



Seattle Tax Advisory Group

October Meeting:

Date: October 2, 2013

Location: Seattle Municipal Tower,
Conference Room 5531, 700 Fifth
Avenue, Seattle, Washington 98104

Attendees:

Glen Lee, City of Seattle Finance
Director
Paula Borhauer, Starbucks Director –
Sales and Excise Tax
Jamie Carnell, City of Seattle Senior
Tax Policy Specialist
Joseph Cuhna, City of Seattle Tax
Manager
Dawn Flookes, PEMCO Controller
Lilah Gael, City of Seattle Portal
Coordinator

Craig Goodrich, Virginia Mason SVP –
Finance
Ezra Hodge, e-Gov Systems CEO
Damian Hunt, Amazon Tax Manager
Rachel Le Mieux, Peterson Sullivan LLP
– Partner
Renee Staton, Plum Creek Timber
Director – Tax
Paul Thomason, e-Gov Systems
Business Analyst

Handouts: Seattle Tax Advisory Group Charter, Tax Advisory Group Work Plan,
Square Footage Tax Information and Recommendations

Meeting Summary:

Welcome and Introductions – Ezra Hodge and Paul Thomaston of e-Gov Systems were introduced to the Seattle Tax Advisory Board. A brief overview of e-Gov Systems was presented, followed by a Question and Answer session. One question queried the responsibilities and liabilities of the taxpayer and the portal should payments be distributed incorrectly. The portal governance will build in the roles and responsibilities around this issue.

There was a question about the portal governance structure and Jamie Carnell gave a brief overview of the portal governance was given with an explanation of principle and subscriber roles. A formal process for more transparency and communication between

cities and the Department of Revenue is a goal, and the portal has developed a partnership with the Department of Revenue, and the Association of Washington Cities, to share information with these two major stakeholders as the portal progresses

Damian expressed an interest in seeing the portal rollout quickly to other cities. Jamie explained another goal of the portal is a strategic plan for roll outs with a repeatable methodology for additional cities to come on board. The plan is designed to expand and add regions with large numbers of communities quickly, but the portal will not be open to additional cities until it has cycled through to year end filing.

Square Footage Tax Discussion:

Glen Lee communicated to the group that the structures currently in place pertaining to the Square Footage Tax are not sustainable. There was discussion in the group on the best option for moving forward with a plan to restructure the square footage and the consensus was to eliminate the square footage tax. City staff expressed a concern of not understand the full impacts of removing the square footage tax and the advisory group talked about a couple of possible options which included a bump in the B&O rates. Glen expressed concern that Council approved increases might not be legal. He also committed to looking towards something simple and rational to help offset potential losses from the square footage tax. City staff see this as an urgent issue but it may not get addressed until after the elections.

City staff will draft bullet points for options to offset the square footage tax should it be eliminated and will send them to the group prior to the November meeting.

Next meeting: November 14, 2013 – Multi City Business License and Tax Portal's new name, look, and feel revealed; Portal governance framework; Square Footage Tax replacement options (**Glen and Jamie will draft bullet points to discuss during the next meeting**) – this meeting has subsequently been cancelled.