



Minutes of Board of Directors' Meeting

March 19, 2008

Affinity Bank Conference Center, Santa Clara at Chestnut

Directors Present: Chairman Jason Collis, Vice Chair Dave Armstrong, Secretary Jerry Breiner, and directors Glenda Lewis Grayson, Lori Moll, Douglas Wood, Mark Hartley, Jim Luttjohann, Maria Fiore, Sandra Walker, Ed Warren, the Honorable Cheryl Heitmann, and the Honorable Christy Weir.

Directors Absent: Zoe Taylor, Clarey Rudd, Jack Carter, Seana Weaver and Greg Smith.

Other attendees: DVO Executive Director Rob Edwards, Michael Kodama and Tom Mericle (City of Vta), Sid White (City of Vta), Debora Schreiber (Kalorama Coalition), Quinn Fenwick (Ventura PD), Dave Wilson (Ventura PD), Jen Livia (Red Brick Gallery) and Sherry Stuckey (real estate broker).

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

Special Presentations

- Jim Luttjohann, of the Ventura Visitors and Convention Bureau, gave his quarterly report. He noted that on April 5th the VVCB began a 2-year strategic restructuring plan, going into detail about current budgets and the continuation of co-op advertising bringing the current total to just under \$800K. Discussion on budget issues, including advertising in Ventura. Jim would like DVO to continue participating in the co-op ads, as there is much more value when a group participates in the whole. He reiterated that visitor report cards and surveys continue to note our top issues to deal with are vagrancy, cleanliness of sidewalks/parking areas.
- Tom Mericle/Michael Kodama of the City of Ventura gave their update of the Parking Management Plan. The Downtown Specific Plan (DTSP), adopted 2007, called for an in-depth management plan component, with funding available to complete. Most of the work to date has been to update inventory and current utilization. The future use data, a major component of the final result, is just in, and Michael noted it is a prioritized item for the work being done. The second part of the study, potential location of additional parking structures, is being handled by a newly hired design consultant: most probable sites are at the NW and NE corners of Palm and Santa Clara. Tom noted that, for all of the work and study, financing is the key. In November 2007, Tom and Mike gave their latest update to Council and got additional direction. Since then Don Shoup, noted expert on downtowns' parking, gave a lecture (available on the City Website as a video download) on the subject of "The High Cost of Free Parking." Tom stated that they are currently working on RFPs from 5 potential vendors for meter installation slated for this summer. Discussion about timing of installation of meters followed. They will be going back to Council April 21 with an update on the Parking District, possible selection of meter vendors and associated data. Mike noted that the intercept survey, taken as late as January of this year, showed that approx

13% of merchants continue to park in the 2-hour zones. Not surprisingly, customers surveyed found it difficult to find parking. In an interesting side-note, they found that nearly twice as many merchants believed their customers would not want to pay for parking as there were customers who stated they would have no problem in paying for parking. The survey did not address commuters.

Finishing up, in response to a question from the board, Michael stated that the survey can be determined block-by-block (note: DVO's original request requested this) but the overall strategy will not be complete by the April 21st council date. Mike and Tom will come to DOT in two weeks (4/10) for an update and clarification. Discussion followed as to the requirement and necessity of community meetings and positive public relations necessary to vet this in the public realm. Jerry noted that the entire package needs to be fully discussed and answered, prior to the public hearing about it second-hand. Included in that discussion, needing answers for the inevitable questions, are the facts on the survey data, revenue projections, use of the revenues, the management district's composition/compensation, time frames, etc. Discussion.

Approval of the previous board meeting minutes (3/5/08) - J. Collis

Jason Collis asked for a motion to approve the previous board minutes' approval.

