

## STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING #1 – NOVEMBER 13, 2009 Meeting Summary

### ATTENDEES

#### Steering Committee Members

Dave Brunner, McCoys Firehouse Restaurant  
Tina Bueche, Syanpse206  
Lisa Dixon, Pioneer Square Community Association  
Anne Fennessy, Cocker Fennessy  
Rick Friedhoff, Compass Center  
Guy Godefroy, Trinity Nightclub  
Kate Joncas, Downtown Seattle Association  
Susan Ranf, Seattle Mariners  
Laine Ross, Resident  
Phyllis Shulman, Richard Conlin's Office  
Leslie Smith, Pioneer Square Community Association  
Annie Strain, Resident  
Richard Thurston, Grover/Thurston Gallery  
David Young, Seattle Seahawks

#### Consultants

Bonnie Berk, BERK & ASSOCIATES  
Allegra Calder, BERK & ASSOCIATES

#### Other Attendees

Karen Beppler-Dorn, Klondike Gold Rush National  
Historic Park  
Kevin Daniels, Nitze-Stagen  
Paul Elliott, Seattle Department of Transportation  
Adam Hasson, Samis Land Company

#### City Staffing Team

Steve Johnson, Office of Economic Development  
Nancy Yamamoto, Office of Economic Development  
Steve Brown, Seattle Police Department, West  
Precinct  
Gary Johnson, Department of Planning and  
Development  
Sara Wysocki, Department of Neighborhoods

### WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS AND CHARGE TO THE GROUP

Steve Johnson welcomed the group and introduced Tim Ceis, Deputy Mayor, who charged the group to develop an action-focused and compelling Plan. He said that Pioneer Square is important to the City, and is an important part of "the fabric of Seattle." He also said that there are problems to be addressed in the Square; we know that we need to have a revitalized business community. We need a new future for the area, so how do we use the great resources in the room, including City resources, to get to that new future?

He encouraged the group to "spend your time on the solutions rather than the problems," to "put aside the old fights" in Pioneer Square, and to develop a Plan that the new mayor can implement. He also noted that Richard Conlin's office is committed to the project, along with the rest of the City Council.

Nancy Yamamoto, project manager, then introduced the project and the City's objectives. She said that this will not be an extended planning process or a process of making a list of what ails Pioneer Square. She noted that the City's goal is to complete this effort in the spring, for presentation to the Mayor and Council.

## **FACILITATED DISCUSSION: OPPORTUNITIES**

The group brainstormed around two key questions: (1) What are the assets we could build on? And (2) What are the short term opportunities for the district?

### ***Assets***

- Opportunity for cultural tourism – the buildings, the history, the fire
- Need to take advantage of our architectural fabric –there is nothing like it on the west coast
- Incredible economic diversity – both residential and business, including sports facilities
- You can get here – it’s a transportation hub and it’s walkable
- Best transit in the region
- Lots of parking
- Open space – Occidental Park should be a resource
- Affordable commercial space
- Some amazing unique retail shops – we do have independent businesses that are unique and we could have more of them due to small spaces
- Small independent, unique businesses
- Commercial space is unique and relatively affordable – has a cool factor
- New hotel opening
- Proximity to downtown and the waterfront
- Connection to International District and waterfront
- Good incubator of small and emerging businesses
- A sustainable marketing model is the gallery walk, it attracts thousands of visitors
- There is a museum in our own neighborhood – the art galleries
- Repurposing of the alley – alley art walk, building on dumpster free program
- The Square has a unique personality
- It feels like a small town in urban center – intimate, nice scale
- Lots of talent
- Social network is probably world class
- Passion, commitment, community – you can make us happy, but don’t make us mad
- North Lot project – live here, go anywhere
- Opportunities for development – adjacent lots, surface parking
- There is a deep bench of landowners and developers that really care about Pioneer Square
- The stadiums and attendance are a plus, not everyone considers it a plus, but many businesses depend on it
- Soccer!!!! Soccer injected new energy, good fans, respectable, lots of families
- Nightlife is alive– huge potential, always something going on
- City Hall is located here; we are near government

