

Dimond Improvement Association

Board of Directors Meeting - February 10, 2022

Board Members Present: Ryan Romaneski, Victoria Wake, Alex Park, Tomasz Finc, Kevin Whittinghill, Chris Harper, Erica Perez, Zandile Christian, Jay Ashford, JoAnn Tracht-Rawson, David Gross, Bret Peterson, Tomasz Finc

Board Members Absent: Marjorie Jones, Julie Johnson, Ben Stein-Lobovits

The meeting was convened at 7:00 p.m.

1. Agenda approval.

ACTION: Approve the meeting agenda as presented. (Motion: Chris Secoded Jay; in favor, unanimous)

2. Minutes approval.

ACTION: Approve minutes from January DIA board meeting. (Motion: Kevin Secoded Chris; in favor, unanimous)

3. Chair's report. Ryan noted that the board was aligned around organizational priorities: Beautify the public realm; strengthen and grow neighborhood economic vitality; build an equitable, inclusive, and cohesive community; enhance public safety; and ensure a strong, stable and sustainable organization. Some committee chairs asked for additional time to finalize their budget structure. Ryan will be doing check-ins with all board members regarding their plans to remain on the board and any thoughts/questions/priorities you may have for DIA.

4. For the good of the order. Kevin shares that sideshow deterrents are budgeted to be installed at the Coolidge and Fruitvale intersections with MacArthur this coming summer. This was news from Joe DeVries from city administration. This was made available by funds that Councilmember Thao earmarked in the budget.

Jay shares that Officer Aaron Johnson will be the new CRO for beats 20-25. He's just getting started.

Ryan shares that a developer is looking to build a small multi-family project on a current single-family lot. He will be meeting with them in the next couple of weeks.

5. District 4 Updates: Matt Napoli updates that Local Heroes will be next Saturday February 19th at 10:30am. Please email him for details. There is a Council meeting Tuesday, where they will vote to approve the Howard Terminal environmental project on

Thursday 2/17 at 6pm. Public comment is estimated to be 3 hours long. Matt also updates that the hiring process is slow in Oakland, which is part of the reason why work doesn't get done.

6. Action: 2022-23 Budget Review: Ryan updates that our budgeting process is evolving, and he would like to be able to provide more visibility into revenues and expenditures. We will ask committees to dig into the budget in more detail and will target a first draft of budget for review by March.

Ryan offers a review of our guiding principles:

- We use zero-base budgeting, which means that unspent funds do not roll over from one year to the next
- We are conservative on revenues and generous on expenses
- We maintain one year of prudent reserves based on average annual expenditure for the last five years (Currently: \$33,055)
- In addition to our prudent reserve, we hold some funds as board restricted for public art projects (Currently: \$17,460); other funds may be donor restricted in that they were received for specific purposes (Currently: \$9414.94)
- Some revenues are tied to expenses and vice versa - we do our best to acknowledge those interdependencies, but our budget is meant to be a blueprint and is built on some assumptions

As for our current cash/financial position, based on the restrictions mentioned above, we currently have an unrestricted balance of about \$8,400. That assumes we maintain our current reserve levels. There's another account we use for Oaktoberfest. The net revenue from each event was intended to be split between the DIA and the DB&PA as per the contract that both groups and the organizer sign. Many years ago there was a decision to retain a reserve in the Oaktoberfest account to pay expenses that are incurred before the event revenues come in. That started as a \$10,000 reserve and it's grown quite a bit over the years. Our total reserve balance is now about \$62,000.

Ryan proposes that we maintain the operating reserve for Oaktoberfest of \$20,000, and allocate the balance between DB&PA and the DIA. Doing so would bring the available unrestricted funds for DIA to about \$29,635. The other reason for doing this is that the DB&PA is almost out of money. If we want them to be able to meet the cost share obligations that we have negotiated with them in the past, they can only do that if we distribute some of these funds. Ryan also argues that this is simply the right thing to do, and we are not served as a community by holding this much money in our bank account.

Alex asks whether in addition to allocating the reserve funds to DIA and DB&PA can we set a cap on Oaktoberfest reserves so we don't run into this issue again? Ryan says yes, he's proposed that the cap should be \$20,000.

Chris asks if we should consult with Daniel regarding the appropriate reserve funds amount? Ryan says we have looked at the amounts that have been needed in years past and that's how we have arrived at this amount, and we hesitate to ask Daniel and he will likely err on the side of more money in reserves, which may be how we ended up with this larger than necessary sum over the years.

JoAnn asks if we're confident that DB&PA will cost-share? Ryan says yes. JoAnn feels the DB&PA has spent money on things she doesn't consider to be to the benefit of the community.

Victoria mentions that the original seed money amount for Oaktoberfest was \$5,000, which was intended to be spent each year, but that's not what happened and the money accumulated. Victoria emphasizes that we should make sure we properly distributed proceeds from Oaktoberfest in previous years, not only to DBPA but also to DIA, because that \$62K seems too high. Ryan says we have looked at the last true Oaktoberfest and funds were indeed distributed.

Erica asks how we arrived at the \$20,000 for the reserves? Ryan says it was simply a round number that exceeded the expenses from any of the previous years. Erica suggests we keep an eye on that number in future years to ensure it's still not much more than we really need.

