

DOWNTOWN VENTURA PARTNERS



Minutes of Boards of Directors' Meeting October 27, 2010 505 Poli – 5th floor conference room

DVO Directors present: Chair Dave Armstrong, Secretary Jerry Breiner, Vice Chair David Comden, Treasurer Greg Smith and directors Christy Weir, Seana Sesma, Charnelle Smith, Clarey Rudd, Cheryl Heitmann, Michele Olsen, Jim Luttjohann, Lucas Johnston and Patrick Mullins (absent were Jayme Dwyer, Jason Collis (excused), Lori Moll (excused), Zoe Taylor, Doug Wood) | **quorum met with 9 of 18**

DVP Directors present: Chair Dave Armstrong, Secretary Jerry Breiner, Vice Chair David Comden, Treasurer Greg Smith and directors Christy Weir, Jeff Smith, Cheryl Heitmann, Mike Merewether, Mark Hartley, Ed Warren (absent was Jeff Becker) | **quorum met with 7 of 11**

Other attendees: Sid White, David Wilson (VPD), Kathleen Eriksen (Executive Director, DVP/DVO), Barbara Asbell, Barbara Evans, Jim Wright, Lydia Larson.

Quorums were met and the meeting was called to order at 8:36 a.m. by Chair Armstrong.

Introductions – Dave asked the members of the public to introduce themselves and their affiliations.

Approval of previous meeting's minutes | Breiner – Jerry brought forth the minutes from the previous meeting. There was a motion by Christy and second by Greg for DVO approval. Motion passed with 7 in favor, no opposing and 2 abstaining. There was a motion by Greg and second by Mark for DVP approval. Motion passed with 9 in favor, no opposing nor abstaining.

Old business, Executive Committee updates | Comden – None.

VPD Report | D Wilson – Commander Wilson noted that working with Snapshot and the Clean & Safe team has been very smooth and efficient. Though there are parking issues, he feels that discussions are going well at this point and John Snowling is keeping up with everything related to the parking district in a very efficient and effective manner. The VPD have had 4 complaints about the meters since their installation 6 weeks ago, 4 of them from elderly folks needing assistance in operating them. The cadets, Dave said, are working on assisting and being proactive in their responsibilities downtown to the visitors, parkers and merchants. He reported a suicide on Santa Clara that took place 10/26. Q: what would be the effect of a moratorium on enforcing meters for 6 months? A: In VPD's eyes, it would first mean the loss of a dedicated officer to downtown, something the merchants have asked for for years. That alone might make it a hard pill to swallow for Council to approve such an idea. He said VPD is hoping to find funds to pay for an extra holiday-time officer. Christy Weir and others noted that there has been a loss of panhandling issues since the meters' arrival, due in part to the presence of officers and/or cadets. Cmdr Wilson noted that there is a direct correlation between the installation and that change. Q: What is the appropriate response when you see someone sleeping in an enclave or entryway to a vacant (or occupied) building? A: call dispatch. Dave said they are working with the City Attorney's office to see if there is a way to change the downtown ordinance regarding panhandling to include the verbiage that would prohibit panhandling within 50' of a parking meter. Jerry and Dave commented on work being done behind the scenes on this subject at DAT. Dave reported that, as opposed to the story circulating around town about VPD ignoring a woman getting beaten up at Good Bar last month, the real story involved a domestic dispute of which the woman was a participant. He also stated that at a recent merchant meeting, he was told by one merchant that "if they have too many calls for service they can lose their liquor license." Dave reiterated that calls for service, when they become exceptional, are looked at to determine if the problem lies with the caller or the location. Oftimes, it is not that location. Finally, Dave reported that VPD is working with the County justice system to initiate "stay away" orders for repeat offenders downtown, those that become a nuisance due to repeated violations of the law.

September DVP Financials | G Smith – Greg reminded everyone he had sent the September financials to everyone via email for approval. After short discussion, Mike then moved and Cheryl seconded approval of the financials. DVP passed the motion with 10 in favor with no opposing nor abstaining.

DVO-DVP ACTION ITEM: Adopt Position Statement for Parking Pay Stations | Armstrong – Dave began this long discussion by giving background, along with able assistance from Vice Chair Comden. He noted that there is a vocal group downtown, advocating for a 6-month moratorium on the paid parking – and does DVO-DVP want to take a position about this. David noted that there were 32 people in attendance at the 10/26 meeting, chaired by Gary Parker of American Flags and Cutlery. They were concerned, fearful, scared, most believed meters are partly to blame for their slow business. Comden noted a request to change the current policy of the City by this group, though the letter they composed needing some serious editing (in his belief). Kathleen's concern is the negative press that she and other merchants perceive that downtown and Ventura in general are getting as a result of this activity. She has spoken with a number of business owners about not talking about the issue with customers or with her and customers are present. In her view, not all of them are getting the "perception vs reality" issue that arises when a potential customer to their, or others' stores, believes things are problematic downtown.

Dave noted that their concerns are real, and DVO-DVP is here to help make everyone successful. He then asked what ideas the board has. Can we take this negative energy and use it to go forward instead of getting lost in the mire that things like this can become if they aren't nipped in the bud? (colloq) We need to communicate to the merchants about what we do in a much better, more channeled way. Q: Where did the 6-month moratorium come from? A: It was originally asked as a year-long moratorium, Mayor Fulton responded to the question that it was not likely a year would work. David suggested that the next idea from this group may be to gauge, at the end of their planned moratorium length, how much more consideration can be given to the timing of the meters?

