

Walnut Creek Downtown Association
Board of Directors Meeting

Wednesday, October 12, 2022

Meeting Minutes

Attendance: Kathy Hemmenway, Brian Hirahara, Peggy White, Sue Rainey, Jenny Perry, Dan Batlin, Gary Skrel, Kristy Lincoln, Bob Linscheid, Kevin Wilk, Jonathan Bartlett, Teri Killgore, Tracy Dietlein, Jim Telford, Joanna Sibley, Jennifer Perry.

- I. Welcome & Introductions – Brian Hirahara, WCD Board President
- II. Public Comment – No public comment.
- III. **Board Action** Brian Hirahara, Board President
 - A. Approval of August 3rd, August 17th, and September 22nd 2022 Board Meeting Minutes; Motion moved to accept meeting minutes by Gary Skrel, seconded by Jennifer Perry.
- IV. Measure O Campaign Update – Gary Skrel, WCD Board Treasurer & Measure O Co-Chair
 - A. Announcement that ballots are mailed out tomorrow. The Measure O campaign had a fundraising goal of \$70,000 and has reached \$72,000. The campaign team needs more walked to distribute campaign.
 - a. Kevin Wilk – Commented that we live and breathe Measure O but people outside of here do not know what Measure O is. Emphasized that most funding comes from outside of the city and that a little information can get people to sway from automatically voting no. Encouraged directors to comment and post on Measure O related content to push the negative comments down and comment back to questions or negative posts, in order to accurately inform. Further encouraged directors to write letters to editors. Suggested that if a lot of letters are received, they will be more likely to publish, but must be sent now so they can be published in the next 10 days.
 - B. Described the messaging on the 2nd version of the Measure O flyer. The flyer explains ½ of funding comes from outside Walnut Creek and states who is controlling where the money is being spent.
 - a. Kevin Wilk – More specifically, the money is being allocated by a citizen’s oversight committee that have annual independent audit. Last night during the city manager’s report, Dan Buckshy discussed how Walnut Creek just won an award for transparency and financial acumen for the state of California. Over the past 12 years we have shown how we are financially astute and transparent with where our money is being allocated.
 - i. Bob Linscheid - Since the Chamber’s Measure O endorsement (which is unusual), we have received pressure from the schools for Measure J endorsement. First, they opted out of the Measure J endorsement due to the 6 months of due diligence spent on making the Measure O decision. Second, they felt endorsing 2 measures on the same ballot could potentially hurt both. Has there been conversation from city relating to this?
 - ii. Kevin Wilk – Personally supports Measure J. However, measure O directly affects the chamber and businesses, and Measure O does

- not.
 - iii. Bob Linscheid – Schools impact businesses from a talent perspective. Wouldn't it have made sense to stagger these measures?
 - iv. Kevin Wilk – There were conversations about that but it has been worked through with the way it turned out.
 - v. Jim Telford – Do we know where things stand relating to polling numbers?
 - vi. Kevin Wilk – About 50% were in favor at the last survey. It will be close but historically, if people don't know about it they will vote no. If anyone has kids who are 18-22, get them to post and share with their friends because this is a group that is harder to reach.
- V. City Council Report – Kevin Wilk, Walnut Creek City Council
 - A. Staffing number are low but consistent with staffing everywhere.
 - B. Police is good; 75 uniformed officers out of an 85 number of approved officers. Compared to neighboring cities, we are in a good position but are still looking to get to 85. A full staff will be helpful with enforcement in the downtown. As Chief Knox said, if you pull someone over on a busy street, people will see it and slow down for 15 minutes knowing police are around. A full staff will help with all of these police efforts and will hopefully be full in the next few months.
 - C. City council voted on cannabis delivery. There is currently only 1 provider, for medical marijuana for delivery in Walnut Creek. Now open to 3 recreational distributors and will be chosen through a bidding systems. HerbnJoy is our current provider for medicinal marijuana and will now be providing recreational as well, for delivery. Council voted to have staff come back in 5 months to discuss a storefront. There is a community benefit discussion that was recommended a month ago regarding \$250,000 per delivery service that will be a part of the bidding process. Council determined that is too much and agreed on a more equitable amount last night, to be approved in the next month.
- VI. City Staff Report – Teri Killgore, Assistant City Manager, City of Walnut Creek
 - A. Will be returning to council in early December to agree on final steps for permanent outdoor dining structure program. Applications will be launching for Main Street businesses in January 2023. This will only occur on Main Street because of Locust Street construction in 2023. The temporary structures will be kept on other streets until construction is complete, and then will move to permanent structures as well.
 - a. Kathy Hemmenway – For Main Street businesses who want a permanent structure, are we waiting until rebound expires in June 2023 or is that when the process is beginning?
 - b. Teri Killgore – The process for Main Street will begin in January. Council has been flexible thus far and if there are construction delays, it will be discussed whether rebound can be extended. The application process is expected to open in January.
 - c. Kristy Lincoln – How long is the construction on Locust Street going to last and what will the impact be on traffic?
 - d. Teri Killgore – The preliminary construction plans are to go block by block for each phase. However, the plans are not finalized yet. The current plan is to primarily operate during business day hours and cover the areas on week nights and weekends. Originally it was only EBMUD but Central Sanitation has now been added to this construction and it is expected to last at least 9 months. This is construction that has been delayed from the pandemic, in order to keep the downtown open during the pandemic and support the businesses. It has been pushed to the future as far as possible and is necessary to occur in 2023.
 - e. Gary Skrel – What is the good news for the businesses?
 - f. Teri Killgore – It isn't pretty but at the end of the day we will have great

