

**Dimond Improvement Association  
Board of Directors meeting minutes, 4/9/20**

**Board members present at start of meeting:** Jay Ashford, Zandile Christian, Fran Donohue, Tomasz Finc, Chris Harper, Julie Johnson, Marion Mills, Ryan Romaneski, Daniel Swafford, JoAnn Tracht-Rawson, Victoria Wake. **Guests:** Amauri Collins-McMurray, Paul Epstein, Marjorie Jones

**Abbreviations used in minutes:** DB&PA (Dimond Business & Professional Association)

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Chris convened the meeting online via Google Hangouts at 7:05 p.m.

**1. Agenda approval.**

ACTION: Approve the agenda as presented. (Motion: not recorded; Second: Marion; in favor, unanimous)

**2. March minutes approval.**

ACTION: Approve minutes from the March 12 board meeting. (Motion: Marion; Second: Tomasz; in favor, 9; opposed, 0; abstain, 2 [JoAnn, Ryan])

**3. Chair's report.** Chris noted that DIA revenue this year will remain uncertain because the feasibility of (and proceeds from) the Keep Dimond Clean fundraiser, given the COVID-19 pandemic. Also noted was the likely adjustment of the city's budget for the same reason, with the possibility that funding for the Dimond District BID feasibility study and Oakland parks maintenance staff will be affected.

**4. Board member recruitment.** Ryan reported that seven community members have expressed interest so far. He has interviewed two—Marjorie Jones and Ben Stein-Libovits—and recommended them both for appointment. Marjorie is a 26-year resident of the Dimond, is self-employed in tax preparation and bookkeeping for non-profits, and serves as treasurer for DB&PA. Ben moved to the Dimond two years ago and is lead web and analytics engineer for Ripple, the global payments network. Both have a strong desire to be more active and contribute to the Dimond community.

ACTION: Appoint Marjorie Jones and Ben Stein-Libovitz to the DIA Board of Directors, effective immediately. (Motion: Ryan; Second: Marion; in favor, unanimous)

Ryan also recommended the development of a substantive on-boarding process, including a detailed handbook, an in-person orientation session, and the pairing of each new board member with a board mentor. Tomasz and Jay volunteered to help Ryan with this effort, including reviving the handbook draft started a year or so ago.

**5. Work in Progress (WIP) reports (from written & verbal reports).**

*Beautification.* New volunteer Tara Parker-Essig, a recent Design graduate and native plant enthusiast, is working up a protective fencing design for the native plantings at Bienati Overlook. Also for the overlook, one of two bids has been received for replacement of the chain link fence.

*Communications.* Tomasz is testing website hosting on Amazon instead of GoDaddy because of performance issues. He is also working to get Mailisha Chesney, newest member of the committee, up and running as a co-moderator for the Dimond News Group. JoAnn asked for input on the next newsletter—should we publish and what should it include; there was consensus to publish and highlight merchant status given COVID-19.

*Grants.* Jay has been reaching out to grant awardees to see if they would like their initial 50% funding at this point. Two awardees have received it, but many projects are on hold until further notice given COVID-19.

*Membership & Volunteer Development.* The committee met with JoAnn, Tomasz, and Victoria of the Communications Committee on Mar. 24 to discuss membership goals and possible synergies between the two committees. Jay and Chris will further meet to discuss strategies on increasing membership, evaluating membership technology needs, and possibly producing a 60-second video to pitch potential members to join and current members to renew.

*Oaktoberfest.* An informal Oaktoberfest subcommittee of Daniel, Victoria, Julie, Fran, and Chris met to discuss consequences the pandemic may have on the 2020 event, and consider options if it cannot happen in its usual form. The group will meet again on Apr. 11.

*Head-Royce School.* A spring meeting of the Neighborhood Liaison Committee was to be held, but it appears not to be scheduled yet.

*CVS issues.* JoAnn contacted CVS's Darrel Larson, who indicated he would have the store manager get the litter pick-up service started as soon as possible, as agreed to in February. She also asked about CVS staff not wearing personal protective equipment (PPE) and learned the store has now received the gear and will be using it.

*Strategic plan process.* Jay and Marion met on Apr. 8. Jay will send out an email to the board with their thinking and next steps on the plan-making process.

*June 3 general meeting.* Publicity would normally start around Apr. 29, but will be held back until at least early May, when the next COVID-19 social-distancing directive will be known.

**6. Filling JoAnn's and Robert's shoes.** This item was continued from the March meeting. The list of responsibilities each of these long-term board members had assumed over the years was reviewed. While other board members have volunteered to take over some roles, these key roles remain open: KDC Fundraiser coordinator; CVS issues coordinator; and coordinator for Caltrans Park & Ride Lot perimeter weeding. JoAnn will continue with the fundraiser while she can, but needs someone to train along the way. Chris will explore recruiting a team of Head Royce high school students to adopt the Caltrans lot weeding as a school project.

**7. Helping Dimond merchants during (& after) COVID-19.** Chris opened the discussion and invited ideas for how DIA can help Dimond merchants manage during this crisis and rebound after it has subsided. Marjorie said that several DB&PA board members are meeting next week on the subject. Most of the ideas centered around encouraging the public to patronize those merchants still open and doing business at some level. Marion and Marjorie will survey the commercial area and send results to Chris, who will compile the information in a form to publicize to the community. As individuals, board members can get take-out and buy gift cards for future use. Other ideas included: using DIA's A-frames to call attention to open merchants; promoting on-line social gatherings where all participants order take-out; possibly sponsoring the cost of meal delivery; raffling gift cards to people who join DIA; and counseling merchants in seeking benefits through the new CARES Act.

**Adjournment.** Chris adjourned the meeting at 8:45 p.m.

**Next board meeting:** May 14, 2020

*Minutes submitted by Victoria Wake  
Approved 5/14/20*