

Minutes of Regular Meeting

**Board of Directors
San Jose Downtown Property Owners' Association**

November 15, 2021

A regular meeting of the Board of Directors of the San Jose Downtown Property Owners' Association (POA), a non-profit California corporation, was held via Zoom conference call.

Board members present: Egge, Friese, Kline, Marbry, McMahon, Phan, Ristow, Southwell, Schneider,

Members absent: Zelalich

Also present were SJDA, Block by Block and City of San Jose staff: Executive Director Scott Knies, Director of Policy and Operations Nathan Ulsh, Director of Public Space Operations Chloe Shipp, Street Life Manager Sarah Billings, Business Development Manager Nate LeBlanc, Community Engagement Manager Chris Arkley, Business Resiliency Manager Omar Torres, PBID Project Coordinator Dennis Yu, Block by Block Program Director Chris Kendrix, DOT Division Manager Eric Hon, and Brad Segal from PUMA.

Friese called the meeting to order at 8:37 a.m.

Friese motioned to approve the minutes for the August meeting, Phan seconded the motion and they were unanimously approved.

President's Report:

- Renewal: Chair Freise would like the board to begin to understand what their roles will be in the coming months in terms of outreach for the PBID renewal, especially during the petition and ballot phases. Freise queried what board members are most interested in during this phase of the PBID.

Kline will be involved in pulling together Adobe and their neighboring tech organizations. Schneider is concerned about the potential split of downtown between District 6 and District 3 with City Council redistricting. Marbry with Swenson is focused on homelessness issues and tackling storefront vacancy. Southwell is focused on outreaching to his hotel counterparts. Phan interacts with retail stakeholders downtown and has conversations with folks on what voting for PBID means.

Knies talked about the formal launching of the renewal campaign, and shared what the petition and ballot phases of the campaign entail. It is most important that owners within all areas of the renewed PBID are aware of what is going on.

- Staffing Update: LeBlanc introduced Omar Torres, who is the Business Resiliency Manager, a position funded through a joint City Office of Economic Development/SJDA grant, and is focused on small business support in the PBID, and along the Alum Rock and Monterey Road business corridors. Ulsh introduced Chris Arkley, the new Community Engagement Manager. Arkley's role is partially funded by the PBID and with remaining funding from SJDA. He is focused on member support and will be the staff liaison for the Historic District.

Shipp and Ulsh are in the process of hiring a Research and Data Analyst position and are hopeful this role will be filled by the next board meeting.

New Business:

- VTA Contract: VTA has updated PBID staff that prevailing wage will be required despite not having a signed contract, and that the requirement is retroactive starting in January 2021. VTA will provide 11 months of backpay to Groundwerx staff. The new contract will run to December 2022. Staff is working on submitting all hours for 2021 to VTA now.
- PBID Renewal Steering Committee Updates: Segal provided a summary of their visit to downtown last week. The team received positive feedback from the private property sector about the draft management plan, increased staffing and proposed new services. Segal presented the renewal strategy and highlighted several items:
 - Increased staffing for the Groundwerx clean and safe program.
 - New Social Impact Program that will focus solely on downtown's unhoused population.
 - Move away from two zones to one zone for consistent service. This will create an additional \$600,000 in revenue for the district. For properties within the current basic zone, it is a significant increase in assessments. Major properties in this area have been contacted about this increase and are supportive of it.
 - Added capacity in areas of activation, business support, communication and special projects.
 - Build flexibility into the PBID.
 - Narrowed boundary expansion areas to five options.
 - Segal and team are reviewing the draft management plan with property owners, and they are receiving positive feedback.

Social Impact Team: Shipp highlighted the Social Impact Team will be more equipped than the Groundwerx ambassadors and will be on the ground everyday. The Social Impact Manager will be a licensed clinical social worker and the rest of the team will be a combination of peer support staff, individuals with lived homeless experience, and outreach workers. Social work internships for college students are also being considered. Shipp will be overseeing the team.

Freise asked if the budget was enough for the social impact team. Shipp shared that the current wages for the team members are consistent with local outreach programs, and will follow the City's living wage rate. The Social Impact Manager's salary is comparable with manager level roles as well. Ulsh added that the PBID has flexibility to shift funds around from the vote of the board if more funds are needed. Knies was confident the Social Impact Team will lead to additional City and County funding once established.

Assessment Increase Cap: The new district has two proposed assessment increases: one 5% maximum increase on assessments for the overall PBID budget, and another 5% maximum increase for capital project restricted funds. Currently the PBID can have up to a 5% increase, but generally each year the assessment is increased 3%. This additional funding for special projects through increasing the assessment increase cap can help leverage funding from other sources. Assessment increases are proposed by the board annually, and then approved by the City Council. Several factors traditionally go into determining the assessment increase, and that would remain the same if the board approves the two maximum increases: City living wage increases, proposed and current projects and new development within the district.

Kline said Adobe is on board with premium rates and management plan, with the caveat that safety and security remain a focus of the district. Current conditions around Guadalupe River Park have deteriorated, and Kline sees the new service additions as a potential opportunity to help.

Freise motioned to approve the draft management plan, Phan seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

Shipp updated that the Steering Committee Meeting is moving to every month.

Staff Reports:

- Staff reports were distributed prior to the meeting.
- Capital Projects: Southwell asked for some examples of the PBID's capital projects. Freise shared that MOMENT, Hart's Dog Park, and SoFA Pocket Park are the most intensive capital projects undertaken by the PBID, but capital projects also include murals and lighting. The district targets unused or underutilized spaces for these projects. Phan asked what lighting projects are down the line. Shipp talked about a potential lighting plan for downtown. This includes string lights, programmable lights, and lighting technologies that emerge in the future. Billings highlighted recent light installations at San Pedro Arch upgrade, Post St light curtains, and Circle of Palms.

Kline said places where people can eat or shop will create a magnet for people to come together. He would like to see more community creation, and make things that are worth talking about. Egge seconds Kline, would like to see more urban sports parks downtown such as basketball courts. Schneider would like to see more festivals like art and wine. Phan noted the lack of public places to hang out.

Billings will be hosting Street Life meetings again in January 2022.

The meeting was adjourned at 10 a.m.