



DOWNTOWN ACTION ORGANIZATION

**Board Meeting
December 18, 2019
9:00 – 10:30 am
Santa Rosa Metro Chamber
50 Old Courthouse Square, Santa Rosa, CA 95404**

Present: Natalie Balfour, Andrea Ballus, Zach Berkowitz, Sonu Chandi, Raissa De la Rosa, Joe Dietzen, Charles Evans, Hugh Futrell, Sue Kade, Rick Mossi, Bernie Schwartz, Doug Van Dyke, Sara Woodfield

Absent: Michael Hyman, Tom Robertson

Santa Rosa Metro Chamber Staff: Cadance Hinkle Allinson, Peter Rumble, Jenn Beach

MINUTES

1.0 CALL TO ORDER

Chair Natalie Balfour called the meeting to order at 9:05.

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, November 20 Board Meeting Minutes, as presented was unanimously passed.

5.0 FINANCIAL REPORT

Cadance highlighted the financial report, shared that the DAO is ending the year where it needs to be financially and explained that further review of available 2019 funds would happen during later discussion.

6.0 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT

Cadance shared details of her leave and introduced the Board to Jenn Beach, who will be assisting with administrative duties while she is out. Peter will continue to serve as primary contact for the Board and the City of Santa Rosa.

Cadance brought the Scope of Services that outlines the role of the Chamber and explains all of the administrative and management fees paid to the DAO. These include all staffing costs, bookkeeping services, IT, equipment, supplies, and office and meeting space for both the DAO and StreetPlus. The Scope of Services is available to the public in the DAO office.

Cadance acknowledged that the DAO unfortunately did not take on holiday décor this year, but that they would plan to next year and requested assistance from Board members and business owners to provide their input at a meeting early next year. Raissa shared a brief history of the City's holiday decorations, reiterated that this was not a baseline service and shared that all business owners were welcome to decorate trees in front of their business. She shared that having a prioritized list of décor needs with a budget will be helpful if funds do become available.

Peter reiterated that this type of project takes significant funds and that the DAO decided as an organization to focus on street level services during its first year. Sonu acknowledged that the scope of the work of the DAO was why this was missed and shared that lighting needs to be a priority because it will play a critical role in changing the current perception of Downtown.

7.0 DISCUSSION: DOWNTOWN BEAUTIFICATION OPPORTUNITIES

Cadance shared details about the lighting and planting projects that could be taken on in 2020. A discussion ensued about the possibility of utilizing \$20,000 leftover from 2019 and allocating some of the \$50,000 from 2020 to cover the cost. The link between security and lighting was reiterated and highlighted how important the lighting project would be to accomplish multiple goals to Downtown businesses.

It was suggested that the DAO have a separate meeting to discuss priorities and come up with a clear list of what will be accomplished in 2020 and future years as funding allows. Hugh reminded everyone that the management plan was adopted with broad priorities and the heaviest emphasis needs to remain on street level services. The Board should put together a more thorough beautification plan and begin discussing how additional resources can be found. It was agreed that it would be helpful to have a clear plan that could be communicated to property owners, business owners and the public.

Doug reiterated that the DAO has a finite focus and that the funding needs to stay within the bounds of the management plan.

8.0 ACTION: VOTE ON TREE SURROUNDS IN COURTHOUSE SQUARE

Cadance reminded everyone about the options for bench surrounds. Doug motioned to approve the benches as recommended.

Hugh asked for a reminder about how the City was maintaining existing benches and Raissa shared that as they broke, they would be replaced. There was discussion around the condition of the existing benches and concern that if the benches were not properly maintained, there would be future issues. The benches selected should limit sleeping and skateboard use and are powder coated. The benches, once installed, will be maintained by the City because they were part of the original Courthouse Square master plan. Anything beyond the master plan would be the responsibility of the DAO to maintain. There is potential for the DAO to take over maintenance responsibilities of the Square moving forward.

Discussion continued about the need to create an attractive public space for the community to enjoy.

The motion was unanimously approved.

9.0 ACTION: VOTE ON 2020 BUDGET

Hugh reminded everyone that between the 6% contingency and \$50,000 allocated for Improvements, Enhanced Security and Marketing, there was \$82,000 unallocated in the 2020 Budget.

Bernie suggested that the perception of Downtown right now is currently very bad and that anything that can be done immediately with these funds, should be done. Zach agreed and suggested something big and visual was critical. The need to act quickly was reiterated and agreed upon.

A discussion ensued about how to phrase the language around the \$50,000 allocation. The need for marketing funds was discussed, as well as the need to prioritize beautification before spending marketing dollars.

Doug motioned to pass the budget as recommended in accordance with the management plan. The motion was unanimously approved.

10.0 FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Doug shared that the DAO was not created to take on marketing, but rather to improve and enhance the entire Downtown environment. However, creating a marketing cooperative and identifying outside funding has to be a task in 2020, and should be an ongoing future agenda item.

Raissa suggested a Brown Act training and offered to coordinate that at a separate time for anyone available to attend.

Charles reiterated a separate meeting was needed to put together priorities and a five-year plan to show property and business owners.

Bill Hillendahl asked for an update on Lot 10. Raissa will provide an overview of the P3 Feasibility Analysis when available.

11.0 ADJOURNMENT

Board Chair Natalie Balfour adjourned the meeting at 10:35.