ACTION: Motion to maintain a reserve of \$20k for this cycle, with future review, and to distribute the remaining reserve balance between DIA/DPBA, after past split distributions have been verified as done. (Motion: Victoria; Seconded JoAnn; in favor 10 abstaining 1)

Ryan shares three potential proposals for how we balance our proposed FY23 budget. One is to do it by priority, another is to do an across-the-board percentage cut and say every committee needs to cut a certain percentage, and a third option would be to make surgical cuts and look at where we can make cuts that reduce expenses without impacting revenues.

Jay suggests stack-ranking projects. There's a dollar amount associated with each project and revenue is unknown at the outset. Once revenue comes in, you can determine which projects end up above or below the line.

Ryan says he is asking committee chairs to force rank all of their projects by priority.

7. Seamless Bay Area. Bret is working with Seamless Bay Area, which is an organization that is trying to unify the various transit systems across the Bay Area. The organization is trying to get the City of Oakland to endorse the transit principles of Seamless Bay Area, a set of seven, common-sense principles to run all Bay Area transit as one easy-to-use system. They include such principles as putting riders first; make public transit equitable and accessible to all; and align transit prices to be simple, fair, and affordable. Bret has drafted a letter from DIA to Council member Sheng Thao's office requesting this endorsement.

Victoria says she's in favor of the goals but knows that having worked in public transit for many years that bigger is not always better and that when you move to too big of a bureaucracy, you lose a lot of quality and it becomes difficult to operate in a responsive way to people where they are. Smaller can be more limber and more responsive. All that said, certainly the principles and the intention behind them make a lot of sense, but it could be a giant mess having one agency run something for the entire Bay Area.

Bret says he values her opinion but the intent is to get Oakland to sign on to the principles so that Oakland can have more of a say in the coordination of the proposed agency to be developed.

Ryan asks if there's a motion.

ACTION: Motion to send this letter to both Councilmembers Thao and Gallo and signed by both Dimond and Laurel District organizations. (Motion: Bret; Seconded: Ryan, in favor 9, abstention 2)

8. Oakland's General Plan. Ryan raises that the City of Oakland is embarking on a once in a lifetime opportunity to revise the city's General Plan. The update for Oakland's 2045 General Plan is an opportunity for all Oaklanders to work together to create a visionary blueprint for the future of our City. Once approved in 2025, the Oakland 2045 General Plan will guide the development of our City for the following two decades. The Oakland 2045 General Plan will craft a new direction for the future of Oakland, one focused on creating an equitable and just city. Plan elements include housing, land use, environmental justice, safety, noise, transportation, open space, conservation and recreation, and public infrastructure/facilities.

Ryan asks if we should plan some sort of ad-hoc committee to understand how we want to plug into this.

Bret shares that the General Plan is being broken up into two phases. Phase one goes into Spring 2023 and Phase two goes into Spring 2025. Proposed letter outlining DIA's priorities to the relevant commissions.

Ryan asks what it looks like to participate in the elements folks are interested in. Bret says it's essentially an opportunity to provide public comment. For our part a letter would be a good starting point.

Ryan proposes forming an ad-hoc committee (or individual committees) to explore this in more detail.

Victoria suggests it makes sense to discuss and explore specific plan sections through individual committees as they align to the committee's interests and priorities.

Chris suggests it may be a good topic for a DIA general meeting to make our neighborhood aware of the General Plan.

Ryan suggests Bret can keep us apprised of this during Good of the Order, or through individual committee members.

Victoria suggests individual committees to do the initial investigation. Kevin agrees it makes sense to do through the committees. Bret asks if it's broken into committees how much action could really be done? Do committees have the autonomy to make comments? Ryan comments that it may be difficult to find a piece to grab onto because it's so big and the timeline is so long, perhaps it's best to just stay abreast for now.

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

Beautification: *Julie is getting a bid for moving the big, heavy pieces of the old Dimond Printers sign from under former committee member Tim Little's deck to The Crucible, where it will be restored. Our newest street tree, on MacArthur near Champion, was seriously vandalized; with the help of a former Trees for Oakland volunteer, it's been splinted and we hope will survive; we may add a cage for protection. Jim Link, a landscape contractor who lives in the Dimond, has offered to have his crew do occasional weeding and pruning when they have down time; they have already done this on Harold St. at two corners of the Caltrans parking lot; we will develop a list with him of areas that need attention. Victoria is working with two volunteers to weed Bienati Overlook so the native species can show off. The "rogue gardener" of the Fruitvale off-ramp has gone more rogue and is piling up cut paver stone pieces, making the area and the traffic island unsightly; we will attempt to have him remove them but the challenge is we don't know him or his contact info.*

Community Care: *2/10, JA: First DIA general meeting of 2022 is taking place on Feb. 24th at 7pm "Managing California's Water Resources in a Low-to-No Snow Future". Additionally, we are exploring re-launching the Grants program in 2022 (pending board review/approval, in Q2)*

Economic Development: CARES Grant Facade Improvement Program update: Working with contractors on bids to fix dry rot on Dimond Slice exterior, fixing African Retail Traders' broken storefront window, and powerwashing awnings at Flower Lounge and Lucky Discount shop.

Public Safety: Joe DeVries, Director of Interdepartmental Operations for the City of Oakland, informed us that Thao's earmarked money for the Dimond will go towards Botts' dots installations this summer at Fruitvale/MacArthur and Coolidge/MacArthur. We upgraded the digital video recorder (DVR) for our security system at Cybelle's. We may need to upgrade the cameras there as well.

Adjournment at 9:07

Minutes written by Lindsey Berking and Jay Ashford. Minutes approved 4/14.