

CEG MEETING NOTES FOR JUNE 9, 2017

Our facilitator, Katherine Graubard, called the meeting to order at 4:02. p.m.

ACTIVITIES OVER THE PAST TWO WEEKS

William Ruckleshaus—“Vu and Déjà Vu,” May 30th at “Folio”

Peg Haggerty shared her thoughts on William Ruckleshaus’ interview by Morton Kondrake at Folio, on May 30th, titled “Vu and Déjà Vu.” *Note:* The interview is available as a podcast under Folio’s Past Events link: <http://www.folioseattle.org/past-events>.

Peg mentioned that the first hour of the event was devoted primarily to a discussion of Mr. Ruckleshaus’ experience as a Deputy Attorney General during the Nixon Administration. As you may recall, Mr. Ruckleshaus resigned his position in the Department of Justice rather than fire the Watergate Special Prosecutor Archibald Cox when ordered to do so by President Richard Nixon.

Turning to current events, Mr. Ruckleshaus made several points regarding allegations of illegal or unethical behavior by the current administration. They included:

1. A sustained public outcry is a necessary element to force exposure of illegal behavior (if it exists) in the upper levels of government. An eruption of outrage will not do it. Absent continuing focus of concern, nothing will happen.
2. The role of government “leakers” or whistle blowers was essential to the exposure of corruption in the Nixon White House. Mark Felt (“Deep Throat”) was vital in exposing the activities of senior administration officials.
3. He expressed great confidence in Robert Mueller, the newly named Special Counsel charged with investigating Russian efforts to influence and disrupt the 2016 election and any possibility of collaboration by U.S. citizens.
4. He was asked about possible outcomes, including the possible impeachment of President Trump, removal under the 25th Amendment, or resignation. He stated his belief that it is too soon and there is not currently sufficient evidence to support either impeachment or removal due to inability to perform his duties (25th Amendment).
5. When asked about the Russian involvement, he concurred that it was a serious matter that needs both further investigation and preparations to prevent any effective similar action in the 2018 and 2020 elections in this country.
6. Finally, when asked whether he would recommend that younger people become involved in electoral politics today, he was both optimistic and pessimistic. He noted the need for individuals to move into this sphere, but also noted that to be effective at the highest levels of government requires not only personal integrity and commitment, but also requires expertise, judgment, and maturity, which can only be gained over a long period of time.

Sound Transit/First Hill Association Surplus Property Disposition Open House, June 5th

Bob Terrell reported on the Sound Transit/First Hill Association Open House that he and approximately 20 Skyline residents and staff attended. The session concerned Sound Transit’s prospective use of their 21,600 square foot piece of property at the corner of Madison Street and

Boylston Avenue. The property, originally intended for a transit station site, is now surplus. In prior years Sound Transit would have been obliged to sell the property for the highest bid. Under current rules they can designate uses for the property, and are in fact obliged under the provisions of Sound Transit III to facilitate development of low-income housing.

The purpose of the meeting was to gather First Hill community input to help the Sound Transit staff form the request for proposal (RFP), which would be used to dispose of the property. The event included presentations by First Hill Association Executive Director Alex Hudson, Sound Transit staff, and Marcie Wagoner of Three Square Blocks, a community planning organization.

Alex presented the goals developed by the First Hill Association for use of the plot. These include 100% low-income housing for individuals whose income is at or below 60 percent of the Seattle area median average, retail space on the first floor, community spaces for use within the structure, and provision for family-size units.

Bob also noted that the First Hill Association has worked closely with Bellwether Housing and Plymouth Housing Group to ensure that there would be a viable respondent to the RFP. He also noted that there are private developers who may wish to encourage Sound Transit to make the property available for other purposes.

In response to questions, Sound Transit staff stated that they cannot use their eminent domain power to secure the remaining quarter of the block, which they do not own. They were allowed only to condemn property for a transit purpose, and that no longer exists. The board will decide the funding method for the property. They are not required to secure any specific dollar amount for the property, but have a responsibility to get cash as part of its overall development budget.

Marcie Wagoner, a consultant to Sound Transit, requested the audience to identify their preferred options for the project. Participants pasted sticky notes with opinions and rationales to boards headed with program goals, such as low-income housing, family housing, and retail space.

