

BID Advisory Board Meeting Minutes

Thursday, April 16, 2026, 10-11 AM

San Rafael Chamber Conference Room

817 Mission Ave, San Rafael, CA 94901

1. Call to Order/Roll Call 10:03AM

Attended: Terrance Thornton, Jeff Brusati, Jay Yinger, Kathrine Erilla, Tobi Lessem, Rick Lewis

BID Staff: Sarah Tipple

SR Chamber: Karen Strolia

Guests: Jaime Ortiz – Bank of Marin & SR Chamber, Beau Blanchard – CAFILM & SR Chamber, Andrea Henderson – SR Chamber, Carol Ponzio - MSA

Absent: Temple Schauble, Crystal Vargas, Morgan Schaufli, Adam Dawson

2. Approval of December, January, February, & March Minutes*

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

3. President's Report – Terrance: Dissolution Update: Any remaining assets will be liquidated and all outstanding obligations will be addressed as part of the dissolution process. Once the dissolution is finalized, a Certificate of Dissolution can be submitted to the Secretary of State. To address previous questions, Terrance reached out to the attorney twice but did not receive a response. Given the nature of the inquiry, it was felt that the attorney may have been more comfortable responding to someone other than a current board member.

An additional issue involves the EDD and Paychex, which handled payroll for Sarah. When payroll services ended in August 2023, Jed was listed as the signee, and the account had not been closed. We no longer have access to the account. Sarah's new tax professional is currently assisting with resolving the matter.

Bylaws / Quorum Discussion: The bylaws, which were created and updated in 2021 prior to the current board, contain language describing two different meeting quorum requirements. One section references a quorum of eight members for meetings of the membership, while another section regarding special meetings references only a majority, without specifying a number. With Stacey's assistance, it was confirmed that the current Board can establish quorum at seven members, representing a majority of the current board. Sarah suggested updating the bylaws for clarity to help avoid confusion for future boards and staff.

4. Director's Report – Sarah: Events, Promotions, & Art Programming Updates: Earth Day Clean & Green: Earth Day continues to be a successful community volunteer event, typically drawing 30–40 volunteers each year with strong support from the Board. Cory from the City coordinates supplies and City logistics. Terrance leads graffiti removal efforts, while Tobi and Adam coordinate the mulching projects. Jaime assists Sarah with tent setup, and Tom Harrison leads sticker removal throughout Downtown. The Mayor attends each year to share a few words with volunteers. The event takes place from 10:00 AM–12:00 PM, and this year Hot Italian is generously providing free gelato to all volunteers. Volunteer sign-ups are available on the BID website.

May Madness Car Show & Parade: Planning for May Madness is moving along well. Posters are hot off the press and will be distributed to businesses tomorrow. The liquor license has been secured, and sponsorships are tracking slightly ahead of last year. Trophy sponsorship opportunities are still available

for anyone interested. Entertainment lineups are finalized and posted on the website. Coordination continues around vehicles, exhibitors, vendors, promotions, and logistics for what remains the BID's largest annual fundraiser. The event continues to showcase the vibrancy of Downtown San Rafael and serves as an important community-building event. Sarah shared that a friend who attended a previous year commented on how vibrant Downtown San Rafael felt and how it looked like a wonderful place to live.

Dancing Under the Lights (DUTL): The date for Dancing Under the Lights has been finalized for the first Friday in August, consistent with prior years. Sarah explored moving the event date to Sept, but chose to avoid conflicts with the West End Block Party schedule. School of Rock will return to perform, and due to popular demand, Neon Velvet will also return after being a major hit two years ago.

Pizza Month: The 1st Annual Pizza Month has officially been finalized for July. Additional details and business sign-ups will be announced soon.

Hops & Vines: Research continues on identifying the best October date for Hops & Vines. September was considered too competitive with other Marin events, and wineries have expressed a preference for October, which may help increase participation.

Annual BID Summer Mixer – Pacifics Baseball Game: The annual BID Summer Mixer at the Pacifics Baseball game is confirmed for Friday June 5th. The event still needs a singer for the National Anthem and someone to throw out the ceremonial first pitch. Morgan and Kathrine will assist with organizing the mixer, more updates next month. The event includes a large raffle featuring donations from local businesses and serves as a strong community-building opportunity. Since T&B is celebrating its 80th anniversary, the group discussed potentially inviting someone from the business to throw out the first pitch.

Annual Fall Meeting & Mixer: The Annual Fall Meeting and Mixer is tentatively planned for the third Monday or Tuesday in September. The BID is currently looking for a venue and traditionally selects a newer Downtown business to help promote. Sarah expressed hope that The Twelfth may be open by then and available to host.

