

# Seattle Mayoral Candidates Take Center Stage

Totem Report September 20, 2017

By Laura Rehrmann



Peace was an underlying theme of our meeting beginning with the inspiration from past president **Cathy Gibson**, and the opening song, "Let there be peace On Earth" led by **Linda Rough** accompanied by **Burr Stewart**.

Rotary District Governor Alex Hopkins introduced our past president Cathy Gibson as committee chair of the District's newly launched Peacebuilders Committee. The District made a \$25,000 gift to establish the committee and support its work.

**David Woodward** introduced special diplomatic visitors among the guests in attendance.

**President Mark** introduced Seattle's two mayoral candidates, Jenny Durkan and Cary Moon, and interviewer Ross Reynolds, a 30-year veteran of KUOW public radio.

Reynolds began with a reminder that it was important that we learn as much as possible about these two candidates who emerged as the top two vote getters in the 21-person field. He asked each candidate how they could afford to run. Durkan responded that she has taken a leave of absence from her job in order to work full time on her campaign and Moon replied that she has taken a sabbatical for the last three years. Each learned how important their strong families were; Moon from her three-year stint as operations manager for her family's industrial company in Michigan where she saw profit sharing, employee ownership, and the importance of building commitment across the company. Durkan's parents asked not what you did today, but what good did you do today. Her father was a long-time Washington legislator and lobbyist and her mother argued with the Port of Seattle that women could be jitney drivers, and she won. Durkan has long worked on behalf of victims of sexual abuse and misconduct, notably the Mike Lowry and Brock Adams cases.



Reynolds asked the candidates how they differed in addressing the homeless issues. Moon began saying that too much energy is spent on homeless encampment sweeps and not enough time on long-term affordable housing and she would not support sweeps. Durkan said that if sweeps mean pushing people aside, lack of dignity for the homeless, and destroying their personal property, she is adamantly opposed. She went on to say that we can't allow people to live in encampments and call ourselves moral. Outreach, social workers and navigation teams working on short-term and long-term shelter needs, as we currently have, is part of the answer. She advocated specific numbers of homeless people living in every district in the city so that all neighborhoods share and shoulder the support for homeless.



Moon said that is not what is happening. Durkan disagreed and went on to say that no tent in our city is a safe place for women and children and that Seattle is among the cities with the highest counts of women and children who are homeless and living in cars. Durkan said that she would not start over on the current administration's Housing Affordability and Livability plan (HALA). She said that Moon had endorsed starting over. "We have to push forward and if we start over we will stall the work for years," she said. Moon responded that she was not endorsing starting over but "we have to look at the use of public land, speculation and blanket up zones of vulnerable neighborhoods." She decried what she called the top down HALA planning.

Durkan said that neighborhood planning is important and HALA did include that as it developed its proposal (see [www.Seattle.gov/hala](http://www.Seattle.gov/hala) for details).





Reynolds asked what their experiences had been in bringing together diverse constituencies to address issues. Moon cited her experience in forming and leading the People's Waterfront Coalition which convened organizations to create a vision for the waterfront, which she described as having no vision. Durkan responded that Moon's organization was focused primarily on fighting the tunnel, rather than a waterfront vision.

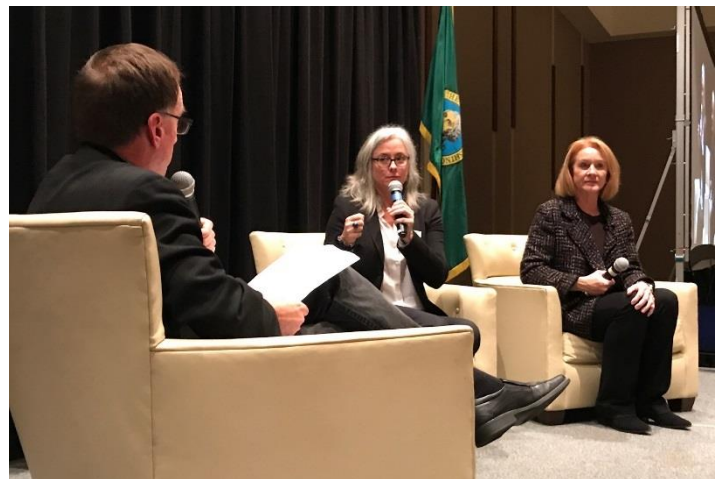
Durkan cited her work on police reform as the chief federal prosecutor officer for Western Washington. She convened

community members, the police, Department of Justice, and the city council in dozens of meetings to get to agreement on consent decree to reform policing.

In response to questions from the audience, Durkan said that measuring outcomes is essential and there are always unintended consequences. "You must consult first with those running programs and those experiencing the program, and make real time adjustments," she said. Moon said that we don't measure outcomes well and cited the Rights of Tenants which she said is an excellent example of how to address race and class equity, but Mom and Pop landlords were hurt by the ruling and we need to improve that.

When asked about business experience in managing a large budget and employee group in the last 10 years, Moon said that although her family business experience was more than 10 years ago, she said she will hold department managers accountable with a clear action plan and empowering them to do the work. Durkan said that the Mayor's job begins on November 25 and she would hit the ground running. She cited her experience overseeing the FBI's and ICE's work locally, and working with Attorney General Eric Holder to craft a budget for the Department of Justice nationwide. "Bureaucracy will slow roll you every time, so you have to have your hands on the levers," she said. Moon said she has a team of five working on her transition now; Durkan said she is focused on winning, not on transition.

Asked about increasing police, both candidates did not specify a number saying that they would need to look at the work currently assigned to the police. Durkan suggested that in her meetings with neighborhoods she thinks we should return to community safety officers working beat patrols and getting to know neighborhoods. While Moon said the current force needs time for training, Durkan said that they have time, and it is mandated now (by the consent decree) and that we need guardians, instead of warriors.



To a question about the importance of Seattle on the global stage, Moon suggested collaborating with cities regionally and developing our exports with a strong strategy in global trade. Durkan said that she served as global chair of cyber law for her firm and that Seattle is a world class city now and to keep and attract business we must fix the problems of homelessness, affordability and transportation in partnership with business. Moon thought that the Amazon headquarters decision was a very practical one as they look at the capacity of the city to accommodate them.

To close our meeting, President Mark presented our member **Bob Alexander** with a Paul Harris pin in thanks for his \$8,000 in gifts to Rotary International.

President Mark thanked the candidates for stepping up to run at a time when “we need big thinkers and brave leaders.” He thanked them for putting themselves and their families on the line and invited whoever is elected Mayor to ask our club to help with issues important to Seattle. He reminded us that if we don’t step up to run for office, we have an obligation to find and choose the best leader.

