

RISE UP - AJL INTERVIEW 2020-01-14 15-18-22

editor's note: this is an edited, rough transcript of an interview by Evan Clifthorne, founder and lead organizer of Rise Up Belltown, with Seattle City Councilmember Andrew Lewis and his District Director Parker Dawson. This transcript was created using automation software, and may contain typographical errors. This transcript is provided for convenience and should not be taken as an official record of any kind.

Evan Clifthorne [00:00:01] Hello there, Belltown. This is Evan Clifthorne with Rise Up Belltown. We are sitting here at City Hall in the brand new offices of newly elected city council member Andrew Lewis, who represents Belltown and the rest of District 7. We are also sitting here with one of his staff. I'm going to let you introduce yourself.

Parker Dawson [00:00:21] Yeah. Hi there. Parker Dawson previously served as the Andrews campaign manager, coming on as his district director now.

Andrew Lewis [00:00:29] And Evan, great to be here with you. Andrew Lewis, newly elected city council member for District 7.

Evan Clifthorne [00:00:36] Cool. So we're here today to chat a little bit about Belltown; to get to know Andrew a little bit better. He is excited to serve the district, I know. And we'll start that off with one personal question and then we can talk about some issues, and then we're gonna get back to talking about your office and about some of the things that you want to achieve while you're here.

Evan Clifthorne [00:00:58] So for our one personal question, I want to talk to you about something that you think is cool. American lyrical artist Skeelo once wrote that he wished he was a little bit taller, that he wished he was a baller, that he wished he had a girl that looked good and that if so, he would call her. The song, in many ways, was a hit because everybody can relate to that experience of longing for just a little bit more of something. And more often than not, these things we're wishing for are the things that we think of as enviable, or admirable, or just... cool.

Evan Clifthorne [00:01:34] What is one of those things in your life? What are you mildly (perhaps healthily) envious of? What's something that you think is cool?

Andrew Lewis [00:01:42] Yeah, well, you know, it's kind of on my mind because I went to a Belltown Community Council meeting on last Wednesday last week. And, you know, the nightlife scene in Belltown is something that I've spent a lot of time in, in the last couple of weeks, just because I've been kind of in the neighborhood. And, you know, it's a part of the city that reminds me of what the Ballard I grew up in was like. So I kind of wish I had a little bit more bars like Mr. Darcy's or Lava Lounge or Neon Boots. That used to be a lot more common. One of my favorite bars in Ballard is The Sloop and there used to be a lot more bars like The Sloop in Ballard. And now they're not around anymore. They're getting displaced. They're getting pushed out.

Andrew Lewis [00:02:32] And there's just a certain level of intimacy and character that those kinds of businesses have. And it's great to have a neighborhood of those within my council district.

Evan Clifthorne [00:02:44] Yeah, well, that's awesome. You know, you mentioned a few of those bars and it makes me think they're in the last couple of years we've seen a lot of new bars open like Jupiter, Black Cat, Screwdriver, Connect Lounge. Shorty's of course moved. It seems to me like all of those are sort of opening in the periphery of some of the ones that you mentioned that are right in the core. So for those listening, we're gonna we're going to come back to this a little bit later in

this discussion. We're gonna talk about the Belltown Core. But before we get there, we want to chat about some of the broader issues too. We're going to talk about four issues today, homelessness, affordable housing, commercial and cultural displacement, and of course public safety.

Evan Clifthorne [00:03:28] So our first question is on homelessness. As you've probably seen, large portions of the Belltown community's past response to homelessness has been rooted in displacing individuals and encampments from our streets. Even if we accept maybe a few isolated cases where this might have been in the best interests of the public, of everyone, would you agree with those bell towers that say that this has gone too far or have we reached an appropriate balance? Either way, what are the options for the city to pursue a response to homelessness in Belltown that is rooted in services and support? Especially for both for youth homelessness and for adult homelessness. You are the chair of a new committee, right? On homelessness?

Andrew Lewis [00:04:21] So just to dive into that question, I am the chair of the Select Committee on Homelessness. It's gonna be a committee of the whole of all of our council members. We're gonna meet once a month, fourth Wednesday of every month.