BID Promotions & Advertising: BID promotions continue to perform well. Weekly Marin IJ digital advertisements are generating approximately 15,000 impressions and around 200 clicks per month. It links to the BID's online event calendar, which is also seeing strong engagement. Businesses with events posted to the calendar receive additional promotion through the BID's Facebook page and placement on the BID homepage, helping consolidate Downtown happenings into a central community resource. Sarah continues working on strategies to promote the biz calendar to different target audiences.

Art Programming / Utility Box Art Program: Sarah officially launched the new BID Utility Box Art Program in April, and the program has already received three artist submissions. Sarah received approval for \$10,000 in funding from DSRAD to help establish the program as a permanent public art initiative. Funding supports administration, insurance, artist coordination, and long-term management infrastructure. The goal is to paint five utility boxes this year, with the long-term vision of the BID sponsoring at least one new box annually while also maintaining and refreshing existing artwork over time. Currently, there is no designated long-term "manager" of the utility boxes. DPW recommended focusing on newer boxes since many older boxes may eventually need replacement, although replacement timelines could still be 5–10 years away. The program currently cannot expand into the West End because there are no traffic signal utility boxes located in that area.

5. **Budget Review – Sarah:** She shared the current budget. There were no major concerns or notable changes to report at this time. The Lunar New Year expenses exceeded the income generated from the event this year.

6. **Beautification – Tobi, Adam (absent), Jay:** Beautification & Mulching Program Updates: The Downtown mulching program will officially launch again on Earth Day with the help of volunteers and BID

Board members. Jaime also expressed interest in becoming more involved this year. Jeff, Adam, Tobi, Jaime, and potentially additional volunteers will assist with continuing the mulching efforts throughout the year, with three planned phases total. Tobi and Adam will lead the next two phases of the mulching program.

Planter & Streetscape Updates: Jay provided updates regarding the Fourth Street planter improvement discussions. Old tree stumps currently cost approximately \$800 each to drill out, raising questions about potential funding or subsidy sources for future planter upgrades. Also mentioned larger planter concepts, emphasizing the importance of selecting durable materials that are not easily damaged or knocked over. Jay identified a potential source for iron planters that may be better suited for the Downtown environment. Tree species selection and access to water sources remain important considerations in the planning process. The BID currently has a \$3,000 budget allocated this year to complete one planter improvement project. Jay plans to return next month with additional concepts and recommendations for the Board to review.

7. **Parking Updates – Karen, Terrance:** Karen forwarded the recent email conversation between the BID and Jim regarding Downtown parking concerns and requested an update, which was then forwarded to Terrance for follow-up. One idea discussed was adjusting parking meter hours to longer enforcement windows, potentially extending meter operations from 10:00 AM–7:00 PM. However, there could be operational and community concerns associated with that change. It was also noted that electric vehicle charging fees may begin to be implemented in the future. Downtown San Rafael has two free parking garages, both of which are typically far below capacity. However, many visitors still prefer street parking over garage parking. Sarah questioned why the parking lots are not free on Saturdays and suggested that would be a good topic to discuss further with Jim. Terrance noted that the smaller surface lots are often heavily utilized by employees parking for long periods, reducing turnover and creating more enforcement activity and ticket revenue. Jaime asked about current garage parking permit rates, noting that monthly parking in the garages is approximately \$75 according to the City’s website. It was also observed that the fourth floor of the garage behind the bank is often largely empty. One idea discussed was encouraging employees to use upper garage levels, potentially through discounted employee parking incentives. These parking options and information are currently posted on the BID website. Could use better City promo of these options. Jay introduced a broader discussion about the ongoing challenge of employees and merchants “plugging” meters by parking all day in convenient customer spaces. This reduces turnover and limits accessible parking for shoppers and visitors. As parking enforcement increases, some employees move vehicles throughout the day or begin parking in nearby residential neighborhoods. One potential solution discussed was creating free or discounted parking opportunities for employees and merchants in underutilized parking areas or garage levels, helping preserve prime street parking for customers and visitors. Jeff would like to meet with Karen and Terrance before the next parking meeting to continue discussing parking concerns and possible solutions.

8. **DSRAD Updates – Stacey:** Stacey shared several updates regarding the Downtown San Rafael Arts District (DSRAD) Public Art Program. The program remains very active, with multiple projects currently underway throughout Downtown. The new sculpture currently installed at the San Rafael Community Center is now in place, and a ribbon cutting ceremony is being planned in the near future. The

sculpture's current location is temporary, with plans to eventually relocate it to the new crosswalk/public art area near Pond Farm once that site is completed and ready for installation. Additional mural projects are also moving forward. Work is expected to begin soon on the C Street Garage mural, followed by the City Plaza fountain mural project. Stacey also announced the launch of a new ArtBurst grant opportunity for businesses and organizations within the District. The ArtBurst 2026 program will offer grants ranging from approximately \$5,000–\$10,000 for arts-related activations and projects taking place between May and June 2026. Information about the grant opportunity can be found in the news section of the BID website. The BID's new Utility Box Art Program is continuing to move forward successfully. Overall, there is excitement about the momentum and continued growth of public art and creative placemaking efforts throughout Downtown San Rafael.

