



**Minutes of Board of Directors' Meeting
June 10, 2009
Affinity Bank Conference Center**

Directors present: Chairman Dave Armstrong, Secretary Jerry Breiner, Vice Chair David Comden, and directors Jim Rice, Mark Hartley, Greg Smith, Lucas Johnston, Jason Collis, Doug Wood, Maria Fiore, Lori Moll, Christy Weir, Clarey Rudd and Ed Warren,

Directors absent: Tom Wood, Cheryl Heitmann, Jennifer Livia, Zoe Taylor, Jim Lutjohann and Seana Weaver.

Other attendees: Executive Director Rob Edwards, Bill Finley, Barbara Evans, Sid White.

The meeting was called to order at 8:40 a.m. by Chair Armstrong.

Approval of previous board minutes – A motion was made to approve the previous board minutes. Seconded and approved.

Special Presentation | Request to Council from Social Services Task Force – Next up was a detailed presentation by Peter Brown, City of Ventura Social Services Manager. We discussed the concept that the Faith Based Subcommittee of the Task Force brought forth to City Council in May, regarding the decriminalizing of sleeping in cars. Peter said the resolution was taken to council to begin to put pressure on the City (and the County, in turn) to aggressively and proactively address the 10-Year Strategy to End Homelessness by allowing those who wish to sleep and live in their cars within the City limits. Lively discussion followed. The resolution covers public and private lots, and discussions have taken place at Council level regarding the modification of the Municipal Code to reflect this. It is coming back to council with staff recommendations on July 13th, and in discussion that followed it was agreed that if DVO has a stand on the matter it is imperative we make a proactive showing, both via email and formally in person. VPD is not in favor of decriminalizing the program, partially for the fact they are already overburdened with calls. This would create another layer of trouble at the public lots, not to mention the private ones. Question was raised how the City can create an ordinance allowing parking in private lots to occur without any recourse for the property owner. Peter said staff will be responding to the three alternatives mentioned: 1. Repeal of the ordinance in total, 2. altering the allowable hours and 3. adding to the existing language. Jerry asked if there shouldn't be, as most ordinance-change requests go, a fourth alternative which would be "make no change at all." Discussion. Q: would this apply to RVs? A: yes. Q: what is the definition of "sleeping/living" in cars? A: none. There is a possible alteration in discussion, allowing specific locations. Suggestion to allow public lots. Jerry suggested that if the Faith Based community has so many followers for this concept, and these parishioners have expendable charitable contributory cash, why not start a pilot program, allowing these churches to try this concept for a period of one or two years to see if it works. Discussion. Peter said the City's intention is to go back to these faith based organizations to ask which may be open to allowing their lots to be used for this reason.

Q: what is the estimate of the Santa Barbara vs Ventura viability for this kind of program? A: Santa Barbara has some issues, as they were more or less forced, via lawsuit, to instigate something of this nature. Peter estimated there are probably 100 people in Ventura "living" in their cars at any given time. Dave Wilson said the allowing that to continue is not a good idea, from a law enforcement and public health standpoint. Jim Rice asked "in a cash-strapped City, is this really anything that can even be thought of as a possibility at this point in time?" Discussion. Dave Armstrong noted that his fear is that this concept does nothing to end homelessness, the concept of the organization who brought it Council, but rather it encourages it and does little to even manage it, as many of these people are in need of services. Christy said the Council did not endorse the idea of sleeping in cars in May, merely asked that Staff come back with recommendations. She said the majority of Council is not ready to endorse this idea, and their determination will be based in great part on the ideas brought forth by VPD, code enforcement – and of course, public input. Q: with every bed over-subscribed in the City, who would actually address this county-wide issue? A: Peter said there are 3 or 3 governmental bodies that could take on this issue, but getting them together is very, very difficult. He said

that there are three ways to distribute the number of beds in each jurisdiction: 1. per capita (bad, in his view), 2. per population, or 3. via the Regional Housing Needs Assessment. Staff is suggesting the Council look at the third option as the way to address it. Goal is to move them in to permanent housing asap. Jerry asked Dave Wilson (VPD) for his input. He said there is already too much of a need for service calls, just for the problems we currently face downtown involving homeless issues (which includes mental health, drug/alcohol dependencies, vagrancy). They receive multiple complaints often on single issues – VPD does not have a “tool” to deal with what they have on the plate now. This would be a further burdening of resources, all too precious in this economy. If Council takes away the ordinance, said Dave, there will be many more problems in downtown and midtown to deal with. There would be nothing to prevent someone from sleeping in their cars up in the high-priced hillsides or the beach areas, where many tourists visit.

