

# **BID Advisory Board Meeting Minutes**

## **Thursday, February 15, 2024, 10-11 AM**

San Rafael Chamber Conference Room  
817 Mission Ave, San Rafael, CA 94901

### **1. Call to Order/Roll Call/Welcome Guests**

Called to order by Terrance Thornton, 10:08a

**Attended:** Terrance Thornton, Amy Bullock, Adam Dawson, Tobi Lessem, Joe McCallum, Jeff Brusati, Kelly Phu, Jay Yinger, Valon Grajqevci

**BID Staff:** Sarah Tipple

**San Rafael Chamber:** Karen Strolia

**City of San Rafael:** Stacey Laumann

**Absent:** Bishlam Bullock, Morgan Schauffler

### **2. Approval of January Minutes\*:**

**motion** Adam Dawson **2nd** Amy Bullock

**all members present approved January minutes**

**3. President's Report, Terrance Thornton** – Terrace met with Jaime from Bank of Marin to work on consolidating our 4 BID accounts, eventually closing them down and moving the funds to the Chamber BID account. The May Madness account will remain open. Amy asked: once the merge is complete, will we still have access to our decision-making - Karen said yes and that the city is paying for the bookkeeping services. The fiscal year-end for the Chamber is a calendar year - so is the BID.

**4. Executive Director's Report, Sarah Tipple** – May Madness planning is in full swing, Sarah does about 75% of the administrative work, apps, promotions, design, etc. Rick manages the car recruitment, sponsorship, image selection, music, staff recruitment, etc. Jeff helped finalize the poster artwork and will help print the t-shirts again this year. The postcard invitation will be mailed out - everyone who has ever participated in May Madness - sponsors, food vendors, exhibitors, etc. Trophy sponsorship packets are live. May Madness will only have 1 block of vendors, mostly because we don't want to block businesses and need the room for the cars. All the downtown businesses are invited to participate, they can have a free booth space. The ABC permit is just for the nonprofit, beer is being donated by Stateroom and Pond Farm again this year. The event is on May 11, it is consistently on Mother's Day weekend.

Sarah shared some great press we received last week. The Pacific Sun shared the story of our 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Fe-BREW-ary promotion. Fe-BREW-ary began out of a promotion that Sarah heard SMART was working on in early 2023, so quickly created a page on our site showcasing all our local taprooms and breweries to make sure San Rafael was included in their promo. The Marin IJ wrote an article about our 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Chinese New Year Dragon Hunt. The Dragon hunt and word scramble challenge brings diversity, art, and activity to the downtown area. Similar to the Elf Hunt, it is a great way to bring more people to Downtown and generate activity for our businesses. The goal is to integrate this concept into other and more culturally diverse events if successful. It is also garnering exposure for the City of San Rafael in a big way.

**5. Beautification Committee updates - Sarah, Terrance, Jay** - A BID subcommittee came up with several ideas of what we can do with the DSRAD funding to bring more art downtown and will be presenting it to the DSRAD group today. Ideas on the table are a rainbow crosswalk, a matching mural fund for businesses, a sculpture, and bringing back the SR Art + Wine event - which activates Falkirk - all these ideas to introduce art and vitality. The SR Chamber Leader Institute class project is re-activating the utility box paintings. The BID will sponsor one of the boxes and can be involved in approving the final design.

**6. City Updates, Stacey Laumann** - Micah just got appointed to be the director of the Community Development Dept which encompasses a lot of decision-making. Director of community development's past leader is being transitioned out. Their goal is to figure out how to help being the initial point of contact: how to bring a business into town, tenant improvements, and then figuring out how to facilitate the movement through the city process. As an example, they met with a developer looking to purchase an entitled project, they needed a lot of information, quickly. Another is working with businesses on streateries. The debt market is softening so there is more movement happening in the space of building out. Approved projects have been slow mostly due to this. Goldstone property update: she met with his broker this week, tenant improvements and cleaning up the storefront, they say they are moving on it. He has been amassing properties for 7 years and is going to work on building housing and retail. The city parking structure behind the building will be a different project. Once a project is approved by Planning, there will be a certain amount of time to start the project, but if they are not approved, there are no rules for property owners to keep the "blight" away. Karen proposed: to communicate with the City - we first email her or Sarah and they send a consolidated/streamlined proposal to Micah as a bigger representation of the downtown businesses. Another part is, if there are suggestions/solutions, she can give a 'menu' of ideas to Stacey to choose from. One idea: Pop-up stores might help to revitalize the area in empty storefronts. One issue is the insurance cost. Micah was looking at the insurance burden being put on the Chamber. They are looking into it.

**7. Chamber Updates, Karen Strolia** – Karen is digging into the Economic Development strategic plan to understand the feedback that was captured a couple of years ago, the trajectory looks good. She is working to create a longer-term vision for the BID and the chamber. Micah and Terrance are working with her to wrap up the financial process for the BID. The State of the City Dinner will be on May 15 in front of the Rafael Theater, partnering with local restaurants, and this year awards and presentations will be inside the theater. PBID update: No new information about it at this point. Assessment updates: the city has no formal list of who has/hasn't paid. The BID/Chamber has requested the list, but not received. Considering some sort of outreach ideas on how to show the local businesses what work we are doing to support them.

**8. Roundtable check-in/next agenda suggestions, all** – Homelessness and vacancies for future topics.

**Adjourned 11:09am**

\*action items