

## **Dimond Improvement Association**

Board of Directors Meeting - November 11, 2021

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

**Board Members Absent:** Marjorie Jones, Ben Stein-Lobovits, Zandile Christian, Tomasz Finc

The meeting was convened at 7:01 p.m.

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

**ACTION:** Approve the meeting agenda as presented. (Motion: Bret Seconded Chris; in favor, unanimous)

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

**ACTION:** Approve minutes from October DIA board meeting. (Motion: Bret; second Joann (pending corrections); in favor, 10)

**3. Chair's report.** Ryan updates that we need to discuss whether we are planning to return to a full Oaktobefest next year because planning will need to start ASAP. Our retreat is coming up in January and we are hoping to secure a space for it in the next few weeks. Would the board be interested in getting together for a social holiday event with board members or board members and partners? Several board members say yes. In our December board meeting we'll have a chance to see how we're tracking against our goals set for the year, which will help us as we start to set our goals for 2022.

**4. For the good of the order.** Kevin asks if anyone has an update on the Sons of Norway building. Ryan says yes, it's been sold and the owner plans to continue to rent it as a banquet space. Unclear on what their plans for the space are. Bret comments that Kevin did a great job organizing the event on Halloween and the community really seemed to enjoy it. JoAnn reminds everyone that there's an annual Thanksgiving event at 2-Star

Market. They need volunteers, and we need to promote it on Facebook. Ryan updates that Councilmember Thao announced that she's running for Mayor.

**5. District 4 report.** Matt Napoli updates that the five-year paving plan was released last Friday. If you google "Oakland paving plan" there's an interactive map that will show you the plans. There's also a discretionary fund for additional roads so if you have any suggestions, reach out to Matt. On the topic of redistricting, Matt offers his opinion that it's better for the Dimond if the districts stay close to where they are now. The EIR for the Head-Royce expansion was released on Friday. Matt is more than happy to listen to concerns, although he can't take a stance and neither can the Councilmember. Regarding the Botts' dots that were put in on MacArthur and Fairfax, they were purchased through a grant. They can't alter them until they study the effects of them, and they also can't force the DOT to use the grant funds for Botts' dots, they can only make the suggestion. Kevin asks if there's anyone we can petition at DOT to suggest the funds get used for Botts' dots. Matt says yes, and please file reports for sideshows that you're aware of. While it can be frustrating to file multiple reports and not see action take place, it is data, and in the long run it does help. Victoria mentions that she wrote a second follow-up email to Arthur Watson, Public Works lead on the City's garbage can refurbishment initiative. She copied Matt on the latest one and hasn't heard back. Matt says he will follow up.

**6. Head-Royce EIR.** JoAnn has real concerns after reviewing the EIR. There are 680 pages. She would like to ask the board to send a letter requesting a cohesive, comprehensive and integrated evacuation plan that will mitigate the risk to the larger Dimond community in the event of a fire, because it seems that section would have the most impact on our community members, and JoAnn feels we have a responsibility to ask questions of Head-Royce. Her suggested questions are:

1. Where in the EIR does the project address the specific impacts on the Dimond District Community?

2. Why in the EIR does the Evacuation Plan not cover the entire campus?
3. Why does the EIR designate the Dimond Retail District as an evacuation destination: who made that decision and why?
4. With whom on the DIA or DBPA did the EIR authors consult?

There will be no neighborhood meetings. December 13th is the Landmark Commission meeting, and December 15th is the Planning Commission meeting.

Ryan suggests that JoAnn and Victoria connect on a letter of concern for the board to review in the next meeting (or sooner).

**8. Action: Oakland Redistricting.** Ryan updates that there are now 8 redistricting maps to review. Bret asks if there's anything positive about having the Dimond commercial district split? Can it be good to have two council members? Kevin's perspective is that two council members would get less attention than one and it will be harder to get things done. No one provided any positive perspectives on splitting the Dimond commercial district.

The board decides to rule out maps C, H, and D, all of which would split the commercial district.

Alex mentions A splits the map on Montana. We've talked about doing more recruitment along Fruitvale and we have some pretty active members around there.

Alex points out that Map B would make the Dimond one of the most diverse districts in the city.

Alex points out that there are a few maps that include the super thehills district, and perhaps we should ask ourselves if we want to be part of the super hills district.

Ryan is not a fan of plan G, because of the carve-outs for Laurel and Maxwell Park.

Bret asks if anyone is feeling strongly about any maps.

Ryan suggests we could write a letter to say that we support any maps that keep the commercial district intact.

Kevin likes map E. David adds that it includes Laurel and Maxwell Park. Bret adds that map E would not be a superhill district.

Ryan is partial to map F. It has a lot of the things we like about E, but doesn't include Claremont.

