**Pike Place Public Market Constituency**

**2022 Candidate Questionnaire**

Name:  Zekaryas (Zack) Gebrkidan

Position(s) of Interest: Officer-at-Large

**1.What is your connection to the Market?**

As a proud member of the Pike Place Market community for nearly 24 years, I currently serve in a leadership position as a union shop steward for the PDA Parking Department, a role I’ve held for over ten years, and as a parking attendant technician. In this role, I proactively resolve technical problems for the Parking Department and provide world-class customer service to the diverse members of the Market community and the public. On a daily basis, I interact with a vast number of local, national and international tourists visiting the Market, in addition to Market residents, merchants, farmers, crafters, and employees of the Market Foundation and PDA. These daily conversations impart the needs of the Market community, helping me gain a deeper understanding and appreciation of the myriad cultures, ethnicities and rich diversity exemplified by the Market community. My calm and friendly demeanor puts visitors and locals at ease.

Serving as a Constituency Member-At-Large for the past two years, I know the profound hardships many businesses in the Market community faced and continue to face in the wake of the pandemic. Throughout these two years, I have advocated for Market merchants and residents, including restaurant owners, farmers, crafters, and buskers. I am seeking your vote to serve another two years as a Member-At-Large, so I can continue to be an advocate for the entire Market community. If re-elected to the Constituency At-Large position, I will advocate for the 500 businesses and many residents in the Market Historical District.

**2.      How long have you been a Constituency member?  How many Constituency Meetings have you attended in the last 12 months?  How many PDA council meetings have you attended in the last 12 months?**

I have been a member in good standing of the Constituency for ten years. I served as a Member-At-Large for the previous two years. Since I work in the evenings when the PDA Council meetings are held, I have not been able to attend PDA Council meetings.

**3.      In your view, what are the biggest issues facing the Market now and in the near future? Do you champion any special issue?**

Positive communication and attentive listening to different opinions pertaining to the issues confronting the entire Market community. Working closely with the different constituencies at the Market to solve their problems constructively.

Greater outreach to all members of the Market community, increase engagement and membership, listen to diverse voices, and work together to solve the most urgent issues facing merchants, craftspeople, farmers, residents, veterans and marginalized groups.

**4.     What do you see are the challenges facing the PDA Council and the Constituency?**

Recent Constituency Bylaws Amendments: I supported a professional review of the Constituency Bylaws by an attorney hired by a Constituency member. The Constituency Executive Committee had the opportunity to review the proposed revisions submitted by the attorney. I believe the entire Constituency membership should be given the opportunity to review the revisions to the Constituency Bylaws proposed by the attorney.

Now that the pandemic is in our rearview mirror, I support in-person voting at the Market, so that the Market community and locals who visit the Market elect members of the Executive Committee. It is important to understand the Market history and culture in order to make informed decisions regarding candidates in the Constituency elections. Online voting excludes and is not accessible to many bilingual farmers, restaurant owners, crafters, buskers and others at the Market. In-person voting at the Market to elect members of the Executive Committee will help build and sustain a vibrant Market Historic District.

Building a strong, cohesive and active Constituency to enable greater outreach and engagement to gain a more wholistic understanding of the problems facing the Market community, while learning the lessons from the pandemic. I aim to foster greater mutual respect and a positive working environment among Constituency members so we can better serve the needs of the entire Market community and the public’s interests.

Working constructively with the Market Foundation, Historical Commission, and the PDA for the benefit of residents, business owners, farmers, craftspeople, buskers, veterans and the most vulnerable individuals of the Market community.

**5.      What can be done to increase public participation in Market advocacy, especially by those who live and work in the Market.**

As an Eritrea, I am able to appreciate and represent the diverse voices and bilingual community at the Market. I would encourage active participation and involvement by all members of the Market community including the underrepresented members. Raising and addressing concerns pertinent to the Market community and among the diverse members by demonstrating that we can help them solve their problems will encourage greater participation by the members of the Market community. As a former member of the African Chamber of Commerce, I would also conduct greater outreach to Seattle area residents through the African Chamber of Commerce to increase the diversity and representation at the Market at all levels. I would also foster greater education about the Market from diverse perspectives.

As a nearly 24-year employee at the Market, I am able to communicate effectively with international bilingual tourists and the entire Market community. I understand differences in language and culture and make everyone feel welcome at the Market. I have offered my support to and garnered the support of bilingual and diverse business owners, farmers, craftspeople, buskers, residents, Foundation and PDA staff, PDA Council members and the tourists over many years. I am able to solve problems constructively and amicably by focusing on the best possible outcomes for the Market and achieving input from the greatest number of stakeholders.

Increasing diversity and equity is critical in order to better serve the needs of all communities at the Market.

**6.     Would you be willing to render additional assistance to Constituency subcommittees if the need arose?**

I am always available to participate on any committee as long as there isn't a conflict of interest. I am committed to serving our community and its truly unique people, shops and services. I would be honored to serve the Constituency and the greater Market community for another two years as a Member-At-Large.