In our meeting on Friday, Bob was asked if there was any consideration for using the Sound Transit space for a public park. He stated that this was considered some years ago, but the City of Seattle did not have the resources necessary to either acquire or maintain a park at this location.

725 Blog CEG Pages—Updates, Questions, Comments

Jim Tanner asked for comments or questions about the development and status of the CEG pages on the 725 Blog. There weren't any questions, although approximately half of those in attendance indicated that they had in fact looked at the materials. Jim also offered to answer questions or respond to concerns and encouraged residents to contact him via email at james.g.tanner@gmail.com.

COMING EVENTS

(*Note:* All events are in the Mount Baker Room unless otherwise specified.)

June 12, 3:00 p.m. Democracy Vouchers: What are they? How do they work? Voter Registration Opportunity

Wayne Barnett (SEEC Executive Director), Jenna Smith, and others of Mr. Barnett's staff will discuss what the vouchers are, who is eligible to receive them, and how to get replacements if you misplaced, lost, or tossed them when they came out in January.

Jacque Larrainzar, King County Elections Supervisor, will be available to do on-site voter registration for those not registered to vote in Washington State. She will also assist Washington voters who need to change their voting address if they have not done so since moving to Skyline.

We will also be conducting an experiment of recording this presentation for distribution through Skyline's Portal, the 725 Blog, or both. Thanks to Jim Tanner for agreeing to serve as our videographer.

June 16, 7:00 p.m. Al Franken, Giant of the Senate

We will have a live stream of Senator Al Franken's appearance at Town Hall in the Mount Baker Room. (*Note:* We will offer a friendly suggestion to Town Hall that we would appreciate it if they could accept off-site telephone questions when they stream events in the future.)

June 22, 1:30 to 4:00 p.m. Sound Transit Board Meeting Property Disposition RFP Event Location: Ruth Fisher Board Room, Union Station, 401 S. Jackson Street

Sound Transit staff will present the Request for Proposals for disposition of the property at Madison Street and Boylston Avenue. The RFPs will define the approved future uses of the site, developer qualification requirements, and the criteria by which proposals will be evaluated. The First Hill Association has strongly supported inclusion of the following criteria in the RFPs:

- All residential units should be reserved for occupants with incomes not exceeding 60% of the Seattle area median income.
- The ground level should be reserved for retail and commercial use.
- The facility should include community meeting spaces.
- Some units should be of sufficient size to accommodate families with children.

It is our understanding that the Sound Transit Board will hear testimony regarding the RFP. The turnout of First Hill residents at the community session on June 5th was impressive. If you are interested in attending the hearing, please contact Jim Sanders at (206) 323-8952 or via email at jimsanders1947@gmail.com. If there is sufficient interest, we will investigate whether transportation can be arranged.

June 26, 3:30 p.m. Dr. James Conca, PhD: Ethics of a Global Energy Policy

Dr. James Conca (Geochemistry, California Institute of Technology) will speak to the Peace and Justice Group on the hope for and methods for achieving a green, balanced energy policy as presented by the Paris Accords. Dr. Conca is a geochemist with a PhD from Cal Tech, a frequent science contributor to *Forbes Magazine*, and an energy consultant to the government and corporations.

(Note from David O'Hara on behalf of the Peace and Justice interest group: Dr. Conca is coming from Eastern Washington at his personal expense. A substantial audience for his presentation would be appreciated.)

June 29, 3:00 p.m. King County Executive Dow Constantine

King County Executive Dow Constantine will join us to discuss “The Role of County Government.” He is expected to talk about what the County does and does not do, and the impact of federal policies on the County and its citizens.

SUGGESTED COMMUNICATIONS TO FEDERAL OFFICIALS

Senate Action on Republican Health Care

Jesse Weinstein, Democratic Party Area Coordinator, joined us and advised that action on the Republican Health Care act is moving along quickly, although not publicly. The Republican Caucus has been meeting to revise the bill passed by the House and is expected to bring it up for consideration in the very near future.

