



**UNION SQUARE ALLIANCE
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING**

Minutes

**September 26, 2024 – 9:00-11:30 a.m.
Morton's The Steakhouse, 400 Post St
San Francisco, CA 94102**

Board Members in attendance (all in person): Erik Murray, Evan J. Kaizer, James Sangiacomo, Jordan Buckley, Julie Taylor, Lauren Ellis, Lin Huber, Mark Purdy, Maxine Papadakis, Spencer Sechler, Shirley Howard-Johnson, Stephen Brett, Manuela Anne King, and Wes Tyler.

Staff and contractors: Marisa Rodriguez (Chief Executive Officer), Ben Horne (Chief Financial Officer), Ken Rich (Director of Policy and Economic Development), Daniela Vasile (Interim Director of Operations), Zarrina Yousafzai (Finance and HR Associate), Jessica Chilingirian (Marketing and Communications Associate), Liza Bernard (Events Associate), Melanie Medina (Executive Assistant), AnaKatrina Cortado (Intern), Beau Simon (Legal Counsel), and Chip, Don Lepana, and Miracle Matau (Block by Block).

Guests: Cindy Ramesh (Hilton Hotels), Heather Corden (Boutique Manager), Tammy Brock, Tom Brock, Kacee Ochalek (OEWD), Jackie Hazelwood (OEWD), Jeremy Blatteis, Joan Laguatan, Karin Flood (Flood Building).

Summary of Actions Taken by the Board of Directors

- **Action:** The Board unanimously approved the July 25, 2024, minutes as motioned by Spencer Sechler and seconded by Shirley Howard-Johnson
- **Action:** The Board unanimously approved the 2023-2024 FY Annual Report as motioned by Evan Kaizer and seconded by Mark Purdy.
- **Action:** The Board unanimously approved SFPD's request to access video as motioned by Wes Tyler and seconded by James Sangiacomo.
- **Action:** The Board unanimously approved a letter of support to Gov. Newsom regarding entertainment zones as motioned by Spencer Sechler and seconded by Julie Taylor.
- **Action:** The Board unanimously approved the contract with Daniela Vasile as Interim Director of Services as motioned by Julie Taylor and seconded by Shirley Howard-Johnson.
- **Action:** The Board unanimously approved amendments/extensions of vendor (Legion, Block by Block, and AVS) contracts through November 30 as motioned by Mark Purdy and seconded by Spencer Sechler.
- **Action:** The Board unanimously approved LES contract for staffing support during Winter Walk as motioned by Julie Taylor and seconded by Erik Murray.



- **Action:** The Board unanimously approved Field Paoli's contract for Stage Improvement Project as motioned by James Sangiacomo and seconded by Shirley Howard-Johnson.
- **Action:** The Board unanimously approved Winter Walk sponsorship levels as motioned by Mark Purdy and seconded by Spencer Sechler.
- **Action:** The Board unanimously approved the 23-24 FY Audit Report as motioned by Spencer Sechler and Julie Taylor.
- **Action:** The Board unanimously approved the Unaudited Financial Reports of August 2024 for recommendation to the Board of Directors as motioned by Spencer Sechler and seconded by Julie Taylor.

1. Call to order, roll call, introductions, and welcome to Morton's Steakhouse.

Marisa called the meeting to order at 9:04 a.m. She expressed her gratitude to those who attended the boarding and to the staff of Morton's Steakhouse for their hospitality in hosting the meeting. Then, introductions were made, and finally, Marisa took attendance.

2. Public comment

Marisa called for public comment. Maxine Papadakis called attention to the Empty Homes Tax, which was approved by San Francisco voters and became effective on January 1, 2024. Maxine asked if there were any actions the Alliance could take to oppose this tax. Mark Purdy offered to provide contacts who have challenged this tax.

Karin Flood served as a fundraising volunteer for the SF Proposition B Campaign, a proposal that advocated for a \$309 million public health bond. She encouraged the board to vote Yes on Proposition B, which would enhance and improve SF's Public Health Facilities. Furthermore, the proposition would provide funding that could be used to revitalize public areas like Powell Street. Karin also provided updates regarding the Samuels Clock, a non-working historic landmark on Market Street. Although it had been previously maintained through the funding of the Flood family, she stated that it had yet to be determined whether the responsibility of fixing the clock would remain with private entities or shift to the city.

