

# **BID Advisory Board Meeting Minutes**

## **Thursday, January 15, 2026, 10-11 AM**

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

### **1. Call to Order/Roll Call 10:00AM**

**Attended:** Adam Dawson, Katherine Erilla, Terrance Thornton, Jeff Brusati, Tobi Lessem, Jay Yinger, Rick Lewis

**BID Staff:** Sarah Tipple

**Chamber:** Karen Strolia

**Guests:** Carol Ponzio - MSA

**Absent:** Temple Schauble, Crystal Vargas, Morgan Schaffler

### **2. Approval of December Minutes\***

*The meeting did not have a quorum, so no vote could be taken.*

### **3. Approval of Amendment to Section 4.6 of the Bylaws - Quorum definition\* (5 min)**

*The meeting did not have a quorum, so no vote could be taken.*

**3. President's Report, Terrance** – Terrance reported on the need to follow up with the City's parking committee after a productive meeting with Jim last year. Requests included a three-hour parking extension, increased promotional materials highlighting garage employee benefits, and improved promotion of the ParkMobile app. Extending parking to three hours could support increased shopping and time spent downtown, as two hours is often insufficient for activities such as attending a class followed by lunch. While the ParkMobile app allows users to extend parking time, only approximately 16% of users are currently using the app, raising the question of how to better motivate both employees and customers to utilize garage parking. He emphasized that the City needs to provide clearer and more effective promotional materials. Parking meters are important in keeping spaces turning over but expressed concern that strict ticketing exactly at the expiration time can penalize customers and negatively impact the downtown experience. Karen offered to reach out to Jim as well to assist with follow-up.

**4. Director's Report, Sarah** – Sarah reported that she enjoys doing a business walk-around in January or February to promote BID programs. The outreach typically takes place over several days and includes brief five- to ten-minute conversations with each business. 150+ businesses. She shared the flyer with the board, one side highlighting 25+ BID programs to ensure businesses are aware of the scope of work being done, and the other side intended to include a survey; however, survey questions will not be included this year since the Chamber is conducting it. Another flyer is handed out that reminds businesses who the BID is and why we exist, includes a downtown map, and provides key City and partner resources such as SeeClickFix, the Safe Team contact number, and the SBDC. Sarah also requested board involvement across the BID's 25-plus programs and encouraged members to mark their calendars, noting that nearly everyone is participating in some way and expressing appreciation for that support. She also announced that the third annual Lunar New Year Scavenger Hunt will begin in February, emphasizing that it drives foot traffic, adds color and vibrancy downtown, and generates strong press coverage, with

participant feedback consistently noting it as a great way to enjoy downtown and discover new businesses. Fe-BREW-ary is also coming up.

**5. Budget Review – Sarah, Karen:** Sarah shared the 2025 balance sheet and profit and loss statement 2025. Some items of note on the P&L: \$10,000 public art programming utility box expense moved from 2025 to 2026, questions about a \$1,000 insurance refund check to be reclassified to miscellaneous income, a \$1,000 sponsor check for Dancing Under the Lights is not added yet, and promotional advertising expenses that was coded incorrectly, not all beautification funds were spent in 2025, the Winter Wonderland sponsorship check to City has not yet been written. Questions were raised regarding the tax and workers' compensation line items, and Karen indicated she would check with bookkeeper on all these questions and follow up next month.

Karen provided an update on assessments, noting that there is a potential \$10,000 increase per year if all assessments are paid, though there is currently no enforcement mechanism. Additional balance sheet questions were discussed, including a May Madness \$11k line item, \$5k in accounts payable, and \$5k in accounts receivable, with Karen agreeing to follow up with the bookkeeper on those items as well. It was confirmed that the \$68,000 balance in the bank is accurate. Karen explained that during the predecessor's phase-out, the bookkeeper entered the numbers, but some information was unclear and required additional cleanup. She also noted that the books are closed in January for the prior year to account for outstanding or unrealized revenue, and that once the books are closed, a revised budget will be distributed to BID members.

