



DOWNTOWN ACTION ORGANIZATION (DAO)

Board Meeting

June 17, 2020

9am – 10am

Virtual Meeting

Zoom Meeting ID: 863 8788 4100, Password: 061720

Phone: 669-900-9128

AGENDA

- 1.0 CALL TO ORDER**
- 2.0 PUBLIC COMMENTS ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS (limited to two minutes each)**
Comments from the public will be allowed on all agenda items at the time each item is called.
- 3.0 CONFLICTS OF INTEREST OR ABSTENTIONS**
- 4.0 CONSENT ITEMS**
 - 4.1** May 20, 2020 Meeting Minutes
- 5.0 FINANCIAL REPORT**
 - 5.1** Consideration of the adoption of the District's financial report ending May 31
- 6.0 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT**
Cadance will provide a brief update on efforts and work of the District
- 7.0 OPEN & OUT UPDATE**
Updates around City's plans to create a social distancing destination Downtown, feedback from business owners and DAO role moving forward
- 8.0 ADJOURNMENT**

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DOWNTOWN ACTION ORGANIZATION (DAO)

Board Meeting

May 20, 2020

9am – 10am

Virtual Meeting

Zoom Meeting ID: 827 6104 0237, Password: 052020

Phone: 669-900-9128

Present: Natalie Balfour, Andrea Ballus, Sonu Chandi, Raissa De la Rosa, Joe Dietzen, Charles Evans, Hugh Futrell, Tom Robertson, Bernie Schwartz, Doug Van Dyke, Sara Woodfield

Absent: Zach Berkowitz, Sue Kade, Michael Hyman, Rick Mossi

Santa Rosa Metro Chamber Staff: Cadance Hinkle Allinson, Peter Rumble

MINUTES

1.0 CALL TO ORDER

Chair Natalie Balfour called the meeting to order at 9:03 am.

2.0 PUBLIC COMMENTS ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS (limited to two minutes each)

Mike Montague shared that the Historic Railroad Square District received their first assessment from the City and has hired evening security to help alleviate some of the issues surrounding the homeless situation in the area. He shared that the lack of parking due to homeless encampments could keep Railroad Square from reopening once they are permitted to.

3.0 CONFLICTS OF INTEREST OR ABSTENTIONS

There were no conflicts of interest or abstentions.

4.0 CONSENT ITEMS

4.1 Motion to approve consent item, April 15 Board Meeting Minutes, as presented was unanimously passed.

5.0 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT

Cadance shared a brief update letting everyone know that the DAO continues its communication with Downtown businesses and its grassroots marketing efforts through the website, social media and new Live From Santa Rosa program, six weeks of live content every Thursday to engage our community with our Downtown businesses. The website and social media have seen an increase in traffic during the pandemic.

The lighting and planning projects are being discussed and will hopefully keep moving forward. The StreetPlus Team is working hard to keep Downtown area clean and manage the homeless population while the majority of businesses are closed.

6.0 FINANCIAL REPORT

6.1 Motion to approve District's financial report ending April 30 as presented was unanimously passed.

7.0 REOPENING DOWNTOWN

Cadance provided a brief update as to reopening timeline of Downtown and the work the City has put in to engage with businesses in order to provide businesses with the opportunity to serve more customers while adhering to social distancing guidelines.

Chris Denny shared the grand vision for the reopening and how the significant investment being made into beautification and creative projects should help set Downtown Santa Rosa apart from all the other local cities that are opening their streets to retail and restaurants as well. He is focusing on creative partnerships to make improvements and serve Downtown businesses.

Raissa provided details around all the logistics and operational concerns the City is working through to make this program feasible, including dealing with ABC to allow alcohol to be served outside current business boundaries. Raissa reiterated that the partial closures were only part of the plan to activate and engage Downtown, and that there were plans to bring in artwork, programming, beautification and activation within Courthouse Square. She shared that both Petaluma and Healdsburg are considering a similar plan. There is not yet data available from other cities who have implemented similar plans, but municipalities across the world are taking similar approaches to allow businesses to open safely. She encouraged the board to think big and about the overall Downtown community rather than the benefit to a specific business.

Peter acknowledged the work and investment already taken place at the City and shared that this was a great opportunity for the DAO to provide input along the way.

Multiple board members shared that they hoped a strong marketing effort would be implemented to make reopening successful.

Tom asked if there were any budget figures available. Chris shared that without DAO contributions, he was expecting to raise and spend \$240,000.

Discussion ensued about how to ensure business owner feedback is taken into consideration. It was agreed that the DAO would conduct a survey of business owners and bring an Ad Hoc committee of business owners together to review survey results and provide recommendations. The DAO wants to work collaboratively and quickly to help businesses reopen.

Doug asked if the DAO could send an email to business owners asking their employees to not park on the streets and instead use the lots and garages which are currently free. Cadance will send an email later in the day and work with the StreetPlus team to encourage off street parking.

Mike Montague urged that social distancing be taken into consideration with any plans being made. Chris assured that this was the primary goal of the program.

8.0 HOMELESSNESS DURING PANDEMIC

Hugh shared details around the encampments on the west side of the freeway and the larger homeless issues currently facing the City. He reiterated the existing challenges facing the City and that there are new challenges now related to CDC guidelines and the Shelter in Place

order. Discussion ensued about the issue and Raissa shared that the City is working on the issue every day and looking for solutions that meet all needs.

Hugh shared that given how pervasive the issue is Downtown and what an impact the issue will have on business success, it is critical for the DAO and the Historic Railroad Square Association be a part of the discussion. He suggested the organizations work together to connect with the City to push specific measures that deal with immediate and long-term issues and begin implementation with haste.

Public comments were made in support of the idea, reiterating that the perception of Downtown is significantly damaged by the encampments.

Hugh moved that the board authorize the Executive Committee and staff to work collaboratively with the Historic Railroad Square Association Executive Committee to bring issues forward with a sense of urgency to City and manage the ensuing details. The motion was unanimously approved.

9.0 ADJOURNMENT

Chair Natalie Balfour adjourned the meeting at 10:35 am.
adjourned the meeting at 10 am.