



City of Seattle
Office of the Mayor

Beacon Hill Town Hall recap
Tuesday, February 15th, 2011
[Jefferson Community Center](#)
3801 Beacon Ave S
206-684-7481

The following is a recap of the question and answer portion of the evening:

Moderator: Judith Edwards, chair of the North Beacon Hill Council

Panelists:

- Mayor Mike McGinn
- Capt. Mike Nolan (Seattle Police Department)
- Steve Johnson (Office for Economic Development)
- Charles Bookman (Seattle Department of Transportation)
- Robert Stowers (Department of Parks and Recreation)
- Diane Sugimura (Department of Planning and Development)
- Jerry DeGriek (Human Services Department)

Questions:

1. **[Teenager from Mt. Baker]** Would the state of Washington be interested in offering a grant that my business partner and I could use for a business we're working on that would allow people to buy clothes at a discount?

Mayor: I'll turn that one over to Steve...first, though, a word about what we're doing here:

- It's important to be out in the community, and we'll be doing several dozen of these (town halls, walking tours, etc)
- It's important to have City departments here, too
 - 1) they're smarter than me, and
 - 2) it's important that there are other people in City government who are also held accountable to you

Steve Johnson:

- The short answer is that we can help you in thinking through your business plan and in thinking through how you can get capital; I'll give you my card
- That's our primary purpose: to help entrepreneurs succeed, especially young entrepreneurs

2. **[The business partner of speaker #1]** The purpose of this business we're trying to establish is to create change among less fortunate people who can't afford good clothes

Mayor: there are a lot of things we should be doing to help young people; I'll talk more about it later if I don't get an opportunity from another question

3. **[From an Ethiopian-Somali community association]** My focus has been helping teenagers for the last three years to keep them busy and off the streets. As a community we're helping them get uniforms, supplies, etc, and

for the last three months we've been renting soccer fields for them to play on. What's your office's plan to protect them and their future?

Mayor:

- We can look at our city and see a lot of things that we can be proud of
 - Neighborhood business districts, cutting-edge companies, great local businesses, community diversity
 - We're fortunate enough to be able to attract people here from all over the world
 - We have the most diverse zip code in the country
- But there are things we know we can do better
 - We're in a tough economic situation, with lots of people out of work
 - We clearly have challenges in how well we serve our youth and families
- One of my first initiatives was the Youth and Families Initiative
 - The starting point was to listen to families
 - It was chaired by Estela Ortega, Norm Rice, and Bob Watt
 - We heard from nearly 3,000 people, and we asked them about their priorities at 6 town hall meetings and over 100 small meetings
 - That input led us to a set of priorities moving forward
 - Among the things that emerged were after school activity, health care, etc.
 - One way we're addressing these issues is through the Families & Education Levy
 - It's a special property tax levy by the City
 - The City contracts with organizations to provide services and health care to students
 - Title I (lower-income) schools receive more intensive support from Levy dollars
 - It's in front of City Council now, hopefully we'll vote on in in November
 - I don't think we can count on Olympia to make sure that we have enough money to support our students
 - Funding will be tied to outcomes
 - Another way we're addressing them is by looking at our own funding across departments to see what we can be doing better re: supporting youth and families
 - We established a road map detailing the key places to support children, working with the school district
 - For example, are you reading at grade level by third grade? If not, you're not likely to graduate from high school; after 3rd grade most learning is done by reading
 - Our drop-out rates, particularly for African American and Latino students, is too high
 - We're looking at where we're spending our money to see if we're spending it in the right places
 - We're also working with community partners
 - A third way is our Seattle Service Plan [E-mail engage@seattle.gov for more information]
 - If you want to mentor or read to kids, we'll help you do that and make a difference
 - The city also has about 3,000 part-time jobs or internships for youth, but most don't currently train young people for good opportunities
 - We're looking at identifying our current opportunities and aligning them for good training opportunities
- Obama said that we need to "win the future;" winning the future means taking care of our children and educating them

4. **[Local resident, gives address on Rainier Ave S]** I want to focus your [the Mayor's] attention on the Deep Bore Tunnel:

- I'm worried about the due diligence associated with the project

- The Port of Seattle has offered \$300 million to the project; at 6% interest over 30 years, that's \$1.7 billion; "that is not small change"
- Seattle City Light has dedicated \$122 million, a 4.2% rate increase starting next year for 6 years, a 28% increase all told
- All in order to provide a better promenade for 10,000 households in the CBD
 - Seattle has 303,000 households, why should they provide that kind of a benefit for 10,000?
 - Where's the justification, where's the equity?

