ATTENDANCE

Members Present: Vice Mayor Beach and Councilmember Ann Keighran

Members Absent: None

Staff Present: Economic Development Specialist (EDS) Cleese Relihan, Community Development Director (CDD) Kevin Gardiner, City Manager Lisa Goldman (CM)

Members of the Public Present: John Britton (property owner and broker), Ron Karp (property owner and broker), and Riyad Salma (property owner and broker)

READ AND APPROVE MINUTES FROM FEBRUARY AND MARCH MEETINGS

Approved.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Report on Commercial Vacancy Spaces:

EDS Relihan took photos of all the vacant storefronts in Burlingame over the past month, with the intention to identify properties that are not being well maintained, and sending letters to owners of properties that need attention. Of all the vacant properties, EDS Relihan and CDD Gardiner determined that four were in sufficiently poor condition to warrant a letter. Each letter sent to the property owner specifically described the nature of the complaint. On a positive note, the majority of vacant properties have been well maintained.

The subcommittee reviewed slides of the vacant properties (attached), with the four properties in need of attention being reviewed first.

- 220 Primrose Road – Complaint regarding the deteriorated condition of the butcher paper on the windows. Property owner responded immediately and will address the complaint.
- 1215 Burlingame Avenue – Poorly maintained window wrap, and tables and chairs from a neighboring business stacked in the doorway.
- 1311 Burlingame Avenue – Former Gymboree storefront, poorly mounted butcher paper in the windows, padlock on door, and poorly-mounted signage.
- 1465 Burlingame Avenue – Minor complaint, with signs from a previous Planning application still in the window despite the project not moving forward.

Subcommittee members asked staff to follow the letters up with emails and phone calls, and further suggested that local realtors associated with the properties could be contacted if the property owners are not responsive.
In reviewing the slides of the vacant properties, there was a discussion of identifying the types of qualities that are representative of a well-maintained vacant storefront. Comments from the subcommittee included:

- Vacant storefronts with the full window graphics can be confusing, as they appear to suggest an incoming tenant, or an occupied space.
- A property in the 1400 block of Burlingame Avenue with an address spray painted on a piece of plywood should be contacted to remove the plywood.

Members of the public agreed with the opinion that covering all of the windows with paper or graphics is not desirable. The windows should be able to let in natural light. Furthermore, they suggested that the City could develop some stock graphics that property owners of vacant spaces could utilize for window displays. The intent would be to provide tools to make it easy for property owners to comply.

**Strategies to Address Nuisance Commercial Property:**

Subcommittee members noted that a lot of effort went into creating the Vacant Property Maintenance Checklist, but the intent could be summarized with main points:

- Papered-over windows – Avoid windows covered in newspaper, and windows covered in strips of butcher paper that could peel off over time.
- Acceptable window coverings – Screening with some active imagery, but not fully covered. Provide photos of successful examples to emulate.
- No chain link fences.

Subcommittee members suggested that the checklist is rather overwhelming, and addresses a number of property maintenance items that would apply to any property as well as code enforcement items. Instead the emphasis should be just on items specific to vacant storefronts, and should be simplified with just a few bullet points and photos.

Members of the public suggested that the building permit for construction could require that the windows be obscured once construction commences. Subcommittee members clarified that vacant spaces should retain some clear glass, but once construction commences, windows should be obscured so that construction activities are out of view.

Subcommittee members suggested that direction should be provided in a manner similar to design guidelines, with visual examples showing good examples. Given the relatively small number of violations, the preferred approach should be guidelines with staff follow-up, rather than a more aggressive regulatory approach.

CDD Gardiner summarized:

- Revise the checklist to just focus on the main points;
- Remove the items related to code enforcement from the list;
- Provide visual examples;
- Provide some “carrots” such as pre-designed graphics to make it easy for property owners to comply.

**FUTURE AGENDA TOPICS**
The subcommittee agreed on the following calendar for the coming year:

- **May:**
  - Shop Local Campaign;
  - Preliminary debrief/“lessons learned” from Burlingame Talks Shop event

- **June:**
  - Additional follow-up to Burlingame Talks Shop, with focus on implementation actions;
  - Burlingame Plaza merchants and property owners

- **July:** Cancel meeting for Council recess

- **August:** Hotel General Managers

- **September:** Auto dealerships

- **October:** Broadway BID

- **November:** Downtown BID

Subcommittee members reminded staff to send emails to the BIDs and interested parties for each agenda. The email should also list the tentative topics for the upcoming months.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

There were no further public comments.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Meeting adjourned at 9:20 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kevin Gardiner
Community Development Director