Andrew Lewis [00:04:36] For the homelessness issue, we don't need any poll or any kind of focus group to tell us that it's the number one issue everywhere. I mean, it is probably is the number one issue in Belltown. If you polled residents, they would probably say chronic street homelessness is the number one issue on their minds on a daily basis.

Andrew Lewis [00:04:59] If you look nationally and even internationally to see what cities who have gotten ahead of chronic homelessness have done, it's housing first paired with a permanent supportive housing strategy. And that's something that unites Abilene, Texas and Helsinki, Finland, who are to places that couldn't be more different in terms of climate, demography - the size and scale of those two different locations. But in both cases, they had a large chronic homeless population and they were able to make significant visible differences and impactful differences in the lives of people in those communities by scaling up more permanent supportive housing and having a housing first strategy to get people inside before addressing folks underlying issues. I think one problem that we've really seen in Seattle is we really do not have a sufficient amount of permanent supportive housing to completely implement a housing first strategy.

Andrew Lewis [00:06:09] I think that the result of that has been that when encampments, unsanctioned encampments, present a public safety, public health or other kind of issue in the community, the response has been to just sweep that encampment, which may have removed it from that particular location. But if we can't get that person into some kind of permanent supportive housing or a service linkage, they're just going to set the encampment up somewhere else.

Evan Clifthorne [00:06:39] So we shouldn't be sweeping? Not to make it too black and white, obviously.

Andrew Lewis [00:06:45] No, what I'm what I'm saying is that if there is an encampment that is posing a public safety or public health risk, then that encampment should be removed. But I think the problem is, when we're not offering a place for someone to go, it's not going to provide a long term solution out of our homelessness issue. The only way that we're going to do that is by scaling up more permanent supportive housing. And that's what I want to guide my colleagues on the select committee to pursue. I want the city of Seattle to pursue a new and bold initiative that is aimed toward providing more permanent supportive housing. I want to work closely with groups like Plymouth Housing Group that have a very large and intensive capital campaign right now to build, I think, over a thousand additional permanent supportive units on top of what they already have.

Andrew Lewis [00:07:36] You know, so we're not doing this alone. But I think that we really need to build a sense of urgency around this cause the jurisdictions that have made demonstrable progress on this: that's how they've done it. There's no example of a city anywhere in the world that has essentially criminalized poverty, and then gotten out of the homelessness crisis that way. You know, it's not a moral way to do it, it's not an affordable way to do it. We need to focus on permanent supportive housing, which works.

Evan Clifthorne [00:08:24] So much of the effort to build more feels like it's just not enough, not fast enough ever. And I wonder, is there something that can be done on the other side of the spectrum? We think about this and Belltown a lot, because we have 17 units of affordable housing right now, where if those that are at risk and goes away -.

Andrew Lewis [00:08:50] Is that the Wayne Apartments?

Evan Clifthorne [00:08:50] Right. And if those residents are suddenly evicted, then it's not to say everybody that lives there, but there is certainly a high probability that some of those folks could end up being homeless because it just costs so much to move. So I wonder about whether it's the Wayne, or whether it's other affordable housing units in Belltown or elsewhere in D7, or in Seattle, are there things that can be done around the prevention side? How do we keep people in their homes in the first place? Do you see that as being part of the work of this select committee to think about prevention in addition to sort of new housing?

Andrew Lewis [00:09:36] Yeah. I think that that's a really good point to bring up. You know, I personally live in a historic building, in Lower Queen Anne. It's a nationally designated historic building. It limits like kind of how that building can be developed and restructured and what have you. And as a result, there's quite a few units in that building that are relatively affordable to new construction. New construction is always going to be to some extent more expensive because you have to pay off the new financing to build the building.

[00:10:14] Preserving old buildings that are built to last can be an effective strategy to prevent displacement and to preserve existing affordable housing stock from being torn down. [10.8s]

Andrew Lewis [00:10:31] I do want to flag that one possible issue is unreinforced masonry. The building I live in is unreinforced. That partly is why it's more affordable. It's also a lot more dangerous to live in it. And I mean, that's a risk that I take as a renter. So I just want to flag that as a potential issue in that as we preserve these historic buildings, there also needs to be a concern that there are going to be certain costs that have been deferred for a long time around unreinforced masonry or other kind of essential upgrades. And that is that is a consideration. But I think generally, preserving existing affordable housing is a very good strategy.

