**LDA Meeting Minutes**

**January 24, 2022**

**Meeting Via Zoom**

Attending: Jonathan Evans, Alex Mountford, Dorothy Okamoto, Jain Williams, Joanne Wong-Lam, and Zinzi Zareef (Board Members)

Executive Director: Daniel Swafford

Call to Order: Jain Williams

* Welcome and Introductions
* Review of Agenda
* Approve November 2021 Minutes – Motion made to approve by Jain, seconded by Joanne, all in favor.

1. Councilmember Sheng Thao – District 4 Council Office update – Matthew Napoli

* General Council Updates: 1) Vaccine mandate passed in December and coming back to Council this week; 2) Feb. 19th – Local Heroes.
* Public Safety: Increase in side shows in Diamond and Laurel but Botts Dots seem effective calming measures, though unfortunately, will not be increased due to red tape with DOT but DOT should be able to replace missing dots. Grant money will not be used for Bott’s Dots to prevent side shows but instead will go to those ‘waist high plastic poles’ funding.
* Traffic calming and slow streets update: Originally to end in November but delayed and will stay in place for now.
* Question raised about parklets deadline: Probably after March but may be extended.

2. LDA Business

* Ambassador Pilot: Received 50% of grant ($25K).
  + Small business needs: assistance with Google website/listing updates, i.e. key words on website to facilitate search.
  + Working with both Laurel, Dimond, and Bret Harte area merchants and safety needs along MacArthur with OPD Chief and stakeholders. Mid-Feb. target date to set agenda
  + Daniel has two openings for Ambassadors because Berkeley interns fell through. Alex offered to help. Program ends in June.
* New website: Almost complete, more visual, asking businesses to contribute content/images. Improving key words for searches to help folks connect with businesses.
* MailChimp Newsletter: up to 650 recipients and hope to reach 1000.
* Public Art/Beautification: 1) See email 1/24/22 – Fist of Flour and Manos murals up on walls – looks great! Good job Alex! 2) Cornerstone – mural by artist Robin Gibson’s samples reviewed by Board. The “arches stain glass” was a majority favorite of the Board.
* BID disbursement from County, $108K (50%).

3. Laurel Security – Merchant Watch Update

* Wind damage to several businesses
* Wells ATM pulled out of wall at Launderland. Have good camera images – large truck, forklift, cars used.
* Non-regular aggressive homeless person loitering recently at Manos Building.

4. Events and Promotions

* Nov. 27th Small Business Saturday and Dec. 18th Santa Stroll – Both went well, engaged a good number of folks.
* Food Drive results: 3 collection locations, Santana, Degrees Plato, Showin Out Hair – filling (3) full barrels.
* Business Promotions – Shopping and dining in Oaklandside article. Reach was good, esp. around Laurel.
* Laurel Lunar New Year/Local Heroes – Feb. 19th blessing of businesses.
* Laurel Street Fair – Second Saturday in August, Aug. 13th confirmed. Don’t know where sponsorship may be so might need to downsize fair.

5. Business Attraction and Land Use

* Former Anasa Yoga REMax renovation– challenges to find contractors to work on space.
* Ground floor retail DaVita – Broker offered to help.

6. Open Forum

* Car slammed into parklet of Laurel Cyclery and totaled it. Jason wants to rebuild and Daniel/LDA encouraging him to work with insurance company to resolve.

Next meeting Monday**,** February 28, 2022, 6-8 PM VIA Zoom