

BID Advisory Board Meeting Minutes

Thursday, December 18, 2025, 10-11 AM

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

1. Call to Order/Roll Call 10:05AM

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

BID Staff: Sarah Tipple

Chamber: Karen Strolia, Andrea Henderson

City Staff: Stacey Laumann

Guests: Carol Ponzio - MSA

Absent: Temple Schauble, Crystal Vargas

2. Approval of Minutes*

**September: motion Morgan 2nd Adam Dawson
all members present approved minutes**

**October: motion Adam Dawson 2nd Jay
all members present approved minutes**

**November: motion Jeff Brusati 2nd Adam Dawson
all members present approved minutes**

3. President's Report, Terrance – Terrance shared that he spoke with the San Rafael Police Department regarding whether they maintain a contact list of downtown business owners for emergency situations. This came up after he noticed a neighboring business's door was open and had no direct way to reach the owner. SRPD confirmed they do not currently have such a list, but it may be something worth considering in the future.

4. Director's Report, Sarah – Sarah thanked everyone for attending the Annual Holiday Mixer, noting it was a great opportunity to feature new downtown businesses, meet new faces, and strengthen connections.

Sarah reported that the BID Assessment Renewal was presented and approved at City Hall on Monday. She delivered a brief two-minute presentation highlighting the work completed over the past year, including 25 programs across seven program categories, as well as the BID's successful fundraising efforts. Sarah then used her report time to invite board members to share highlights from their businesses or downtown experiences in 2025 (not limited to BID programming), to celebrate the end of the year meeting. Highlights included:

- **Sarah (BID):** Special moment of 2025 was at the 2nd Annual Dancing Under the Lights, proud to see an event idea come to life, seeing the growth and success, be welcomed by the community, and becoming part of the Downtown tradition for years to come.
- **Morgan (Youth in Arts):** Shared success of the *My Voice Matters* program, highlighting and uplifting student voices.

- **Andrea (San Rafael Chamber):** Enjoyed the opportunity to visit and connect with many downtown businesses.
- **Karen (San Rafael Chamber):** Noted an exceptional year due to strong partnership and coordination with the BID. Highlighted upcoming January meeting with Cristine to better align with the City, as well as the success of the Economic Forecast and Job Fair events.
- **Adam (Mikes Bikes):** Spoke about ongoing supply-chain challenges but highlighted a meaningful partnership with Access for Bikes to expand trail access.
- **Terrance (San Rafael Martial Arts):** Shared the business's role in supporting kids and teens through proactive mentorship and school check-ins.
- **Katherine (Modern + Avenida):** Reported increased social media engagement, repeat customers, and growing recognition from other companies for events and pop-ups.
- **Carol (MSA):** Highlighted successful partnerships with the Audubon Society and WildCare that drove traffic to the gallery; plans to continue partnerships, with the lease running through November.
- **Jay (Yinger Associates):** Noted challenges to the 2nd Friday Art Walk post-COVID, but shared that the most recent event was highly attended and encouraging.
- **Rick (Gold Rush / New Advisory Board Member):** Shared impacts of tariffs on precious metals, noting steady traffic counts and optimism that conditions will stabilize.
- **Jeff (T+B Sports):** Also noted tariff impacts but emphasized the business's ability to adapt. Highlighted the importance of events in building goodwill, strong customer service as a competitive advantage, the upcoming 80th anniversary in 2026, and the annual Christmas Eve event.
- **Tobi (Bodywise):** Shared expansion into an 1,800 sq. ft. space to support community events, classes, herbal offerings, and expanded massage services.

5. **SR Chamber Updates, Karen** – Karen shared that she noticed a renewed trend toward shopping local and supporting brick-and-mortar businesses (from 20-year-olds). She noted that the Chamber Board and BID Board will come together to discuss the partnership in Jan. Karen emphasized that the Chamber's role is not to take over BID efforts, but to support and advocate for the BID and downtown businesses, including assistance with health department issues and support for non-Chamber members.

She also addressed the absence of the Downtown Streets Team (DST) and raised the question of how the City can help restore basic downtown services such as power washing, safety, and beautification. It was noted that power washing is currently scheduled on a quarterly basis but has not been consistent. Sarah added that when DST ended in Petaluma, the City contracted with the nonprofit Rebuilding Together to manage similar services.

Discussion included the PBID, which was acknowledged as a good initiative from the City, with emphasis that it should serve as an addition to existing services rather than a replacement. Karen also referenced Marin Convention & Visitors Bureau (MCVB) funding currently allocated to West Marin promotion and noted there may be opportunities to reallocate some of those dollars to support downtown San Rafael.

Winter Wonderland was discussed, noting that the event was delegated to the BID in 2022 and 2023. In 2024 the city gave us ARPA funds to hire a producer. In 2025, the City took back the production and management, like pre-covid. Sarah worked for the production company that used to produce it.

Karen also shared that work is ongoing to remove barriers and simplify systems so small businesses can more easily access City programming.

Finally, a question was raised regarding BID assessment collections, noting that approximately \$10,000 remains uncollected. Clarification is needed on whether affected businesses are aware of the outstanding balances and what the plan is for outreach and follow-up.

6. City & DSRAD Updates, Stacey –Stacey shared an update following the City Council meeting on Monday and thanked the BID for volunteering time and support. She noted that DSRAD public art projects are planned to be unveiled next summer and emphasized the importance of celebrating these installations and using them as an opportunity to help San Rafael shine.

Stacey also shared that tourism is included in the City’s three-year plan, with an upcoming effort to assess the current tourism model, evaluate partnerships and resources, and develop a clearer strategy moving forward. She highlighted that city gateways are a major priority, noting that the Highway 101 northbound gateway is expected to be revitalized within the next six months.

Finally, Stacey emphasized the need to further define and strengthen the San Rafael brand, including the overall look and feel of the city.

7. Round Table Check-In/Next Agenda suggestions, all – Jeff with T+B highlighted the upcoming January Chamber/BID meeting as an opportunity to leverage the new year as a kickoff for a revitalized partnership between the two entities.

Sarah asked if the meetings could be updated to end at 11:15 to allow for more discussion without being rushed, as she feels her reports are. While about half of those present preferred to keep the meeting to one hour, there was general agreement to add an optional 9:45 a.m. informal mingle time before the meeting for those who wish to connect.

Finally, it was noted that an update to the bylaws should be added to a future agenda to revise the quorum requirement to one-half plus one of the board, rather than the previous requirement of eight members, which reflected a larger board size in the past.

Adjourn 11:02AM

**action items*