9. **City Updates – Stacey:** Downtown Cleaning & Beautification Updates: The City's End-to-End Downtown cleaning and power washing program is currently active. Crews were working this week in the D Street and Fourth Street areas and shared that they are making their way throughout Downtown with the goal of completing full district cleaning operations during the month of April. Sarah suggested documenting the impact of the program with before-and-after photos, including potential staff or volunteer selfies, to help showcase the improvements and ongoing beautification efforts. Stacey asked group about outreach and education opportunities related to sidewalk maintenance responsibilities. Feedback and additional ideas will be shared via email. One suggestion was to create a broader campaign reminding Downtown businesses, property owners, and tenants about their responsibilities for sidewalk cleanliness and maintenance while also providing resources and tools for assistance. Sarah noted that the BID already has a one-page informational flyer covering many of topics including this one, and will forward it to Stacey for review. Karen asked about vacant properties and who is responsible for debris or garbage removal when no tenant occupies the building. Stacey clarified that responsibility falls to the property management company or property owner. Stacey also shared that, in the coming fiscal year, the City is exploring ways to improve how Downtown beautification services are managed and financed. However, due to broader City service limitations, there are currently no plans for a dedicated "concierge-style" maintenance service. Residents and businesses are encouraged to utilize the City's "See, Click, Fix" reporting platform to report maintenance issues directly. Stacey returned to the earlier discussion about encouraging businesses to take greater responsibility for maintaining storefront areas and expressed curiosity about how businesses and tenants may respond to additional outreach or educational efforts. Karen added that businesses may also need guidance regarding the safe handling of hazardous debris such as drug paraphernalia, condoms, or other biohazards, which would likely require City assistance or specialized cleanup support.

Development & Economic Updates: Stacey also shared several development and economic updates impacting Downtown San Rafael: The 930 Irwin residential development project recently held its groundbreaking ceremony. Goldstone has officially submitted an application for the Market Hall and residential tower project, which is proposed at 24 stories. Plans are available for public viewing through the City's online project portal. The City's "Major Projects" webpage is becoming a valuable resource for tracking Downtown development activity.

In recognition of Small Business Week during the first week of May, the City is preparing a proclamation for City Council and plans to spotlight select local small businesses. Stacey also shared encouraging

economic activity data, noting that approximately \$83 million in transactions occurred in San Rafael between January and April 15, indicating positive momentum in real estate activity and business activation throughout the City.

Finally, the City is exploring improved communication and onboarding processes for new businesses, particularly through the business license application process. Efforts include providing information about the San Rafael GO program and connecting businesses to available resources such as the Small Business Development Center (SBDC) and other City support services.

10. **Chamber Updates – Karen:** The Chamber is working with the City of San Rafael on a new business survey intended for Downtown businesses. The goal of the survey is to better understand how businesses are doing, identify ongoing needs and concerns, and gather broader feedback from the business community. Parking was mentioned as an important topic. The intent is to hear from a wide range of businesses rather than relying on feedback from only a small group of stakeholders.

The upcoming State of the City event featuring Mayor Kate, taking place on May 13. The event is designed to be both informative and community-oriented, featuring live music, food, and opportunities for networking and engagement. The Chamber is bringing back the Business Showcase event on September 30 at Falkirk Cultural Center. It will take place outdoors and, over the years, has evolved into more of a business-to-business networking and showcase event. However, participation remains open to both businesses interested in hosting booths and community members interested in attending. Additional details and event information will be shared as planning continues.

11. **Round Table Check-In/Next Agenda suggestions – all:** Carol shared that MSA has made a proposal regarding a potential relocation from its current location near E Street and Third Street, the move closer to Fourth Street may ultimately be a stronger fit for visibility and foot traffic. However, the potential new location currently under consideration is reportedly in very poor condition, so another proposal has been submitted for a building space located next to Scandinavian Designs. As part of the transition, the business would be downsizing significantly from approximately 17 units to 4 units, which Carol explained is necessary to help the business remain financially sustainable and operational.

Tobi shared exciting news that Bodywise Massage is expanding from approximately 600 square feet to 2,400 square feet. The expanded space will include six massage rooms and offer a broader range of wellness services including somatic work, Thai massage, and couples massage. Additional offerings may include “movement snacks,” herbal medicines, and other healing and wellness services intended to help fill gaps where traditional medical systems may not fully meet community needs.

Beau also shared updates from California Film Institute regarding the upcoming DocLands Documentary Film Festival, taking place April 30 through May 3. The festival’s closing night party will be held at the Elks Lodge.

Adjourn 11:07AM

**action items*