**ACTION:** Write a letter to the redistricting commission indicating our support for both maps E and F specifically and keeping the Dimond Commercial District intact. (Motion: Kevin, Seconded: Jay, In favor: 9 abstentions: 1)

**9. Report: Public Safety Survey Results** Bret reports first and foremost that the DIA needs to improve its outreach to underrepresented groups, as became very evident when reviewing the results of this survey. Of the safety concerns raised in the survey, respondents were very concerned about reckless driving followed closely by burglaries, car break-ins and muggings. Other takeaways:

- Respondents are less concerned with panhandling compared to other issues raised.
- The average respondent feels somewhat unsafe in the business district after dark.
- People would generally prefer commercial and pedestrian activity to reliance on police and security cameras.
- Respondents feel somewhat unsafe on roads that are not generally exclusively residential, but more safe on residential streets.
- Respondents want MacArthur Blvd to be more pedestrian and bus-friendly, and are willing to sacrifice on-street parking for more pedestrian space.
- People have indicated dangerous intersections and stretches of roads on MacArthur Blvd and elsewhere.

- MacArthur and Coolidge is the most concerning intersection on MacArthur Blvd, and Fruitvale and Lyman is the most concerning outside MacArthur.

Alex asks if there are specific suggestions for Lyman and Fruitvale to make it safer? Bret says not one that stood out, but there were a lot of suggestions like stop signs, speed bumps, and trees.

Bret suggests the board get around some improvements we could implement to make that stretch of Fruitvale safer.

Ryan asks what our plans for the survey findings are. Bret says we are going to share at least the dangerous spots and what we want fixed with Council member Thao's office. Internally there's a lot we can learn from this survey about making the neighborhood safer. For instance more lights, community events, more big planters, and even some bigger ideas.

**10. Discussion: Public Art Tour.** Victoria updates that one of our goals for this year was to put together a public art tour, and it's nearly done. Marion and Julie researched 21 public art pieces. JoAnn and Tomasz set up the Google map framework, and Victoria edited entries and populated the map. The map is currently embedded on a staging-site webpage, with introductory info, a printable pdf, and repeat presentation of the pieces. It will launch in our December newsletter, and then next year we hope to have some in-person tours and possible artist presentations. Some of the artwork is so in-depth that you could even have a meetup at one spot at a time and spend an hour talking about all of the elements in the piece.

Alex suggested a press release on this, as it would be an easy one to get picked up.

A few board members remark on how great the project turned out. Ryan thanks everyone and especially Victoria and Marion for their hard work.

**10. Discussion: Sideshow Deterrents.** Alex mentions a few people have raised concerns about sideshows recently, especially with the recent activity and the property damage to Bank of America. Alex suggests a letter

if that's the only thing we can do. Kevin adds we've sent a letter to Council member Thao's office in the past. If Matt sends us DOT contact information we can perhaps put pressure on them directly. Another suggestion is to do a fundraiser to "Buy a Dot" to install ourselves, even though we can't legally do that, but it would raise awareness about the issue and DIA.

Alex states at the very least a letter from the DIA to register our particular dissent on the matter would be great. Chris suggests writing a letter and asking members to sign it for impact. Kevin suggested also including all of our past communications.

**11. Action: 2114 MacArthur Blvd.** A pre-application for a 5-story mixed use building with 4 commercial units and 39 residential units has been submitted to the city. The site is 2114 MacArthur Blvd, the former Blockbuster site aka Norge Cleaners.

Bret and Ryan will be meeting with a person on the project to discuss the pre-application and to share hopes and concerns for the project. If the board would like to include some comments, please add them to the google doc so they can be relayed to the appropriate people. Bret and Ryan would also like to vote to support the proposed building height of 55 feet (currently zoned for 45 feet maximum).

Bret emphasized that he is not asking the board to endorse the project, he's asking that we approve the 10 foot height increase to get this project through this early stage.

Ryan suggests that everyone review, and Bret and Ryan will meet with the developers next week to gather more information.

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

**Beautification:** *Art installation update: Committee is making renewed effort on Dimond Printers sign placement and may decide to move forward or abandon the project at its Nov. 18 meeting. Bienati Overlook: Continuing to work on if and how the chain link fence will be replaced. "Act of Beauty" notes: Thank you notes were sent to Wells Fargo and T-Mobile for repairing*

*and repainting their structural canopies. KDC: Looking at possible full-commercial-district sidewalk steam-clean and a large community workday in spring 2022.*

***Public Safety:*** *We finished our public safety survey and are currently preparing the results for the public and media (Oaklandside expressed interest). We have pressed Thao's office on the timeline for the Botts' dots installation in the Dimond. We are also in the process of upgrading our security camera equipment at Cybelle's.*

**Adjournment** at 9:15 PM. Minutes written by Lindsey Berking.

**APPROVED 12/9/21**