



**Minutes of Board of Directors' Meeting
August 27, 2008
Affinity Bank Conference Center**

Directors present: Chairman Jason Collis, Secretary Jerry Breiner, Vice Chair Dave Armstrong, directors Lori Moll, Cheryl Heitmann, Sandra Walker, Mark Hartley, Glenda Lewis, David Comden, Zoe Taylor, Jim Rice.

Directors absent: Treasurer Greg Smith, Christy Weir, Jack Carter, Clarey Rudd, Jim Lutjohann, Doug Wood, Maria Fiore, Seana Weaver, Ed Warren.

Other attendees: DVO Executive Director Rob Edwards, Sid White (City of Vta), Marni Brook (Montecito Bank and Trust), Stasiu Geleszinski (Sperry Van Ness), Marie Lakin (Whisenhunt Communications), Robin Elander (City of Ventura), John Mann (Office of Assemblyman Pedro Nava), Al Gomez and Dave Wilson (VPD), Lucas Johnson (Affinity Bank), Annie Campbell and Hilda Kirkpatrick (VVCB) and Janet Fukomoto (Time Warner Cable/Charter).

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

Introductions

Jason introduced Al Gomez of the City of Ventura Police Department with an update on graffiti gangs (taggers) and the current state of the train trestle covering 101 at Ash. They are now able to fine the parents in civil court for underage graffiti artists. The Graffiti Tracker is a national database of photos that allows police departments and State trooper to coordinate data to identify similar styles of graffiti, instance to instance. 11 businesses in the downtown have filed a lawsuit regarding a common graffiti vandal. He also discussed the GPS camera system and the accompanying database, currently noting that over \$63,000 in citations issued in the last 6 months. Q: Is there a pattern to the tagging? A: no, taggers work whenever it works for them, day or night. Q: Any graffiti on the VC campus and are you working with Campus police? A: we are working with the campus police, so far very little in terms of graffiti. Q: Are the gangs recruiting taggers to assist in their "marketing"? A: yes, and unlike gangs, taggers have no "turf". His advice to merchants is twofold: (1) before removing any graffiti take a photo of the damage and call the VPD non-emergency hotline at 650-8010 to report it and (2) put up and install anti-graffiti covering on your windows, acting as an "etching guard" against window destruction. Discussion

Jason next introduced guest John Mann from Assemblyman Pedro Nava's office, discussing the graffiti on the railroad trestle at the foot of the pedestrian bridge at Ash Street. At DVO's and Mayor Christy Weir's insistence, his office has met with CalTrans and Union Pacific regarding responsibility for the trestle, and at this point CalTrans assumes responsibility for the structure. As to HOW that responsibility is to be exercised – and who and how it is to be addressed and completed – was part of a longer discussion. The City Attorney's office is working with Caltrans and Assby member Nava's office to get the job done. The big issue, as always, is preventing future damage – how to secure the trestle and be able to identify those that choose to ignore the no trespassing ordinance. Q: At what point can an estimate be put forth to ascertain the true amount to fix/repair/paint/maintain? A: We don't know yet, it will depend on who gets the bid on the contract. Q: How can we get ourselves higher on the priority list to get this done? A: Letters from organizations such as DVO and other organizations, including the County of Ventura will make big inroads to moving ourselves up the ladder. Union Pacific has agreed to pay 1/3 of the graffiti removal fees. Q: If there is a way to utilize the Public Art Program, would it be possible to have the painting work done in house (as it were)? A: It is up to the City Attorney, but obviously safety will paramount in concerns. Lighting, cameras, lead abatement, - all of these subjects must be addressed, but Pedro Nava's office is committed to working with DVO, the City, the Chamber of Commerce to get this done right and get this done soon.

Approval of previous board Minutes - Moved/seconded/passed.

Old Business – none.