Mayor: You need to ask the City Council and our governor that question. I'll add a couple more facts:

- The City Council is now prepared to enter into contracts with the State to proceed
- The deep-bore tunnel itself is a couple billion dollars, the total project is \$3.1 billion if we exclude the electric rates
 - We probably won't get the electric rates back in 6 years; it's probably going to be longer than that
 - But you're right—electric rates will be higher; the port also needs to raise \$300 million, they haven't figured out how to do that yet, but that'll be another tax
- There's going to be a toll of \$4-5 each way during the peak hours, also there are no downtown exits or entrances
 - People won't use the tunnel, they'll drive on the surface streets, but we won't have the money to invest in transit, surface streets, or I-5
- All of that money is to move about 40k cars per day
 - The Ballard Bridge is 56k, Fremont is 36k
 - Billions of dollars to move fewer cars than the Ballard Bridge
 - There's \$700 million that hasn't been raised yet, \$300 million from the Port and \$400 million from tolls
 - If there are cost overruns, under State law City taxpayers and property owners would be required to pay them
- Lots of big businesses want this
 - If someone came to you with a project, without financing secured, and with no plan in case it goes over budget, and once we build the product no one actually wants to use it...do you want to green light it? You'd say no
 - We just went through a very difficult budget process where we ultimately we ended up making direct cuts to services to balance the budget, or raising parking rates, which no one likes—I get it, no one likes to pay for parking
 - We reduced community service hours, didn't hire as many police officers as we like...if we have to pay cost overruns, what gives?
- I don't think it's a good idea, and I've been making my opinions known, but most of the elected leaders disagree with me...I hope the people get a chance to vote on it

5. **[Longtime resident of Beacon Hill]** I've lived here for 8 years; internet service is really bad

- Between Qwest, Comcast, Clear, and Broadstripe, none of them offer advertised upload or download speeds
- Broadstripe especially experiences regular service outages
- My only option is Broadstripe, most of the time the service is too slow to stream video
- Broadstripe knows that they lack the infrastructure to provide good service,
- Surely the City has the power to regulate Broadstripe since it's impacting businesses and residents...what's the City doing to address the issue?

Mayor: I've heard the issue before...two questions:

- 1) What's our leverage as the City to displace Broadstripe and bring in another carrier?
 - I don't know--it is FCC regulated, and we don't have a lot of competition
 - Even Comcast and Qwest aren't in a position to provide the service we want
- 2) Having an internet connection right now is critical

- We're working on developing our own broadband plan in the City of Seattle
- Seattle City Light, Seattle Public Utilities, and the Department of Information Technology are looking into what type of business plan we can develop so that we can start providing fiber optic service to neighborhoods throughout Seattle
- We're taking our time to develop the right business plan, other cities and even countries have done it...existing providers aren't likely to provide the service we want
- Fiber optic is orders of magnitude better than what people think about today when they think about broadband
- The Internet, like highways or shipping, it's what commerce and ideas travel on, it's how people connect to the global economy now
- The broadband plan is a long-term answer, but I'll get you an answer for the shorter-term question

6. **[Beacon Hill resident, part of the group that created the festival street]** It's by the light rail station, we put on a music series over the summer there.