Dave Armstrong asked: “What can DVO do at this point?” With a limited number of case managers, much more resource will be required from planning and code enforcement. Mark stated that, as a property owner, he sees people living in their cars in the north Oak street parking lot everyday, sleeping, barbecuing, urinating, trashing up the lot and the area; the CURRENT situation is untenable, so how can Council even consider this idea as having any merit? Peter said there WILL be a sleeping in cars program at the end of the summer, and we should get used to it. Lively discussion.

Q: of the fiscal impact, how much will VPD and the city put in to make this work? A: zero dollars (\$0). Discussion. Peter suggested a partnership between the business and faith-based communities to address this, not a confrontation. Noting the Santa Barbara model, he stated that State Street Business Association was the driving force in to the creation of Casa Esperanza, SB’s homeless center. Q: So, what should DVO do? A: Dave suggested that Rob and Jerry work with the letter already begun by Jerry to draft a note the board will vote on next meeting, to be presented to Council by Rob and emailed to Council prior. In the letter, it will be important to note that we support VPD in their efforts, ask for no un-funded mandates, ask for the fourth alternative (see above). We will need to see the draft, and Peter said he would get us the basics of the staff verbiage. We should make sure the end goal is stated; to end homelessness, and our stance will be that this does nothing to accomplish that, in turn, it does the opposite. We (the City) should not deviate from the plan to end homelessness. It should be noted that this sounds like, and is being devised, as a diversion from the true goal. We should dedicate time and resources to find solutions, as opposed to adding more layers of probable hassle on the already-over-burdened VPD and citizenry. We will offer to help facilitate a 1-2 year pilot program, utilizing the faith based community’s own private lots, to see if this concept can work.

It was noted by Jerry that the newspapers and magazines should make public notice of this asap, so there can be input from the populace, not just those who are closely paying attention to what goes on.

Old Business | Executive Committee Report | David Comden – None

Executive Director’s Report | Rob Edwards – Rob reported that the Parking Advisory Board will meet next week for the first time and will go over the vendor apps for the meter stations. The latest proposal is to have a wireless hub at intersections, and as Dave Wilson noted, the ability to have cameras at those hubs as well. Great news from a security standpoint. The recycle bins are ready to be distributed, the initial 10 coming out next week. From 5-7pm on the 16th, DVO will be hosting a “welcome to Ventura’s downtown” gathering for incoming Planning Director Jeff Lambert. Rob will forward the eVite to all for distribution. Dave Wilson mentioned we now have 4 weekend officers assigned to downtown, thru indepth discussions with City Attorney Callone and RDA. Dave Armstrong asked for ongoing statistics regarding same. Rob also mentioned that Geodelic, a new company located in the incubator, is creating a software solution to enable cellphones to read full-size webpages for use of hotels, restaurants, etc and Ventura is their test-city. On the PBID front, the contract is in hand and being edited by the Steering Committee today. There are 22 applicants for the 11 board positions, deadline Monday for return of these docs. Discussion.

- **Finance Committee | Greg Smith** – Greg provided the extended DVO budget, taking it out to the end of July, 2009. Discussion. There was a motion/second to accept the proposed budget. There was a motion to extend Rob Edward’s contract one month further from its existing sunset of 6/30/09 to 7/31/09. Motion/second. Both motions passed unanimously. Rob thanked the board and invited us all to his new place, above Bernadette’s, for a Fourth of July party from 10-12 in the morning.

Committee Reports

- **Economic Restructuring Committee | Dave Armstrong** – Dave noted that ER had a productive

meeting last, working on the budget for the work plan, and it may be presented at the DVP board meeting in two weeks. Jim Rice gave an update on the Restaurant Committee, now down to one time per month for the meetings (better attendance, more focused meetings). They are working on on-going CUP issues. The July 4 California Music Festival is upcoming, though it is unclear if the organization of it is going to come off as professionally as it could. Discussion.

- **Design Committee | Lori Moll** – Lori noted the committee met last week and worked on the work plan and updated info on the newsracks.
- **Promotions Committee | David Comden** – David reported that the upcoming visit by syndicated columnists he is working on with Jim Luttjohann will also feature a performance by the SBCs Living Wallpaper Docents with a meet-and-greet 6/25 at the Mission, 5-7pm. There also may be a tour of downtown using Glen Gerson's mini-tour vehicle. The Endless Bummer will premiere worldwide at the Majestic Ventura Theater on the 28th. He also mentioned that Artwalk fundraiser (the ArtyParty) will take place 7/18. Finally, he noted that the VVCB has now added a seat for a DVP representative to their board of directors, to be filled once DVP is in gear.
- **Organization Committee | Lucas Johnston** – Lucas said the committee met and had a productive meeting, working on the work plan and engaging with the San Buenaventura Conservancy's Cynthia Thompson. This month's Third Thursday is at W2O.
- **DOT – DAT - SSTF | Jerry Breiner** - No update

New Business – none.

Public Comments – none.

Meeting adjourned at 10:40 a.m.

Respectfully submitted, Jerry Breiner – secretary, 2009-2010