Dimond Improvement Association
Board of Directors Meeting
June 11, 2026

Members Present: Zandile Christian, David Gross, Kidan Hull, John Jacobs, Craig Johnson, Marjorie Jones, Maria Rincón, Victoria Wake

Members Absent: May Seto-Wasem

Guests: Cristy Johnston, Deputy Director, City of Oakland Economic & Workforce Development Department; Rebecca Dean, Councilmember Ramachandran's office; JoAnn-Tracht Rawson, Beautification Committee member; Chris Harper, past Board member

Meeting called to order at 7:05pm.

1. Approval of Agenda

Agenda approved by acclamation.

2. Approval of Minutes

May 2026 meeting minutes approved by acclamation.

3. Cristy Johnston, Deputy Director, City of Oakland Economic & Workforce Development

Cristy introduced herself and described the work of her department. Her seven staff members divvy up the 26 business corridors and 11 business improvement districts to work with. (Her beat includes the Dimond and Laurel.) Her department also manages the Safety Ambassador program. They have a facade grant program but at the moment all funds have been awarded. They also have a "business navigation" service flyer, and expect to have a flyer about the newly passed Measure C tax-relief program. She will send these to us to distribute. We discussed the various challenges to filling storefronts, city permitting, etc., and referenced an exciting "Vacant to Vibrant" program in San Francisco.

4. **City Council District 4 Update**

Rebecca reported on recent happenings at City Council, including:

- Final review of the Mayor's proposed budget is underway. Councilmember Ramachandran is proposing these amendments: $250K additional for safety ambassadors; $500K for graffiti abatement; 3 additional electrician positions; $500K additional for OakDOT for traffic safety measures; and $250K for a "Human Resources Strike Force" to break the log-jam in hiring.
- The $9 million grant from Crankstart Foundation to address illegal dumping. Illegal dumping cameras will increase from 35 to 85. Coordination with OPD and the DA will improve. Drones will be deployed to spot illegal dumping. And two new trucks will be purchased. There is also pending state legislation (SB1218) that would deny vehicle registration to anyone with unpaid illegal dumping fines.

Craig added information about the lease auction for the Caltrans lots coming up on June 15. Permitted use will be short-term vehicular storage (unless a bidder had prior approval for a different use) at $3,500/month for each of the two lots.

5. **Chair's Report**

Dave brought up the challenge of board communications recently, particularly with email responsiveness, and asked the board to discuss the situation and propose solutions. Several board members pointed out the general trend away from email and more towards texting and work platforms such as Slack, which allow for easier coordination of teams, organization of topic threads, and real-time chatting. There was general interest in looking into this but no specific action step was determined.

6. **Treasurer's Report**

Marjorie showed a close-to-final budget report for last fiscal year (FY26), as well as the current Budget to Actuals, and Potential Available Carry Forward Cash reports for the current fiscal year (FY27).

5. Caltrans I-580 Truck Access Study

Victoria brought the board up to date on the study. DIA's ad hoc committee (Carrie Campbell, JoAnn Tracht-Rawson, Tom Donovan, and Victoria) met with Caltrans staff last December and this March, and met earlier this day via zoom with Benicio de Palm, transportation staffer in Assemblymember Mia Bonta's office.

Caltrans held two public listening sessions at St. Jarlath's Church in May, with 150+ people attending each one. One oft-repeated criticism from the public (and the DIA committee) has been that I-580 entities were not included on the Technical Advisory Committee for the study, leading to concerns that the study is weighted to lifting the ban rather than an even-handed, informed look at the potential impacts. This concern was also expressed to Assemblymember Bonta's office.

In March, the DIA committee submitted to Caltrans a spreadsheet of 50+ entities along I-580 to assist the agency in bringing these constituencies into the study process. Results from the various study analyses are expected to be released in the next few months. Victoria also referenced an interesting demographics study comparing I-880 and I-580, and mentioned that there is a contingent of the public calling for the study to be halted and rethought.

6. Committee Updates

Public Safety:

- The committee is down by three board members and it's not known if those retiring will continue as non-board committee members.
- Departing board member Rolfe Kasling will conduct another security camera training via zoom on 6/18.
- The Beautification Committee will pick up the camera installation project for Bienati Overlook.

- The $15K budgeted for bistro lights should be reallocated unless a new lead takes on the project.
- The committee needs to check in with the Laurel District Association on activities and reporting in the Safety Ambassador program.

Economic & Business Development:

- For the City's new "Town Business " free digital advertising program, these Dimond businesses have been nominated in the three eligible categories: The Mailbox (legacy); Tomsa Sushi and Willows & Pine (new); and La Farine (community contributor).
- The committee met with John Beaver, owner of Oaktown Spice and Dimond resident, to gather his ideas and insights regarding the Dimond commercial area.
- Victoria has been in contact with the property manager (Lee Jatta of Borelli Real Estate) and leasing agent (Isaac Sun of Blatteis Realty) of the 15-storefront property Dimond Center (old Rockridge Luggage space around the corner to post office); five of the storefronts are vacant.
- Dollinger Properties welcomes being connected to prospective tenants at the redeveloped Bank of America site; contact Damon Scholl, Dollinger Properties, Damon@dollingerproperties.com, (650) 508-8666 (main); (415) 676-8086.
- Victoria pointed out that the new Chase ATMs have no branding signage; she is guessing it's because the City limits signs to two, and this maximum is in place at roof level, thus giving no business identification at pedestrian level.

CEVO: (slide skipped at the meeting)

- Dimond News Group: A list of email addresses that bounce back is being compiled to deal with.
- Newsletter subscription campaign. The committee is looking into a postcard promotional mailing.
- A-Frames. New vinyl insert sleeves were purchased to affix to the A-frames.
- General Meeting, 5/13. Zandile organized the meeting, which featured a DIA overview, presentation of two Volunteer of the Year awards, and the League of Women Voters explaining ballot measures. There were 54 attendees.
- Community Grants. All are in progress. Awardee for the "Fruitvale Avenue Crosswalk Mural – Four Seasons of the Dimond" had to change the location of the project due to difficult City logistics. The new location is at the yellow entrance gate where Wellington St. turns to Cañon Ave.

Beautification:

- JoAnn Tracht-Rawson was successful in having the City repaint red cubs in 30+ locations.
- Loard's property owners have signed the contract for a mural on their building and the artist, Matthew Floriani, is developing the design.
- Repairs at Champion Transit Plaza kiosk and Farmer Joe's display case have not started yet.
- JoAnn and Victoria are scoping out a project to fix up the Champion St. entrance to Farmer Joe's; next step is to talk to the manager about ideas and cost-sharing.
- Zandile is scoping out a project to repair the retaining wall at Giant Burgers; she is getting estimates and will speak to the owner.
- Old Blockbuster site continues to be an eyesore. Victoria has talked to the owner about trash, weeds, and broken fence; some progress is being made.
- KDC needs another one or two Wednesday litter-walk leads.
- At least one illegal dumper at the KDC drop-spot, caught multiple times on camera, may have been stopped when Caltrans replaced a section of fence and locked two

gates, preventing the dumpers from crossing the parking lot to the drop-spot.

Oaktoberfest:

- Craig reported on his conversation with Daniel Swafford, event organizer. Daniel would like to negotiate a two-year contract going forward, starting with 2026 and 2027. They also discussed strengthening the messaging tying the event proceeds to benefits for the Dimond, including being specific about what program tips, given via the payment apps, support.

7. <u>Good of the Order / New Business</u>

None.

Meeting adjourned at 9:15pm.

Minutes submitted by Victoria Wake
Minutes approved 8/13/26