3. CEO's report

- Dreamforce and other district happenings

Marisa shared that there has been an increase in unhoused individuals in the district due to the sweeps occurring in the Tenderloin. Marisa urged the Board and the community to contact Member Services should they need to report incidents or other requests. On another note, Marisa provided notice that JP Morgan Chase & Co. would visit Union Square to observe how their donations to the Bloom Initiative and Winter Walk were utilized.

- Upcoming Union Square events

Marisa informed the Board of the Inaugural Cambodia Day on September 28, 2024, with an expected turnout of 7,000 to 10,000 attendees. As a result, she reminded the Board that Post Street would be closed due to the event. Marisa also invited the Board to partake in the final SF Live in Union Square on October 12. Finally, Marisa noted that Another Planet



Entertainment would showcase a country music concert and proposed that Union Square honor the first responders who engaged in the recent Union Square incident.

- Staffing updates
Ben Horne notified the Board that Jason Cherniss, the Alliance's Director of Services, is on medical leave until the end of October or early November. He briefly introduced Daniela Vasile, who is now serving as the Alliance's Interim Director of Services in Jason's absence.
- IDA conference
Marisa highlighted that the Union Square Alliance won a Downtown Achievement Award for the Bloom 2023 event and accepted the award at the IDA Conference 2024 hosted in Seattle. Melanie Medina and Liza Bernard reflected on their positive experience and key takeaways as event first-timers, emphasizing the insights gained and lessons learned. Evan Kaizer also recalled being inspired by the multiple conference awardees who impressed him with their variety of empowering projects for their downtown districts.
- Office build-out update
Marisa and Ben updated the Board on the office buildout. Construction has begun and is expected to be completed by the end of October.

4. Action to approve the July 25, 2024, meeting minutes

Marisa directed the Board to review the previous BOD meeting minutes provided to them in their packets. These meeting minutes were also sent out in advance.

Action: The Board unanimously approved the July 25, 2024, meeting minutes as motioned by Spencer Sechler and seconded by Shirley Howard-Johnson.

5. Action to approve 2023-2024 FY Annual Report

Ben directed the Board to review the 2023-2024 FY draft Annual Report and asked the Board for any feedback. The report outlined the Alliance's key initiatives from the past fiscal year's economic development, marketing, events, and advocacy. The audit results are included in the report. A postcard will be sent out to members informing them of the annual report's completion and inviting them to contact the Alliance if they want a copy.

Action: The Board unanimously approved the 2023-2024 FY Annual Report as motioned by Evan Kaizer and seconded by Mark Purdy.

6. Action to approve SFPD request to access video

SFPD has requested live camera access to the Alliance's security cameras for an ongoing investigation regarding overnight ATM theft and robberies in other areas of San Francisco that could be targeting the district. Ben asked the Board to ratify the decision to allow access to SFPD



as the Executive Committee approved access via email. Marisa noted that the Alliance will revisit SFPD's camera access request to ensure a smoother and quicker process.

Action: The Board unanimously approved the SFPD request to access the video as motioned by Wes Tyler and seconded by James Sangiacomo.

7. To Receive the BID's Advisory Committee reports and to take action to approve several Committee recommendations:

a. Public Affairs & Advocacy (Erik Murray) ^(OBJ)

• Salvation Army – The Way Out

Marisa introduced the Board to "The Way Out" program, a homeless initiative of the Salvation Army that aims to assist unhoused individuals who have a substance use disorder. She highlighted the program's on-demand recovery service and mentioned that many clients who found success with the program often came from within the city's Criminal Justice System. She also reminded the Board that the Union Square Foundation did partner with the program for the holiday fundraiser in 2023.

• Update on use of non-assessment funds and campaigns

Due to the Alliance's contract with the City, the organization is prohibited from participating in advocacy measures for city ballot measures and in any political campaign. The Foundation on the other hand, can fund the Alliance via a non-advocacy fund to allow for the Alliance to advocate and speak on ballot measures when appropriate. Marisa stated that the Union Square Foundation has agreed to replenish the Alliance's non-advocacy fund with up to \$30k to allow the Alliance for limited advocacy for city ballot measures when necessary.

