



Only in Seattle

Peer Network Gathering Meeting Notes

April 30, 2015

Location: Big Chickie, Hillman City

IN ATTENDANCE

M. Angela Castaneda, [Beacon Hill Merchants Association](#)

Robert Hinrix, [Beacon Hill Merchants Association](#)

Kay Knapton, [Uptown Alliance](#)

Sarah Valenta, [HomeSight](#)

Betty Jean Williamson, [Beacon Arts/Beacon Hill Merchants Association](#)

Dennis Comer, [Brown Sugar Baking Company](#)

Guy M. Davis, [Columbia City Business Association](#)

Lynn Dennis, [West Seattle Chamber of Commerce](#)

Robert Mohn, [Columbia City Business Association](#)

Larry Reid, [Georgetown Merchants Association](#)

Jennifer Teehan, [Washington Women's Business Center at Community Capital Development](#)

Matthew Stubbs, [Hillman City Business Association](#)

Susan Davis, [Rainier Chamber of Commerce](#)

MEETING NOTES

1. Welcome from Matt Stubbs, owner of Big Chickie
2. Overview of Agenda
 - a. Recap of last month's special events peer network
 - b. Format for today's peer network
 - c. Introductions
 - d. Peer Exchange
 - e. Announcements
 - f. Close
3. Order of discussion
 - a. Highlights from each district
 - b. Discuss successes and challenges with various organizational structures

- c. Growth in neighborhood business districts and retaining small businesses

A. Highlights from each district

Beacon Hill

- Upcoming events: Beacon Walkabout on 6/27 and 9/12 from 1-9pm in Beacon Hill
- Beautification project will be a mural in the business district

Columbia City

- Gateway construction started on Edmonds St and 37th
- Business district visioning update process is underway

Georgetown

- Cultivating relationships for event and organizational sponsorships
- Upcoming events: May Art Attack (5/9) and Annual Carnival (6/13) in Georgetown

Hillman City

- Developing a business district vision and action plan in 2015
 - Concurrently, Vision Hillman City is a resident group that is developing a vision for neighborhood. Hillman City will be working closely with them to wrap their work into the larger neighborhood vision and engage businesses to implement the work.
- Planning events to activate neighborhood
- Installation of two Parklets planned in business district this year

Othello/MLK

- Retail recruitment and attraction

Rainier Valley Chamber

- Upcoming event: Heritage parade on 8/15 in the Rainier Valley

Uptown

- Urban Design Framework
- Partnership with Seattle Center for more event activation in Uptown

West Seattle

- Website improvements
- Providing technical assistance to local businesses through Grow Seattle Partnership

B. Discuss successes and challenges with various organizational structures

Columbia City Business Association

- CCBA is an informal, all volunteer association of businesses/property owners and residents committed to a common vision for the business district and supported by a fiscal sponsor (HomeSight)
- Attendance at the monthly meeting is about 50-60 members

- There are four active committees
 - Goodwill, business development, marketing and membership
- A few years ago they tried to implement a more robust organizational model with paid full time staff. That model did not work for various reasons and they choose to revert back to an all-volunteer led group.
- Downside to this structure is that it requires a lot of volunteer hours
- A few keys to success:
 - Define a specific geography that you serve
 - Focus on business district concern specifically and not overall neighborhood issues
 - Cultivate partnerships
- There is also a Business Improvement Area in Columbia City
 - The BIA boundary is very closely linked to the boundary that the CCBA specifies as the business district
 - The BIA:
 - Assessment is for about 60 properties in the business district,
 - Provides a paid manager to oversee the CleanScapes contract, and advocate to the City for any improvements, and
 - Specifies CleanScapes service the business district 5 times a week.
- When starting a BIA, identify key decision makers to pitch the idea. This could be a good way to gauge the interest and ability to get needed approval.

Georgetown

- Paid executive director and some contracts for event production
- Many volunteer hours committed for GMA board
- Concern with sustainability of model
 - Relies on commitment of volunteers to do active fund raising, execute events and work individually with businesses
- It would be tough to explore a BIA with business and property owners in Georgetown

Beacon Hill

- 501c3 with two paid staff members
- Focuses on business district in north Beacon Hill
- Enhancing partnerships is key to long-term success
- Relies on grant funding, membership revenue and sponsorships to staff org and continue programming

C. Growth in neighborhoods and retaining small businesses

- Fast growth is impacting Seattle's central and southeast businesses negatively
 - It is becoming increasingly difficult for businesses to fight off displacement
- Looking for growth models that focus on retaining current businesses
 - Resources needed:
 - Technical assistance for small businesses to anticipate and keep up with growth
 - A handbook or resource guide to learn about what the City can do to help and how to access these resources.
 - How can OED be more of a resource to small businesses?

- What are innovative tools the City can adopt and explore to support local businesses?

4. Announcements

- a. Beacon Arts Mural Outreach for Small and Simple Grant
 - i. Jefferson Community Center – 5/16 from 12:30 – 4p

5. Close

- a. Next Peer Network Gathering is **Thursday, May 28 from 12-2PM**. This peer network will be in partnership with GrowSeattle and cover Restaurant Success, Access Seattle, the Green Business Program and more. Please visit www.onlyinseattle.eventbrite.com to register.