Evan Clifthorne [00:11:11] Cool. Well, that is good to hear. Let's move on to question number two. You talked extensively in your campaign about Seattle's urgent need for affordable housing, as you've been discussing. You specifically talked about this idea of using tall timber — I'm doing air quotes for those at home — basically cheaper, more sustainable residential buildings, because you can build out of a material that is cheaper, perhaps more sustainable even as a material but I'll let you talk about that.

Evan Clifthorne [00:11:48] The questions we have are how quickly can Seattle get tall timber stands right now? It's allowed at the state level. It's not allowed at the city level yet, hopefully? But it sounds like we're on that path.

Evan Clifthorne [00:12:02] I think the main question that I hear from folks other than sort of how quickly is this going to happen is: how do you ensure that those benefits, the benefits of it being a cheaper building, accrue to serve the purposes of affordable housing as opposed to just

being pocketed by developers? If developers can just build cheaper buildings, then what's to stop them from still charging the same prices that they charge now? And that doesn't necessarily help anybody, right? So there's some nuanced issues here I'm getting out, and I guess I'm I'm I'm curious about your take and how does what does the future look like?

Andrew Lewis [00:12:38] Sure. So those are all really good questions. I'm a big supporter of cross laminated timber, typically abbreviated to CLT. And I did talk about them a lot in my campaign. CLT, just a flag it - is not necessarily cheaper in and of itself, the material. But what it can do is considerably cut down on the time it takes to build a similarly situated building. So while the material might be either more expensive, or about as expensive, it kind of depends on the scale and scope of what you're doing. And I'll preface it with saying, I'm not a contractor or an engineer or an architect. So this is just based on on the anecdotal conversations I have had with people who are. My understanding is that some of the big benefit is, you can shave off something like six months of construction time, and so that can help speed the the project along, which can save money in terms of the construction.

Andrew Lewis [00:13:34] In Seattle, we currently can. Council member Johnson, when he was on the council, passed an ordinance allowing for CLT structures to be built on a concrete base. So if you have one story of concrete, you can build something like eight stories on top with CLT. It might be two stories of concrete and six stories of CLT.

Evan Clifthorne [00:14:01] Does the state go to sixteen stories?

Andrew Lewis [00:14:02] Yes. Good question. So the state of Washington has released guidelines based on the continuing study of the seismic and fire resistant nature of modern CLT building materials and has released new guidelines that allow cities to go higher and without a concrete base. So I need to go back and look, it was on my campaign website but I haven't memorized it.

Andrew Lewis [00:14:31] But I am a supporter of increasing the city's building code to to allow the higher cross-laminated timber buildings without the concrete base. And that's important for a couple of reasons.

Andrew Lewis [00:14:52] because concrete is a big driver of global climate change. So we can get rid of the concrete entirely. We can also make CLT buildings more viable by increasing their use for like mid-range construction. Right. So where you're currently very limited in the kinds of buildings you can make with CLT, with these new guidelines, midrise buildings could be made of CLT. So I think that's something to explore. It's really more of a global climate change thing than necessarily a unaffordability response.

Andrew Lewis [00:15:28] I think generally, though, one thing that we could do is that right now, under are the incentives in our building code, you can get extra stories on whatever you're building if it's a sustainable building like we have and an incentive.

Evan Clifthorne [00:15:45] And those incentives could be looked at again?

Andrew Lewis [00:15:46] Well, we could we could make it an affordability and environmental incentive on top of the mandatory housing affordability, right?

Andrew Lewis [00:15:58] We could throw in an additional density bonus for the CLT facility buildings so that if you do provide a certain percentage of affordable units on top of what you already have to pay in mandatory housing affordability, maybe we'll give you another story of CLT. And that is something that I'm interested in looking into, because I think with a lot of developers, since they already have to pay in to the mandatory housing affordability, if they can

get another story in certain areas where it might make sense, to increase the amount of onsite affordable housing, and maybe even give a stronger incentive. Some cities, like San Jose in California is a good example, give a bigger incentive if you build the housing onsite instead of paying in low fee. But we need to look at those kind of strategies and I think it would make sense to maybe take sort of compound the benefit by also linking it to us to the sustainability benefit. And kind of fight global climate change while at the same time make more room for workforce housing.

