



## **DOWNTOWN ACTION ORGANIZATION**

### **Board Meeting Minutes**

**Wednesday, August 21, 2019**

**9:00 – 10:30 am**

**Santa Rosa Metro Chamber**

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

#### **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, July 17 Board Meeting Minutes, as presented was unanimously approved.

#### **5.0 FINANCIAL REPORT**

Tom Robertson presented the financial report and shared that the DAO is in the process of switching to accrual-based accounting. The transition is in process and the August financial report will accurately reflect all assessments and funds spent.

The financial report was unanimously approved by the board.

#### **6.0 EXECUTIVE REPORT**

Cadance Hinkle Allinson reported on the Info Sessions the DAO has been offering to businesses and property owners. The Marketing Info Session, held earlier in the month, focused on upcoming events: Fridays on 4<sup>th</sup>, Winter Lights and the Chamber Gala. Group Advertising opportunities were also discussed, as well as social media, which is now active on Instagram and Facebook (@downtownsantarosa) and the website which will launch next month.

The next two info sessions will be on Homelessness (September 18 from 8-9am) with Jennielynn Holmes and Tom Schwedhelm and Trash Collection (October 9 from 9-10am) with Recology. Future topics that will be covered are Wednesday Night Markets and Retail. The September Board meeting will be pushed back to 9:30 to accommodate the Info Session.

The DAO will be applying for two grants. One through Creative Sonoma to create a public art engagement opportunity on Courthouse Square next spring and the second through Rebuild North Bay to determine the feasibility of getting new lights and revamped planters in the downtown corridor. Both are in the research process and should be submitted in September.

Cadance listed past “Future Agenda Items”, many of which had already been addressed, such as the Portland Loo and forming a Parking Committee.

She shared that the DAO is trying to work more closely with downtown events so that they can share “businesses are open” language and the DAO can provide the public with information about their events.

Any private art projects would need to be approved by the city, go through the Art in Public Places Committee and be gifted to the city. Private art would not replace the art scheduled to be installed on the North Side of the Square.

Cadance will reach out to ask Patrick to come speak on the Downtown Station Area Specific Plan at a future meeting.

Lot 10 Construction is stalled and out of the hands of the Parking District and sitting as a possible development opportunity for the city. There is no new information, though it will be shared when it’s available.

## **7.0 STREET LEVEL SERVICES DISCUSSION**

Cadance shared that the Executive Committee has been working through several scenarios to determine what would provide the DAO with the best possible outcome as far as more hours and higher wages for street level employees. There will be a report next month regarding recommendations and options.

A discussion ensued about pressure washing and the issues in Courthouse Square after events, as the side streets and stone areas are extremely dirty and need cleaning. It was clarified that StreetPlus was never meant to clean the streets and there would need to be a collaborative discussion with the city to get those better maintained.

Joe Dietzen asked if the app was available for business owners to report issues to StreetPlus. Cadance shared that only text/call/email is being used to contact StreetPlus currently. A discussion ensued about the city’s app for reporting issues, which is completely separate from the work of StreetPlus.

Zach Berkowitz brought up issues of homelessness and skateboarding in the square, both of which have recently been listed as negatives in online reviews for Hotel E. He wanted to know how these issues were addressed at night and it was suggested that since StreetPlus staff don’t work at night, Hotel E staff call the Police Department as soon as they have an issue, so that the information can be logged.

Cadance explained that skateboarding is in fact prohibited in the square, but there is no signage indicating that. Hugh shared that skateboarding has been growing and that we need to work with the city to put up signs that share the rules which anyone can then enforce. Michael suggested a formal security team was the only way to address these issues.

Sara reiterated that there has been significant damage from skateboarders on both the benches and the curbs. Hugh shared that this was likely possible because the benches were never correctly primed prior to installation and that the city would need to determine if there was recourse with the contractor to get them fixed.

A discussion around the importance of police presence occurred. Cadance shared issues like skateboarding cannot be a priority for the police with everything else they are facing. The Downtown Enforcement Team is scheduled to add new members soon, and an update will be provided on their work when available.

A member of the public asked for lights to be put up on 5<sup>th</sup> street and for resources to deal with difficult members of the homeless population. Suggestions were shared.

It was determined that DAO staff should be the contact between any complaints with vacant businesses and the property owners. Anyone who needs to check to see if they have a “no trespass” letter on file, or who wishes to file one, can request assistance from Cadance. No trespass letters are renewed every February.

## **8.0 DAO COMMITTEE UPDATES**

### **8.1 Design and Improvement Committee**

Hugh shared that the Crepe Myrtles are moving forward to an October installation, after the 18” seat walls are built. The design work is done and now the prep work needs to be contracted out and completed.

Ron Hodges, the Landscape Architect hired to do the work on the square, has come up with several other options for ground plants under the larger trees. The DAO will hopefully begin that work in the fall as well.

Hanging flower baskets have become not feasible due to cost, fabrication difficulties and maintenance, so it was suggested that vertical banners be installed instead.

Hugh shared that the city has to fix benches prior to the DAO beginning any work on them. Cadance has reached out to Jason Nutt to begin discussing.

The city had previously indicated that they would be able to move the Asawa Fountain forward and a meeting to discuss further is happening tomorrow.

Cadance shared the Public Art Advisory Committee is meeting on August 26 for the first time. Sue asked if there was any progress on the Schultz statue, and Tom shared that there should be soon.

### **8.2 Marketing Committee**

Sonu Chandi shared that a lot of progress has been made on social media and that they'd like to potentially discuss formalizing the marketing committee in the future. He repeated that Fridays on 4<sup>th</sup> is for all businesses, not just those on 4<sup>th</sup> Street.

### **8.3 Parking Committee**

Michael Hyman shared that the parking committee had its first meeting and members and supporters are now meeting with council to push forward the 6pm rollback, their primary agenda item. This issue will be on the Downtown Subcommittee Meeting agenda on September 5<sup>th</sup>. He explained that the committee doesn't want to combat the city's data, but rather focus on the fact that the parking district is there to support businesses, and not vice versa. Michael listed future issues that would be tackled by the parking committee and there was a general discussion about Shoup's concepts and progressive parking. It was agreed that better education and a stronger validation program, which is in the works, is important for to change public perception.

## **9.0 FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

Raissa suggested that the City's minimum wage ordinance be discussed at the next meeting as it is going to council on October 1. The council would like to expedite the state's timeline by two years.

## **10.0 ADJOURNMENT**

Chair Natalie Balfour adjourned the meeting at 10:10am.