



MEETING MINUTES
VENICE BEACH BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
REGULAR MEETING AGENDA

Via Televideoconference pursuant to Executive Order N-29-20 Issued by Governor Gavin Newsom
Friday, March 26, 2021
Meeting Starting Time 10:00 AM

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/91034363364?pwd=bVFRQmw5KONLenl6YndUVmQwdXd6dz09>

Meeting ID: 910 3436 3364 | Meeting Passcode: 889138

Dial-In Number: +1 669 900 9128

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: President Steve Heumann, Treasurer Connie Brooks, Jack Hoffmann, Mark Sokol, Jeffery Harris, Jake Matthews

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT: Secretary Jeremy Weinstein.

STAFF & CONTRACTORS PRESENT: Eleni Polakoff, Alan Gonzalez, Azucena Vela, Paul Williams, Grace Davis, Emeline Neau, Jeff Briggs, Marcus Lieber, Tara Devine

AGENDA

(Please note that Agenda Items may be reordered during the meeting at the discretion of the Board.)

1. Call to Order

HEUMANN

Welcome and Introductions

The meeting was called to order at 10:04am.

2. Public Comment

Russell Sherman said that he has two small apartment buildings at 52 and 60 Market and is happy to see the positive changes on his street due to BID services.

Margaret Molloy spoke about how vacant buildings and the problem of illegal conversion of buildings to hotels or other uses are causing the decay in Venice, and not the homeless. She made several personal remarks about a number of Board members and business unrelated to the BID. She said that she is opposed to the renewal of the BID.

Mark Rago said that he is the founder of the Venice Dogs and that it is not that he is opposed to change, but that the community doesn't need bullies like Snapchat. He criticized Great White for recent construction. He lamented that the Venice Freakshow has been vacant for four years. He asked if Mark Sokol would consider bringing the Venice Freakshow back to an area of his property between the Townhouse and Speedway.

3. Government Representative Liaison Reports

- a. City of Los Angeles, Recreation & Parks – *Bob Davis*

Bob provided an update to say most items in the park remain open. The basketball courts remain closed. The handball courts will reopen soon (no timeline available yet.) The Venice Pier Phase I (primarily dealing with under-pier pilings repairs) is expected to be complete in June. Phase II (improvements above pier) is not yet funded but they hope to obtain funding in late summer and begin work on that in the fall/winter. RAP is working to try to get the palm trees trimmed because the more frequent winds are bringing down fronds. Bob posed a question to the group: How many palm trees are there in the park, including the County parking lots? The answer: 747 palm trees on Venice Beach between Rose and Washington, and around the County lots.

b. City of Los Angeles, Police Department

During Agenda Item #1,

LAPD SLO Monique Contreras joined the meeting briefly with Dexter O'Connell to provide an update on an encampment fire on Sunset. She said hello but did not speak.

c. Los Angeles City Council, District 11 – *Nisa Kove*

Nisa was not able to attend this meeting. During Agenda Item #1,

Dexter O'Connell, Bridge Home Deputy for Council District 11, joined the meeting briefly with LAPD SLO Monique Contreras to provide an update on an encampment fire on Sunset and that city crews would be out today to clean up. He stated that the cause of the fire was still unknown and under investigation.

d. Los Angeles County Supervisor, District 3 – *Zachary Gaidzik*

Zachary was not able to attend this meeting.

4. Consent Items

All matters listed on the consent calendar are considered to be routine and will be enacted by one roll call vote.

- a. Financial Reports
- b. Approval of Minutes (1/29/2021)

**LIEBER
WEINSTEIN**

Steve called Item 4a and introduced Marcus Lieber, the BID accountant. Marcus reported that the BID has \$604,000 on hand with expenses of about \$73,000. The City has collected about \$783,000 (53%) of the assessments for the current year. Marcus explained that it's hard to predict collections at this moment because the most recent County report is not yet available, and one of the City reports is also not yet available. He provided a brief overview of recent expenses and explained some aberrations (such as the under spending in the Safe Team budget due to low hiring in the first couple of months of the year). Executive Director, Eleni Polakoff, confirmed that the Safe Team is now fully staffed.

