



Board of Directors Special Meeting
Wednesday, August 17, 2022

Meeting Minutes

Attendance: Brian Hirahara, Kathy Hemmenway, Bob Power, Dan Buckshi, Brad Barnett, Jonathan Bartlett, Kevin Wilk, Jim Telford, Dan Batlin, Barney Fonzi, Jim Fidelibus, Donna Labriola, Kelsey Wendt, Sue Rainey, Gary Skrel, Bob Linschied, Tracy Dietlein

- I. Welcome & Introductions – Brian Hirahara, WCD Board President
 - A. Announced that this is an emergency meeting. Dan Buckshi, City Manager, gave a presentation at the last meeting on the Sales Tax ballot measure. We covered the WCD pertinent language that was added, thank you to Gary Skrel’s efforts. We worked with the city and added ballot language which includes “downtown improvements, business support, and the arts”.
- II. Public Comment
 - A. Bob Joe, Chair of Sustainable Walnut Creek
 - a. Sustainability Week in Walnut Creek is October 22-28. Every year, the last Wednesday of October is Sustainability Day. Thankful for the support, funding, and promoting of Sustainability week. See the information flyer for the events schedule and sign-up to participate.
- III. **Board Action**
 - A. Sales Tax Initiative
 - a. Jonathan Bartlett – In support of the measure. Thinks there should have been specific assignments of the allocation of tax dollars. In most business settings when you are given money you are required to be accountable for how the money is spent. Appreciated the reasoning previously discussed, about the flexibility of funds when something arises like a pandemic but doesn’t feel it was a good enough reason.
 - b. Brian Hirahara – There is an oversight committee. There are legal restrictions against specifically allocating the money prior to the initiative being approved.
 - c. Jonathan Bartlett – From a marketing perspective, the people may resist if they don’t see written restrictions listed.
 - d. Gary Skrel - If there are specific restrictions for where the money is being spent, state law requires us to get a 2/3 vote and the chances of that happening are impossible. Thinks the city made the right decision doing it that way.
 - e. Sue Rainey – The timing of this is concerning due to the current financial climate. The city needs the money, and it is already on the ballot. It is time for us to get behind this and support it. It is a way to get money from everyone else who shops in Walnut Creek to help with our infrastructure.
 - f. Brad Barnett – When you buy a car in the City of Walnut Creek, the taxes are based on where you live. If you live in Walnut Creek your taxes are paid in Walnut Creek. If you buy a car and you live in Oakland, you are paying Oakland taxes regardless of where you buy it. This is not a disadvantage to them as a dealer if people go find the lowest rate elsewhere. We generate money in WC when everyone buys a car, anywhere in the Bay Area.

- g. Kevin Wilk – Addresses the part of the initiative that swayed him. Heather Farms Swim Center needing to be rebuilt. For example, if the center was estimated to cost \$25 million but ends up costing \$20 million, that allows the city to use \$5 million elsewhere. This allows the city flexibility to spend the extra amount allocated if projects are underbudget. Regarding sales tax, the city gets 1% of the 8.75% that goes to Walnut Creek. If someone shops online, we get 15% of the 1% because it is going to the overall state pool. The ½ cent sales tax means the entire ½ cent goes to Walnut Creek, regardless of it being spent in-person or online.
- B. Motion to support the ½-cent ballot measure. Sue Rainey made motion, second by Bob Power. All Directors present are in favor. No Directors were opposed. Motion passed.
- C. Brian Hirahara - Now that the Board has voted to support this measure, a separate committee will be setup to begin educating the merchants. We will need to educate the storefronts that this Measure is a benefit to the downtown. Especially with the presence of crime right now, this will resonate with our members.
- D. Bob Linschied – Informed that he will need to sustain due to the Chambers Board meeting not occurring until tomorrow.
- E. Gary Skrel - Would you like to see a show of hands of who would like to support in spreading the word, educating the downtown and hanging signs?
 - a. Hands raised by Brian Hirahara, Bob Power, Sue Rainey, Barney Fonzi
- F. Brian Hirahara – Thank you for the support on this initiative.

Meeting adjourned at 8:45am.