- It's the first one in the city.
- I have names of people to contact about these things, but I want to make sure you've heard about them
- A water fountain would be great, and also a garbage can or two
- There's electricity, but it's very awkward
- There's a permit process, too

Mayor: I know we're working on that permit process as well

Robert: The City has a permit process that all of the departments take part in...the Parks department is generally active in big events, but we're going to concentrate also on smaller events, so that we can give more support

Speaker: It's a street, not a park

Mayor: Similar issues, though--like in Belltown, where we're converting a street into a park (also McGraw Square)

- We need to start thinking about how we support these types of activities in the public space
- In government, there's a lot of "my job is this" or "my job is that," but people will work across departments if they have the connection to

Speaker: Seattle City Light, for example, only had experience with providing Christmas lights, they didn't really know how to support different types of lighting

Mayor: As we start thinking about our streets as public places, that we use for community, that starts challenging us to start thinking differently about how we do business

7. **[Local resident]** I've been here for 6 months...two things:

- I recently started riding a bike, and sharrows are terrifying
- I came from NYC, and I was present for the shooting of Sean Bell
 - I'm really disappointed by the relationship between the police and the public, if there's something you can say about that I'd really appreciate it

Mayor: I'll take the easy question first and the hard one second

- Sharrows are there to demonstrate that the road should be shared, but if the roads were safer than more people would bike
 - Bike boulevards, for example, are something we haven't done yet, but the sharrows do have their place re: alerting people that the road is shared
- The issues surrounding the shooting of John T. Williams, and other incidents, are very troubling, because if there's not faith and trust in the police department and faith and trust from the community, then we can't do our job
 - People shouldn't be fearful, but these incidents are shaking the confidence of the public
 - We need to start having that conversation about what it means to be a diverse city and how we ensure that every officer fully respects the dignity and individuality of everyone they interact with
 - How do we come back together as a city?

- The question to be raised re: John T. Williams is "would it have been different if he weren't a Native American homeless person?" *[Ed. note: it was brought to our attention afterwards that John T. Williams wasn't actually homeless]*
- We have to have a really honest conversation about how to change it...this is one of my highest priorities.

8. **[Member of Beacon Merchants Association]** We just received an OED grant to build the capacity of my organization, trying to further the development of a commercial district on Beacon Hill
- Spearheaded the development of the festival street
 - People want to see a walkable, bikable, livable area around the festival street; they want to see development
 - Right now there's a lot of empty lots and fencing, not a lot of prospects for anything to be built any time soon
 - What else can be done to further development in the business district of Bacon Hill?

Mayor:

- One problem of the recession is that private capital has pretty much gone away, but there are some people who had their plans on hold who are coming back to DPD now
- I've been asking the same question: what can we do as a City to allow appropriate new development to occur in our neighborhoods and business districts?
- If you read the neighborhood plans around the City, and I have (all 39), all of them want that, but there are also a lot of misgivings that development will destroy the essential character of a neighborhood
- In times of a booming economy we were wary of what development would mean, and a lot of the rules and regulations we put in place may be standing in the way of getting some good projects built now
- We also need to recognize that not every neighborhood is in favor of new development
- We are going to be attractive in the long run if we make sure that we're investing in broadband, transit, youth and families, job training, taking care of our existing infrastructure, and making sure we have a regulatory environment that's friendly to businesses....in the long run we'll do OK if we invest in the right things, but in the short run we're in tough economic times, and it's challenging to make it go faster.

9. **[A local resident, also a member of the North Beacon Hill Council]** I'm here to support using the Neighborhood Service Center as a community information center
- There's a lot of support and volunteer potential, including us
 - Question for the Mayor: how likely is that to happen, and what needs to happen to make that possible?

Mayor: one painful choice in direct services was the number of Neighborhood Service Centers we left open

- We closed half of them and left open the ones that had payment centers, and we also rearranged the NDC's
- This means that there are fewer services
- There are a few advantages to the realignment
 - For example, the Neighborhood District Coordinators are now working in teams that will be better able to coordinate with other departments
- Having said that, I don't see us getting the money back to re-open those centers any time soon
- Our budget is on the margin, and we've used up a lot of our pots of money...Olympia is starting to use some of the pots of money that would come to us to solve their budget problems, and people will be looking to us to do more with less
- We would be open, whether through the Neighborhood Matching Fund or other grant opportunities, to neighborhood efforts to support some sort of community information center
- I'm looking at my budget now to respond to further cuts from Olympia

Speaker: It would be volunteer labor; we already have the space

Mayor: I'm not sure who owns it, but we'll follow up with you...unsure if we're leasing the space or if we own it

10. **[North Beacon Hill resident, with a question about making North Beacon Hill an Alcohol Impact Area]** I find myself picking up high-octane beers from the street often, and seeing intoxicated people on the street

- I'm not sure what the salaries are of the 5-6 firefighters who come to take an intoxicated person to emergency aid
- What will it take to make Beacon Hill an alcohol impact area?

