



BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, May 10, 2023

ATTENDANCE:

Brian Hirahara, Tracy Dietlein, Jenny Perry, Jonathan Bartlett, Dan Batlin, Peggy White, Rolla Ghaben, Bob Power, Bonnie Waters, Sue Rainey, Joanna Sibley, Jim Telford (Virtually), Teri Killgore, Bob Linscheid, Tina Neuhausel, Kathy Hemmenway, Donna Labriola, Kelsey Wendt, and Connie Ammatuna.

MEETING AGENDA

- I. Welcome & Introductions – Brian Hirahara, WCD Board President, BH Development
 - Meeting was held at the Walnut Creek Yacht Club at 1555 Bonanza Street. The meeting was called to order at approximately 4:00pm.
- II. Board Action – Brian Hirahara, WCD Board President, BH Development
 - Approval of January & March Meeting Minutes. Both January and March meeting minutes were approved, seconded, and the entire body approved.
- III. Public Comment
 - Tina Neuhausel from Sustainable Walnut Creek (SWC) is becoming an associate member of Walnut Creek Downtown. Sustainable Contra Costa and Sustainable Walnut Creek were created 15 years ago. There is a cleanup effort in Contra Costa, finding 90 different actions for individuals to create a more sustainable lifestyle. Party for the Planet (June 10) is a party for several sustainable businesses, they give awards to individuals, companies, non-profits and several other categories. SWC also coordinates an Eco event in March with other community partners.
- IV. Treasurer's Report – Kathy Hemmenway, WCD Executive Director
 - Kathy shared the current Treasurers report – balance sheet. Connie will take over all the accounting in-house. We will subscribe to an online QuickBooks software program, to cut checks in-house and provide real time accounting reports/access. Reminder that April 1st was the beginning of our new fiscal year.
- V. WCD Staff Report – Kathy Hemmenway, Executive Director, WCD
 - Kathy welcomes Connie Ammatuna, as the new Administration Assistant to take on accounting

and clerical duties. Kelsey will be able to focus more on the event planning.

- Donna talked about the Spring Uncorked event (4/26). There were over 600 tickets sold. Gross sales were \$33K, costs were at \$11K, which equals approximately \$22K net. Announcements of the scavenger hunt will come out on Monday. The Board and Brush said they were busy during the entire event which provided a lot of visibility for them and thanked the association.
- Classic Car Show event is coming up on Sunday, May 21. Taking place on Pine Street at the Rotator Taproom.
- June 22nd is the 2nd Uncorked event. The program will include mariachi bands, a partnership with the Livermore wine trolley so it will be easier for the people to visit the various zones that will be part of the event. Working on a campaign to bring more residents downtown for this event. Staff goal is to sell 1,000 tickets. Spotify ad just went live. Starting location will be at Broadway Plaza. Chill Zone element and possibly a silent disco or after-party at a location still yet to be determined. Cultural Festival is happening at the same time, so we are trying to bring in a Latin element, possibly even adding a station in the silent disco.
- \$25K in sponsorship support has been pledged by the Walnut Creek Commerce & Visitors Bureau to support WCD 2023 programming/events.
- Walnut Creek Downtown is sponsoring a booth at the Walnut Creek Art & Wine Festival, on June 4th. We will have 3-hour shifts for both days & are looking for volunteers to pour wine/beer.
- A Joint Executive Meeting with the Chamber and the WC Downtown committees last week (5/3). At least two more meetings will be scheduled for this year to discuss our collaboration and partnership with the Chamber. A very positive meeting discussing future goals to emphasize that we are not competitors; we are partners all working together towards the same goal.
- Tuesday, June 13th Lita will be hosting a festival in the Water Light Plaza. It originally started as a Juneteenth celebration in Oakland. They are hosting a couple of private dinners, carnival type theme with live music, dancers, and educating the community regarding the Latin community. Event time will be 2pm-8:30pm.

VI. City Council/City Manager Report – Dan Buckshi, City Manager; Teri Killgore, Assistant City Manager, City of Walnut Creek

- Dan and Teri provided a combined City Council/City Manager's report in Loella H.'s absence. The council had a lot of discussion at the May 2nd meeting regarding the proposed 1501 Main Street project which went from 27 units to a 285 unit, 7-story apartment building. It was a split vote, saying "no thank you" but you are welcome to come back with other ideas. It does not transition into the neighborhood well. The historic neighborhood and a high-density living complex do not work well together. The State of California was informed that the Council had turned down the project, putting Walnut Creek under more scrutiny. As the State continues to push for more housing, it is reviewing the city's housing. The State would like suburban cities to do more high-density housing. They are intentionally trying to find a balance between the high-density and single-family housing communities. The State is giving the city an 8-year deadline to create 5800 units and will probably request even more housing, of which 60% should be for the low-income population. Walnut Creek will not qualify for subsidies, and then will get penalized for not meeting the goal.

