

## **Dimond Improvement Association**

Board of Directors Meeting - December 9, 2021

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

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

**Guests Present:** Matthew Napoli, Councilmember Thao's office

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

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

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

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

ACTION: Approve minutes from November DIA board meeting. (Motion: Victoria Seconded Chris; in favor, unanimous)

### **3. Chair's report.**

Our Holiday party is next Thursday at Grand Lake Kitchen, from 5:30 - 7:30. Our retreat is in January.

**4. For the good of the order.** Kevin updates that there will be a decision on redistricting maps by December 31st. Under consideration are maps K and H, which divide the district, as well as F and I, which don't. If you would like to make your opinion on the maps known, visit the Redistricting Commission [website](#). Victoria updates that the newsletter will go out next week. Please take a look and provide your feedback on the content of the newsletter so we can continue to improve it. Victoria adds that we do not currently have enough volunteers for the Saturday litter walk. We need both leads and volunteers. If we continue to feel that's a core goal and benefit to the community, we might ask that all of our board members volunteer at

least once a month. If you want to volunteer, please show up at Giant Burger at 9am on Saturdays.

**5. District 4 report.** Matt Napoli updates that there was a meeting with DOT last Wednesday. DOT was asked about putting the money they were granted for sideshow deterrents to good use. The DOT said they can't install more Botts' dots "for a while" at Dimond intersections on MacArthur at Coolidge and at Fruitvale. Victoria mentions that she recalls the Council member got \$150,000 approved for sideshow deterrents and asks whether they are not obligated to use for that purpose since they were approved. Matt says yes, but those funds were for both sideshow deterrents and traffic control and the DOT will argue that bulbouts and hardened centerlines can serve both purposes. Alex suggested perhaps a public records request would be the next course of action to determine why the grants were given for 35th and MacArthur and not the other intersections. Matt suggests an email requesting information, with him copied as a first course of action, and a public records request if we receive no response. Matt also shared that Councilmember Sheng Thao pitched authorization for two new police academies and they were approved. She's pushing for pretty big hiring incentives to bring new officers to Oakland, as there is a large vacancy gap to fill. Ryan mentions that there's also been a delay in releasing existing funding for graffiti abatement and there hasn't been enough staff to process the grant. Matt acknowledged that headcount resources are an issue in many areas of Oakland city government.

**6. Head-Royce EIR Response.** JoAnn refers to the letter drafted to Head Royce. She points out that this isn't necessarily a letter of opposition, but a request for a more detailed and robust fire evacuation plan. In summary:

With no city-designated evacuation routes in the vicinity of Head-Royce School (HRS), it is crucial that the HRS-generated plan be comprehensive and realistic.

1. The DEIR does not address the specific impacts on the Dimond District community of an evacuation of HRS.

2. The DEIR does not address the lack of an evacuation plan for the entire campus.
3. The DEIR's recommendation that the Farmer Joe's/CVS parking lot in the Dimond retail area be designated the HRS evacuation destination site is inadequately explored.
4. The DEIR's suggestion that other schools can accommodate HRS's population in an evacuation is inadequately explored.

Bret asks if we are putting ourselves in a questionable position if we oppose the project of one of the biggest employers in the district. Victoria explains that the point of an EIR is to make a project as good as it can be, and it takes a lot of minds in the community to make a project work. Bret says that we may not want to be overly prescriptive in the EIR about evacuation plans in an official document, when plans can change. Victoria explains that the current evacuation plan is effectively to shelter in place and wait for vehicles, and the evacuation routes are all reliant on vehicle transit. Bret suggests that we contact them versus slowing down the process. Victoria states that is unlikely to work. Ryan invites any other voices into the discussion. Bret asks if anyone else sees an issue with opposing one of our businesses in a major project. Ryan says he takes more issue with the language feeling a bit inflammatory, and the constructive feedback may get lost.

**ACTION:** Approve the letter with changes to the language that reduces negativity while still conveying the need for a more comprehensive evacuation plan, with written feedback from the board early next week and final approval by Ryan. (Motion: Joann, Seconded: Victoria in favor; 7 opposed; 2 abstain: 1)

**7. Discussion 2022 Octoberfest:** Ryan updates that we ended up making about \$7000 in net proceeds. Historically we have split proceeds between DIA and DB&PA. Since the DIA was solely responsible for the organization and cost of the event this year, he had not planned on splitting proceeds this year. We also did not need the merchants' buy-in for the event this year as there was very little disruption given the location. Victoria and Chris point

out that it may be a moot point because there was no contract. Ryan also asks for board feedback on emerging plans for 2022. The proposal is to return with a two day event in 2022, contingent on local health data. There are also some concerns about volunteers, as we will need 200 volunteers committed this year, or our expected revenue will be lower. Ryan asks if anyone is opposed to a two day event. All board members support a two day event.

**8. Discussion: Bombera Parking** Kevin updates that a neighbor of Bombera, Carla Jimenez, has written a letter to Bombera, Sheng Thao's office, and some members of the DIA complaining that employees of Bombera have been parking on her street even though Bombera had promised that they would not. Erica and a few other board members point out that this is probably an issue best saved between the neighbor and Bombera. Victoria says that a lesson learned here is to always get promises in writing.

**9. Board Retreat Agenda and Pre-Work** Ryan updates that the goals of the board retreat are a.) To build relationships and trust across the Board through opportunities to learn from, and with, each other - and have fun and b.) To improve communication and collaboration by partnering with one another to define and drive forward our collective priorities.

Another goal for this year is for us to prioritize some of these priorities. Currently, our priorities are: To beautify the public realm, strengthen neighborhood economic vitality, build an inclusive and cohesive community, enhance public safety, and to grow membership and volunteer participation.

In order to ensure a stable and sustainable organization, can we align more of our work around a smaller set of priorities? Our committees have done a lot of work this year, but Ryan wonders if we could make more progress if we chose to focus on fewer priorities. If everyone can take some time to think about this before the retreat, we can use our time to discuss and make decisions.

At the January Board meeting, committee chairs will share a progress report on each committee's goals. This is important for us to understand how our committees have made progress or not, and how we've spent funds we've allocated, or not.

**10. WIP Reports** *(from written reports)*

***Beautification:*** *Major art installation: Property owners of at least three potential locations have expressed openness to installation possibility; a new partnership with The Crucible means that the metal arts organization will store the sign now and do the restoration beginning in March 2022.*

*Potential donation of art: Artist Andrea Bacigalupo has offered her concrete sculpture to install in the Dimond; Tom and Victoria are exploring locations before a decision is made. Bienati Overlook: Dave is reaching out again to the county to seek assistance with replacement of the chain link fence.*

*Virtual public art tour: Tour will go live with December newsletter.*

*Steam-clean/power wash: Lindsey, Alex, and Marc are organizing a business facade powerwash to take place Jan. 6-7.*

**Adjournment** at 8:45

Minutes written by Lindsey Berking.

**APPROVED 1/12/22**