

**Dimond Improvement Association
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes, 8/13/2020**

Board members present: Jay Ashford, Zandile Christian, Fran Donohue, Tomasz Finc, Paul Epstien, Chris Harper, Julie Johnson, Marjorie Jones, Marion Mills, Ryan Romaneski, Daniel Swafford, Victoria Wake and Kevin Whittinghill

Absent Board Members: Ben Stein-Lobovits, JoAnn Tracht-Rawson **Guests:** Rishi Desai

1. Agenda approval.

ACTION: After motion made and seconded, the meeting agenda was approved as presented.

2. Approval of July Minutes.

ACTION: After motion made by Fran, and seconded by Tomasz, the Minutes of the July 9, 2020 meeting were approved.

3. Chair's Report.

In advance of the meeting, Ryan solicited comments from the Board members as to how to improve meetings. Ryan thanked the members of the Board for sharing their insights.

Ryan also thanked Paul and Julie for participating in the first Executive Team Meeting ("ETM"). During the ETM, the Executive Committee approved a digital thank you card for Betsy Block, who provided strategic planning advice to the Board. Ryan also thanked Marjorie, who has offered to prepare the DIA's 2019 income tax returns at no cost to the DIA.

Ryan solicited other Board members to thank or celebrate the work of other members, which was done.

4. District 4 Updates.

Ryan reported that Amauri Collins-McMurray, the Community Liaison to Councilmember Sheng Thao, updated him regarding the fire station project and break-ins at Joaquin Miller Park.

Fire Station. The restaurant at the fire station (Bombera) is scheduled to open November 2020. A hearing on the Agreement to sell the building was to be held at the July City Council meeting, but was pushed to September. Ryan intends to circulate a letter on behalf of the Board.

Break-Ins. With respect to recent break-ins, Amauri reported to Ryan that the Oakland Police Department (OPD) has apprehended suspects. The OPD Captain has reportedly dedicated additional resources to the Joaquin Miller area.

Tennis Courts. Victoria reported that Amauri informed her that the Dimond Park tennis court

repair is now scheduled for November.

5. Meeting Purpose

Discussion led by Ryan. Ryan would like to align the Board around a set of guiding principles, i.e., a set of beliefs that guide the Board's decisions.

After discussion, the Board generated the following goals for its regular meetings: 1. An opportunity to focus on specific areas that are important to DIA; 2. Monitor progress of Board actions; 3. Celebrate successes; 4. Keep organized; and 5. Engage in topics of discussion.

In advance of the meeting, Ryan solicited comments from Board members on the subject of how to improve meetings. Four themes or guiding principles emerged: 1. Stay connected to the mission and purpose of the DIA; 2. Focus on what matters; 3. Do together what we cannot do alone; and 4. Respect each other's time in terms of how each member "shows up" to each meeting. That means, come prepared and stay engaged throughout the meeting.

Ryan broke the Board members into four groups, one for each theme. Each group met separately in a virtual break out room to discuss what the particular theme or principle would look like, sound like, feel like?

After the break-out meetings, the Board reconvened. Ryan asked the Board about using the break-out rooms. The feedback was positive, though some said they would like more than a 60-second warning that the break-out session would be ending.

6. Mural Project.

Discussion led by Rishi Desai. Rishi updated the Board regarding the mural project underway on a wall facing the Bank of America parking lot. Rishi and his wife own the building on which the mural is being painted.

Context. Approximately one year ago, Rishi attended a Board meeting to discuss the mural project and request a contribution to pay the muralist, Robin Gibson. At that time, the Board supported the project and, per Rishi's request, allocated a \$6,000.00 contribution to the project from Oaktobefest and restricted art funds. The Board did not at that time formally authorize the contribution.

After shelter-in-place orders were issued in March, the project was put on hold. Rishi and his wife have since worked with DBPA to re-start the project. Rishi represented that the DBPA contributed \$15,000.00, and has agreed to pay ongoing mural maintenance for 10 years.

Rishi reported that, under the DBPA agreement, the mural will be inspected each month. To the extent there is a source problem, the muralist, Ms. Gibson, will repair it under the terms of the original contract. To the extent there may be graffiti or other external damage, the DBPA will contract with Ms. Gibson or another artist for the repair.