- Capital budget will be shared at Council meeting on Tuesday, June 16th. A detailed budget will be shared in the first week in June including Measure O and a full list of budget items. The May 18th Council meeting will provide a preview of those budget items.
- Outdoor dining applications will be due on May 31st. Locust Street and Bonanza Street remain under construction, so those will be put off until the construction is over in 2024.
- Draft of the Economic Development Plan is arriving soon & will be shared at the May 16 Council meeting. The department tried to get a pulse of the community through many interviews which provided a lot of "take-aways"; will be asking for feedback from Council. The first part of the plan is what the city is taking on and the second part could be what the Chamber or WCD might be able to take on. The third part are items that ED can't take on during the next 2 years. The 2-year goal is that we are all working in the same direction. The draft is located on the city's website.
- The downtown EBMUD construction is still on-going and is on schedule. The sewer district (Central San) will be coming in next. The construction has forced some of the sidewalks and crosswalks to have gaps or uneven surfaces causing some falls. Teri to share this issue with Public Works to notify EBMUD.

VII. WC Chamber of Commerce & Visitor's Bureau Report – Bob Linscheid, CEO, WCCCVB

- Recently held a meeting with 16 chamber organizations within the County at the Chicken Pot Pie Shop. Discussion topics included how to work together as a region. Reviewed lengthy list of proposed legislatures which includes an 11 x 17 document of new housing restrictions alone.
- Leadership Contra Costa recently held a session on Housing and Transportation. The class of 30 people were stunned by some of the ideas for transportation. When discussing housing development, the per unit cost is close to \$850K; what is the real solution to solving that pricing problem?
- The Chamber will be hosting a meeting with the head of BART security on May 15 regarding safety concerns. With ridership being low, the group hopes to have a conversation regarding safety and cleanliness, on behalf of the business community to ask what BART is planning to do? We need to collaborate regarding the goals, roles and responsibilities.
- June 3rd and 4th is the Art & Wine Festival at Heather Farm.
- The Chamber is recruiting for the next class of Leadership Contra Costa. Thanks to Kaiser Permanente for their support including scholarships for non-profits. The recent class included 60% women.

VIII. Macerich/Broadway Plaza Report – Tracy Dietlein, Senior Marketing Manager, Broadway Plaza; WCD Vice-President

- Broadway Plaza currently has 4 retail openings. Tracy talked about some of the tentative openings dates and movement that is happening in the plaza. Alo Yoga is scheduled to open in June; Channel - summer. Cholina Linda will go into the space near Boudins. Lifetime Fitness continues to hold for an opening in August, they are opening their sales office around mid-May. Louis Vuitton - June. Pinstripes has been moved to March 31, 2024. Original Joe's is coming, but they do not know exactly when. Crate and Barrel will be there until Fall and then move over to their new spot.

- Makers Market is this weekend. June 3rd Barbie is coming. She is coming out of the Hello Kitty Van. Father's Day weekend they are collaborating with A Brighter Day (organization promoting teen suicide prevention) for a luxury car show.
- "Experiential Retail" seems to be more relevant.

IX. DRAA/Lesher Center for the Arts Report – Peggy White, Executive Director, DRAA

- Peggy White talked about the latest news for the Lesher Center for the Arts. Hosting an event on May 18 to announce the upcoming headliner series. DRAA/LCA would like to look at everyone's calendar to make sure they are planning together and collaborating. Sushi and Salsa event, open bar, Japanese influence at Sasa on May 30th; \$250 per person. They have approximately 10 more openings.
- New artistic director was just announced and is starting in August. He will have a year before he starts planning events.
- Fiesta Cultural is June 20-25. Women in Country, a bluegrass festival is being planned for September. They are hoping that these programs will open the community up to other demographics.

X. President's Report - Brian Hirahara, WCD Board President; BH Development

- Brian shared that Walnut Creek's downtown is in better condition, rebounding quicker than other downtowns. One factor is that Broadway Plaza is one of the top malls in the country and has low vacancies and high sales. Walnut Creek is very well known, even in other parts of the country. Also discussed were the high rents and landlords that don't comply with certain restrictions, permits, etc.
- Measure O funding will provide support for the downtown. The programs it will help fund will help our merchants and membership; the organization is thankful for the support.
- The Wall Street Journal published a recent article stating how businesses are preferring to go to the suburbs. The big city's crime, cleanliness, online shopping, and other issues have forced these businesses to look elsewhere.
- Partnership with the Chamber is very important. Continue to discuss a vision or strategic plan for the downtown. Walnut Creek doesn't have a space for a 'farm league' of small businesses, only larger retailers. One idea is to consider shipping containers as space for small micro-retail shops down Cypress Street. A small retailer can do a short-term lease, low rent, no utilities, and can decide if it's working for them, if they want to stay or move to another location. It's clearly conceptual at this point but could be very exciting.
- Kathy is celebrating her 15-year anniversary working for the Downtown Association. Family and friends joined the end of the meeting to celebrate with the Board. Kathy is presented with an award to thank her for her leadership and all the time she has committed to the city.

Meeting Adjourned at 5:32pm

Next Meeting: July 12, 2023