Our board's originally endorsed the idea, Dave reminded us, because it was a management of parking decision, designed to aid the merchants in bringing paying customers to their door – as opposed to other merchants or their employees taking up the parking spaces on Main. The Parking Advisory Board, the Council and the DVO-DVP have been very actively engaged in being proactive AND reactive to the group's requests. Sid noted that we won't have the results of sales in the downtown for another 6 months, due to the speed (or lack thereof) in sales figures coming back to the City. Dave stated that is important to note that the entirety of the remainder of our budget for 2010 is slated for promotion and marketing to get people to come to downtown. Jim Luttjohann said two of the disc jockeys at KFI radio suggested the group get a hold of people with bulldozers and pull them down, like they did in Chicago. Discussion followed. He mentioned that the VCB has had more complaints about the design/color of the meters more than anything.

What can DVO-DVP do to get more involved on the social networking aspect of the discussions? Seana suggested Kathleen might want to consider chiming on Facebook more often, if not alone just to help put facts to some misconceptions about what is really going on at the street. Jerry suggested anyone with a Facebook account also do so, in that all comments from Kathleen will appear to come from DVO – and that may be a lightning bolt for those looking simply to argue. There is some bullying and intimidation of the merchants, some stating that they have been urged to close their stores for 4 hours every day.

Dave responded to some comments from a member of the public in attendance, who said DVO should be more concerned with what's going on with the downtown" by citing just a few of the many things we have accomplished and tried to accomplish with certain property owners to clean up the downtown. He stated our focus, as always, should remain positive. Jeff Smith noted that the Parking Advisory Board has made conscious and true efforts at addressing all of the concerns brought forth by the group – to the point that he has gone downtown at a few times over the past few weeks to gauge the situation first hand. He reported that when he was downtown he noted that there people all over shopping, and parking, making a positive choice to park downtown. Barbara Evans, also on the Parking Advisory Board, noted that she shops much more frequently downtown since the meters went in, for convenience sake more than anything. Discussion followed on how to promote the good work – and the good possibilities now evident downtown by having available parking. Dave finished by stating that our responsibility, as always, is to continue to bring positive changes and messages to downtown. Sid has delivered business assistance program materials at the meetings that have been held, and he has a few merchants speak to him off record about it. He plans to do a Holiday workshop with Kathleen, specifics to be ironed out. Clarey ended the discussion by suggesting that if each one of the board members could visit the stores it could potentially defuse problems.

DVO-DVP ACTION ITEM: Adopt Recommendation for Fiscal Impact Studies | Armstrong – Dave spoke about the fact that ER committee recommending to the board that we ask the City Council a/o the Planning department to seek fiscal impact studies from any new development coming on line. After brief discussion, Greg moved and Mike seconded for DVP that we recommend that City Council have a fiscal and economic impact study done to all future developments. Passed 8-0-0. Greg then moved and Jim seconded the same motion for DVO. Passed 10-0-0.

DVP ACTION ITEM: Review and approve Board policies | Heitmann – tabled

REPORTS:

Executive Director Report | K. Eriksen –

Business Development:

- Assisting with Coordination and Promotion of Third Thursday Mixers
- Staffed Restaurant/Bar Committee Meeting
- Working with Breiner to Update Database
- Providing Personalized Assistance to Existing Businesses
- On-Street and In Stores as Much as Possible
- Acting as Parking Ambassador - Offering Assistance & Free Coupons to Downtown Parkers
- Acting as Liaison with Merchants in Response to Parking Meters
- Survey Businesses for Feedback Regarding Downtown Events
- Working with Alcohol Beverage Control (ABC) regarding outdoor café applications and processes, happy hour regulations and responsible retailers program.

Clean/Safe:

- Coordinating Selection, Purchase and Install of Holiday Decorations
- Manage Clean & Safe Team:
 - Sidewalk Sweeping / Power Washing (2)/ Tenant Scrubber In Use(3)
 - Graffiti Handbill Removal
 - Trash Removal
 - Discourage Panhandling / Escort Off of Sidewalks
- Staffed Design Committee Meetings
- Managing Plantings/Maintenance of Large Sidewalk Planters
- Additional Planters to Ends of Main (Ash to Figueroa)
- Facilitating Repairs and Monitoring Downtown Festival Lighting
- Design & Distributed “Snap Shot “ Promo Piece

Marketing/Promotions:

- Soliciting Co-op Advertisers for 4th Quarter Marketing Campaign, Assembling Comprehensive Listing of Businesses for Ad
- Coordinating Holiday Tree Lighting Ceremony
- Wrote Quarterly Newsletter
- Coordinating Install of Holiday Banner Program
- Coordinating Holiday Display for Outdoor Advertising on Recycling Bins
- Staffed Promotions/Organization Meeting
- Working with Breiner on Design and Content for New Website
- Coordinating Annual Meeting
- Maintaining Social Media Outlets – Facebook
- Solicited Restaurant Participation for Rotary Event

Administration:

- Sent Meeting Reminders & Agendas for Boards/Committees
- Staffed All Committee/Board meetings (8 total)
- Manage Office & Communications
- Billing for City Contract

Meetings/Appointments:

- 51 Meetings/Appointments in Total

Announcements – The Prosperity Council has received multiple responses to its LIVE LOCAL request for online social media networking. It continues to work on a folk-themed spring 2011 event. CULTIVATE VENTURA is working with the City to re-landscape the farmer’s market parking lot. Lucas and Marni Brook have been honored with an award from the Pacific Coast Business Times, Mark Hartley has received an award from CSUCI for his work on so many fronts. Congratulations to all of them from the board!

New Business – On November 17 we will have our Annual Meeting at the Candlelight Restaurant from 5:30-7:30. The Mayor’s Art Awards will take place at the Museum 11/18.

Public Comment - none

Meeting adjourned at 10:30 a.m. | Respectfully submitted, Jerry Breiner – secretary, 2009-2010
