

Downtown Business Improvement District
Board Meeting Minutes

Thursday, June 18, 2020

VIA ZOOM DUE TO COVID-19 SHELTER IN PLACE ORDER

1. Call to Order/Roll Call/Welcome Guests

Board - Adam Dawson, Jaime Ortiz, Bonnie Ayers Namkung, Elisabeth Setten, Jeff Brusati, Tobi Lessem, Morgan Schaffler

Chamber – Joanne Webster

City of San Rafael – Simon Vuong

Guests – Meg Reilley - Marin Society of Artists

2. Called to order by Erika at 10:10

3. Approval of April Minutes* - motion Adam/2nd Bonnie. Approved unanimously - members listed above.

4. President's Report – none

5. Executive Director's Report, Eda Lochte

Dining Under the Lights is on track to start next Thursday, 6/25. We owe the City a big thanks. They made permits easy, free and fast, and thanks to Joanne and the Chamber too. Hardest step is to get ABC permits to extend liquor license to outdoor space. Eda will collect all and drive to Santa Rosa today to secure them for 30 restaurants.

DUTL Set up: The City is contributing Brian's time plus a public works employee, Jackson. Would like BID to cover \$3,800 for another staff member as well, Sam? 10 hours per night for 19 nights at \$20/hour.

We're getting buzz on NextDoor, even getting requests to purchase the poster and donate an amount toward the cost of event. Publicity and social media is promoting it, Chamber is promoting it, Marin Arts will put on their site. Hopefully IJ will do another free article.

Proposing a seven-week IJ campaign of print ads/digital impressions to promote the outdoor dining: ½-page poster and details, includes participating restaurants link and stay-safe info. Cost is \$2,750. Danielle and Simon of City's Economic Development Dept. would donate \$1,000 toward it. So our cost would be \$1,750 for Dining Under the Lights.

$\$1,750 + \$3,800 = \$5,550$ for both. We have a \$3,000 in budget already for Downtown events. Can board approve \$2,550 in additional funds. This is within our budget because we haven't produced any other events this year.

Adam moved to approve existing \$3,000 and reallocate \$2,550 from the \$10,000 that was designated for Hops & Vines. Elisabeth seconded. Unanimously passed by members listed above.

Bonnie nominated Tobi to take over secretary position. Adam seconded. All members present, as listed above, voted in favor.

The group thanked Eda profusely for working so hard on the outdoor dining project.

6. Treasurer's Report - none

7. Events Chair, Jaime Ortiz

Thanks to Joanne and the Chamber for working with BID and Erika to reactivate the local economy. Joanne offered kudos on creating a great Dining Under the Lights event and the accumulated buzz.

Discussion on a flip the switch lighting event. Maybe music or percussion to announce the lighting. How to time and coordinate the lighting? May not need to have the Mayor stand in a conspicuous place to do it.

A consideration for future budget years. Not much in BID savings for a rainy day, want to be able to survive next year if revenues are down. Will be discussed in future meetings.

8. DSRAD Report, Elisabeth Setten

DSRAD committee would like to enliven the downtown Dining Under the Lights campaign with art, such as a chalk art display. Would commission 6 to 10 artists to create street art near the participating restaurants. Need to be able to provide a stipend to the artists. Can also work with Youth in Arts, asking BID to consider it.

Can present a proposal at the July meeting, suggest a stipend for artists, and a plan for how the project will look. Dining Under the Lights will evolve and we can add more layers to the event. Could ask for themed art pieces to represent spirit of San Rafael or an uplifting theme. Suggest beginning in Aug. or Sept. Will make for terrific photos to entice people downtown. Can be done in social distancing way, draw people to check out the art and have dinner. Will the City be OK with a campaign like this?

Bonnie shared a proposal from Lynn Sontag, head of Dominican University's art dept. Lynn was instrumental in helping DSRAD get set up as an organization and craft the mission and vision of the group.

This fall she'll be teaching a community engaged art class with honors students who will partner with [Next Generation Scholars](#) and a group of 8th graders. They would create artwork around an assigned reading—something that speaks to the present moment (like the House on Mango Street by Sandra Cisneros).

Lynn mentioned being inspired by the [Mural Arts Philadelphia's Storefront Artwork Initiative](#) and wondered if businesses on 4th Street might be interested. She suggested they could do vinyl artworks (like her leafy design in the old San Rafael Jewelers windows) or works on paper.

She is proposing a series of 5 to 7 artworks placed along 4th Street in the windows of closed/boarded/empty storefronts. Both the Dominican and younger students have a strong relationship with Downtown San Rafael, seeing it as a place for dining, entertainment and a

route to school. It could be a lovely, positive experience and the art would bring enjoyment to the businesses, community and the artists. Lynn's team plans to create a website for people to find more information, and like Mural Arts Philadelphia, an exhibition map, downloadable coloring pages, and possibly outreach to middle school teachers and families for suggested work they can create at home. This may be a bright spot that people need right now.

9. Economic Development Report, Simon Vuong

Eda and our team at the City have been focused on Dining Under the Lights and preparing for dining outside. No permit required for DUTL. Restaurants can apply for outdoor sidewalk or parking space permits on the City's website. No fee, quick turnaround.

Eda visited each restaurant for a personal discussion on where they can put tables outside and how customers will be most comfortable. So we hope more restaurateurs will be amenable to it. We need to change consumer behavior to let them know it's safer outdoors and a way to support local businesses.

Working on a launch of open businesses map and looking to expand into rest of County. One also can go to City website and find out which businesses are operating. Indoor retail opened this week, hoping in 2 weeks we'll have indoor dining open. Just monitoring how Marin recovers with the County.

Clarification – for outdoor shopping, merchants can apply for free automatic permit to put their wares on the sidewalk. However, taking over a metered parking space in front of their business or setting up in their own parking lot requires extra review by City. Retailers have not been participating. Most retailers and restaurants are waiting for full reopening of indoor shopping and dining. Outside it's windy or hot, so foot traffic is down.

Many businesses are holding back. They want to see more momentum before they commit. City is monitoring the applications they receive and waiting for when indoor shopping and dining reopens.

Looking for County to give a consistent message to show we're safely reopening and let people know to wear masks. Asked County to create employer toolkit so they'll understand steps to take if an employee tests positive. How to disinfect your business, who to quarantine, what happens next.

10. Chamber of Commerce – Joanne Webster

Working on how to best deliver our services and benefits to members during quarantine and social distancing. We're taking a pause on our signature events and hosting virtual events. We're brainstorming and also very involved in reopening efforts with the County, as well as focusing on keeping everyone safe.

Will host a bingo event with Whistlestop on Thur. In July, our big annual meet-up with other local Chambers will be a virtual event.

11. Adjourned at 11:03

12. Next Meeting: Thursday, July 16, 2020, 10:00 a.m. via Zoom