

## RNA Minutes

September 10, 2018

Minutes by Rob Mumford

Meeting was called to order at 7:07PM by Matt Otis.

### **Introductions:**

Board Members Present: Susan Beal, Chrystal Brim, Allen Field, Jessica Gillard, Brendon Haggerty, Sharon Hatch, Brian Hochhalter, Jonathan King, Erik Matthews, Rob Mumford, Matt Otis, Lauren Sher, Kat West

Board Members Absent:

Others Present: Debby Hochhalter, Denise Hare, JoAnn Knowles, Muz (SEUL rep), Heather Flint-Chato, Ben Salzberg, Josh Linden, Christina (SEUL)

### **Ice Breaker:**

- Kat with "What's your favorite watering hole?"

### **Community Announcements:**

- Chrystal: met with city tree team, collaborating to reboot Richmond tree team. Workshops, walks.
- Jonathan: Annual cleanup report from Muz, almost a record year. Went really well. Net gain \$3278.10
- Heather: Unreinforced Masonry Project, Placard debate Oct 3rd at 2pm at City Council. Citizen Jane movie at 19th and Everett Oct 19th with panel. Discussion...
- Allen: recommended film to watch, Battered Bastards of Baseball
- Ben Salzberg: neighbor near Yoga Union is renting out their rooftop space on weekends like Sunday Salsa nights 8-10pm. How do we deal with noise violations? A 3rd party is involved that sets the events. Appealing the noise variation to city council next week. Looking into zoning. Is there something to do? Discussion... Allen to chat at break with Ben about Good Neighbor Agreement.
- Susan: Updates to Richmond Ready. Join email list. Aiming for a DIY approach: How to make an emergency kit. How to get earthquake foundation work on your home. Water storage to sell. Adding a signup on the website.

- Sharon/Susan: Diesel Pollution info. Time and location on the RNA website calendar and front page at the time of this writing.

**Statement by the Women of the RNA Board:**

Kat speaks: Although starting out with excitement at joining the RNA and help out in the neighborhood, the experience/feeling quickly turned to sadness with the level of negativity, hostility and lack of compassion witnessed. Presents an example of Chrystal's bad experience at Clinton/Division Street Fair with a verbal attack. Nervous for women on grievance committee, for future possible attacks. Noting that this atmosphere tends to diminish women's voices and participation in these circumstances. How to move forward, allowing voices to be heard (women, POC, marginalized). Standing in solidarity with women on board to make it more welcoming to women and minorities. Also, this is not male-bashing and that many men have been extremely supportive asking how to support the women on the board.

Chrystal speaks: Describes her experiences at Clinton Street Fair tabling for RNA. Chrystal was approached by a woman at the table immediately starting demanding Chrystal to speak to the SE Examiner article and who put her up to running for the board, and that "you must be sleeping with developers." Allen (who was helping set up booth) told Chrystal to just walk away and motioning with eyes to walk away. Chrystal drew the link between a hostile visitor to our RNA booth at the Clinton Street Fair and Allen's posting on Next Door inflaming things with negative attitudes towards the board. It's made her not want to participate.

Jessica speaks: Witnessed comments from neighbors in the community such as a board member is so hostile that they won't come back and makes Jessica sad. Doesn't like the attitude to keep people out. Reflecting on the hostility at the RNA that keeps people away. She would like to encourage more people to participate, but hesitates under the current climate. A small homogenous group should not have such a mouth piece to the city.

Susan speaks: Anecdote about a comment Eric (when Board Chair, May 2017) asked, are there any questions about candidates or the elections. Someone said, "There should be a cap on the number of white men representing the neighborhood" to which a reply was joked, "Sure, 15." Lost our only female POC due to the hostile environment. Frustrated with the all or nothing scenarios. However, personally excited about Richmond Ready work, Diesel meeting. Was thrilled to help build out three other voting sites during elections, but feels trapped in an endless cycle of grievances destroying our ability to advocate for and represent our community.

Lauren speaks: Has been impacted by the negativity. Sole renter on the board and if she were to find other renters interested in running for the board she would advise against it.

Sharon speaks: Wanted to join board to meet neighbors and outreach in the community and increase participation. Spend her time in a meaningful way. Experience in short time has not been good. Energy of board has been taken up with negativity. Collaboration is why we all joined the board. Was surprised another board member has quit recently.

Susan with 4 actions or the women and allies will strike in protest:

1. Create a safe space for women on the board.
2. Treat other board members with respect and compassion. Stop all efforts to turn neighbor against.
3. Stop fighting for power on the board. Stop making threats. Learn to build trust.
4. Become an ally to the board. Intervene when you see a woman being interrupted, shut-down.

## Discussion

Heather: Loves the rallying together of the women. Felt unsafe. Gets lots of anxiety showing up at meetings. Feels politically contentious. Happy to have so many women on the board and speaking out tonight. Saw significant changes since 2015. Calling names and pointing fingers. A lot on all sides.

Denise: Not unifying to ask for unity.

Debbie: Long history of bad behavior. This isn't new news. Read the grievance, it's not personal.

Kat: Definitely not male vs female. About creating atmosphere/environment where women feel supported. When there's a lot of ugliness women's participation tends to diminish. All the women on the board talked about quitting. Would like to hit the refresh button.

More general discussion...

Allen: RNA used to be very Collegial before 2015 when it became very political and contentious by taking positions on highly contentious issues. Reason on the board is tree planting, park clean ups, movie in park. Allen states that 4 votes were changed and that should not happen. Sorry he filed the grievance, but it's an act of not getting traction trying to solve things on the quiet side.

Heather asking about next steps.

Kat with closing statement. To discuss later, and come up with a direction.

Susan: Grievance is exhausting and dull. Being a working mother makes it extremely difficult, adding stress.

Josh: Was involved in DC with similar contentious scenarios. Cultivating trust is important.

Kat motion to adjourn. Rob seconded.

Unanimous.

Meeting adjourned at 8:25pm.