Evan Clifthorne [00:17:05] Well, we'll obviously have to talk more about that issue!

Evan Clifthorne [00:17:08] Let's move on to question three. As I'm sure you're aware, the historically working class artistic musical heart of downtown is currently being proposed for demolition. The multiple proposed projects -- Mama's now is also being proposed for demolition -- would displace up to half a dozen local businesses that currently help to anchor Belltown's commercial core.

Evan Clifthorne [00:17:35] It would also, as it turns out, destroy 17 units of existing affordable housing at the Wayne Apartments. Belltown has repeatedly asked past Councils for a temporary special zoning district for the commercial core, and other relevant affordability and community related sites in the neighborhood, that would essentially push the pause button on displacement-based development while we figure out how to save or replace those 17 units, and while we explored options for prioritizing commuting and affordability within a particular core instead of just prioritizing profits.

Evan Clifthorne [00:18:10] There's certainly things to be figured out, and we're not proposing to have all the solutions. But what are the possibilities of some kind of pause button? Would you theoretically support establishing some sort of "community and affordability network" in Belltown? If so, how do we work with you to help make that idea a reality? If not, are there other options that you think are better suited to try to stop or even slow the displacement of these various businesses and residents in Belltown?

Andrew Lewis [00:18:44] Yeah, I'm really happy to have a conversation about how we might do that because as I mentioned earlier, that business district is really important to me and I patronize it on a frequent, regular basis. And the Wayne Apartments provide very unique affordable housing that you can't find in any district of the city, let alone in District 7.

Andrew Lewis [00:19:05] I'm going to start with what's upsetting to me about it. And the first thing is the Wayne Apartments were designated as historic. They're one of the oldest buildings in the city, let alone one of the oldest buildings in District 7. The historic designation should stay in place unless the landowner can say of show that they can get no viable economic use out of the property.

Evan Clifthorne [00:19:29] Let me pause you on that, because it seems to us -- and we may need some help in getting clarity around this as a community -- but what we understand is that there's been an economic exemption granted for the Wayne site, so that this current development can move forward.

Evan Clifthorne [00:19:51] However, there's a pretty significant difference between what the property owner asked for, which in terms of this exemption was "their site only", and that of the proposed development, which is of course the whole block. So it seems to me that if the city has granted an economic exemption for the Wayne to be torn down because the owner presumably can't make back their money just on the site, then shouldn't the proposed project that includes the whole block be considered as part of that exemption? To to ask the question, "could new

construction be developed on part of the site and at the same time preserve the existing historic land"?

Andrew Lewis [00:20:33] Right. Well I mean, that would be a good question for a land use attorney way, which I'm not. But the one thing that I would say that that is that is upsetting to me is it seems to me that since that building does support viable, viable bars and viable restaurants, viable businesses, it seems like it would be hard for that property owner to show that they can derive no economic value from that building. There's also there's tenants that are paying rent in that building. I mean, that building is providing viable economic use. As a lawyer, it just seems to me that there should be a higher standard to show that you can't get any viable economic use from that building. And that's just to say that [00:21:25] maybe we do need to look at strengthening our ability to protect these historic buildings when they get acquired by landowners who then try to undermine that historic protection in order to build some tall glass tower or the Whole Foods in the bottom or whatever, they're going to put in [18.3s] - something that's not going to add character to the built out neighborhood. So I'm happy to talk about any potential strategy to preserve business districts like the one we're talking about.

Andrew Lewis [00:21:58] But the one potential issue that I would flag is near Washington state for for better, for worse is very strong property laws. We've got to be careful to design something that wouldn't constitute a takings or implicate the takings clause of the Fifth Amendment.