*Motion passed.**

Old Business

Committee Reports

- **Economic Restructuring Committee Report: Dave Armstrong**
Dave noted they are revisiting goals and objectives of the Office and Retail Strategy. Merchants are struggling and DVO has an obligation to help in any way we can, he stated. His committee is also working on negotiating the rights to license Jeff Becker's sign at 101/California for DVO's use.
- **Design Committee Report: Glenda Lewis Greason**
Glenda noted that the Spring Clean up Day is April 12th, all are invited to participate. Currently there is \$10,000 budgeted for replanting of the planters; we may use some of that during that Cleanup Day. Rob noted that we are looking for a commitment from 50 people to help that day. An update on the sponsorship of the recycle bins Rob put together is being considered by the City Attorney at present.
- **Downtown Operations Team (DOT) Report: Jerry Breiner**
Jerry noted that Dave Armstrong, in his update made an obvious and clear challenge to DVO that his committee reflects: We have an obligation and an opportunity to help out our merchants during this difficult time, from the economy's downturn to the interruptive water and sewer line replacements on Main. He discussed the current state of the uplighting request and endorsement (Sid White said it is on track, included in the 5-Year CIP Implementation Program). Sid noted that he could use a budget concept approval for DVO's agreement to maintain the lights up to \$7000/year. Earnest work won't start on the concept until mid summer. Updates will come as we get them. Jerry asked Sid if DVO should request a schedule when to expect operational lights on the trees? Dave Wilson said he will see if he can get some info and will forward on to us. Jerry also noted that the Parking Study, reflected earlier in these minutes, has come a long way and DOT is very enthused and commends Tom Mericle and Michael Kodama for their work to date. It is important the work get completed asap so DVO can throw its endorsement on the entire plan.

- **Organization Committee Report: Sandra Walker**
Sandra and Rob gave an update on the newsletter, now being produced through this committee. Currently the committee is working on restructuring the bylaws and needs committee input. Sandra suggested a Volunteer Merchant Recognition award to be awarded to the merchant over a certain period of time who has participated and given for the good of the downtown. Discussion. She is working on doing cross-promotion with The Breeze newspaper.
- **Promotions Committee Report: Rob Edwards for Seana Weaver**
The merchant briefing at the Aloha Steakhouse was well attended, with 45 new faces getting involved on a committee level. Lots of input was taken that day, on many subjects.
- **Executive Directors Report:** Rob Edwards noted that the board retreat is this coming Monday afternoon. The 3 top topics that emerged from the interviews were (1) permanent funding; (2) stakeholder communication and (3) advocacy. We will look in to these in detail at the retreat (see below).

+ *Board retreat is Monday March 24th from 4:00 – 8:00.*

+ *Communication with council and city manager: Up-lighting of palm trees to add both safety and ambiance: I drafted, circulated/finalized a letter to council and city manager urging adoption of the expenditure to the CIP plan. Council voted 5-2 to add the item to city staff's workplan. Andrews and Fulton were the two NO votes. Also submitted a letter regarding the proposed lamp post banner ordinance; urged adoption of some basic implementation aspects per my previous experience in our cities.*

+ *The Economic Restructuring committee hosted a very effective human resources seminar; Paychex and Affinity Bank were the sponsors. Great turnout and all good comments followed. As planned, DVO will coordinate several more helpful small business seminars like this one this year.*

+ *Spring Clean-up: Saturday April 12. Let's all think of students and their groups (sports teams, etc) as the most emails I get via our website are from parents looking for volunteer opportunities for their children. We need 50+.*

+ *Ventura City Corps will be an integral part of our clean-up day. Both Vta and Oxnard City Corps students will lend a hand (and trucks!) as we aim to re-plant the 30+ sidewalk planters with new drought-tolerant species.*

+ *The Mission's 225th anniversary celebration in Sunday March 30. Main Street will be closed in front of the Mission for a Mass; I have reached out to the Mission to offer assistance with merchant buy-in and press.*

+ *Permanent funding: Met with three consultants who could provide us guidance as we seek solutions to our permanent funding goal; Attending a course next week on the creation of assessment districts in California.*

+ *Ultimate Boarder: Movie for Thursday night has now been replaced with an evening of live music at the Ventura Theater, est. attendance is 1,000 [5x more than the cinema att.]. Main Street business owners have engaged to help facilitate a Friday night block party; DVO to assist with permits.*

+ *First "merchant meeting" to engage new stakeholders on March 11 at Aloha SH was a huge success; more than half the 45 there were new to DVO.*

New Business

- **CAMERA GRID:** Jerry and Sid spoke about the current state of the camera installation, hopefully to encompass most of Main Street as a "grid" or "quilt" of cameras. Charter Cable just took over for the old cable company, and there is a maze of agreements and equipment discussions that are taking

place, hopefully to finish before summer. The plan is get the first cameras up at Mission Park, the parking lot next to it, California Plaza, and other key locations. Sid has spoken with IT guys and the current situation is experimental, to say the least. The RDA is funding it temporarily, with WiFi discussions taking place same time.

- GRANT PARK MASTER PLAN: Rob noted it is still in flux, though there is some recreation to be included in the design concepts.

Meeting adjourned at 10:57 a.m.

The next DVO Board meeting is April 2, 2008 at 8:30 a.m. at Affinity Bank Conference Center.

<> *Indicates action item to be taken at next board meeting* * *Indicates that motion passed unanimously.*