

Minutes of Regular Meeting

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

July 21, 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, Mancuso, McGowan, Ortbal, Schneider and Zelalich.

Members absent: Guido, Kline, Phan

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 May meeting were unanimously approved.

President's Report:

- Staffing Update: Dennis Yu has been promoted to a full time PBID Coordinator role.
- PBID staff provided an update on the Groundwerx COVID-19 sick leave payout and asked the board to approve a new COVID-19 sick leave policy for Groundwerx that will sunset when the City of San Jose's COVID-19 leave ordinance ends on December 31, 2020. Staff proposed a cap of 80 hours of leave moving forward for Groundwerx employees who have COVID-19 related absences. This recommendation was unanimously approved by the board.
- 20-21 PBID and Street Life Budget Updates: Knies provided an update on preliminary FY 2019-20 actual expenses. This update included delays for maintenance and street life projects, such as stopping all landscaping work and pausing the ungirdling project since March and the beginning of shelter in place. These areas of underspending has allowed the PBID staff to put resources into Al Fresco and COVID-19 response and rollover surplus funds to the FY 20-21 budget. Additions to budgeted expenses that were mentioned include a possible dog park in SoFA and Cesar Chavez Plaza park lights in place of Museum of Art projections.

Zelalich suggested \$2,500 for Al Fresco K-rails might not be enough. She also expressed interest in a Christmas tree in Cesar Chavez Plaza to avoid having a dark park during the holiday season (since Christmas in the Park is moving out of downtown this year because of pandemic).

Zelalich also asked if there were any specific asks for a dog park from the SoFA neighborhood.

New Business:

- Stabilization Plan: Segal presented the draft Stabilization Plan. Segal urged the board to look at this as an opportunity to change SJDA's business model. The powerpoint explained how P.U.M.A gathered information from an online survey, talked to board members, engaged property and business owners. Near term implications from the outreach data showed that recovery from COVID-19 impacts was among the top priorities, with an emphasis on clean and safe programming, business support and equity issues. Long term implications were also weighted toward small business support and clean and safe efforts. The PBID and Groundwerx have become the main programmatic anchors. The PBID renewal will be key. Long-term trajectory points to environment and experience as the two guiding factors. A question Segal brought up to the board was: "Can PBID go beyond its existing services?"
- Stabilization Plan Discussion: Knies noted that the plan will be presented to the SJDA board, the Knight Foundation (partial funder of the plan), and the plan will be released publicly in August 2020.

Bartl agreed with putting Business Development on the street level, but said it could be challenging because there are costs that go into that.

Zelalich was amazed the survey received 1,200 responses, but would like more specific examples on how to make downtown more welcoming to others. Segal suggested adding more things that attract different people like Latin-x or Asian populations, either in design or being deliberately in tune with different cultures. Embracing cultures through public art was also mentioned.

Manusco liked the idea of a small business support center, emphasizing the importance for our retail tenants. Manusco's retail tenants have been hit very hard and a support center for them would be important moving forward for engaging small businesses with a storefront and having a place where people can go. Brad said a storefront economy will be critical in bringing people back into downtown.

McGowan added that it will be years, not months, to rebuild the downtown community. McGowan stressed that downtown absolutely needs people on the streets, saying "it's an eerie place" right now. He also talked about the need to diversify retail.

Yu observed that crowds can show up strongly to bars and restaurants at night, despite bars being among the most uncomfortable for people to go back to in the survey. Segal agreed that the younger demographic is going to be the first to bounce back to old habits and will be important in the

recovery of downtown. Zelalich adds that restaurants and retail will be a good thing to focus on because it attracts people. Bolstering outdoor dining and how we can provide necessary funds for businesses to expand outside can really play up the revival.

Downtown transportation became a key conversation focus for how to reimagine public spaces. Freise started with saying that all cities are struggling right now, and downtown San Jose has been derailed. Freise noticed cities are really transitioning away from cars, and used downtown Seattle as an example where they have blocked all car traffic in certain areas. Freise wondered if there is something like that for Almaden Blvd. that does not have vehicles on it. He liked Al Fresco and said we are not alone in doing this because other cities are also abandoning motor vehicles as the main asset of their downtown.

Ortbal responded saying the City of San Jose has always been moving towards more walkability, outdoor dining, and the current opportunity provides the platform toward moving in that direction. Zelalich added the City is trying to redesign streets to make pedestrians the key, not the cars, and hopes to make this something more permanent than temporary. The City has a Downtown Transportation Plan that Ortbal explained can help connect street life actions to the overarching context of downtown reopening.

Freise said it is great that we focus a lot on cleanliness and safety, but if we are thinking about changing the makeup of the board, then we should be questioning how we can broaden our functions. Segal suggested that broadening board functions will depend a lot on renewal. Knies talked about having more cross-over between the SJDA and PBID boards. Freise asked the board to think of one or two things they can innovate.

LeBlanc gave his thoughts on expanding the Business Development team if the board wants to approach storefronts in a different way. LeBlanc prefers a more folksy approach where we treat every district with its own main street. LeBlanc at the moment is not comfortable being at a storefront. Freise brought up the idea of a master lease for storefronts downtown and LeBlanc said there is a lot of energy heading in that direction with a handful of consolidated ownership in certain districts.

Schneider is originally from Germany and cited outdoor dining and walking friendly examples to get people back into downtown as effective at attracting people. If businesses have merchandise outside, people can see it before walking inside.

Staff Reports:

- Staff reports were distributed prior to the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:04 a.m.