### ***Short-term Opportunities***

- Manage the perception of these assets as opposed to focusing on the problems
- Manage the message, for example around the Elliott Bay Bookstore situation
- Create a unified marketing campaign
- Create a permanent firefighters museum in Station 10 – it would add to our small museum district and can help tell the story of Pioneer Square. We already have several museums: Klondike, Police, Firefighters (temp), Wing Luke
- Opportunity to see National Park as keystone piece of cultural marketing, revitalization, see Lowell, Massachusetts, for an example
- How can we harness stadium visitors for businesses that are not restaurant or nightclubs?
- Vacant lots are opportunities to develop
- Focus on being accessible by transit – complaints are about parking, but why are people driving? Communicate how to get here from Wallingford
- Removal of the Viaduct is a HUGE opportunity, but mitigation is a huge concern/opportunity
- Capitol Hill negotiated a really good mitigation package, we need to get organized
- Need to bring back waterfront trolley – the bus is not the same
- First Hill streetcar will happen soon and the western terminus is still in play, so Pioneer Square should get involved
- Leverage opportunities for funding – centralize funding available from various city departments
- The Gallery Walk – in place for about 30 years, strictly voluntary on the part of the gallery – yet there will be hundreds of people even on the darkest of nights. Galleries are opening mid-month now. It's a mix of people and there are always new people. Hotel concierges send visitors here so there is a real link to tourism.
- Open and staff a public restroom
- Technology is a fourth leg of our stool – we've got the cell phone company, games and software developers. These are 24-hour people. They represent the future – we need to find the marriage between past and future instead of only looking to the past.
- The four legs of the stool for Pioneer Square are arts, history, entertainment (includes sports) and technology
- Historic districts always attract the creative classes
- There is an opportunity to do some triage right now and keep money in the community – build community and support each other. How many people here eat, shop, play in the neighborhood? We need to have a living local economy.
- ING and Microsoft have moved in – let's find out why they have moved in here. How can we attract businesses?
- The City has talked to gaming, arts, film industry companies, etc. and they talk to businesses who love Pioneer Square – how to attract more of them?
- We are working with enterpriseSeattle to see if we can't relocate some gaming companies. For example, the DigiPen Institute, which is located in Redmond, would be great here.

- Need ambassadors to represent the assets of Pioneer Square. It's an urban playground – what can you do with kids in the city? I don't think these things are very well known to parents – internal tourism, history of the City and museums are really important. Can we package what is there differently? Build on the soccer games. Communicate where families can eat in Pioneer Square.
- Until 10 pm minors can come in and listen to music – that is good for kids and we should make that better known
- Why don't we have a dedicated staff person at the City level for the historic districts? Under the historic preservation banner we have mixed compliance – they don't do enforcement
- Reinstitute the welcome packets – cooperative advertising, etc.
- There are opportunities for co-branding, for example– “Duck into the Square” and “Cruise the Square”
- The Ducks have reached out to the Square and could bring in a diverse group of visitors
- Cultural tourism could be a draw
- The J&M site is an opportunity – it's going to be a restaurant/bar. There are people moving into the old Longhorn space. Millstream is coming back.
- Work on activating the second floors of buildings
- If you talk about adding residents and the Viaduct project, then a lot of the things that we have been arguing about become moot because we have a totally new situation
- We need a cohesive community. I'm one of the most active marketers and I would love to help. I run 60 ads/week on FM radio
- Opportunity to reintegrate the Washington Street boat landing into the neighborhood
- All visitors should go to Pioneer Square, along with Pike Place Market. The Market has vendors throwing fish. What is our equivalent of throwing fish?
- Performance Art – the Thriller dance was great
- SPARKS – parks programming has made a real difference. We have staffed Occidental Park 30 hours/week, which has led to some programming opportunities
- Special events communication would be helpful regarding activation of the Park.
- Need to work more closely with the stadium/exhibitions. I live on the edge and most people don't stop – we need to engage them. Also need to coordinate soccer and Art Walk on the same Thursday. This requires coordination and communication
- Activation of empty retail space – can we merchandise those spaces with art or something else?
- List of to dos – the lights are out, who do you call to fix this? Standing water on the street restricts parking – there has been a lake on Yesler.
- Additional resources from the Police department on Public Safety would be helpful
- Not only more police – we need legislation and other tools. Lisa and Leslie held a public safety meeting to help owners know what the police can and can't do and when to call the police
- The Central District is doing their own blog and mapping incidents which they give to the police. Can we do that?
- The Police Department is working on a way to deal with the fact that people don't want to repeatedly call 911; there will be an email address to report drug activity

## **COMMITTEE OPERATION AND ORGANIZATION**

Bonnie Berk presented the group with the proposed Operating Principles and introduced the idea of Committee co-chairs. The group had a short discussion about group membership and brainstormed individuals or organizations that could potentially be added.

The group then agreed to adopt the draft Operating Principles.

## **CONCLUSION: ROUNDTABLE COMMENTS AND REFLECTIONS**

The group was asked for final thoughts or comments, either on today's discussion or the process. Comments were as follows:

- I am ready to go
- I appreciated the positive focus
- I am very excited for the outcome
- Looking forward to the process
- History could be starting from today, with a sustainable process that gets us where we need to be
- There is collective wisdom and passion here, and I am hopeful that we can build community
- I am excited – I have 6 ½ pages of ideas
- Thanks to the City for the focus on this project
- I am impressed with the quality of the conversation
- I continue to be optimistic
- Looking forward to working with the businesses in the room – that is new for me
- Looking forward to bringing resources of National Parks Service to the conversation
- Thanks to Sara for all her help in the Square

## **NEXT STEPS AND NEXT MEETINGS**

The next meeting will be in December and will coincide with Donovan Rypkema's visit.