

**Dimond Improvement Association
Board of Directors Meeting, October 8, 2020**

Board members present: Jay Ashford, Zandile Christian, Fran Donohue, Tomasz Finc, Paul Epstien, Chris Harper, Julie Johnson, Ben Stein-Lobovitz, Marion Mills, Ryan Romaneski, Daniel Swafford, JoAnn Tracht-Rawson, Victoria Wake and Kevin Whittinghill

Absent Board Members: Marjorie Jones

1. Agenda Approval (Ryan)

Marion Mills moved to approve the meeting agenda. Jay Ashford seconded the motion. The agenda was approved.

2. Minutes Approval (Paul)

A motion was made to approve the minutes from the August 13, 2020 Board Meeting. Fran Donohue seconded the motion. JoAnn Tracht-Rawson and Marion Mills abstained. The minutes were approved.

Changes were proposed to the draft minutes from the September 10, 2020 Board Meeting. Paul will incorporate those changes and present the revised minutes to the Board in advance of the November meeting.

3. Chair's Report (Ryan)

Ryan expressed that he has a lot of gratitude for the Board. He appreciates that Board Members stay engaged during meetings. He also thanked the Board for the agenda items and for their great work.

After the opening remarks, Ryan invited "For The Good Of The Order":

A. JoAnn offered that she is working with the Neighborhood Steering Committee ("NSC") regarding the Oakland Department of Transportation's ("DOT") decision to allow Head-Royce families to use designated slow streets for "pick ups" and "drop offs". The NSC will be advising the DOT that it is not happy with the decision, and will ask the DOT to look at alternatives. The NSC is also going to try to meet with Councilmember Sheng Thao to address the issue.

B. Tomasz shared a picture of the Dimond Park tennis courts with the repaired fence, and a picture of the current status of the mural facing the Bank of America parking lot.

C. Jay shared he learned that Renee Sykes, who had been with the Oakland Police Department for 22 years, is retiring.

D. Victoria advised that the City, in response to neighbor requests, has removed all asphalt from the traffic island at the corner of Carmel and Laguna streets. Neighbors are planning to create a drought-tolerant garden there.

4. **District 4 Updates (Ryan for Amauri Collins-Murray)**

Amauri Collins-Murray, the Community Liaison to Councilmember Thao, typically provides the District 4 updates. Amauri notified Ryan that he was attending a candidate forum and could not attend the Board Meeting.

Amauri provided Ryan with slides. Based on Amauri's slides, Ryan reported the following:

A. The Dimond Park tennis court repairs are scheduled to be completed by the end of November.

B. The City Council approved the release of \$20,000.00 to the DIA for a feasibility study regarding making the Dimond a Business Improvement District. Ryan thanked Council Member Thao's office for supporting the release of the funds.

C. The City Council will review the Bombera restaurant sales agreement at its October 20 meeting.

5. **Oaktoberfest Next Steps (Ryan and Daniel)**

Ryan said that he was excited to have all Board Members serve as champions of Oaktoberfest 2020. He said there will be additional opportunities to get involved on the day of the event.

Ryan recognized that Daniel has been "up to his neck" in Oaktoberfest for the last month or so.

Daniel said that he appreciates the effort being put forward by the Board. He reported that Ryan was able to secure a commemorative Oaktoberfest 2020 pint glass, which is being sold on the website. Daniel also reported sales are coming in for the various Oaktoberfest offerings.

Planning Details: Daniel advised that Kevin has been waiting to secure breweries for an online Meet the Brewery event. The back-up plan is to have a Home Brew Club member speak about the Oaktoberfest beers being offered at a 10/17 Zoom event.

Daniel said that he has been receiving good acknowledgement of outreach efforts, including by Visit Oakland. Councilmember Thao's newsletter included a nice feature about Oaktoberfest. Daniel reported that, in toto, the process is coming together. He is trying to encourage people to patronize Dimond businesses for Oaktoberfest, particularly if they would like to order food other than what is being offered by the Grand Lake Kitchen and Dimond slice. Daniel was also able to confirm that the DIA will be able to sell mixed packs of beer at the Grand Lake Kitchen starting on 10/19 and continue through the end of the month.

As for marketing, about 10,000 previous Oaktoberfest attendees will receive an email about this year's event. There have been posts on social media about Dimond businesses. Daniel is sending an email every two to three days regarding not only the main event on 10/17, but also the value of supporting Dimond businesses. In the email, he is also encouraging people to shop local.

Pricing: Through DoorDash, all of the East Bay can receive a delivery of the various Oaktobefest offerings for \$8.00. Delivery to patrons in San Francisco and the South Bay is \$40.00.

Order Deadline: The deadline to place orders is midnight on 10/13.

Thanks: Daniel thanked JoAnn for the MailChimp e-blast. He thanked Ryan for designing the flyer. Marion offered “kudos” to Daniel and his staff, and to Ryan.

