

Minutes of Regular Meeting

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

May 19, 2020

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: Bartl, Friese, Lambert, Ortbal, Guido, Kline, Mancuso, McGowan, Phan, Schneider and Zelalich.

Members absent: All members were present.

Also present were SJDA, Block by Block and City of San Jose staff: Executive Director Scott Knies, Operations Manager Chloe Shipp, Street Life Project Manager Marie Millares, Business Development Manager Nate LeBlanc, Director of Policy and Government Affairs Nathan Ulsh, PBID Project Coordinator Dennis Yu, Block by Block Program Director Semu One Bear, DOT Division Manager Eric Hon, P.U.M.A President Brad Segal, and P.U.M.A Associate Daniel Makela.

Bartl called the meeting to order at 8:33 a.m.

The minutes for the March 24th meeting were unanimously approved.

President's Report:

- Staffing Update: Director of Policy and Operations, Nathan Ulsh introduced himself to the board members.
- July Meeting: Bartl asked if adding a meeting in July would be good since the next planned one is in August. Zelalich approved.

New Business:

- Stabilization Plan: Knies presented challenges SJDA will face in the next 18 months. PBID is going to be involved in the re-opening process of businesses. Knies talked about hiring PUMA from Denver to develop a short term plan and Segal and Makela from P.U.M.A joined midway through the meeting to conduct tier 1 interviews. Knies encouraged the board to read the staff reports that address some of the emergency situations due to the P.U.M.A interview taking the place of the Staff Reports section of the meeting.

The \$10,000 spending for the Stabilization Plan was sourced from the St. James Park study budget. Bartl agreed this was dollars well spent and has no issue. Ortbal added this was a modest expenditure and moved to approve the expense. The motion was passed unanimously.

- Downtown Lights: Knies introduced an application in Circle of Palms

during holiday season that can work with social distancing. It was an ephemeral light experience that can invite many people back into downtown San Jose. Millares reviewed this project at the ad hoc meeting and got good feedback. This project included a lighting upgrade on the palm trees and the projection will be on either the historical entrance or the sign wall. The museum had been wanting to do an architectural projection for a while. The estimated costs for the tree lights is \$70,000 and \$200,000 for the projection. The \$200,000 for the projection is split into the cost for content and the tech. Millares is working closely with SJMA and wants to make the content fall under Tier 1.

Virtual sculpture is another idea where people can view constructed augmented reality objects on their smartphones. This portion of the project would cost \$30,000. Kline felt the digital and virtual aspect of this project is great for downtown's branding, but feels the budget is not adequate for the scale of this project. Zelalich liked the idea too, but was curious if this would last past the holidays and if there is anything we can add or activate during the day because the lights only work during the night.

- PUMA: Segal, the President of P.U.M.A, introduced himself to the board. He has been involved in downtown revival for more than 30 years, especially with improvement districts. Segal describes P.U.M.A as a team of economists and planners. His stance on the economy is that most economists agree this is a deep recession for a short period of time and this is the framework in which P.U.M.A is using to create the Stabilization Plan.

Segal asked the board members to introduce themselves. Everyone gave a brief description of how long they have been involved with the PBID and which entity they represent. Segal then proceeded with the three questions:

- Question 1: What are the two or three most important things for the PBID to do in downtown San Jose?

Responses:

- Bartl is concerned about cleanliness, safety, and homelessness
- Seven board members said the clean and safe fundamentals are the most important
- Five board members said homelessness is the most important
- Kline said helping businesses transform was the most important
- Zelalich emphasized the importance of ramping up business development services, especially on the ground floor
- Mancuso added that ground floor and retail activation is the most important thing for property management
- Schneider said there needs to be more retail and there are enough bars and restaurants
- Phan suggested a media campaign may be necessary to let the public know that downtown San Jose is working to make it a

- safe and welcoming place
 - Ortbal raised the question: How do we make and transition businesses to be COVID safe?
 - Schneider is curious how downtown dining will change and how outdoor dining may impact parking and transportation
- o Question 2: Thinking beyond the pandemic (3+ years later), what programs and services should the PBID do differently, or a greater emphasis on current services?

Responses:

- Bartl raised a two part question: How do we reach out to people and bring them downtown? Having something to provide in downtown that is more than just bars because it's still not a destination place. How do we get people to take VTA to downtown?
 - Phan said our residential level needs to get to a point where people will crave public spaces more
 - Zelalich said bolstering our downtown parks, such as St. James Park, is a place that makes sense for the PBID to explore in partnership with the City. Also communicating PBID services and the story to members will improve our messaging. More business services are needed. The one other area Zelalich thinks the PBID could explore is the management of public spaces in downtown and how that works. For example, activating the area underneath Highway 87
 - Knies wrote in the chat: Another long term play for PBID is how to incorporate Downtown West and 100 plus new acres into the district.
 - Ortbal asked if there is anything we can do that we might not be able to do due to the pandemic or something we can't do due to regulations
 - Phan said there's not enough connectivity between the downtown hot spots or micro neighborhoods
- o Question 3: As you prepare for renewal, knowing we are doing this in an interesting time, what are 2 or 3 things we should be looking at collectively in anticipation for renewal?

Responses:

- Bartl brought up the PBID boundaries and which directions it can change. He emphasized not going too big to support it and balancing what we can do with the funding we receive.
- Phan questioned what services are big tech campuses going to need and what services that the public needs in the downtown core. Maybe crafting different benefit zones could be useful. He emphasized using data like pedestrian counts to understand foot traffic and using other essential data to make informed decisions.

- Kline asked how to get a more holistic approach to get people to come to downtown. A lot of things in cities happen organically and if we can find out what and where people are going we can make some more surgical changes.
- Brad said PBID started out more fundamental with clean and safe, not holistic and surgical, but there are many things that the PBID can do that are worth exploring.
- Zelalich said if you want nice things, somebody has to pay for them. If PBID can secure more funds with a grant writer to pay for bigger projects that can start redoing infrastructures such as Park Ave and other big plans along Almaden Blvd. Large projects are going to take public-private partnerships. Sometimes there is money to build but not maintain and the City is tied down to addressing other issues like housing. Going bigger for the pretty things we want.

Staff Reports:

- Staff reports replaced with PUMA session

Other Matters: Knies invited PUMA to present their findings in a future board meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:57 a.m.