



## **DOWNTOWN ACTION ORGANIZATION**

### **Board Meeting**

**September 18, 2019**

**9:30 – 11 am**

**Santa Rosa Metro Chamber**

**50 Old Courthouse Square, Santa Rosa, CA 95404**

## **MINUTES**

Present: Andrea Ballus, Zach Berkowitz, Sonu Chandi, Raissa De La Rosa, Hugh Futrell, Michael Hyman, Sue Kade, Tom Robertson, Bernie Schwartz, Doug Van Dyke, Sara Woodfield

Absent: Natalie Balfour, Joe Dietzen, Charles Evans, Rick Mossi

Santa Rosa Metro Chamber Staff: Cadance Hinkle Allinson

### **1.0 CALL TO ORDER**

Vice-Chair Hugh Futrell called the meeting to order at 9:37.

### **2.0 PUBLIC COMMENTS ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS (limited to two minutes each)**

There were no comments from the public at this time.

### **3.0 CONFLICTS OF INTEREST OR ABSTENTIONS**

There were no conflicts of interest or abstentions.

### **4.0 CONSENT ITEMS**

**4.1** Motion to approve consent item, August 21 Meeting Minutes, as presented was unanimously approved. Bernie Schwartz and Doug Van Dyke both abstained, having not attended.

### **5.0 FINANCIAL REPORT**

Tom Robertson presented the Financial Report and shared that the budget is balanced and cash flow is projected to be positive by year end. He informed everyone that there was now cash on hand from the Sesquicentennial, part of which will go toward the Asawa Fountain. He also reiterated that although there might be a delay in getting funds from the assessment, it was important for the city to pay their assessment by December, which is when it is due.

Cadance shared that as of this financial report, the DAO is now operating on an accrual, and not a cash accounting basis. She also pointed out that there are three assessments

booked into this fiscal year, as the first year of operation, and that in future years, only two will be reflected.

## **6.0 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT**

Cadance reminded everyone she would be out of the office from September 19 through September 27. She then provided updates on Fridays on 4<sup>th</sup>, which have been going well, and will be in a constant state of growth and improvement as the event and concept evolves. There are 21 businesses currently participating.

She shared that the first info session, held earlier that morning, which focused on Homelessness and featured a presentation from Mayor Schwedhelm and Jennielynn Holmes from Catholic Charities, was successful. Though attendance did not match RSVPs, there was great support from City staff, including the Chief of Police, Ray Navarro. Info Sessions in October and November will cover Trash and Parking. There will be no Info Session in December and the DAO Annual Meeting will be held on January 15, 2020.

There is progress being made on getting new lighting on 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>, as well as updating planters throughout downtown. She will continue to update everyone as funding is secured through various sources.

The city has contracted with Precision Concrete Cutting to begin leveling out sidewalks throughout Downtown during the month of October. Hopefully impact to businesses will be minimal. Sue requested they don't work in front of restaurants during the lunch hour.

The Portland Loo issue will be returning to the Downtown Subcommittee on October 3. Cadance is working to schedule a debrief with city staff for DAO prior to that meeting.

A discussion ensued about street level services. Many people are happy with the progress that Robert and his team have made and want to encourage them to keep up their impressive level of work. Others suggested that it would be important to differentiate between cleaning staff and security staff, to help create the perception of greater safety downtown. The business owners know and recognize the impact that StreetPlus has made but want to determine how to help visitors and community members feel this impact as well. It was determined that at a future meeting, a change of uniform would be discussed.

## **7.0 CITY PROPOSAL ON MINIMUM WAGE**

Raissa De La Rosa presented on the City's proposal to fast track SB3, which was passed to raise minimum wage to \$15 an hour by 2023. She provided details on the steps that other local cities have begun implementing and shared that the City of Santa Rosa staff will be proposing to Council that the change take effect on July 1, 2020 for businesses with over 25 employees and January 1, 2021 for businesses with 25 or fewer employees. After that point, other than exemptions, it will be \$15 for all businesses plus CPI every year thereafter.