• Action to approve letter of support to Gov. Newsom regarding entertainment zones

Erik Murray directed the Board's attention to the letter of support for Governor Newsom's SB969 regarding entertainment zones. Entertainment zones would foster an inclusive environment, allowing brick-and-mortar establishments to participate in outdoor events, increasing foot traffic and support for local businesses. Ken Rich further explained how entertainment zones would apply throughout Union Square and that there is authority to approve both blocks of Maiden Lane and Campton Place, effective in October 2024.

Action: The Board unanimously approved a letter of support to Governor Newsom regarding entertainment zones as motioned by Spencer Sechler and seconded by Julie Taylor.

b. Services & Public Safety (Don Thomas) ^(OBJ)

• July & August 2024 Operations Report.

Chip introduced Miracle Matau and Don Lepana as Block by Block's new Member Services Supervisor and Project Manager (respectively). Miracle stated that her new role will focus



on reinforcing customer service standards, mainly as she supervises the Member Services team and assists Lance Goree (Operations Manager). Don introduced himself as the Project Manager of Block by Block, citing his various experiences that have prepared him for his current role. He will also assist Lance and help ensure the Union Square Alliance contract and needs are being fully met.

Don Lepana presented the July and August Operations Reports. Don recognized Tanisha Blackwell and Moises Rivas as the Ambassadors of the Month from July and August, for their steadfast dedication and upbeat dispositions in pursuit of enhancing the Union Square District. He also reported a heightened presence of SFPD in Union Square. The organization has been seeing an increase in Member Services calls (from texting). Staffing performance sees a 15-20% increase in efficiency, which is reflected in team changes and auditing investments. Joe Shelley of Legion informed the Board of the increase in calls resulting from activity in the Tenderloin and Market Street areas (disruption of drug users and campers). He also noted that Legion has initiated a targeted and more defined Passing Call program to address hot spots in the district with data expected by September's report. He then introduced Michael Brown, a new Ops Manager of Legion. Discussion took place regarding the level of engagement SFPD has versus private security. Spencer Sechler suggested comparing the statistics between Block by Block, Legion, and 10B.

- **Action to approve contract with Daniela Vasile as Interim Director of Services.** Ben presented Daniela Vasile's contract as Interim Director of Services. Daniela formally introduced herself to the Board and emphasized her ten years of relevant experience working in the district, such as her previous employment with Block by Block as the West Coast VP and various upper management roles. She was offered a position as the Interim Director of Services while Jason Cherniss took medical leave. Daniela recused herself for this discussion. The Board reviewed her contract, and Ben highlighted the length of the contract, compensation, and duties.

Action: The Board unanimously approved the contract with Daniela Vasile as Interim Director of Services, as motioned by Julie Taylor and seconded by Shirley Howard-Johnson.

- **Action to approve amendments/extensions for the following vendor contracts**
 - Legion (October 1 – November 30, 2024)
 - Applied Video Solutions (October 1 – November 30, 2024)
 - Block by Block (November 1 – 30, 2024)

Ben noted that if the Alliance receives approval for RFP 230, the Alliance could allocate approximately \$2.5 million over the next two years to enhance Ambassador services for the district as well as Market Street, 5th Street, and 6th Street. For financial and safety considerations, Ambassadors would operate only the first and second shifts. Approval of RFP 230 would release assessment funds, enabling the Alliance to hire additional security and police support through Legion (a plan developed by Jason before he went on leave).



Discussions took place regarding contract extensions, with Ben confirming that contracts will be extended at current rates through the end of November until RFP230 is decided.

Action: The Board unanimously approved amendments/extensions for the vendor contracts (Legion, Applied Video Solutions, and Block by Block) through November 30, 2024, as motioned by Mark Purdy and seconded by Spencer Sechler.

