

## **Dimond Improvement Association**

Board of Directors Meeting - October 14, 2021

Board Members Present: Jay Ashford, Victoria Wake, Tomasz Finc, Julie Johnson, Ryan Romaneski, Kevin Whittinghill, Chris Harper, Alex Park, Lindsey Berking, Bret Peterson, JoAnn Tracht-Rawson, Erica Perez

**Board Members Absent:** Marjorie Jones, Ben Stein-Lobovits, Zandile Christian, David Gross, Sara Goldwell

The meeting was convened at 7:01.

### **1. Agenda approval.**

ACTION: Approve the meeting agenda as presented. (Motion: Victoria second Lindsey; in favor, unanimous)

### **2. Minutes approval.**

ACTION: Approve minutes from September DIA board meeting. (motion: Chris; second Bret; 10 in favor, 1 abstention)

**3. Chair's report.** Ryan's only update is that Sara had to decide to resign from the board, but we hope that she will rejoin us at some point. A few folks have had some recommended board members, so we are excited about that.

**4. For the good of the order.** Kevin shared that Oakland has put forth four maps for redistricting. Maps A-D. B and D are what they're going to focus on for now. B is most similar to what we have currently, and D separates the Dimond by Fruitvale Avenue and effectively cuts the Dimond in half. Victoria asks if the board should form an official position on this, since they could be making this decision as early as December. Ryan suggests we may need to have a special meeting, as our next board meeting in November may be cutting it close. More information on maps can be found [here](#). Ryan asks if we want more time to think about this, or to add this as an action item on this meeting. Chris and Alex suggest more time to look would be helpful. Ryan will schedule a special meeting.

**5. District 4 report.** Matt Napoli updates that Councilmember Thao is organizing a Halloween costume giveaway on the 24th, and donations are needed for that. Also, there's been authorization for a 5th police academy, and there will be walking officers in the Laurel starting in November. Alex asks if there has been an uptick in crime in Laurel. Matt says yes, there have been several assaults, at least one homicide and several break-ins. Victoria asks if the walking officer will be the same officer or the same few, so that those officers will get to know the area. Matt says generally yes the walking officers will be the same people, not as a rule, but the same officers tend to sign up for those shifts. Ryan mentions that there's a paving map available for review, if you're curious about which roads are going to get repaved in the next five years.

**6. Exterior Improvements Update.** Lindsey updates that the CARES grant amount is \$5000, and reminds the board that we decided on three top priorities for allocating funds. 1. Most significant physical improvement potential 2. Addressing or repairing blight and 3. Speed of project. Our funds are limited, so we are looking for sites where we can make the biggest visual improvement with the funds we have, like paint, powerwashing, and signage. We may also have access to funds for public art for graffiti abatement. Some of the sites we've identified may be a good fit for this instead, allowing us to stretch our budget even more. A few of the most blighted buildings are not occupied. With speed and costs in mind - we want to target established businesses that are less likely to change hands and be redesigned by a new owner or lessee anytime soon. Alex suggests that if we are hiring someone to powerwash buildings, they may be getting paid a day or hourly rate and perhaps it makes sense for us to clean as many buildings as possible and organize it that way. Victoria asks that the Beautification Committee be included in the public art planning.

**7. Head Royce EIR Response.** JoAnn mentions that release of the EIR is anticipated at the end of this month, which is earlier than expected and requested.

**ACTION:** Motion to submit a letter to Councilmember Thao's office in support of the Letter that the NSC submitted requesting that the city delay

the release of the EIR until after January 1st. (Motion: JoAnn, Seconded: Victoria. In favor 7, opposed 1, abstentions 2)

8. **BID Steering Committee** Ryan updates that we are compiling a long list of candidates for a BID Steering Committee - the group that would be responsible for hiring a consultant and engaging business and property owners in the process. Criteria are commercial property owners in the district (in the commercial core), or generally well respected, connected or otherwise influential in the district. Alex suggests a mix of old and new owners, so that it doesn't give the impression that it's all newcomers trying to push their agenda. Daniel will also share some names of folks with the group as options as well.

9. **Membership Drive** Jay updates that the membership campaign ends this week, but hopes we will improve as we flex our muscles as an organization to promote ourselves. While we fell short of our target numbers, we were able to recruit 10 new members. Hoping to have a presence at movie night coming up and continue to promote who we are and what we do. Kevin asks if out of the 10 that joined, were there any approaches that were most useful? At a high level the two strategies that were the most useful were the personal outreach (netting about 5 of the 10 new members) and the digital blasts that were sent out. Victoria signed up one person at Oaktoberfest, go Victoria! Tabling wasn't as successful, but in terms of growing awareness about the organization it's always useful. Alex asks if there was any progress on the diversity goals. Jay says it's hard to know from the digital signups.

10. **Oaktobefest Recap.** Daniel reports that Oaktobefest was really unique this year. Even though it was under the Oaktobefest umbrella, it felt like something really new. We pulled off running a restaurant for a day, effectively. The artists and performers were great, simple and low key was a nice change of pace. A lean, organized team of over 200 volunteers and brought in about 50K in revenue before expenses. It's going to be really important to make a decision about next year fairly soon. We also need to

get a commitment from all board members to be able to roll up their sleeves and contribute with two days of hard labor to help out, otherwise we're going to need to hire out for that next year. JoAnn asks about how many people we think there were. Daniel guesses about 2000 or more.

## 12. **WIP reports.** (*from written reports*)

*Beautification:* Public art tour - We are still in the process of building the virtual tour; everything is in there but is being edited and needs to be integrated into the website. Art Installation - We have received 1 more sketch from the artist with a design that is site specific. We are pursuing two locations at this time, but are running into obstacles on both. Hoping to be able to make some progress. KDC - Zandile has developed new procedures and communications protocol for KDC paid and volunteer litter programs. Street trees - A new street tree was planted on MacArthur, just above Champion, to replace a tree that died; Trees for Oakland planted it and Doug Freitas, neighbor, will water. Commercial beautification - Two Dimond locations rec'd "act of beauty" thank-you notes: Bank of America (for improving hedge along Fruitvale); Enrique & Nancy Han, owners of Ly Luck building (for painting high-up wall visible from MacArthur). Other - Victoria organized a clean-up of Bienati parking lot prior to Oaktobberfest.

*Community Care:* We are (belatedly) putting together a panel discussion for our next DIA general meeting, targeted for Wed. Oct 27th at 7:00pm, with the theme "The Dimond District: Past and Future". As soon as we confirm a quorum for our panel, mass marketing and PR will follow.

*Membership and Outreach:* There were not interns that were interested in meeting with us and touring the neighborhood. Not sure if there is any hope with MetWest High school interns. Sent an email to the head of the program and haven't heard back. Also put out the October Newsletter, but have lost the help of one important member who was putting the newsletters together and need more help or the Newsletters might stop.

*Economic and Business Development:* Successfully completed first outdoor movie at Dimond Library (in partnership with OIFF). Currently organizing Halloween themed event for 10/29.

*Public Safety:* We have closed our Public Safety survey and are now reviewing and processing results. Bret feels we should have a draft presentation by next month's committee meeting. We sent a joint letter with the NCPC 22x to OakDOT and Thao's office asking/confirming they will clean up the Fruitvale/MacArthur intersection prior to installing Bott's dots. We are in the process of upgrading and increasing access to our security cameras.

**Adjournment** at 8:45 PM. Minutes written by Lindsey Berking.

Approved 11/11/21