Evan Clifthorne [00:22:20] That's something that as advocates in Belltown we've always tried to propose: is solutions that make sure that property owners get made whole, one way or the other, while at the same time recognizing that these that this is a very unique core space, and that each of the tenants in this building, as well as the buildings themselves in many cases, provide value beyond just to their own site. There's a cohesion to a business district and that is that where, if something happens to my neighbor, it's going to affect me as a business owner, too.

Andrew Lewis [00:22:57] One of the committees I'm going to be sitting on is the land use committee. And so I do look forward to working with folks in Belltown to explore what some of those options might be. And while I might not know what they are right here at the time of our interview, I am interested in critically looking at it, because [00:23:15] it's business districts like that, that make a great city and we need to figure out how to protect and expand them rather than displace them. [7.3s]

Evan Clifthorne [00:23:24] Very cool. This is the our last last of these four questions, and this gets to something on a lot of folks minds in Belltown. It's a public safety question. It is no secret that shootings have become too regular in Belltown. Personally, I live at 3rd and Bell and the other day there was one right outside of our window. We watched as the police provided aid and kept the victim stable.

Evan Clifthorne [00:24:01] In the past, we sort of struggled in Belltown with some community groups trying to pursue sort of "push them around" strategy, like "let's just get people out of this block" kind of like the the "nine and a half block strategy" . But it feels like sometimes we're just pushing the problem around Belltown.

Evan Clifthorne [00:24:25] And other times it feels like while we're just conflating the issue with drug addiction, or with homelessness, and we're not trying to criminalize poverty in Belltown. I think a lot of folks in our community are often hesitant to call the police because they feel like, "Well, I'm just going to be doing more harm than I'm doing good because I called the police but now the police might get caught in a situation where they're making it worse rather than better."

Evan Clifthorne [00:25:01] One of the things that we've talked about in the past is possibly having a public safety liaison like they do in the Chinatown International District and using

ideally existing funds from maybe the county and the city to try to fund that position. Who's to say if that's you know, if that's the right idea or the wrong idea? It seems like there's some success in the Chinatown National District but also we would want to do something that was uniquely suited to our neighborhood.

Evan Clifthorne [00:25:32] One big thing I've heard from folks is the question: is there a way or a strategy to have somebody, whether it's a liaison, or whether it's a community service officer is assigned to Belltown through SPD, or whether it's whomever, to zone in on gun violence? To zone in on violent crime or gun related crimes, even if it's not violent? And is that a strategy that makes sense? Is that even possible? What are what are some of your thoughts on how we approach this?

Andrew Lewis [00:26:03] Yes. These are all really good questions. You know, I'm serving on the Public Safety Committee, and I before taking this job as a city council member, I was a prosecutor in the city attorney's office for three years. So public safety is really important to me. And I know that Belltown has a lot of difficult public safety challenges --.

Andrew Lewis [00:26:25] (to staff) --yeah. We're wrapping up.

Andrew Lewis [00:26:30] Sorry. Staff just trying to get me to my next appointment.

Evan Clifthorne [00:26:33] We appreciate the time. Belltown thanks you!

Andrew Lewis [00:26:35] Sure! But to finish my thoughts on public safety, and particularly gun violence. So a couple a couple of important things.

Andrew Lewis [00:26:45] First, all of us agree that at every level of the discussion and public safety, that we don't have enough patrol officers. If you have a an ample and sizable patrol force, you can engage in more proactive policing strategies that can that can reduce long term public safety problems and particularly in nightlife districts.

Andrew Lewis [00:27:10] If a nightlife district has a reputation for having, for example, pairs of patrol officers that walk the street at night that, for example, check up on all the small business owners and small business owners can build rapport with them. It leads to a reduction in crime. There's a deterrence effect to that. I think also working closely with our West Precinct liaison, who is an attorney in the Seattle city attorney's office, and integrating her more into these conversations is good, for the for the role that it plays. And of course businesses have a role to in making sure that they are doing everything onsite to tend not to foster or encourage criminal activity inside other businesses, to not be a place where there's gang disputes or where there's other disputes that escalate to violence within their businesses. And that should be that can be part of the strategy as well.

Evan Clifthorne [00:28:09] Well and I think we do a pretty good job of that in Belltown.

Andrew Lewis [00:28:12] Yeah!