Steve called Item 4b at 10:37am and asked if anyone has any edits to the minutes. No one did.

Jeff Harris made a motion to approve all of the consent items. Mark Sokol seconded. The Board voted 6-0 to approve.

5. Venice Beach BID Staff Reports

- a. Safe Team Report

VELA/GONZALEZ

Alan Gonzalez noted that there have been four significant fires in the BID in a very short period of time. He talked about the BID stats. He said that the largest single increase has been in the community assistance category which encompasses those general “ambassadorial” contacts with the public. He said he expects this to continue to increase as summer approaches and crowds increase. He also noted that the engagement team is continuing to try to connect unhoused individuals to resources, services and/or family.

Board member Jeff Harris asked for clarification on what types of safe team activities are considered “community assistance.” Azucena explained that this encompasses general questions, directions, requests for water, location of restrooms or other amenities, etc.

Board member Jack Hoffmann noted that encampments are housing barbeques and propane, etc., and that these are significant hazards. He asked Alan if LAFD has been responsive when the BID reports fire hazards. Alan indicated that the response has been inconsistent.

Board Treasurer Connie Brooks indicated that they had a fire on Hampton, and it was not without substantial prior warning from locals. She indicated that before and since, locals have sent LAFD and other city officials ample photographs of fire hazards, and that the response has been “lackluster” at best.

Jack Hoffmann indicated that while the BID lacks the enforcement mechanism to stop the hazards, he wants to see us do as much as we can to address the issue and report the hazards.

Steve Heumann provided closing comments summarizing the discussion.

b. Clean Team Report

NEAU / WILLIAMS

Paul Williams is currently seeking feedback from his team members on any ways the Clean Team can do things better in the BID. The hot water pressure water is making a big difference in how well the BID can address soiled sidewalks. He says he has a very good and experienced team right now that is empowered to take initiative. He noted that service calls are increasing with more businesses open and more people out and about in the BID. He has seven workers who were unhoused at the start of their work with Chrysalis who have now been able to obtain unsubsidized housing as a result of their BID employment and paycheck.

Board Member Mark Sokol noted that this achievement is one of the reasons the BID selected Chrysalis as its Clean Team partner. Mark also expressed appreciation for Paul’s individual efforts to mentor his team members and said he knows that Paul has had a tremendous personal impact on many. Several Board members chimed in to second Mark’s comments.

Eleni explained the BID’s new 4-member engagement team, which works both with the unhoused population as well as the local businesses. The team is comprised of two clean team members and two safe team members. They operate in two pairs to engage and improve team response time to requests and issues.

Allison, Safe Team Engagement Member, indicated that a lot of the unhoused population need an outlet to talk and appreciate being listened to and treated with respect because many people do not treat them well.

Roger, Clean Team Engagement Member, indicated that he primarily works in Zone 2 and says that they have been able to build trust over time. He says that many unhoused do want information about various resources that could build towards future housing. He also echoed Allison's comments that listening to our unhoused community members engenders trust.

President Steve Heumann asked Roger if the relationship with the unhoused helps with cooperation with trash collection.

Board Treasurer Connie Brooks noted that she's been able to interact with the Engagement Team on a few occasions and is very proud of what they are doing.

Several Board members made brief comments echoing prior comments.

Azucena Vela indicated that she has implemented an Engagement Team at another BID she now manages, and that it is proving successful there as well.

Board Member Jack Hoffman noted that our ability to help neutralize conflicts has a ripple effect on making Venice a better experience for everyone.

