

Dimond Improvement Association

Board of Directors Meeting - July 13, 2023

Board Members Present: Dave Gross; Bret Peterson; Chris Harper; Maddie DeWitt; Anoush Jackson-Sattler; Heather Harris; Don Woods; Kevin Whittinghill; May Seto-Wasem; Victoria Wake; Julie Johnson; Malia Miller; Charlie Deterline

Board Members Absent: Zandile Christian; Michaela Sangalli-Guilano; Alex Park; Charis Jones Allen

Guests Present: Sandra Hamlat; Amber from D4
The meeting was convened at 7:02 p.m.

1. Agenda Approval.

ACTION: Motion by HEATHER to approve the Meeting Agenda, MADDIE seconded. The motion to approve the Meeting Agenda was APPROVED unanimously.

2. Minutes Approval.

ACTION: Motion by DAVID to approve the June meeting minutes (as amended by Board member comments); JUDY seconds. The motion to approve the June meeting minutes is APPROVED unanimously.

3. Chair's Report.

KEVIN gives reminder of the meeting norms:

- Be present and prepared
- Share the air (step up and step back)
- Assume best intention (but take responsibility for the impact)

For the August meeting, KEVIN will be out of town. Group discussion about moving the meeting date to August 17, so we can all meet in person. KEVIN will check on availability and get back to everyone on the date.

KEVIN offers thanks to ALEX and JULIE for taking on the Treasurer role.

4. Treasurer's Report.

JULIE presents the Treasurer's Report.

BRET raises question about economic development's budget, specifically, the \$6,800 difference between budget and actual. KEVIN explains that one category is overspent, and one was never spent. The BID consultants have all been paid off.

JULIE confirms that everything from Oaktoberfest has been disbursed and KEVIN reports that the \$20K funds from the City for the BID came in this month.

VICTORIA and JUDY suggest that the numbers presented in the budget are not correct - it appears to be last year's budget. They suggest we correct the budget and discuss at another time. Consensus among the Board members is to move on and regroup when the numbers are corrected.

5. For the Good of the Order.

KEVIN: Yemeni coffee shop should open up with the next 1-2 weeks.

MALIA: I'm preparing the newsletter, so if anyone has updates about what's going on in the neighborhood, let me know.

6. District 4 Update.

AMBER: The final council meeting before summer recess will take place on Tuesday, July 18 at 2:00 pm. We just finished budget season. There is a \$360 million deficit. The City is looking for funding for an Oakland Police Department ("OPD") grant writer

There is a back to school community event coming up; more details will be provided in the coming weeks

Council Member Ramachandran is excited about introducing more legislation. Please reach out with any ideas.

ANOUSH: huge thanks to District 4 for help in repaving in the neighborhood. If any events in the Dimond are happening, please reach out to the DIA for help.

VICTORIA: any updates on how D4 is interacting with OPD re increase in crime?

AMBER: we have regular meetings with captains, beat officers and the interim chief; Council Member Ramachandran is uplifting the concerns of District 4. There is

an increasing demand from the public for meet-and-greets regarding crime. Ms. Ramachandran is hearing these concerns and we are sharing them with OPD and the Department of Violence Prevention.

HEATHER gives thanks for District 4's engagement in the upcoming Keep Dimond Clean ("KDC") fundraiser, which kicks off on Monday and runs for the next several weeks.

KEVIN: any more specifics on the OPD grant writer?

AMBER: there are lots of vacancies in OPD departments. Hopefully, a grant writer can locate sources of funds to help fill these vacancies, similar to what the Fire Department has done recently.

JUDY: do we have any info re whether increase in crime is gang -related, poverty-related, or are there any patterns?

AMBER: There are definitely increases in poverty issues, some of which are related to the pandemic. There is also a general lack of juvenile resources.

7. BID Grant Funding Update

A \$25,000 grant from the City was clawed back because of perceived conflict of interest between a City Council Member and one of the BID consultants. We are working with Council Member Ramachandran on a couple of different options, but right now, the current strategy is to assert that, since we have paid off Ms. Gallo (the BID consultant), she no longer works for us, so there is no longer a conflict, and the grant can simply be re-issued via a new resolution.

8. 2023 Keep Dimond Clean ("KDC") Fundraiser

HEATHER: We're excited to kick off the annual KDC fundraiser this Monday. We ask for your participation if you are available. We have a \$15,000 goal (this is \$3,000 more than last year). We will have social media posts, an e-mail campaign, and A-frames will go out over the weekend. Thanks to MAY and BRET for outreach to business community. Also hoping to do an in-person tabling event. Stay tuned for more info on this.