Committee Reports

- **Executive Committee Report: Dave Armstrong** - Dave noted that current task list for the committee is to get Rob his newly-agreed to contract. Short discussion.
- **Economic Restructuring Committee Report: Dave Armstrong** – Dave spoke about his committee’s latest efforts to talk with Patagonia about joining in with DVO and expand in to the downtown core area with a retail presence. Alex Olsen of Becker Group may be able to help in this endeavor, and Jerry offered to speak with CFO Bob Kelleher. Urban Outfitters, national chain, is showing interest in coming downtown with one of their outlets, albeit with a much smaller store. There is a new olive oil store opening in the 200-block near Capriccio. He reminded us that now the Restaurant Association is setup with Jim Rice at the helm, Dave is actively seeking a merchant to head up the Retail Association. At the Elks/Project Encore he is working on setting up a Children’s Literature series, and there is now a benefit concert for Encore tentatively scheduled for 9/27 featuring former Traffic member and solo artist/songwriter Dave Mason. Watermark may be putting on the pre-event. Additional concerts may well take place, with the participation of Steve from Zoey’s. The Farmer’s Market relocation discussions continue, current issue being the size of the drive-aisles. VPD has been very cooperative at the meetings helping with ideas and the like.
- **Finance Committee:** Dave stated that Greg would not be here at the meeting, so there is no update at this time.
- **Downtown Operations Team (DOT) Report: Jerry Breiner** – Jerry reported that Ken Corney, asst Chief of Police VPD, along with Sid White and Rob Edwards will be having our first sit down meeting as the Action Team. It is the culmination of many months of DOT subcommittee work, focusing on health and safety issues in the downtown. Jerry will update as the meetings continue. Dave Wilson spoke about the task force being a positive force for much needed change and then introduced Tom Higgins to the group from the Patrol Task Force. It is Tom’s group whose presence has been felt much more strongly in the last few weeks. Comments around the table were that it was a great improvement, at the least just to have cops on the beat downtown on a semi-regular basis. Discussion. Jerry also spoke about the current state of affairs with the upcoming completion of the sewer/water main work. Discussion. Q: What is the commitment of the council to the downtown, in regards to the damage to the economy downtown? It was agreed that Mark and/or Brad be invited to come to the next board meeting to discuss the spring/summers plan and to describe what they have in mind for the fall paving project. In discussion, it was agreed that the board members should individually speak with various council members to lobby for our merchants and the immense hurdles they have had to deal with during the last 6 months – and how it should never be repeated. Discussion. We agreed we need to have concrete demands next time a plan to disrupt the streets is placed before us. Sid agreed to set up a meeting next week with Brad, Dave Armstrong, Jerry Breiner and himself in regards. Jerry suggested that Dave’s ER committee create a letter from DVO to the City about this, after our meeting next week.
- **Organization Committee Report: Sandra Walker** – Sandra said the fundraiser on September 21 @ Crowne Plaza is fast gaining momentum. We have already begun to accept auction items, and she reminded the board members that they are each responsible to sell 10 tickets as well as supply 2 auction items for the event. Newsletter articles are still needed from each board member. Rob mentioned we now have a PayPal donation button on the site for tickets, and Michelle from PayChex will be handling the auction items. Sandra handed in her resignation, as she is no longer working at Affinity Bank, but she has agreed to finish up this last item on her agenda. To that end, she introduced Lucas Johnston who will be taking over for her at the bank. Jason thanked her for her input and great help and volunteerism during her all-too-brief stay on our board.
- **Design Committee Report: Glenda Lewis Greason** – Glenda noted her committees next meeting is today at 3:30 @ HQ. The committee’s current task list includes:
 - Street lighting: Rob reported no update at this point, in the hands of the City Attorney. Sid is assisting Rob with this work, and Sid reiterated this it is incumbent on DVO to fill out the Contractor’s app with the City to get this ball in play. Rob said he would attend the Design Committee meeting to help clarify status for the holiday lighting.
 - Benches: placements has been solidified and installation should occur shortly.
 - Recycle bins: Council will review the suggestion by DVO to allow advertising on these and we should know more in the first full week of September. DVO will be paying a “license fee” of \$1800 to install these bins, but we should easily make that money back from the advertising.
 - Signage: Discussion about clutter of signage and A-frames in the downtown. Mark counted way too many of these on a recent trip up and down Main Street. We discussed enforcement of sign ordinances and the work of the Action Team. Jerry will add to the list that is being addressed from a “safety” standpoint.
 - Train trestle: see earlier discussion
 - Rob is working on final insurance items for the golf cart thru VPD.

- **Promotions Committee Report: Dave Comden** – Dave Comden gave his first committee report as chair, noting that meetings will now take place the LAST TUESDAY of the month, 9:00AM at HQ. Noting last weekend's two major events, he said it was interesting and disturbing that a lot of the merchants he personally spoke with did not know about either event. Raising awareness of what is going on in our community is key to a successful promo committee. Discussion. He suggested the idea of putting together an event honoring the 9 Ventura County Olympians, as well as having one of the Ojai Film Festival's soirees downtown. Suggestion about nicknaming Ventura the "City of Festivals." We also discussed the Costner event and the concept of goodwill: how adjacent marketing of festivals and events, on a regular basis, even small, may have a much wider-spread effect than we can comprehend or imagine. At the September meeting the idea of the holiday décor will be discussed, which brought up a long discussion on lighting, power, the timing of purchasing holiday lighting if the City cannot get their installation and changes together fast enough for the holiday season.
- **Executive Directors Report: Rob Edwards** – Rob reported that the DVO and The Crowne Plaza won the bid and were selected as the hosts of the 2009 California Downtown Association conference to be held 9-9-09. Thirty bids were placed from a multitude of downtowns and DVO bested them all. The final four included Palm Springs, Burbank and Pasadena. Kudos to the Crowne for offering excellent customer service and rates. In other news:
 - **PBID consultants meetings** – Rob has now had 3 town hall meetings set with the team, yielding a diverse group of residents, merchants and property owners – 90 total to date. All the input has been positive and supportive with just a few hesitant but not negative, bits of input. Communication of how it all works continues to be the key to ensure an informed public. Two steering committee meetings have taken place to date and two more are scheduled for September 8 and 22, 10AM, most probably at Affinity Banks Conf. Room.

New Business - Discussion around the table about new businesses opening or slated to open, including Duality, Charleen's, Franky's new management, Zoey's Jewelry store. Watermark will be hosting a Chamber meeting soon involving all of the State PACs at the end of September.

Public Comments – none

Meeting adjourned at 10:45 a.m.