Captain Nolan: this has been done in other parts of the City

- We would send an assessment team, then involve the Liquor Control Board (they're the ones who control it)
- It's a project that has to be studied and involves several groups weighing in on it; we can talk further afterwards

Mayor: we'll get you some information about what the process is that other neighborhoods have gone through, and also what are the pro's and con's?

- We mentioned the Liquor Control Board, that's a State agency...make sure we connect so that we can send you information, we'll include it in the follow-up E-mail, too

11. **[Seattle-area resident]** At the East African youth program I work at, I deal with a lot of families who are immigrants and don't have a lot of money

- A lot of the youths can't afford sports activities and things
- I started a youth soccer team that went on to win a couple of tournaments
- The fee increase recently at Parks has been really difficult
 - There's no outside funding source for my program
 - It would help the youths if there were some type of payment plan to offer to non-profit organizations
 - What can the City do to help us continue what we're doing?

Robert: We've been having focus group meetings with people from all over the City to learn more about their issues

- There's also an issue around a decrease in maintenance
- The fees hadn't increased for a long time; they're still reasonable, but we're thinking of ways to offset those fees with specific organizations, perhaps via help with maintenance of the fields in exchange for help with fees
- We believe that the new fees are reasonable, but we can set up an appointment--call us at 206-684-0796

12. **[Beacon Hill resident, holds up a large picture of transmission lines by his house]** This is what City Light and Sound Transit did to our neighborhood of 80 homes

- It never would have happened in Queen Anne or West Seattle
- [to the Mayor] Have you had a chance to go to 12th & Stevens on one of your walking tours?
- We're having a meeting tomorrow night; we'd agreed on a remedy 3 months ago, but Sound Transit has backed away from that now

Mayor: Let's follow up after that meeting and see how it works; it's been brought to my attention

Speaker: My wife, about 10 years ago, was held at gunpoint in front of our house at 12th & Stevens, by a homeless person from the Jungle...if you were to drive down Spokane Street, you'd see a lot of encampments without looking very hard; I'm worried that something's going to happen again

Mayor: I know what you're talking about when you talk about having crime happen in your neighborhood; the good thing about going to these meetings is that it keeps me honest and holds me accountable

- Regarding the Jungle, we probably haven't been doing what we need to be doing down there
- I've asked my Deputy Mayor, Darryl Smith, to sit down with Deputy Chief Metz and start working out what our strategy is going to be
- We're going to take a fresh look at the problem and see if we can do a better job

13. **[North Beacon Hill resident]** Thanks for your bicycle advocacy...can you speak to implementing the fiber plan to underserved areas first?

Mayor: my inclination would be to say "yes," but here's the fact--the City already owns a lot of fiber that we bought with others

- It's likely that the first places we would go would be where we already have fiber
- One of the benefits of the municipal system is that we could take that social justice element into account in a way that a commercial venture doesn't.
- The Digital Divide is real and makes a difference in peoples' lives

14. **[Local resident]** First, I want to get you on record saying that Beacon Hill is the best neighborhood in Seattle
Mayor: Whatever neighborhoods I'm in is the best neighborhood in Seattle; I love every neighborhood in the city...I'm being facetious, but Beacon Hill is a great neighborhood

Speaker: We're trying to get bicycle boulevards and other safe routes to connect neighborhoods to themselves

- What are you going to do moving forward to stress bicycle boulevards over striping arterials?