- foundation from this project. Unsure if it is being entirely repaved but it will look new after the construction.
- g. Bob Linscheid – Are they starting at Civic and going South?
 - h. Teri Killgore – We do not know that yet. The only information is that it will be performed block by block.
 - i. Gary Skrel – Will WCD have access to review the plans to assess the impact?
 - j. Teri Killgore – Yes and the city engineer will be invited to attend the next meeting to answer questions and will appreciate input.
 - k. Peggy White – Is there going to be plenty of notice that the businesses will receive or will they just be showing up?
 - l. Gary Skrel – Yes, they will give you notice but it will likely not be accurate.
 - m. Teri Killgore – There will be a plan but what actually occurs will likely vary from the plan.
 - n. Jim Telford – Encourages signage to help businesses.
 - o. Teri Killgore – Yes, it will take signage, good communication, and creative marketing to help get through the construction.
- B. Council discussed the Seven Hills Ranch proposal by Heather Farms Park. It is under county jurisdiction and the city will not control that decision.
 - a. Kevin Wilk – Citizens recognize that the city is involved with the access points. They are an active community and are not afraid to voice their options.
 - b. Sue Rainey – There are 300 units and already has 800 people on the waiting list.
 - C. Finding that businesses and restaurants from Palo Alto and Santana Row are looking at Walnut Creek for their third location. For example, Sweet Maple is coming.
 - D. The economic development studies, both the downtown retail analysis, office market analysis and the impact of the cancer center home medical office are launching in early November. Will share the highlights in early November. From a retail perspective, compared to other comparable, Walnut Creek is doing really well. Have heard from prospective office tenants that people want to be near the downtown, employees want to be back in the office and want to have their office downtown.
- VII. WCD Staff Report – Kathy Hemmenway, WCD Executive Director
- A. Oktoberfest is coming up. There will be over 50 vendors, 3 beer trucks, and 12 vendors. There have been 50,000 hits on the Oktoberfest webpage and we are expecting 5,000 attendees. Thank you to volunteers who have signed up and will pass around a sign-up sheet if you have not yet. Thank you to DRAA and STAND for sponsoring beverage booths. Setup begins Friday at Noon. The event will be on the East side of Civic Park for the first time.
 - B. Finalizing the contract with the city and will be presented to council in November. In discussion for timeline of BID renewal for next April or May.
 - C. The mini plaza clay mounds were removed last week due to a tripping hazard. The space will now be used for outdoor dining.
 - D. Trick-or-Treat is on October 28th from 2-5pm and will begin in Broadway Plaza. Thank you to Macerich and ParkSmart for sponsoring this event. Trunk-or-Treat, hosted by the city, will be at the same time and we are working to cross-promote both events.
 - E. WCD is participating in the Broadway Plaza Parade of Lights with the ice rink. Save the date, December 3rd and join in the parade.
 - F. The Ice Rink opens December 9th through January 16th with a soft opening on Friday, December 3rd. The sponsorship brochure has been sent out.
 - G. The executive committee had a conversation regarding the strategic plan and voted to move forward. It is a 4-6 month project and will star the 1st and 2nd quarter of the calendar year. It will be important to the organization and will set it up for the next 5-10 years.
 - H. The Holiday Stroll will be on Saturday, December 3rd from 3-6pm. This time will

