



DOWNTOWN ACTION ORGANIZATION

Board Meeting

November 20, 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, Michael Hyman, Sue Kade, Tom Robertson, Bernie Schwartz, Doug Van Dyke

Absent: Rick Mossi, Sara Woodfield

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

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, October 16 Board Meeting Minutes, as presented was unanimously approved with the exceptions of Raissa de la Rosa and Doug Van Dyke who were absent from the meeting and abstained from voting.

5.0 FINANCIAL REPORT

Tom Robertson shared that there was nothing of significance to report and that the DAO had enough cash to move forward into 2020.

Member of the public Eric Fraser asked what the administrative costs of the DAO were.

A motion to approve the financial report was made and unanimously approved.

6.0 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT

Cadance Hinkle Allinson shared that at the Council Study Session the day before, November 19, 2019 Council instructed staff to have the parking meter time roll back to 9am to 6pm. They also requested that there be the same free garage parking during the holidays as in 2018. Free parking was approved for Small Business Saturday and the holiday garage schedule will be addressed at the December 3 Council meeting. Cadance and Michael will be meeting with Kim to see how the DAO can support making the changes happen as quickly as possible. DAO Board members agreed that attendance from business owners as well as having one unified voice was effective. Discussion ensued about the best way to get word out to the public as soon as possible regarding the changes.

The Railroad Square CBD was approved yesterday. They are eager to work with the Chamber and the DAO on collaborative projects, so there will likely be more details to share soon.

The Portland Loo location recommendation from the Downtown Subcommittee is going to be in front of City Hall Annex.

The DAO's Annual Meeting is scheduled for January 15 at noon at City Council Chambers. Invitations will go out soon.

The Santa Rosa Police Department is allocating two additional officers to Downtown starting January 1, which will hopefully mean they have enough staff to keep two officers Downtown at all times. Opinions were shared on the importance of late-night police presence.

The DAO is now surveying businesses to collect relevant data that can be shared with the Downtown Subcommittee. Business owners will be emailed to share their data on a monthly basis.

Hugh suggested that while everyone be invited to share their data, a selection of 30 businesses that can be tracked over time will be more powerful.

Cadance shared that she'll be sending an Emergency Communication Plan draft out to the DAO Board for their review and suggestions. This will help provide details to business owners as well as alert the public as to the status of Downtown during an emergency or PSPS. Raissa de la Rosa said that it would be important to partner with the City to get the word out.

The Courthouse Square Public Art Advisory Committee has finished meeting and the Art in Public Places Committee will now review the proposed plan before the Selection Committee begins.

The trees are getting very close to being planted in Courthouse Square and hopefully a landscape company will be selected this week and work can begin soon. The Board

reviewed the options for either a tree guard or a bench. Discussion ensued and preference was indicated for a bench with dividers to prohibit sleeping. This item will come back to the board for a vote in December.

Plans are moving forward with the Asawa Fountain which will hopefully begin construction before summer 2021. Hugh shared that the work taking place shows the fountain will likely come in under budget and expressed that the City has been helpful in moving this forward. Hugh Futrell Corp will complete the work with the support of the DAO. HFC will only charge for direct costs and will be advancing their funds from the Art House project to build the fountain in lieu of art fees. The DAO has the funds to get the project started and the DAO and HFC will need to enter into an agreement to formalize the work.

7.0 2020 BUDGET PRESENTATION

Cadance shared the 2020 proposed budget and explained the three main changes. First, there is now a 6% contingency included. Second, the StreetPlus contract has increased. This was already scheduled to increase in 2020 and an additional increase of \$14,500 will allow for increased salaries for staff and to formally change the role of two staff members to security officers. Maintenance and security officers will also have different uniforms starting next year. The final change is that there is \$50,000 allocated to future spending for improvements, enhanced security and marketing, so these funds can be used where most appropriate throughout the year. There are a number of beautification projects in the works, including new twinkle lights and upgraded planters and the DAO is also looking at options to do more significant marketing.

Discussion ensued about the benefit of StreetPlus and the need to fund marketing efforts as well as other visible changes needed in Downtown.

Glenn Smith asked for clarification as to why the 2019 Budget was \$300,000 higher than 2020. It was explained that there are three assessments in the first fiscal year and only two every year moving forward.

Eric Fraser provided further public comment.

8.0 DOWNTOWN ACTION PLAN

Hugh spoke about the proposed plan and the obligation the DAO has to make the community feel that downtown belongs to them. The City has made a commitment to Downtown and the DAO wants to partner with the City and its staff to accomplish goals with specific deadlines. The collaboration should lead to getting these items in front of council prior to Goal Setting in February.

Hugh summarized the nine points of Action Plan:

1. Baseline Maintenance in District
2. Increased police presence and response
3. Expediting the DAO taking over Event Management in Courthouse Square

4. Downtown Intervention Action Group to take on homeless issues
5. District taking on responsibility for baseline maintenance if the City will provide adequate funding structure for it
6. Working collaborative on the EIFD
7. Shift in BIA funding to provide marketing support to DAO, which will need further discussion
8. Parking Coordination Group to deal with larger issues and strategies around parking
9. Immediately addressing the nuisance of 1 Santa Rosa Ave

Raissa shared the City's excitement around collaborating on these items, setting timelines and figuring out what is possible with a realistic, coordinated and collaborative plan.

Peter shared that there has been a strong call for collaboration and that setting up an ad hoc committee would be powerful to get these items achieved. He clarified that the DAO's role is not to bring in new business, but rather create conditions that would help the City and Chamber invite new business in.

Raissa shared that the City and Chamber are always happy to help facilitate conversations around filling vacant storefronts.

Hugh recommended the board take action to authorize an ad hoc committee and approve the plan in concept with the goal of taking quick action on these items. The action was unanimously approved.

Eric Fraser provided public comment around the plan and the need for marketing.

9.0 FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

No additional future agenda items were discussed at this time. The December agenda will include a vote on the proposed budget and further discussion around the benches and tree guards.

10.0 ADJOURNMENT

Board Chair Natalie Balfour adjourned the meeting at 10:37.