Charles Bookman: We need all sorts of facilities to meet all sorts of transportation needs

- We developed a Bicycle Master Plan that was adopted in 2007, the current system comes from that plan
- We'll be updating that plan, and one of the most exciting topics in the update will be developing a strategy for bicycle boulevards in neighborhoods
- We need all of it—bike facilities on arterials, and also facilities in neighborhoods

15. **[Local resident]** I've lived here since 2007, and I'm a member of my block watch and the Pioneer Square preservation board

- In the last year my residence has been broken into once and my car was the target of a hit and run while parked in front of our house
- In the last three weeks, our car has been broken into twice
- The total property damage for all incidents is over \$35k in damages
- I called SPD all four times, only twice did an officer show up at my house to fill out a report
 - Despite these reports, I've never received any kind of follow-up
- When my house was broken into, the officer asked if he had insurance, and when I said "yes" he asked "What are you worried about? This is South Seattle; it happens all the time. At least you'll get reimbursed for your loss."
- The most recent car prowler was last Thursday, hasn't been assigned to a detective yet
- Given the challenges of our neighborhood (cultural diversity, easy access to I-5, including the crime havens of Rainier Beach, Skyway, and south King County), crime will continue
 - The question is, what is being done to improve response times and follow-through in criminal cases?

Captain Nolan: I'm precinct commander of South Precinct...did the officer take prints?

Speaker: Yes, on 2 of the 4 calls

Captain Nolan: what you've described is unacceptable, that's not the type of customer service I'd expect from my officers

- One of our top priorities right now is identifying and targeting burglars and car prowlers
- The focus is going on the offense, finding out who these people are and going after them
- The way the officer spoke to you was unacceptable

16. **[Beacon Hill resident]** You're in a tough spot; I just got news that they're not charging Officer Ian Burke

- I do understand that he's going to be fired
- There's a new contract coming up, and there's an expensive lawyer involved; that's a good spot for some budget cutting

17. **[Resident of South Beacon Hill]** I met a resident on the way home, and he had a question for the Mayor...can someone from the Mayor's Office help him with his complaint?

Captain Nolan: SPD will talk to him

18. **[Local resident]**

- A comment for Robert about the merchants—unless the building department stops taking in permits to make money, but rather reviewing applications to issue permits, small businesses are going to spend a lot of money on ridiculous limited-use administrative permits
 - DPD is a business to make money when you file a permit
- Also, don't make up the budget on parking meters...*[sings a song about parking rate increases]*

Mayor: I wish I could sing a response to that...your voice is better than mine

- We did look block by block and neighborhood by neighborhood at appropriate parking rates; we're moving to a more market-based approach to parking
- Rates went up in several neighborhoods, down in 11
- Pricing parking appropriately frees up more spaces for local businesses
- Increasing parking rates does increase revenue, too...I'm not going to apologize for trying to make sure that we balance our budget appropriately
- I'd rather take some of that money and keep some of our community centers open longer

19. **[Local resident]** I'll E-mail the Mayor's Office and Mike.

20. **[Member of a youth soccer team]** We participate in lots of tournaments throughout the year, but we have limited resources

- The East African Youth Sports helps us...does the City have resources for sports?
- We need cheap fields to practice on in the winter

Mayor: The wonderful thing is that people love our sports fields; the bad thing is that we don't have enough

Robert: My staff is looking for more ways to convert some of our existing grass fields to synthetic fields

- There has been an increase in fees, and there is a concern; some organizations couldn't prepare for the increased fees
- Our maintenance has also been reduced; we're talking to organizations to help offset fees, meeting with individual orgs, but our fees will stay the same
- With the increase in fees, a lot of the teams that were blocking some of the fields so that there was less access aren't anymore, there's more opportunity now
- We can sit down and talk with each organization

Mayor: thank you to everyone who joined me up here, and to the other City staff and Mayor's Office staff, but most of all thanks to you for coming out

- If you didn't get your question answered, find one of my staff and give it to them
- If you gave us an E-mail address, we'll communicate back to you

[21.] **[Other question]** A major concern about making the neighborhood more livable would be a reduction in air traffic on Beacon Hill

- The noise pollution from air traffic, especially between 11pm and 6am, is really high
- Beacon Hill & Magnolia are the two areas that get impacted the most
- Who does the Port of Seattle answer to regarding complaints about air traffic, and how do we get something done about it?

[22.] **[Other question]** I heard that they're thinking of lowering the flight paths from the north, and the noise is getting fierce

- Is there anything that the City can do?
- Also, re: the community information center, it could be funded through the OED grant that the Beacon Merchants Association got