
 - c. Oktoberfest situation is normal.
 - d. Lenin Lighting—Ryan and his team are doing that. It will be fine. He has to decide if he wants to do it annually. He's coming from a strong community place. Our holiday campaign will be about it. Moving to a Saturday night. We'll get it on all the blogs.
 - e. Suzie: The Fair itself is not gated, just the beer gardens.
 - f. Phil: Correct. And I think the vaccination mandate will likely be through 2022 in King County.
 - g. Suzie: Oregon just lifted their vax mandate if outside. We might be affected by that for outside activity.
 - h. Phil: We will wait until the very last day to turn in our event permits for the city, because they are requiring a very complex COVID response plan. We have a comprehensive one. Waiting because, maybe they'll drop the requirement to have that as part of the permit. Also work with U-District Street Fair. Don Blakely is the new executive director—nice to see enthusiastic leadership over there. It's a great event, but no one has really owned it before.
 - i. Suzie: UW owns the street and that's how the street fair got started, as a protest to show it's part of their tract.
 - j. Brandi: Looking forward to getting back to how we used to be. It will be fun.
 - k. Phil: Really looking forward to it!

Open Business and New Business – Brandi

- A. SDOT Route 40 update—Brandi
 - a. Nothing new. Waiting for revised plan from Dan.
- B. Public Safety – Brandi
 - a. Haven’t read all of the Mayor’s budget, but it looks like a Community Safety Team will come north in the new year. Leveraging relationship with Sarah Nelson for sure to get more public safety. City Sweats on Stone way had their front door boarded up. Vandalism is hitting Stone Way. We are fighting for more public safety.
 - b. Suzie: And N Northlake Way has to become a motivating factor. Plywood on the door still. There’s the breakage and theft to deal with, but also the ability to repair and get back in to business is so much more difficult now. And the safety issue for employees. The toleration isn’t there anymore. So we have to jump on it.
- C. NERF Grant: (See Caroline’s report.)
- D. Arts Fund (close to \$7k) for distribution.
- E. Walking Guide/Membership Drive – Caroline & Phil
 - a. Emails sent out to all previous listers, lapsed members, folks who’ve ever listed in the past. We have 22 listings so far and are continuing to send out the WG message.
 - b. Brandi will work on getting out a basic Blast and help with standard marketing stuff.
- F. Board Elections & Bylaws vote (from last year’s Code of Ethics inclusion) — Caroline & Brandi
 - a. At our Annual meeting on December 8th at Talarico’s, we will have board elections and vote on the bylaws amended last year, in addition to the Annual Holiday Party.
 - b. Suzie: That timing hits the Seattle Police Foundation meeting she always attends, so she’ll arrive at 6pm.
- G. Wallingford Outreach — Brandi & Sam
- H. Fremont Chamber 40th Anniversary, May 5, 2022 – Caroline

Office Reports—see handouts

- A. Membership & Office Management – Caroline
 - i. See attached report.
- B. NERF (Neighborhood Economic Recovery Fund) Grant— Caroline
 - i. Contract signed (needs to be amended to say we are a 501(c)6, not 501(c)3.) Orientation meeting on December 9th to learn about reporting, etc.
- C. Marketing, Membership & Programs – Caroline
 - i. See attached report.
 - ii. Hysterical Markers (HM): Rachel had responsibility to arrange to keep the HM filled. She did this with HM adopters.
 - iii. Phil offered to go around and fill them all. Suzie can bring box to Phil’s office. Caroline will send out an email to all the adopters.
- D. Board Retreat, January 26, 11am, 4 hours at Phil’s office above LTD Bar & Grill.
- E. Art Walk Mural article in Seattle Times: add to website & Blast!

Announcements – Brandi

- A. Announcements—
 - i. Carrie: We did a direct drive with families. Goal \$100k, reached \$140k with more envelopes to open.
 - ii. Still need an assistant principal. Using funds to make our counselor full time—strong need for that.

- iii. New equipment going into BF Day park above us. So gates will be closed while equipment goes in. Exciting to have nearby. About a year on that.
 - iv. Lots of good BF Day news. Only other issue besides social emotional needs, is parking—very frustrating how folks drive the wrong way, etc.
- B. Calendar of Awesomeness—Chamber highlights from October/November – what have we accomplished that we want to highlight on our website?
- i. Seattle Times Art Walk article
 - ii. NERF Grant
 - iii. Invite Sarah Nelson to Member party. Great that a member is on the City Council.
- C. Chamber of Commerce Award Ideas from October/November – who do we want to nominate for a CoC Award and why?
- i. Suzie: Getting Fremont Sunday Market up and running.
 - ii. Caroline: Fremont Chamber Executive Committee! Brandi, Paul & Phil
- A. Other

Adjourn—Brandi

Super Happy Thanksgiving for your family and loved ones. Please take care of yourselves, because self-care is not selfish!

Meeting ended at 10:00am.

Minutes submitted by Caroline Sherman