Mr. Weinstein invited residents to share their concerns, and particularly personal stories regarding health care concerns, with Senators Murray and Cantwell. You can do this either via email through the Senate website or by letter. They can be reached at:

Senator Patty Murray
154 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510
(202) 224-2621

www.murray.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/contactme

Senator Maria Cantwell
511 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510
(202) 224-3441

www.cantwell.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/email-maria

Mr. Weinstein also introduced Jill Gruber, the new Democratic Party Precinct Committee Officer for the nine-block area, which includes Skyline. If you have questions, concerns, or interest in Democratic Party activities, contact Mx. Jill Gruber via email at jillpgruber@gmail.com or via telephone at (815) 603-1505.

Internet Neutrality Regulatory Rollback—What it is, and why you should care

Skyline Resident Rick Baugh, PhD in Computer Science, University of Illinois, 1970, spoke to us on Thursday, June 8th, about Internet Neutrality and its significance. At the request of Jim Sanders, he also spoke briefly about this issue from an advocacy standpoint at the CEG meeting on Friday. In his comments, he identified three specific regulatory provisions that are key to maintaining Internet Neutrality. They include:

No Blocking—A person engaged in the provision of broadband Internet access service, insofar as such person is so engaged, shall not block lawful content, applications, services, or non-harmful devices, subject to reasonable network management.

No Throttling—A person engaged in the provision of broadband Internet access service, insofar as such person is so engaged, shall not impair or degrade lawful Internet traffic on the basis of Internet content, application, or service, or use of a non-harmful device, subject to reasonable network management.

No Paid Prioritization—*A person engaged in the provision of broadband Internet access service, insofar as such person is so engaged, shall not engage in paid prioritization. “Paid prioritization” refers to the management of a broadband provider’s network to directly or indirectly favor some traffic over other traffic, including through use of techniques such as traffic shaping, prioritization, resource reservation, or other forms of preferential traffic management, either (a) in exchange for consideration (monetary or otherwise) from a third party, or (b) to benefit an affiliated entity.*

He also encouraged those with these concerns to contact both their elected officials and the Federal Communications Commission on this matter. Those wishing to comment can do so on the FCC website at <https://www.fcc.gov/ecfs/filings/express>.

The title of the FCC’s notice of proposed rule making is “Restoring Internet Freedom,” and the FCC document identifier is 17-108. A separate and longer commentary on this matter will go out to you as a separate email.

OTHER ACTION ITEMS

Introductory Information on the CEG and Voter Information

In an earlier meeting we discussed the possibility of providing some introductory material to new residents regarding the Civic Engagement Group and also providing a copy of the League of Women Voters directory of elected officials, voter registration forms and instructions, etc.

Jim Sanders asked the group whether we should undertake this activity. The group’s response was that this was a worthwhile task. The Hospitality Committee may be doing this already, either through their initial resident contact, or through the new Mentoring Program. Jim will talk to Rhoda McLachlan and Carmen Tieu to see if this task is already taken care of, or whether we should pursue it. He will report back at the next meeting.

Joan Conlon mentioned that she has a supply of League of Women Voters pamphlets available for distribution.

General Election Candidates and Ballot Measures

We have in the past conducted candidate forums here at Skyline. A number of competitive races, and possibly initiatives or other measures, is on the ballot in November. Jim asked if we should start preparations to line up a series of candidate forums. It has generally been helpful to reach out to the successful candidates immediately after the primary (August 1st this year) to get them on our calendar.

This will require a fair amount of work to make and sustain contact, get events scheduled, and do the research necessary to develop strong questions. It appears that there is substantial interest in this activity.

Since we have a limited number of potential opportunities and a plethora of contested races, we will need to identify our primary areas of concern. These may include the following races: Mayor of Seattle, City Council Seats (8 and 9 are city-wide), City Attorney, Port Commission (multiple Seats), and School Board (multiple seats). We will do a separate email asking CEG members to identify their top interests.

Linda Wolf suggested that it might be useful to talk with residents of Horizon House on how they developed their more advanced civic engagement activities. Jim and others will follow up on this idea.

In-House Resident Discussions on Primary Races

We had a brief discussion of trying to do this. There was no substantial interest, so the matter was dropped.

The meeting adjourned at 4:55 p.m.

Thanks to Katherine Graubard for facilitating, Jim Tanner and Lilyan Snow for taking notes, and Lilyan Snow and Wendy Schoen for editing and formatting the notes.

Next Meeting—Friday, June 23, 4:00 p.m., Mt. Baker Room