

BID MEETING MINUTES
Thurs. April 19, 2019
Bank of Marin Conference Room

1. Attendees

Board - Jaime Ortiz, Jed Greene, Erika Bowker, Adam Dawson, Bonnie Ayers Namkung
Guests – Joanne Webster - San Rafael Chamber, Tobi Lessem - Bodywise Massage
Staff - Eda Lichte
City representative – Simon Vuong

2. Called to order by Jaime at 8:18

3. Mar. minutes approved - motion by Adam, seconded by Erika, passed unanimously

4. Public comments – Joanne Webster

Mayor is not running for re-election. New district elections begin in 2020, with 4 districts identified and a councilmember for each district. Kate Colin holds the downtown district seat. She may run for mayor. If she wins, then city council will appoint someone to take her council seat.

City of San Rafael partnered with the Chamber to do business expansion and retention interviews. This year Chamber was asked to concentrate on downtown businesses. Majority of respondents were ground floor merchants.

Here is a summary of their responses:

- 40% saw improvement in their business performance over last year
- 50% said it stayed the same
- getting marketing exposure is their biggest challenge
- parking is not meeting their needs
- homeless population is seen as a problem
- lack of foot traffic is a problem
- ranking beautification priorities, the top 3 were: replace/repair trash receptacles, new lighting, create more outdoor dining experiences

The most important task for the city to handle: public safety

Best thing about doing business here: the demographics of the local population

Majority of businesses have been here 5 years or more. They understand the city and the market, happy being here.

This report will be presented to the City of San Rafael in May.

Event open to BID members: Executive Director of St. Vincent's and Andrew Hening of City's homeless outreach, plus police downtown foot patrol at Chamber for a coffee meeting: May 3, 9-10:00 a.m.

5. Jaime Ortiz - President's report

Thanks to Joanne for making BID part of State of the City dinner. It's the best event of the county. Great event and I was so pleased to be part of it and present award to Art Works Downtown for their award.

I'm thankful for our new partnership with the Chamber, where they will help support and promote our communications and events.

We need to think about committee nominations for 2020. Have to nominate leaders, add new board members for next year. Will need volunteers for nominating committee.

May Madness – thank you to Eda and Joanne and Rick Lewis for producing the event. It's May 11 and we're finishing up. I'm collecting sponsorships, a few more vendors, and would like a few more volunteers, including community members.

Added to the event will be Friday night cruising to the Elks Lodge and a BBQ to benefit Camp Chance, a summer camp for at-risk and underprivileged children. Ticket is \$35. Party and dance Sat. night, dance band Pride and Joy will play. Looking for raffle items—gift baskets, gift certificates.

Board member Jed Greene is an alternate for the 2040 Plan committee. He attends when the regular rep cannot. Kate Colin is involved and the Chamber and BID should be involved in the downtown plan. Looking for more immediate action items on the West End. Also looking for board members to represent the West End.

Simon – The City is close to finalizing the new boundaries of downtown. Not sure if the BID boundaries will change.

Joanne - BID board is invited 2nd Tues. of month at noon – Economic Vitality committee meeting at Chamber conference room.

New downtown Marriott hotel – City has been wanting a downtown hotel for a long time and are happy with the project's progress. A public hearing will happen on April 23, where they're looking for support.

The hotel will have a rooftop bar, 140 rooms, and no restaurant so guests will patronize local eateries. A few people are opposed to the project and say there should be housing onsite. Will include 86 parking spaces, although they feel 50 would be adequate, they will overprovide. Will offer valet services.

The hotel will have 8-10 employees daily and they'll arrive late, after commute time. Will also offer bike parking. Will produce an estimated \$1.1 million taxes per year. Will draw people downtown. The BID does not provide advocacy (the Chamber does) but can informally support the project. Encourage the board to attend City council meeting on 4/23 at 7 p.m.

Can email to support the hotel at info@achotelsanrafael.com.

7. Jed Greene – Treasurer's report

Now is when we usually receive the payment for assessments the City has collected for the BID. Our budget is getting tight because we haven't received the funds. Last year showed a 10% drop in funding, so we're not sure what we'll get this time.

Simon – There are not fewer business licenses, but sometimes people don't pay. In general, license renewals have been down. The finance dept. hasn't given a good answer for why. We're working with the enforcement division to find out what's happening. We'll reach out to finance director to get information.

8. Eda Lochte – ED's report

Big thanks to Cory Bytoff who got the Conservation Corps, Downtown Streets Team and San Rafael Clean to our cleanup day before the Sidewalk Sale. The Streets Team cleaned the parking meters and garbage cans. We were featured in the IJ for the cleanup efforts.

For the Sidewalk Sale, good participants were Sunrise Home which put up a huge banner and Essential Sleep Shop, All Season Soccer, D'Lynne's Dancewear and Avant Garde all had merchandise outside on the sidewalk. Possibly cancel the August Sidewalk Sale and make one really good event per year instead. Will send a survey to see if business owners want it once or twice per year and when.

City of San Rafael's Bill Guerin mentioned working to deter rats. He's planning a pilot to put concrete, a tree well and two low planters to brighten the corner of 4th and A streets. The whole area in front of Starbucks will be concrete. Planters will be on either side, low, durable and large enough to see color. It will happen after May.

Joanne – This plan will be discussed at Economic Vitality committee.

Simon – Farmers' Market will be evolving. Will be taken over by Agricultural Institute of Marin and have a change of focus to farm to table. Will go to city council May 20 for their review and support. It will still be Thurs. nights, 6-9 p.m., more concentrated area along 4th St., from Lootens to At St. New concept from AIM is to differentiate itself from other markets. Looking at using all local food sources and businesses and including a local makers component.

Eda – We think downtown restaurants may participate.

Joanne – A number of restaurants will want to put table and chairs out in front of their restaurant.

Jaime – We met with them to ask that downtown businesses be allowed to participate.

The next event is being coordinated by Steve Restivo – the Hops & Vines Stroll, Sat., July 13 from 2-7 p.m. Craft beer and local wine will be spotlighted with tastings. Steve produces many events like this and predicted around 300 attendees.

7. Bonnie – Downtown San Rafael Cultural Arts District

With extremely limited resources, the DSRAD wants to partner with BID, and look for opportunities to co-brand.

Simon - San Rafael's arts district joined a coalition of districts throughout the state, coming together to lobby for more funding.

Joanne Webster - The Chamber's Leadership Institute is coordinating an art project of painting on downtown utility boxes in June.

9. Adjourned at 9:18.

10. Next meeting - Thursday, May 16, 8 - 9 a.m., Bank of Marin