

**LDA Meeting Minutes**  
**January 22, 2024**  
**Meeting Via Zoom**

Board Members Attending: Alysia Gritz, Lorie Mata, Dorothy Okamoto, Vincent Phua, Kao Saelee, Jain Williams, Joanne Wong-Lam, and Zinzi Zareef

Guest: Amy Leibowitz, Laurel resident

Executive Director: Daniel Swafford

**Call to Order:** President Jain Williams

Welcome and Introductions

Review of Agenda

Approve December 2023 Minutes: Motion made to approve by Joanne; seconded by Jain, all in favor.

**1. D4 Councilmember Ramachandran Office – Iris Merriouns**

- Updates – 1) Meeting in 2 weeks with DOT and will bring up LDA concerns. 2) Rapid Permit Program – to address permitting challenges. Invite Juno Thomas from City to next LDA meeting. To be recorded for merchants.
- Public Safety – 1) Tomorrow at Finance Committee meeting, plan to go over City staffing. 2) Feb. 13<sup>th</sup> – Police staffing going to Public Safety Committee meeting; also address the 911 response time issue. 3) Discuss other vacancies around investigative units and may consider using civilian employees and not sworn officers, now only using sworn officers. 4) Tonight there is a meeting to discuss Cease Fire policy as part of anti-violence program.
- LDA concerns: 1) Daniel would like small businesses to be represented at the table to draft Measure Z, esp. given increase in burglaries and robberies. 2) Jain would like to improve communication with Mayor Sheng Thao to know what she's doing and express our concerns.
- CA grant for public safety is coming again and confirming that Oakland has grant writer to apply.
- Daniel sent email to Sophia Navarro of Economic Workforce & Development to include small businesses in discussion.

**2. LDA Business**

- Ambassador Program Update – Safety component ended 1/15/24 – 6 weeks, 22 hrs./day. Sent out merchant/property owner survey. Will compile a comprehensive report to the City so that it might get in multi-year budget, year round.
- CIP MacArthur – SLOW Laurel Traffic – follow up with Charlie Reem.
- BID Renewal 2025 – Putting RFQ to consulting firms and got helpful info. from Jack London BID Renewal.
- LDA Treasures Financial Report – Dorothy
  - Dorothy sent out report. Moved some funds from Bridge Bank to Community Bank.
  - Received first disbursement of \$116K and deposited. 5% increase reflected in amount which can be applied to LDA security needs.

**3. Laurel Security - Merchant Watch**

- “Feet on Street” is trying to start walks on Tuesdays at 6 PM. Meet at Laurel Hardware. Clayton of Urban Shield to walk with them and apply lessons from Ambassador program.
- Burglaries at Ghost Town Brewing and Happy Garden on January 10<sup>th</sup>, 6:20 AM which started with three prior burglaries in Dimond District at 4:30 AM with OPD watching them drive off because of City’s “no chase policy”. Same folks robbed Montclair gas station two days later. Frustration mounting with lack of response to 911 calls, “No Car Blocking” policy, no police chief, no policy change, etc.
- Laurel businesses need to be advocate to elevate small business concerns with City Council.
- Amy reported an assault on Masterson, near 38<sup>th</sup>, by intoxicated person from Laurel Lounge. Everyday bad behavior from Lounge—littering, urination, illegal parking, intoxicated drivers. Need to encourage owner of LL to be good neighbor.

**4. Events and Promotions**

- Holiday Marketing Report – went well with shopping guides and Santa Stroll – good turnout.
- Laurel Lunar New Year – Saturday, February 17, 2024, 2:30-5:30 PM, Event at Taoist Center
- Live in the Laurel 2024 – Sat., Feb 3<sup>rd</sup> Left Coast Power Yoga – concert. 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturdays Starting April or May til Oct.

**5. Business Attraction and Land Use – Not much change over holidays.**

**6. Open Forum**

- Walk through with Peralta – New maintenance person, Matthew.
- Priority budget – Security and BID Renewal

- The question was brought up if a smoke shop has or will open on the property near SubWay at High. It looks like progress is being made but it doesn't appear to be open yet.
- Concerns about problems a smoke shop type of business could bring were discussed.
- To be proactive we could stay in touch with the owners and keep an eye out for any problems
- Alysia brought up issue with 3315 MacArthur.
- Follow up on vacancies at next meeting.

Next meeting Monday, February 26, 2024, 6-8 PM via Zoom