

**Dimond Improvement Association  
Board of Directors meeting minutes, 6/11/20**

**Board members present at start of meeting:** Jay Ashford, Zandile Christian, Fran Donohue, Tomasz Finc, Chris Harper, Julie Johnson, Marjorie Jones, Ben Stein-Lobovits, Marion Mills, Ryan Romaneski, Daniel Swafford, JoAnn Tracht-Rawson, Victoria Wake, Kevin Whittinghill. **Arriving later:** Paul Epstein.

**Abbreviations used in minutes:** BID (Business Improvement District); KDC (Keep Dimond Clean); DB&PA (Dimond Business & Professional Association); NLC (Neighborhood Liaison Committee); NSC (Neighborhood Steering Committee).

---

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

**1. Agenda approval.**

ACTION: Approve the agenda as presented. (Motion: Marion; Second: Ryan; in favor, unanimous)

**2. Chair's report.** Chris welcomed new board members Kevin Whittinghill and, later in the meeting, Paul Epstein, and invited them both to make a few remarks. Chris indicated that Amauri Collins-McMurray, District 4 community liaison, wasn't able to attend the meeting.

**3. May minutes approval.**

ACTION: Approve minutes from the May 14 board meeting. (Motion: Marion; Second: Ben; in favor, unanimous)

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

*Beautification.* Volunteer recruitment for weeding tree wells in the commercial area continues, with 24 wells now complete and at least another eight expected. Eleven community volunteers, plus three committee members, have taken on one or more wells, working independently given COVID-19.

*Communications.* The committee has asked Kevin to look into starting a DIA Facebook page that we can use to promote events and connect with the community. Tomasz and Ben are setting up a "sandbox" of the website so Victoria and JoAnn can make structural changes in draft form. JoAnn has started the publicity for the 2020 KDC Fundraiser. And after a number of months of frustration, she has succeeded in getting a Google Ad Grant for DIA, meaning thousands of dollars in free advertising. At its next meeting, the committee will be reviewing the content and moderation policies of the Dimond News Group. Community member Amy Johnson may join the committee.

*Executive.* DB&PA has approved DIA's FY21 match request of \$16,415 for projects that benefit the commercial area under the budget categories of Beautification, Dimond Public Art, KDC, Public Safety, and Operations (specific Oaktoberfest-related expenses).

*Grants.* Jay will be reaching out again to awardees to check on their project status given COVID-19. Another first installment check was issued this month, bringing the total to six out of eight grantees who have received their first payments.

*Membership & Volunteer Development.* Jay sent out a "please come back" email to 144 expired members in early June, which most likely led to up to eight rejoining members so far.

*Public Safety.* The security camera installation is in progress at the Fruitvale Avenue/Bienati Way corner, with the network video recorder to be hosted at a nearby business.

*Oaktoberfest.* Daniel will be submitting several concept proposals for alternative Oaktoberfest observances for this year given COVID-19.

*Head-Royce School.* The NLC held its summer meeting on HRS's permit compliance. The school is working with the city to come up with fall opening plan, which might involve staggered start times, portable classrooms, and a mixture of online and in-person teaching. Since Laguna Avenue and Potomac Street are designated "Slow Streets" and may be kept that way indefinitely, the turnaround loop used by AC Transit school service and parents dropping off students may be affected. HRS indicated that the NSC would need to take that up with AC Transit. There was also discussion about cars running red lights on Lincoln Avenue and perhaps asking Councilmember Sheng Thao's office to help with a traffic study. HRS will reach out to NLC members to meet in August, once the school has its re-opening plans determined. It was suggested that the DIA Board Handbook include background on issues with the school.

*CVS issues.* JoAnn has reached out to District Manager Darrell Larson a number of times about their commitment to contracting for parking lot litter pick-up, but continues to get no response. CVS made the promise in February. Separately, Paul will be contacting CVS to see if they might make a KDC contribution.

*BID feasibility study.* Ryan is currently drafting a study proposal to the City in order to have the study funds released. He will have the proposal ready for board review and approval at the July meeting.

*Future general meetings.* An ad hoc committee of Tomasz, Kevin, Paul, and Marjorie will develop recommendations for near-term DIA general meetings, including formats, topics, and schedule. Daniel added that the City will be announcing guidelines for outdoor dining, retail, live music, performing arts, etc., which would likely to go into effect in July.

**5. Black Lives Matter statement.** Tomasz introduced a proposed statement in support of the Black Lives Matter movement. Discussion followed of possible additional language, with the eventual consensus being to keep the language as proposed.

**ACTION:** Approve a message of support for Black Lives Matter, to read as follows: "We, the Dimond Improvement Association, reject police violence and the systematic racism that black people face in America. We believe that every black person should have the social, economic, and political power to thrive and succeed. Furthermore, we are committed to the Dimond District being inclusive, welcoming, and safe for everyone." (Motion: Tomasz; Second: Daniel; in favor, unanimous)

**6. Keep Dimond Clean fundraiser.** JoAnn reported that the fundraiser was launched on June 9 and will involve multiple forms of publicity and outreach. She requested that every board member reach out to other social, activity, or neighborhood groups they are part of, using the sample pitch she sent. She noted that this year poses many challenges that could make realizing the fundraising goal more difficult.

**7. Membership video.** Jay presented an initial draft of a short video to be used in recruiting new members. It will feature still images and a voice-over narrative. Jay asked everyone to offer content, script, and image suggestions, and also to send him photos (or upload to the team drive) so he can select the best options. It was noted that there are many good photos from Dimond Public Art, KDC,

Beautification, and Oaktoberfest. Ben suggested that everyone send out the video, once finished, via their social media accounts.

**8. Board of Directors election process.** Continuing the discussion from the last meeting, Victoria reported that she, Chris, Jay, and Fran met to talk through the particulars of an online election this year. All members in good standing would receive an email on June 26 with links to an online ballot and the candidates' "bio & vision statements." Members could vote for one or more individual candidates or the whole slate; they could also write in someone not on the slate. The election deadline would be July 2, with the results available before the July board meeting. If there are any members on the roster without email addresses, they would receive a paper ballot sent in advance of June 26 and have the same July 2 deadline for their ballots to be submitted.

**ACTION:** Approve the proposed Board of Directors 2020 election process. (Motion: Victoria; Second: Ryan; in favor, unanimous)

**9. Face masks and merchants.** Zandile is seeing employees in a number of Dimond businesses not wearing the required face masks to safeguard against spreading COVID-19. She is reluctant to patronize or support them, or have DIA promote them, if they aren't helping to make the community safe. Marjorie said she would talk to her fellow members on the DB&PA board and get something out to the merchants via email and/or flyer. Daniel suggested making the point that their business viability will depend on the public's perception of customer risk and JoAnn suggested injecting some friendly, whimsical humor in the messaging.

**Adjournment.** Chris adjourned the meeting at 9:00 p.m.

**Next board meeting:** July 9, 2020

*Minutes submitted by Victoria Wake  
Approved 7/9/20*