



Union Board of Directors Meeting Emergency Meeting

February 28, 2024 – 1:30pm -2:30 pm
Zoom - <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85065870327>

MINUTES

In attendance

The following directors and advisory committee chairs were in attendance via zoom: Don Thomas, Shirley Howard-Johnson, Stephen Brett, J. Timothy Falvey, Julie Taylor, Maxine Papadakis, Kevin Flanagan, Russell Keil Jr., Evan J. Kaizer, Mark Sullivan, Lauren Ellis, Manuela King, Peter Hart, Opio Dupree, Erik Murray, Jim Sangiacomo, Mark Purdy, Lin Huber, Clif Clark, and Wes Tyler.

The following staff and contract service providers were in attendance: Marisa Rodriguez (CEO), Benjamin W. Horne (CFO), Ken Rich (COO), Melanie Medina (Executive Assistant), Jason Cherniss (Director of Services), David Perry (contractor). and Beau Simon (legal counsel).

1) Call to Order

Marisa called the meeting to order at 1:35pm.

2) Public Comment

Marisa called for public comment. Hearing none she moved onto the next agenda item.

3) Update and discussion of recent news regarding Macy's.

During the meeting, the board discussed the current state of Macy's based on the news release of their potential closure, noting that while the building is being sold, there remains hope that Macy's may still maintain a presence in the area. It was emphasized that until the building is sold, Macy's will continue to operate as a business as usual for now, including hosting its annual Macy's Great Tree event and remaining involved in the community. Marisa also informed the board of her efforts to engage in talks with the state government to seek support in retaining Macy's presence.

There was a discussion about the potential impact of Macy's closure on foot traffic and sales of surrounding businesses. Julie suggested strategies such as offering free parking and free cable car rides to incentivize visitors downtown. The board also considered the significant impact on Macy's employees. Opio clarified that Macy's decision to close its Union Square location was a corporate business move and not a reflection of the city's state. Some board members inquired about potential avenues to reverse the decision and the exact reasoning behind it. Russ pointed out that Macy's closures are part of a broader trend nationwide and proposed the idea of converting the space into another department store.

Despite the challenges posed by Macy's closure, there was an emphasis on controlling the narrative and amplifying positive news about Union Square. The board discussed leveraging events like Macy's



tree lighting for public engagement. Ben noted that despite negative headlines, foot traffic levels are around the highest in the city.

David Perry provided talking points from the mayor's office, and there was a suggestion to reopen Market Street to traffic and focus on building a retail ecosystem around Macy's, particularly supporting small businesses. The status of Cheesecake Factory was also raised for clarification. Overall, the meeting provided a platform for brainstorming strategies to navigate the impact of Macy's announcement on Union Square.

4) Adjourn

- a. Next Meeting: Thursday, March 28th, 2024, 9am at the Grand Hyatt**