Alan noted that the Engagement Team's job is not an easy one. Eleni thanked Allison and Roger for their work. She mentioned Natalie and Josh, the other Engagement team members not present today.

c. Executive Director's Report

POLAKOFF

Eleni Polakoff began her report at 11:15am. Eleni noted staffing changes. Shira Moch has left the BID for another opportunity. She explained that the position is currently open and the BID will be hiring to fill it.

Eleni explained that a recent memo from City of Los Angeles Ethics Committee regarding lobbying caused some questions in the BID community because the majority of our interactions with the City are in furtherance of fulfilling our contract with the City. She said the reason this was of concern is because there is an administrative burden in tracking all contacts and work with the city if required to register as a lobbyist. She said that there is no issue with transparency, because we are already held to be transparent due to the Brown Act. She explained that members of the BID Consortium have testified before the Ethics Committee to ask for clarification that contract-related activities and advocacy (such as working with the city to repair street furniture) do not constitute lobbying activities. Eleni explained that the BID does not engage in activities such as writing letters of support for development projects.

Board President Steve Heumann noted that the BID has tried to stay out of local projects and plans and stay very focused on our district through the lens of clean and safe.

Eleni noted that the BID is actively into its renewal process. She noted that 2021 assessments are remaining at 2020 levels, and that there also will be no increase in 2022

if the BID renews. She noted that petitions have just been mailed, and that owners must return them to trigger the election (ballot) process later in the year.

Tara added that the petitions just went out and should be landing in mailboxes in the next few days, to look for orange envelopes and return the bright orange petition inside the packet.

Steve added that we may be reaching out to property owners to help us reach your neighbors and educate them on the BID and its services, or to help answer their questions and listen to their concerns.

6. New Business

- a. Ratification of contract for consultant for BID renewal

HEUMANN

Steve called Item 6 to order at 11:35 am. He noted that the contract scope and terms were discussed at the last Board meeting and the Board adopted a motion for Eleni and Steve to negotiate an agreement within certain parameters. He noted that has been completed; the agreement is in the Board packet. Steve asked if the Board had any questions. Mark made a motion to ratify the agreement; Connie seconded it. The Board voted 5-0 to approve (Jeff Harris departed the meeting before this vote.)

7. Next Board Meeting – May 28, 2021

POLAKOFF

8. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 11:37am.

3/26/21

The agenda is subject to change up to 72 hours prior to a regular meeting and 24 hours prior to a special meeting. Please check the agenda prior to the meeting for changes. Updated agendas and meeting materials are available at 1320 Pacific Ave., Venice, CA 90291, as well as on the website <https://venicebeachbid.com/board-meetings/>

Please take notice: In an effort to reduce the risk of spreading Coronavirus (Covid-19), and consistent with the Governor's special orders regarding the Brown Act, the Venice Beach BID Board of Directors meeting will be conducted by way of televideoconference. Participants may join via the televideoconference link above or dial-in number. The agenda packet will be made available online to accommodate this change until such time as in-person meetings are able to resume.

Public Input: Public input is taken at the top of the agenda at each meeting. Any public comment on any agenda or non-agenda item is invited at this time. Public comment is limited to two minutes per individual but may be reduced at the Board President's discretion. Please note that under the Brown Act, the Board cannot act on matters not agendized; however, items raised by the public may become a subject for a future Board agenda. Prior to or during the Agenda Item 2 "Public Comment," the public is requested to use Zoom's "raise hand" function (🙋) to indicate that they would like to make a public comment. For callers, press *9 to raise hand.

ADA: As a covered entity under Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act, the VB BID does not discriminate on the basis of disability, and upon request will provide reasonable accommodation to ensure equal access to its programs, services, and activities. To request and receive confirmation of the availability of such services, please contact us as early as possible at 310-396-8243 or admin@venicebeachbid.com

The undersigned certify that these minutes were approved and adopted at the VBPOA Board of Directors meeting on _____.

Steven Heumann

Digitally signed by Steven
Heumann
Date: 2021.10.26 13:02:50 -07'00'

President/Steven M. Heumann



Secretary Jeremy Weinstein