

Public Comment

Date: May 27, 2014

Re: Port of Seattle Commission Special Meeting Agenda, Item 7a

On behalf of our clients, Concourse Concessions LLC, the SeaTac Bar Group LLC, Sun's Inc., and JLAD LLC, we offer the following public comments regarding Item 7a to the May 27, 2014 Port of Seattle Commission Special Meeting Agenda.

We are pleased to see the port staff moving forward with the Airport Dining and Retail Master Plan work. We appreciate the complexity of that work. We embrace the dream of the Commission laid out in its Century Agenda and in various motions and public announcements concerning the strategic goal of sustaining the Seattle Tacoma International Airport concession program as a world class model of creativity, diversity, and success.

Our clients, however, have not been meaningfully included in the planning process. Except for invitations to participate in "stakeholder" meetings, the planning process has not yet illuminated a proposed solution to the dilemmas our clients and other airport small business concessionaires have faced in light of disproportionately high build out costs, location disadvantage, loss of enplanement opportunity and other consequences of what the staff now reports to have been lessons learned from the past.

Concrete solutions to these dilemmas are long overdue. We believe no one will dispute the value that the ACDBE and airport small business concessionaires contribute to the airport food and beverage concession program. From creating national award winning designs to featuring local and unique menus these small businesses are job creating champions of the airport economy. We also suggest that it is beyond dispute that these small businesses have paid a price for their success, a price that justifies continuation of opportunities for a reasonably extended term in order to facilitate recovery of and a reasonable return on their investments.

Indeed, on September 11, 2012, the Commission, after considerable reflection and discussion, acknowledged both the value of the ACDBE and airport small business concession community to the airport and the difficult economic conditions endured by many of them. In that motion the Commission directed Port staff to address those conditions by negotiating direct leases with extended and competitive terms for those ACDBE and small business concessionaires affected by such conditions. The motion set a deadline of December 31, 2012 for accomplishment of the basic work, so that our clients and their small business community would not be facing financial uncertainty and business threatening risk as their leases approach the threshold of expiration in the near future.

We note that Port staff mentions the September 11, 2012 motion and a few other salutary remarks regarding small business growth in its report today. As of today, however, meaningful conversations have not taken place with our clients regarding how and when the September 11, 2012 Motion will be implemented.

So, while we are here to thank the Commission for its unwavering support of the ACDBE and airport small business concession community, we are also here to ask for direction as to when the Commission expects its Motion of September 11, 2012 to be implemented. We ask, "if not now, when, and how?"

Thank you.

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