- RFP230 – HEART Corridor Safety Plan – Proposal up to \$2.5 mil.
This item was discussed in the previous agenda item.
- Project Updates:
 - Bigbelly updates, repairs, replacements
Daniela shared that Bigbelly unit shells are currently being replaced. Block by Block are working on adding the Alliance branding wrap around the units. Full operational use of the Bigbelly fleet is expected to be up by the holidays.
 - LPRs
Ben informed the Board that there are two new camera locations—one on the corner of Powell and O’Farrell Street and the other on 110 Geary Street. Discussion took place regarding how the LPRs will work and integrate with SFPD’s system. There would be 3 cameras in the pilot for LPRs, and we will track metrics and report to the Board on its success.
 - Member Services texting, District360 projects
Daniela informed the Board of plans to geofence the Union Square boundaries, allowing for the tracking Ambassador’s and Security’s walk paths. The collection of this data could assist in enhancing service delivery. On another note, Ben and Daniela reported issues with the Member Services Texting program, in which the Member Services program is not receiving members’ texts about matters within the district. Issues include troubleshooting Member Services. Legion will also begin to integrate their data with District360.
 - Derby Alley and Mason Parking Garage
Ben noted that Derby Alley is a problematic area and, although not part of the district (not assessed), it has negative impacts on the district. This gate is frequently damaged leading to a cycle where unhoused individuals reestablish their encampments shortly after being cleared. Removal of these individuals have created negative impacts (including squatting in the garage) on surrounding buildings including the Mason Parking Garage. Discussion occurred regarding the difficulty of getting into contact with the owners of the garage. Plans are being developed and outreach and cooperation between the businesses that afront the alley and property owners work together on solutions.

c. Marketing & Communications (Mark Sullivan)



- Website Enhancement and Additional Monetization Strategies Updates
Jessica Chilingierian updated the Board on redesigning the Union Square website homepage and subpages, emphasizing how the site provides a more visually appealing and user-friendly experience. She highlighted the implementation of the Pilot Ad program, an initiative that aims to drive revenue for the Alliance. The Alliance has acquired baseline data to analyze the program's effectiveness and eventually build out the cost structure. The plan is to extend the pilot program and further explore the baseline data to see how the program may grow along with the website enhancement edits.
- Union Square in Bloom Updates
Jessica presented statistics regarding audience engagement with the Bloom event through social media (6 million impressions), magazines (1.8 million reach), and press mentions (10 earned press mentions). Furthermore, she also highlighted recipients of Union Square businesses for their Blooms. Finally, she offered the best ways for board members to incorporate Bloom décor planning into their calendars.
- Social Media and Other Updates
Jessica displayed highlights from August-September from social media demonstrating increasing follower growth and social media impressions.
- Holiday Fundraiser Save the Date – Thursday, December 5, 2024
Jessica notified the Board that they will receive a Save the Date for the upcoming Holiday Fundraiser.
- Winter Wander-land
Jessica encouraged the Board to send their holiday promotions and events to the Alliance so that the Alliance could market them as part of the district campaign. She also provided statistics regarding the demographics of those who came to Winter Walk in 2023, and the most common reasons people visit Union Square during the holidays.
- Action to approve LES contract for staffing support during Winter Walk
Ben directed the Board to review the LES contract for staffing support during Winter Walk. The document outlines the conditions of the contract, service descriptions, and compensation for managing the event on site.

Action: The Board unanimously approved the LES contract for staffing support during Winter Walk as motioned by Julie Taylor and seconded by Erik Murray.

d. Streetscapes and Public Realm (Manuela King)

- RFP 226 Amendment
Eva reminded the Board that the original RFP 226 has funded Tulip Day 2024, Bloom 2024, and Winter Walk 2024 for \$440K. However, due to a budget increase for Winter Walk 2024 and necessary funding for additional streetscape improvement projects, the Alliance RFP 226 is being amended to include additional funds for a total funding of \$795K.



- Update on the Powell Street Improvement Project
Eva informed the Board that a completed design for Powell Street was presented at an open house on June 12, 2024. The Alliance's next steps are to wait for the General Obligation Bond results to determine how to proceed with the project. The Alliance will also coordinate with the SF New Deal and the Vacant to Vibrant program to design window activations for the empty storefronts and plan activities and events around the Cable Car Turnaround.
- Action to approve Field Paoli's contract for Stage Improvement Project
Eva stated a total grant budget of \$712K to add permanent sound and a potential lighting system to the Union Square Plaza stage. Construction is expected to begin in 2025. The board had questions regarding the structural testing, and Eva confirmed that structural testing had already started.

