



DOWNTOWN ACTION ORGANIZATION

Board Meeting
Wednesday, July 17, 2019
9:00 – 10:30 am
Santa Rosa Metro Chamber

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

Santa Rosa Metro Chamber Staff: Cadance Hinkle Allinson

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, June 19 Board Meeting Minutes, as presented, by Tom Robertson, seconded by Doug Van Dyke and unanimously approved with the exception of an abstention from Raissa De La Rosa, who was not present at the June meeting.

5.0 FINANCIAL REPORT

The financial report was presented by Tom Robertson and reviewed by the board. Tom pointed out that although it looks like a larger surplus, the projection is to be about \$3,000 under budget. Next year's budget will need to be reviewed with the potential for adding in new categories to meet needs like PR. There was a discussion about the need to build a contingency, which could be done year after year, as long as there are clear plans for spending and unnecessary surplus isn't being created.

Hugh explained that the original budget had 5-6% contingency included. The tight surplus in the current budget is due to the catch up payment. The current budget is under because StreetPlus wasn't fully staffed and wasn't operational at the beginning of the year, which will be a larger expense in the second year.

A motion to approve the financial report as presented, was made by Doug Van Dyke. Motion seconded by Sonu Chandi and unanimously approved.

6.0 EXECUTIVE REPORT

Cadance provided an overview on yesterday's Council Study Session on the Downtown Station Area Specific Plan where three plans were presented. Each potential plan will allow for 7,000 residential units, and plan 1, the Vibrant Core Plan, puts 4,600 of them in Courthouse Square. She highlighted key points supported by council, specifically putting a square in Railroad Square, improving pedestrian and bike access, creating a path through the mall to connect Railroad and Courthouse Square, road diets, connectivity to neighboring areas and no height limits for new buildings. Bernie asked how Simon has been involved in the process and Raissa explained that the city has been meeting with Simon and they are interested, but that this property is not a major asset or focus for them.

Cadance let everyone know that StreetPlus is in the process of hiring a new manager. She has been communicating with them regularly to address a number of ongoing issues including quality of staffing, scheduling and reporting. There was a discussion about the work of StreetPlus and whether or not they are upholding their side of the contract as they have not been able to recruit high quality candidates and there have been serious issues with their performance. A number of alternatives were discussed, including splitting the sanitation and safety contract and reaching back out to the JC as well as Volunteers in Policing. The board would like to see other possibilities explored and to seek Marco's guidance on next steps.

Doug requested information about what the city's baseline services were in the area and Cadance confirmed that the city and the DAO are in regular contact. Hugh reiterated that with the recent reorganization at the city, communication should also be easier. Tom asked for a list of the primary city contacts and their responsibilities to be shared.

Cadance shared that the July newsletter went out yesterday and confirmed that it was received. She'll be following up and delivering some in person as well as invitations for the upcoming info session focused on events and marketing.

On August 8 at 9am there will be an info session hosted by Cadance focusing on five key opportunities for businesses to promote themselves and build their audiences:

1. Fridays on 4th – new event to draw locals and tourists on Friday nights
2. Downtown Winter Lights – hours changed to better accommodate businesses, businesses will have first right on food
3. Santa Rosa Metro Chamber Gala – opportunity create a Downtown District Auction item
4. Levi's Gran Fondo – Carlos will come speak about the event and its impact
5. Group Advertising – new opportunities to collaborate on higher price advertisements

7.0 DAO COMMITTEE UPDATES

7.1 Parking Committee

Natalie shared that the committee is forming and will meet soon. Anyone else who is interested needs to let Cadance know.

7.2 Marketing Committee

Sonu shared that the ad hoc committee has been focused on Fridays on 4th and as they look forward to the future will be asking the board to create a formal committee that can focus on annual events and opportunities for the organization. Bernie suggested they look at how to address road closures and encourage press to highlight that businesses are open and that locals should embrace, not avoid downtown.

7.3 Design and Improvement Committee

Hugh shared that the proposed square improvements are underway. A meeting with David Guhin led to the city looking at the Asawa Fountain in a more focused way and hopefully there will be a response soon.

The encroachment permit has been issued for the crepe myrtles and the additional work including bench dividers and flower urns. Curt Nichols located trees, though pricing hasn't been finalized. He sent over design drawings and the DAO will quickly prepare an RFP for the work. Landscape companies will need to remove the concrete, verify the electrical and irrigation connections are functional and plant the trees. There is lighting that could also fall under the scope, if it fits within the budget. RFPs should be issued shortly with work complete by the end of August. The remaining items submitted with the permit include bench dividers and additional planting. Urns need to be specified and planting decided along with irrigation and whether that will fall under the responsibility of parks or the DAO.

Cadance shared they are still working with Art in Public Places on art in the square and Tom shared that he is trying to make a connection regarding statues through the Schulz family and will report at the next meeting. Hugh shared that these ideas will need to be incorporated into the advisory committee process.

8.0 UPDATE ON PORTLAND LOO PROCESS

Hugh shared that at the Downtown Subcommittee Meeting last week, council sent the matter of the Portland Loo back to Jason Nutt for further information. They wanted to understand how the locations were evaluated and which locations are still options. Hugh shared that they urged the city to review the issues in San Diego and that they are showing sensitivity to the DAO's locational issues and the need to not have any businesses negatively impacted by the installation. There is still flexibility around location since they have authorization to purchase and there is a long production lead time. It is anticipated that the issue will be back before council by the fall.

A discussion ensued about other public restrooms and available facilities downtown.

9.0 FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

It was suggested that the 6pm meter roll back be addressed at the next meeting and Natalie clarified that would be part of the Parking Committee's responsibility to report on it in the future. Charles asked that we review a list of all future agenda items that have been brought forward in past meetings.

10.0 ADJOURNMENT

Natalie Balfour adjourned the meeting at 10:05am.

Follow Up:

1. To put privately funded art into the square, it would still need to go through a review process and be presented as a gift to the city. It would be separate from the piece funded by the city
2. IronMan will include in their press release and in their radio ads that downtown is open for business. Their marketing message: Eat, Shop, Cheer is meant to send people downtown.
3. Topics for further discussion:
 - a. Downtown Station Area Specific Plan
 - b. Update on Constructino Plans for Lot #10
 - c. Create a list of maintenance items
 - d. Consider forming a parking committee
 - e. Portapotties in Downtown
 - f. Invite Jason Nutt to next meeting to discuss the process as to how to plan for capital improvements in downtown
 - g. Large events in the square and their impact.