Raissa reminded everyone that this is speeding up the state timeline, and that even if that hasn't gone into place yet, the state will enforce whichever law benefits

employees the most. She explained that this will impact some businesses more than others and that many small employers are already paying \$15 or higher because of how competitive the workplace is.

Doug shared that regardless of what employees are paying, more focus needs to be paid to helping our community make social change and focus their shopping locally, which will allow business owners to balance out the increased employee cost.

Raissa shared some general feedback she had received so far and let everyone know there is a survey they can take. It was requested that there be an Info Session on this issue, which Cadance and Raissa will work to schedule prior to the October 1 meeting.

Hugh repeated that it was important for Council, regardless of its decision, to focus on what it can do to abate long term affects to businesses, such as dealing with parking, garbage issues, sales tax and business license fees. Since only the timeline is up for debate, the city needs to do anything it can to benefit businesses and those who will be impacted.

## **8.0 COURTHOUSE SQUARE PLANTING PROPOSAL**

Cadance shared that this item will first be reviewed by the Design and Improvement Committee and then brought back to the full board at the next meeting.

## **9.0 DAO COMMITTEE UPDATES**

### **9.1 Design and Improvement Committee**

Hugh shared that plans are moving forward to get the Crepe Myrtles planted. He then shared that there have been positive indications from the city about being able to move the Asawa Fountain forward on an expedited timeline. The suggested plan from the City is for the DAO to pay for and manage a Design Build RFP and that Hugh Futrell Corporation will loan the City \$200,000 against their future park fees to cover the cost of the installation. If Hugh Futrell Corporation can complete the work, it will eliminate delays and restrictions the city faces. It is important that this process be as transparent as possible so that there is no sense of self-dealing. There will be one further meeting with David Guhin to review.

Once an RFP is circulated and details are worked out, the final plan will go to the Design & Improvement Committee before any decisions are made.

It is still being determined if art-in-lieu fees can be used for the fountain as well. Raissa shared that the Advisory Committee on Public Art in Courthouse Square might be seeking further funds for the proposed artwork, which will be installed in approximately 2021. If so, these funds could compete with the Asawa Fountain. A discussion was held about securing outside funding and it was suggested that anyone interested in funding the Asawa Fountain, be connected to Cadance.

Bernie asked about the Voigt Family Sculpture Foundation as a temporary option while other art is in the works. Raissa said she would raise the question as it relates to Courthouse Square.

#### **9.2 6-8pm Parking Rollback Update**

Michael provided an update on the Parking Committee's request to have the Premium Zone enforcement time rolled back from 8pm to 6pm, which was shared at the last Downtown Subcommittee Meeting and is now in the process of being brought to council. He reported that the DAO is taking a collaborative approach and wants to work with the city to solve issues that will benefit the Downtown economy.

Sonu shared there are three issues that need to be addressed: the 6pm rollback, employee parking, and a less expensive validation program.

Bernie said it would be important to get the validation program, parking rollback and new garage hours promoted prior to the holidays to encourage downtown shopping. This would be an excellent opportunity for Council to support downtown businesses.

Bernie requested that everyone attend the Council Meeting as soon as it is scheduled and that letters be sent. Cadance shared that a letter will be sent from the DAO, but encouraged others to send letters as well.

Raissa said she would share relevant sales tax data as soon as it was available

### **10.0 FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

Cadance shared the city is planning to install the bollards in the spring.

A number of issues related to city maintenance arose, including dirty streets, broken furniture and general maintenance around Courthouse Square. Hugh shared that a meeting was planning with the City Manager and Assistant City Managers to begin addressing the issues.

Michael asked why bathrooms close early and how the Portland Loo would be different. Hugh shared that it would be addressed by City staff and that the Portland Loo was initiated as way to provide restrooms during off hours to the homeless population.

### **11.0 ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 11am.