



City Council Economic Development Subcommittee

MINUTES (DRAFT)

Conference Room A

City Hall, 501 Primrose Road – Burlingame, California
Wednesday, March 10, 2021 – 8:15 a.m.

ATTENDANCE

Members Present: Vice Mayor Ricardo Ortiz, Councilmember Michael Brownrigg

Members Absent: None

Staff Present: City Manager (CM) Lisa Goldman, Economic Development & Housing Specialist (EDS) Joseph Sanfilippo, Community Development Director (CDD) Kevin Gardiner, Parks & Recreation Director (PRD) Margaret Glomstad, Assistant to the City Manager (ACM) Nil Blackburn, Senior Civil Engineer (SCE) Andrew Wong, Finance Director (FD) Carol Augustine

Members of the Public Present: John Kevranian (President of Broadway Business Improvement District), Jenny Keleher (President of Downtown Business Improvement District (DBID)), Georgette Naylor (Burlingame/SFO Chamber of Commerce), John Hutar (CEO of San Mateo County/Silicon Valley Convention and Visitors Bureau (SMCCVB)), Mike McKee (DoubleTree), Norman Onaga (Crowne Plaza SFO), Kevin Kretsch (Hyatt Regency SFO), Lisa Kershner (Marriott SFO), Terry Horn

READ AND APPROVE MINUTES FROM FEBRUARY 24, 2021 MEETING

- Approved.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Discussion with Hoteliers

SCE Wong introduced a survey concerning the Old Bayshore Highway feasibility study that is first going to hoteliers to gauge their thoughts on the identity of the corridor and their ideas for transport options. The hoteliers thanked the City for their initiative in providing attention to the area.

John Hutar (CEO of SMCCVB) provided an overview of market metrics for the travel industry, noting that the County may reach the orange tier by the one-year anniversary of the first lockdown. He indicated that the SMCCVB was advocating with elected officials throughout the County to encourage them to allow business meetings and travel.

San Mateo County was hit hard by travel declines, particularly after a robust summer, with declines continuing through the winter months. Burlingame/Millbrae/SFO had 41% occupancy over the year of 2020, compared to 88.9% in 2019. In January 2021, occupancy was at 28.8%.

Based on CBRE research, occupancy rates are anticipated to recover by 2024, though Mr. Hutar speculates that this may be delayed by a year or more.

Mr. Hutar identified the SMCCVB's current campaign to encourage State Legislators to allow meetings under the State Blueprint for a Safer Economy. Their primary suggestion is to include meetings in the Movie Theater reopening plan, citing the brief period of success when meetings up to 50 people were allowed in June 2020.

Mr. Hutar noted that he will be providing a similar presentation to the County Board of Supervisors on March 23 as another push for these allowances.

The hoteliers shared stories of reopening in other states as an incentive for California to allow meetings, particularly given that safety protocols are followed so rigorously. Bookings for meetings are difficult to secure even months out due to fear that lockdowns may come again.

Mr. Kretsch also noted that a lack of clear direction can harm consumer confidence and may lead to difficulties retaining meetings scheduled in the future. Mr. Hutar indicated that the Burlingame Trolley would not return until occupancy recovered.

Councilmember Brownrigg questioned how the City can help in this endeavor, though Mr. Hutar said that the SMCCVB will have more clarity by next week. Councilmember Brownrigg requested that Burlingame hotels tally the number of jobs that can be created or brought back, should meetings be allowed again. The Subcommittee agreed that having sample language for an advocacy letter with hard facts would be very helpful.

Councilmember Brownrigg also requested that staff consider engaging landlords of hotels to better gauge how this relationship may affect business viability. He worried that land use changes may hurt the industry by allowing land owners to change the use of their property.

Discussion with Property Owners and Landlords

Terry Horn echoed the hoteliers' sentiment, noting that office and retail uses are still suffering from the downturn. He noted that a number of vacancies are in the process of being leased, asserting that these are all positive signs of a recovery, though current tenants are still hurting financially.

ACM Blackburn questioned if there would be a way to recognize helpful landlords, though Mr. Horn said that some landlords do not necessarily want the recognition. Ms. Keleher noted that some landlords are not as helpful, and public recognition may cause a contentious atmosphere.

Councilmember Brownrigg theorized that a merchant could nominate their landlord for recognition, and the City could check with the landlord if they would like to be publicized.

Staff Report on Storefront Activation (Paint the Void)

EDS Sanfilippo provided information about his call with Paint the Void, a non-profit previously referred to the City that specializes in storefront activation. While the company is not currently doing work, they would be interested in partnering in the future if circumstances allow.

Their process typically involves identifying prospective properties or businesses and connecting them

with an artist. The painted displays are created on plywood and posted over a vacant space's windows as a public art display. Contracts are separate for property owners and artists, with Paint the Void acting as a liaison. Similar companies are currently fundraising for future opportunities.

Ms. Keleher expressed her support for the idea and cited her own business's success with painted window displays.

Councilmember Brownrigg asserted his support for public art, though he noted that these contracts would be between the non-profit and property owners. EDS Sanfilippo clarified that the overview was for informational purposes on possible ideas for storefront activation, though the City would not likely be involved in the process.

Miscellaneous Discussion

EDS Sanfilippo requested clarification if the Subcommittee would like to discuss permitting live music, per an email from an interested party to the City Manager. This will be discussed over email and confirmed or denied prior to the next meeting.

Action Items

- CDD Gardiner will follow-up when the Rollins Road Specific Plan may be discussed at a the Subcommittee
- CDD Gardiner will discuss live music with staff to determine if it is possible
- EDS Sanfilippo will again invite landlords to the April meeting to hope for a better turnout

FUTURE AGENDA TOPICS

- April 14, 2021- Discussion with property owners and landlords, possibly a discussion related to live music

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no further public comments.

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 9:30 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Joseph Sanfilippo
Economic Development Specialist