**6. May Madness Committee Updates – Rick:** Work is underway on reopening the website, setting up PayPal, managing registrations, securing insurance, coordinating vendors, redesigning the banner, submitting the City application, and addressing other related elements. Sarah has big to do list. Additional day-of-event volunteers are still needed, and board involvement is critical to the success of this key fundraising event. There was discussion about the need to widen the planning horizon to sustain the event's legacy, noting that long-term planning requires broader participation. Comparisons were made to other communities, with Petaluma attracting more cars but lacking strong "cruisability," and Novato drawing many cars but fewer patrons. San Rafael's event last year was noted as one of the largest in recent history. Rick expressed the need for stronger publicity, including television coverage, Marin IJ, social media, and press releases. Current revenue sources include sponsorships, car registrations, exhibitors, food sales, T-shirt sales, and beverages. Rick shared that he distributes event information widely through Google listings and magazines, but noted that a dedicated coordinator is still needed to manage and align all publicity efforts. Sarah mentioned that she knows a publicist, though hiring one would add cost. It was also noted that forming the new May Madness nonprofit, due to the closing of the old BID non-profit, resulted in roughly \$5k expense to the event.

**7. DSRAD Updates – Sarah:** The five new public art pieces presented by DSARD are scheduled to go before City Council on Monday, including the mural on the fountain in the plaza, C Street Garage mural, a mural on the Second Street retaining wall, and two sculptures – a temp one at City Hall and a permanent installation near Pond Farm 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Intersection. An unveiling celebration is planned for June, with

details to be determined. The DSRAD matching grant project Sarah launched for the BID was created to offer DSRAD grant funding to support downtown businesses. It is now under the City due to Chamber liability concerns, and is slow to move forward due to City legal issues. Stacey is now spearheading the project and reaches out to City legal multiple times a week to help push this through. Thank you for your patience. The grant funds must be spent before June 2026.

The BID's request for \$7,000 from DSRAD to support a rainbow crosswalk was approved in 2024; however, the original Ghilotti contact is no longer available, and a new contractor will need to be identified within the approved budget. Additionally, the BID requested \$10,000 from DSRAD in 2024 to establish a permanent utility box art program. The proposal includes painting five utility boxes and creating a sustainable system and long-term home for the program.

**8. Beautification Updates – Tobi, Adam, Jay, Jeff:** Adam and Tobi provided an update on the mulching project, noting that they have been managing the effort and enjoyed the process, though additional resources and more tools from the City would be helpful. Tobi sent her mulching plan to Adam and Sarah for review and suggestions, with the goal of implementing the project on a quarterly basis. Adam and Tobi will share the updated plan at the next meeting.

Jay's focus is on improving a single intersection by adding plants, water, and related enhancements. He is currently obtaining pricing for planters at scale and sourcing materials at wholesale, while noting that ongoing watering and maintenance present a challenge. Jay is working with DPW to explore solutions and plans to concentrate on one pilot planter, with the intention of sharing the plan or key findings at the next meeting. He has a \$2,500 budget from the BID allocated for this effort and that B Street is being considered as a potential location following the removal of trees.

**9. SR Chamber Updates, Karen –** The recent BID/Chamber partnership meeting was successful, bringing together the BID Board, Chamber Board, and the City Manager. This was a valuable opportunity for Christine to directly hear the needs of the business community. The next meeting will include the City's Finance Director. The City has adopted a three-year strategic plan and is seeking business community feedback on how the plan aligns with current needs, particularly as it relates to years two and three. Board members were encouraged to participate in the March meeting to discuss the City's strategic plan, with Karen to share meeting details and timing. An update was also provided on upcoming Chamber events, including the Marin Economic Forum scheduled for February 18, which will have a broader Marin-focused scope and run from 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

**10. Round Table Check-In/Next Agenda suggestions, all –** Budget with updates. Jay wants to share signage improvement ideas. Tobi/Adam to share mulching project updates.

**Adjourn 11:13AM**

*\*action items*