- encourage attendees to enjoy restaurants after the event and retailers will still be open. This is still being planned and is discussed as making it a ticketed event.
- I. The Painted Pianos had a rough year and will likely be pulled next week. Will be getting rid of about half of the pianos. There are 2 new pianos that were painted this past weekend and will be in Plaza Escuela and Broadway Plaza.
- VIII. WC Chamber of Commerce & Visitor's Bureau Report – Bob Linscheid, CEO WCCCVB
- A. After 18 years of the East Bay Women's Conference being held in San Ramon, it will now be at the Leshner Center this year. Have almost reached 1,000 alumnae of the leadership of Contra Costa.
 - B. The Chamber endorsed Measure O, the East Bay Job Pact and endorsed Matt Francois and Cindy Silva.
 - C. This week, a forum was held for the fourth district supervisor race and the Pact will be considering its endorsement for that run.
 - D. Acknowledged Teri Killgore from the city and working together on Shadelands. There is a business improvement district in Shadelands approved for a 9 year contract in 2020. There has been significant development in the area including the sports mall. It is full occupied with 500,000 feet and will be increased by up to 3 times the size.
 - E. Excited to complete the new visitors guide. Nicole Hankton's work has been impressive. There will be an event to announce this release.
 - F. The 5 Chambers of Commerce in the Central County (Martinez, Concord, Pleasant Hill, Lafayette, and Walnut Creek) are hosting a mixpo: an expo with a mixer at the Pleasant Hill Community Center on November 10th.
 - a. Brian Hirahara – Will there be a downtown section or an opportunity to showcase top restaurants and other businesses in the visitors guide?
 - b. Bob Linscheid – Yes, you will be very happy with the outcome and we can share the draft with you to take a look at.
- IX. Macerich/Broadway Plaza Report – Tracy Dietlein, Senior Marketing Manager, Macerich/WCD Vice-President
- A. Updates to Broadway Plaza for retail are: Garage is opening in the Soma space with a 2 year deal. Fabletics is opening in mid-November. The Lululemon expansion is opening in the beginning of November. A deal has been signed with Louis Vuitton for a 1-year pop-up where Sur La Table was located. Selfie world is coming soon for a temporary experience.
 - B. In 2023 there are 11 new openings to announce: Allbirds will be coming in Spring, located in 1/2 of the Amazon location. Allen Edmonds is moving to Papyrus' old location. Chanel Beauty will open in Spring in the old Allen Edmonds location. AloYoga, Blue Nile, Brilliant Earth, Intimasy, and Lifetime Athletics are opening in Spring/Summer. Original Joes is opening where Stanford's was located. Pinstripes is opening in the Fall. Swarovski will be located where BareMinerals was. Macerich purchased the parcel between PF Changes and Crate & Barrel.
 - C. Trick-or-Treat will be taking place on October 28th. Santa will be arriving November 17th through December 24th. The holiday parade of lights is on December 1st. The Makers Market craft fairs are back on Broadway Plaza's Street on November 5th and December 3rd.
- X. DRAA/Leshner Center for the Arts Report – Peggy White, DRAA Executive Director
- A. Announced endorsement of Measure O. They felt the vibrancy and safety of Walnut Creek was important to support.
 - B. They have a new MOU with the city, based on the strategic plan. This will help stay the course and will overall be important for the organization.
 - C. The Leshner Center recently announced their new General Manager, Carolyn Jackson. She is smart, educated, knowledgeable of Walnut Creek, collaborative, innovative and they are excited to have her on their team.
 - D. Provided a recap of On Broadway. Thank you to Brian, Bob, and Gary for their Sasa

Dinner. Overall it was a tremendous financial success. The weather was cold but they were able to make adjustments. Festival Cultural is coming in 2023. Events like these, and the upcoming East Bay Women's Conference are a great use of the Leshner Center.

- XI. President's Report – Brian Hirahara, BH Development, Board President
 - A. Excitement regarding the strategic plan for WCD.
 - B. At the start of the pandemic, prediction that 40% of the restaurants would close. Aside from a few closures, their tenants are having record years since 2021. A few upcoming openings are: Model Bakery, Shake Shack, 5 Tacos and Beer, and San Dai.
 - C. Marketed the previous Apple space for 3 years and had 1 tour. The stores have to have a strong growth for the stockholders, as people are pushing to open stores and find spaces. There has been pent up demand from the last 3 years that is now showing.
- XII. Board Announcements
 - A. Dan Batlin – Announced grand re-opening of Buon Vino will be on October 15th. The new location will bring more events and a great space for food and wine pairing. It is not a full kitchen so they are looking to partner with local restaurants to come to them. Excited to work with local businesses and partner with everyone to bring energy to the downtown.
 - B. Kathy Hemmenway – Start Method will be relocating to the space next to Buon Vino.
 - C. Kristy Lincoln – Announced that Love+Chocolate will be opening their second location in February of 2023, in Rockridge.
 - D. Joanna Sibley – Board & Brush use to have a 6:30pm class on Saturdays. They now have an open studio on Saturday nights from 7-9pm. The open studio is \$25 for 15-minute mini projects.

Next Meeting:
January 11, 2022