Rishi renewed the request for a \$6,000.00 contribution from the DIA. Rishi represented that the funds will be used to pay Ms. Gibson market rate for a mural of this type and size. Rishi presented a picture of the current state of the mural. Approximately one-third of the project is complete.

ACTION: Tomasz moved to contribute \$6,000.00 for the mural project. Chris seconded. After discussion, the Board unanimously approved a \$6,000.00 contribution.

7. Oaktoberfest Update.

Discussion led by Daniel. Because of the pandemic, the Board cannot put on the traditional Oaktoberfest event. Daniel asked, What can be done, if anything, as an alternative to the traditional Oaktoberfest to support local businesses and the DIA, as well as partner organizations? It will be a challenge, he noted, for the Board to budget for next year without 2020 Oaktoberfest funds.

Kevin asked the Board to consider how comfortable it is with putting on a live event, and what such an event might look like.

Chris encouraged the Board to mark Oaktoberfest in some fashion, as a reminder that the community is missing the real thing.

After additional discussion, Daniel asked the Board to make a decision on whether to put on an alternative event, and what that alternative would be, before the regular September Board meeting.

ACTION: The Board voted in favor of Daniel, Kevin and Ryan preparing proposals for Oaktoberfest alternatives to be presented at a Special Meeting.

8. Reimbursement To Dimond Gateway Mural Artist

Discussion led by Jay. The Board previously provided a grant to artist Kritsi Holohan to rehab the Dimond Gateway Mural (across from 7/11). Ms. Holohan was robbed while working on the mural. Jay understands that her bag was stolen, and that she may have lost her datebook, phone, supplies, and other items.

ACTION: Jay moved to reimburse Ms. Holohan for supplies and expenditures lost as a result of the robbery up to a maximum of \$500.00. The Grants Committee will assess the items for which Ms. Holohan requests reimbursement to confirm they fall within the scope of the motion. Marian seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

9. Strategic-Planning Process and Timeline

Discussion led by Ryan. Ryan proposed moving the strategic planning process forward with a public survey that the Board can use to collect community input about vision, values and goals. To that end, the next Newsletter will include a link to a survey to solicit information about the community's vision for the Dimond's future, and the DIA's role in achieving that vision. The survey will include a question as to whether each respondent is a member.

Ryan proposed that Jay and Marian, and the Executive Committee, make up the Strategic Planning Committee (SPC).

The Strategic Plan will help the Board think about its strategy, structure, committees, committee membership, and will feed into goal setting. The process will begin with strategy because structure flows from strategy. The Board can thereafter focus on how to form a budget that advances its strategy.

10. WIP Reports

a. *Beautification.* No update.

b. *Communications.* Tomasz reported that Victoria and Ben are working on a new website structure.

c. *Grants.* Jay reported that of the 8 grants that have been awarded, 6 have received funding. Two are on hold due to the pandemic.

d. *Membership/Volunteer Development.* Jay reported that there are now 75 members. Chris, Fran and Jay will meet in the second part of August to prepare an outline for the Fall membership campaign.

e. *BID Feasibility.* Ryan reported that he and Daniel interviewed a potential Business Improvement District (BID) consultant. In addition, Marjorie and Rishi have agreed to join the BID Feasibility committee. At its September meeting, the City Council will take up the DIA's request to disburse the \$20,000.00 allocated in the 2019-2021 city budget for a BID Feasibility study in the Dimond. Ryan intends to propose dissolving the BID Feasibility Committee so that it will be absorbed into the Economic Development Committee.

f. *Additional General Meeting.* Rishi is a well-regarded pediatric infectious disease physician. The DIA is hosting a forum, entitled "Stronger Together: Dimond Forum on COVID-19", with Rishi on Wednesday, August 19.

g. *General Meeting.* Jay reported that the topic for the next General Meeting, scheduled for September 17, is the City Budget. Presenters will be Jay, Councilmember Sheng Thao, Lisa Augustin of the Oakland Budget Bureau, and Todd Tauzer, VP and Consulting Actuary at Segal.

Adjournment. The meeting was adjourned at 8:59 p.m.

Next Board meeting: September 10, 2020

Submitted by: Paul Epstein

Approved: 10/8/20