Evan Clifthorne [00:28:13] I'm pausing us just because I want to make sure I give you the opportunity to be clear on here that we know that most of the businesses in Belltown are good actors.

Andrew Lewis [00:28:22] Yeah! No, they are! And I was trying to imply otherwise.

Evan Clifthorne [00:28:24] Exactly.

Andrew Lewis [00:28:25] But that's also an area where the city attorney's office through our liaison could partner with businesses to make sure they have the resources to be more proactive. Because I do think that could be part of it. It's like "how do we have a strong relationship with businesses so that we can be stronger partners as a city?"

Evan Clifthorne [00:28:45] You mentioned nightlife in particular around businesses. And one of the things we have that happens in Belltown in particular is that you have a lot of businesses that are connected with each other. The owners are friends with each other. The workers are friends with each other. In particular, the security folks that work the doors are friends with each other. And many of them currently stay in touch, with I think is a very positive thing. They stay in touch with each other, so that as incidences are floating around the neighborhood, there is there a consistency of awareness and knowledge between those different bars and institutions.

Evan Clifthorne [00:29:23] And it seems to me like a network like that -- if there was some sort of a work on the part of the city to really engage -- and the right people, I think if it's the right folks at the city, perhaps the city attorney's office or even the Public Defenders Association, maybe out of LEAD, which we don't have time to really get into, obviously, but of course started in Belltown. To have some of these entities, to be able to work more closely with the employees at these bars and restaurants.. it seems like there's there's some opportunity there. But it's hard to know exactly how or what the best way forward with something like that.

Andrew Lewis [00:30:02] Yeah, I mean, the last thing that I would flag too -- because I agree with everything that you just brought up, and I think we have a lot of good partners out there, and maybe this liaison position we're talking about creating, modeled after programs in other parts of the city can be a way to stitch all that together -- but one thing I did want to flag for your listeners is we're working with the Seattle Municipal Court to restart Community Court. We used to have this in the City of Seattle. It went away about four years ago, but it was a great way -- for misdemeanor offenders as the Seattle Municipal Court wouldn't cover felonies -- but it's a great way to provide resources, services, and accountability to low level offenders who right now, on a lot of cases, are just kind of like plodding through the system.

Andrew Lewis [00:30:59] It hasn't been working the way that we've been doing it. As anyone who's kind of been looking at the news can see. So going back to the community court model, which was much more effective, is a good way to to make sure that folks are actually getting the assistance they need instead of just kind of being in jail for a few days and going right back out on the street. So that's an initiative I'm working with the municipal court on. Had a really good meeting yesterday with the judge who's heading that up for the municipal court. And that's something that is probably going to get going in the spring or summer in earnest. And there's probably going to be a lot of ads that I'm going to push for in the budget in the fall to amp up the impact of that, because [00:31:42] we need to make sure that we have service-based interventions for a lot of folks who are committing crimes of necessity and crimes of poverty, and who currently don't have access to those things. [11.1s] Because the result is that they continue to cause problems, or break the social contract in Belltown, but they will continue to unless we have interventions that solve their underlying issues and get them some help. So I'm looking forward to working with the municipal court on that, and that's definitely something that I think will benefit the people of Belltown.

Evan Clifthorne [00:32:16] That is awesome to hear!

Evan Clifthorne [00:32:18] We are basically out of time, folks. So I just wanted to give you a chance for some final thoughts about how your office is setup, about how people can get in touch with you, what whether you want to highlight some of the top things that we should be watching, that you're gonna be working on? And then maybe afterwards we'll do a little follow up with Parker, after we let you get to your next meeting, and talk about how folks can really get in touch.

Andrew Lewis [00:32:45] Sure, sure! So first off, this was great. Thanks for coming in, Evan.

Evan Clifthorne [00:32:50] Yeah, absolutely!

Andrew Lewis [00:32:50] And really, I'm glad to be on this podcast and just kind of talk about some of these preliminary issues. Anyone that wants to reach out" very easy. Just e-mail me at Andrew.Lewis@Seattle.gov and we'll get something set up. Come on down! We're going to have a really big launch next week of our office hours schedule. And I will be in Belltown on a fairly regular basis at least once a month for a very long office hours session. I'm planning on going to all of the commuting council meetings. Happy to come to meetings of Rise Up Belltown as well. Or of any any other organization that you think we should be aware of, and should have standing commitments on our calendar, again just let us know.