Victoria reported that she has been working on a merchant database. She thanked JoAnn and Ryan’s mother, Sharon, for their help. Victoria added that she will include on the website information about Dimond food-related businesses, including discounts and special items being offered for the month of October, which should be on the DIA website by 10/9.

Ryan thanked the Board for saying “yes” to all of the things that they have been asked to do over the last week or two. He recognized that Kevin and Ben have been instrumental with the website and programming, and that Victoria and JoAnn have been talking to merchants. Tomasz has arranged for ads related to the event to be posted on Google.

JoAnn reported that she went to VegHub, which agreed to do an Oaktobefest-related promotion. She left VegHub with 250 postcards, which they will include in all orders.

Two Start Market & Liquors is offering \$15.00 off of scotch, whiskey and bourbon for the month of October.

6. Oakland Capital Improvement (Ryan)

The City is asking for ideas for capital improvement projects. This can include public buildings, sidewalks, parks, transportation, sanitation, wastewater and storm drainage. Ryan invited the Board to think about projects that the DIA, as a community organization, would like to endorse or recommend. The Board has until the end of October to determine what project(s) the DIA may want to get behind.

Board suggestions:

- A. Improvements to the rec center/community center in Dimond Park. (Ryan)
- B. Address ADA issues at Dimond Park. (Ryan)
- C. Replace the Dimond Park concrete tennis courts. (Marion)
- D. Install bocce ball courts at Dimond Park. (Fran)
- E. Repair of curbs and sidewalks in the commercial area. This would address pedestrian access, safety and appeal. (Victoria)
- F. Install a garden with the letters D-I-M-O-N-D in front of the tennis courts at Dimond Park. (JoAnn)

7. November/December General Meeting (Tomasz)

Tomasz reported that, after the two recent General Meetings during the pandemic, there is now a good, repeatable webinar format in place. He solicited topics for the next General Meeting.

Board suggestions included: a. Post-election analysis. b. Marion suggested a topic along the lines of, What is happening in the Dimond vis-a-vis real estate? c. Kevin suggested Policing and Budgets. Tomasz invited Board Members to contact him with additional suggestions.

Chris Harper noted that, in the past, General Meetings in December included a social component.

8. Strategic Planning: Strategic Goals (Ryan)

Ryan advised that the next phase of the strategic planning process is defining strategic goals.

Strategic goals are high-level priorities that provide focus and direction for an organization, and are often consistent from one year to the next. They inform the organization's specific goals that are set every year.

To come up with strategic goals, the Board gathered input from two sources: One was a recent community survey, which asked, in so many words, "What do you think the DIA should prioritize?" and "What is the DIA doing well?" The second was a survey to the Board, which gave Board Members an opportunity to identify the DIA's strengths and threats.

There was alignment of the two sources of feedback. The community said that the DIA does a great job making the neighborhood attractive, such as litter and graffiti removal, and art. The community also mentioned supporting local businesses. Ryan noted that the community also mentioned that the DIA's work makes the neighborhood clean and safe, and that the DIA does a good job of putting on community events.

In response to what the DIA should prioritize going forward, the community reported:

1. Beautification
2. Support for local businesses
3. Safety
4. Events and opportunities to connect.

With respect to strengths, the Board noted:

1. Keep the neighborhood safe, clean & beautiful
2. Host events that entertain, inform and engage
3. A proven track record of success and consistent presence in the community

Board Members' survey responses revealed an organizational "threat" in the form of reliance on a single source (Oaktobrfest) for substantially all revenue.

The Board identified compelling opportunities, including increased business promotion, particularly in light of stagnant businesses and vacant storefronts. Others include new residents moving into the neighborhood and opportunities to work with merchants and the City.

From the survey results, Ryan created a list of five strategic goals:

1. Beautify the public realm in the Dimond District
2. Strengthen neighborhood economic vitality
3. Build an inclusive, cohesive community
4. Enhance and improve public safety
5. Grow membership and volunteerism

The Board approved these five goals.

In order to advance the strategic goals, Ryan proposed re-aligning the Board's committee structure. The proposed new committee structure is as follows:

1. Public Realm (formerly Beautification, Keep Dimond Clean, Dimond Public Art)
2. Economic and Business Development (formerly Economic Development, BID)
3. Community Engagement (former Grants, General Meetings, Oaktoberfest)
4. Public Safety (formerly Public Safety)
5. Membership and Communications (formerly Communications, Membership and Volunteer Development)
6. Administration, Finance and Fundraising (formerly Executive and Finance)

Ryan broke the Board up into small groups. Each group was tasked with determining the scope of each new committee. He also asked each group to consider opportunities that the Board is not currently addressing that the new committees could undertake.

After the full Board reconvened, Ryan advised that he will be sending a survey for final feedback and reflections concerning the new committee structure, and to find out what committee members would be excited about.

9. WIP Reports (All)

There was not enough time for WIP reports.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 9:02 p.m.

Next Meeting: November 12, 2020

Submitted by: Paul Epstein

Approved: 12/10/20