Action: The Board unanimously approved Field Paoli's contract for Stage Improvement Project as motioned by James Sangiacomo and seconded by Shirley Howard-Johnson.

- Maiden Lane Streetscape Improvement Project
Maiden Lane is expected to be repaved before November 28, 2024. Eva noted that the Alliance is working on a long-term design plan for Maiden Lane in partnership with the DPW.
- Project Updates: R-Evolution, Hallidie Plaza, and Winter Walk
Eva stated that the Alliance is partnering with Building180 to install Marco Cochrane's *R-Evolution* statue in Union Square Plaza. The Visual Arts Commission has approved the project, and the Alliance is awaiting the structural engineering report of the statue that a third party is reviewing. After the statue's restoration, it is expected to be installed in early February until the end of May. However, there is still a possibility of extending the installation date. The Alliance is assisting with this project by applying for and coordinating the permitting process with Recreations and Parks. Furthermore, it will help with marketing and the statue launch event. She also reported the planned date and location of Winter Walk and the various décor and activations shown throughout Winter Walk.
- Action to approve Winter Walk sponsorship levels
The Board reviewed the packet regarding the logistics of the Winter Walk and the sponsorship levels. Eva asked them to review the various sponsors available for the event.

Action: The Board unanimously approved Winter Walk sponsorship levels as motioned by Mark Purdy and seconded by Spencer Sechler.

e. Finance & Audit (Jim Sangiacomo)

- Audit review and action to approve 23-24 FY Audit Report



Ben presented the 23-24 FY Audit Report to the Board conducted by Perotti & Carrade. In their opinion, all the Alliance's financial statements were presented fairly, and the changes in the organization's net assets and cash flows for the years adhered to generally accepted accounting principles. Ben highlighted that there were no adjustments to the results presented to the Board in July.

Action: The Board unanimously approved the 23-24 FY Audit Report as motioned by Spencer Sechler and seconded by Julie Taylor.

- **Action to accept the Unaudited Financial Reports of August 2024 for recommendation to the Board of Directors**

Ben presented the Unaudited Financial Reports for August 2024 to the Board. The Union Square Alliance reported an overall operating deficit of \$1.1M for the fiscal year as the organization utilized reserves from the previous year while awaiting the fiscal year's assessment in December. The assessments/core operations display a negative budget variance of \$16K due to expenses exceeding budget expectations in the Clean and Safe initiative by \$58K and additional revenues over budget by \$16K. Additionally, marketing and administrative costs were under budget by \$12K and \$13K, respectively. There was a significant negative variance of \$264K in Other Revenues, primarily from timing issues related to specific grants and projects, including the Union Square Park Improvements project. Conversely, the organization reduced expenditures on Other Funds by \$267K, leading to an overall positive variance of \$4K. The USBID assessment operational expenses were near management plan levels, with allocations of 80% for Clean and Safe, 9% for Marketing, and 11% for Administration. As of 08/31/2024, net assets (reserves) stood at \$1.164M, while the cash balance increased to \$1.68M.

Action: The Board unanimously accepted the Unaudited Financial Reports of August 2024 for recommendation to the Board of Directors, as motioned by Spencer Sechler and seconded by Julie Taylor.

- **Conflict of interest form updating, including lists of all Board positions**

Ben reminded the Board of their duty to submit a conflict-of-interest form. However, the Alliance must update the Board's conflict-of-interest acknowledgment as well as the disclosure for all other boards on which a member serves.

8. Announcements & New Business

- Cambodia Day – Saturday, September 28th at 12 p.m. at USP
- SF Live Finale – Saturday, October 12th at 1 p.m. at USP
- Next Board Meeting – Thursday, November 21, 2024, at 9:00 a.m., location TBD

End of Open Meeting Session: 11:43 a.m. and **Closed Session began** (see Closed Session minutes).