Andrew Lewis [00:33:36] If there's a district specific issue, you can contact Parker. He'll be my district director, and his e-mail is Parker.Dawson@Seattle.gov. And don't hesitate to reach out, and I look forward to being your partner in government!

Evan Clifthorne [00:33:56] Awesome. Oh, thank you. We're going to pause there for a minute. And then after we let you get you mix, we pick up for a few moments with Parker.

[00:34:16] ...

Evan Clifthorne [00:34:16] All right, folks, we are back. We are down the hall. The council member has rushed off -- probably very late -- to his next meeting. We are very appreciate, and we're here with Parker, and we just want to do a little bonus round to talk about connecting folks with the council members, who are out in the community. Maybe you can give us the quick rundown of what is your office like? What is this place? How do people get in touch? Who are you all?

Parker Dawson [00:34:44] And the council member did give a little bit of an overview. Yeah. So in addition to him, we've got four staff: myself, Kamilah Brown, Katherine Sims and Jacob Thorpe. All of us have been staffed to different policy areas, serving both the council members committees that he's on, as well as other departments where we can still be helping constituents.

Evan Clifthorne [00:35:06] What committees is the Councilmember on? And if you don't have this memorized, don't feel bad! :)

Evan Clifthorne [00:35:12] So he is chairing the Select Committee on Homelessness Strategies and Investments. He's going to be the vice chair of the Community Economic Development Committee. He's also sitting on the Land Use and Neighborhoods Committee, the Public Safety and Human Services Committee. And finally, the Sustainability and Renters Rights Committee. It's actually easier to count the committees that he's not on.

Evan Clifthorne [00:36:11] Right. Right! I was going to say! That's four, plus the selects!

Parker Dawson [00:36:14] Yes.

Evan Clifthorne [00:36:15] That's a lot.

Parker Dawson [00:36:15] Yeah. So four standing committees and chairing the select committee and chairing the select committee of the whole.

Evan Clifthorne [00:36:25] So then each of you in the office are going to be doing different policy issues. And it sounds like council member Andrew just referenced that you are gonna have some office hours?

Parker Dawson [00:36:36] Yes! Yeah.

Evan Clifthorne [00:36:37] So not to spoil the big launch, but are there's some overblown result?

Parker Dawson [00:36:43] Yeah, we're still we're still working out exactly when we will be where, but we will be in at least well in each neighborhood at least once a month. So we're aiming to have at office hours here in City Hall. In Belltown. In South Lake Union. Uptown, Queen Anne, and Magnolia all once a month. So when those will be is still being worked out. We're just making sure that we've got all those times clear and at least six months in advance, if not more. That we've got venues that can be secured so that the councilmember can be more than accessible. But in addition to those will also be regularly attending -- the council member will be attending quarterly I will be attending monthly -- community council meetings, different neighborhood associations or organizations, and advocacy groups -- Rise Up Belltown would be a great one to be adding to that.

Evan Clifthorne [00:37:37] Absolutely. That sounds like a reasonable commitment -- that the council member is going to be trying to get to sort of each of these things at least once a quarter.

Parker Dawson [00:37:49] Yeah. Yeah. But if there were, you know, a very pressing project or issue in, let's say Belltown, we would definitely make sure that the councilmember were able to go there more often and be able to have that closer relationship.

Evan Clifthorne [00:38:09] And then it sounds like you're also being sent out into the field? I heard you say once a month you're going to be at all of these!?

Parker Dawson [00:38:14] Yes! Yes... So far we've have got eight or nine different places. And it's actually easier when some of them are same day. We'll definitely be busy and active, but you know -- part of my job. Definitely happy that we can just do the work that is worth doing. [10.7s]

Evan Clifthorne Yeah! That's good. You're not jaded and burned out, yet. You've got all the energy and we like it! All right, well: thanks for being with us. And thank you, Belltowners. Until next time! ☺