VICTORIA: huge shout out to HEATHER for handling this

9. Tree Removal Requests

Under consideration is a draft letter to Cecilia Garcia of the City of Oakland Tree Services Division submitting comments regarding Tree Removal Permit T22-115 for the development project at 2114 MacArthur Blvd.

VICTORIA gives quick summary of urban trees in the Dimond. Having urban trees anywhere in Oakland can be quite a challenge, so it's all the more important to try to preserve what we have. It's not easy to get new trees to survive and thrive. About 6 years ago, what was the DIA Tree Committee (morphed into Beautification Committee) started looking at trees in the Dimond and identified about 15 spots, only 7 of which could be planted. *[slideshow presented showing examples of successes, failures, and challenges]*. Overall, trends are not good, and the existing healthy trees are few and far between.

Regarding the existing development site, there are existing trees slated for removal, at least one of which is a live oak, which is protected and subject to higher standards for removal. A draft letter is linked in the agenda.

HEATHER: questions (i) if it's worth a conversation with the property owner before sending a letter to the City? (ii) how does the City view the issue of urban planting, and why is it hard to keep and maintain trees?

BRET: everyone is aligned with the need for more trees. I'm a big proponent of planting new trees, but I think the trees should supplant the things that are polluting the city (i.e., cars). I think the solution is to eliminate parking and widen the sidewalks. Also, the development in question will create a demand for new businesses, with 44 new residential units coming in. The project can and will go forward without our help and the tree removals are within the zoning and planning guidelines.

MAY: I care about trees and carbon emissions, but I'm concerned about anything that hampers business development. The roadblocks to development are many, and I'm not sure the DIA should be taking the role of obstructing his project.

JUDY: suggests reaching out to the developer to think about trees in a cordial manner. A letter to the City would not be the best option.

CHRIS: we should be talking to the developer and making him aware of how we and other organizations in Oakland can make him more successful. It's important to get the message across that we are an asset and can be helpful to him.

CHARLIE: I think MAY's points require extra consideration in light of our attempts for a BID this year. We should keep foremost in our minds building friends and allies in the business community.

DAVE: I hear and agree with the points made about promoting local businesses, but the letter seems reasonable and balanced. I think the concerns about it stifling development are overblown.

General discussion continues about whether we can massage the impact of the letter by reaching out to the developer.

ACTION: Motion by VICTORIA to send the draft letter (as may be amended) to express our continued support of the project, but requesting the CITY look into preserving 2 of the 7 removals and encouraging additional tree plantings. Motion **FAILS** on a vote of 3 to 10.

10. New Security Camera System

DIA now has 4 security cameras in the Dimond, including the latest installation at Flavor Brigade (details presented in slideshow). DAVE mentions that, during a community liaison meeting with HEAD ROYCE SCHOOL ("HRS"), he asked if they would be willing to share access to their own cameras. They were reluctant to do so. Discussion ensues about possible privacy issues with HRS—they may not be able to share their cameras if they are only internal-facing.

11. Narcan TABLED

12. Committee Updates

Beautification Committee: Annual Keep Dimond Clean ("KDC") fundraiser is ongoing, and we are engaging in a continuing effort to increase general volunteer participation for litter walks, a Saturday "Green Team" to help with weeding, planting, etc. There will be an upcoming work party for the Bienati Overlook. We applied for a Keep Oakland Beautiful grant to develop signage for the Art Walk. Although the grant

was denied, we are moving forward on our own. We are also continuing to work on Dimond Printers sign

Community Outreach Committee: Hold the date: November 18 from 10:00 am - 6:00 pm for the Dimond Lights event. We are working on Salesforce and various community lists to improve outreach to the community.

Economic and Business Development Committee: The BID efforts continue, even though Summer is not an ideal time for outreach. We are working with other committees and reaching out to businesses to highlight other benefits of the DIA, such as KDC.

Public Safety Committee: As mentioned before, we have new cameras installed. We are working on a list for Council Member Ramachandran listing all crimes in the district reported in the past year. We reached out to CalTrans regarding cleaning up the parking lot of RVs.

Oaktoberfest Committee: We are reviewing contract for the upcoming Oaktoberfest event. We're also working on defining our mission and goals. For 2024, we will likely be presenting an RFP for production of the event going forward.

Meeting Adjourned at 8:52 pm
Minutes Prepared by Dave Gross