



## Executive Committee Meeting

October 24, 2024, at 9:00 a.m.  
291 Geary Street, Suite 200, San Francisco, CA 94102

### MINUTES

#### In Attendance

The following members and committee chairs were in attendance: Wes Tyler (Chancellor Hotel), Russell Keil, Jr. (The Keil Companies), Jim Sangiacomo (Trinity Properties), Julie Taylor (via phone) (Colliers International), Mark Sullivan (Community Member), Don Thomas (The Donatello), and Manuela Anne King (RHAA).

The following staff were also in attendance: Marisa Rodriguez (CEO), Benjamin Horne (CFO), Melanie Medina (Executive Assistant), AnaKatrina Cortado (Intern), and Beau Simon (Legal Counsel).

#### Summary of Actions Taken by the Committee

- **Action:** The Committee unanimously approved the meeting minutes from June 27, 2024, and July 3, 2024, as motioned by Mark Sullivan and seconded by Manuela King.
- **Action:** The Committee unanimously approved to extend the contract for Daniela Vasile through January 15, 2025, as motioned by Don Thomas and seconded by Mark Sullivan.
- **Action:** The Committee unanimously approved expanding security contract and coverage including overnight security coverage for Macy's Great Tree, as motioned by Don Thomas and seconded by Russ Keil.
- **Action:** The Committee unanimously approved the amendment for We Are Kind to provide entertainment and production for Winter Walk and for the Union Square Stage Improvement Project consulting, as motioned by Mark Sullivan and seconded Manuela King.
- **Action:** The Committee unanimously approved the BuildGroup agreement to acquire and install blue turf on the Powell Street Promenade for the holiday, as motioned by Don Thomas and seconded by Mark Sullivan.
- **Action:** The Committee unanimously approved the SF Holiday Lighting Contract for district wide decor purchases and installment, as motioned by Manuela King and seconded by Mark Sullivan.
- **Action:** The Committee discussed and unanimously approved to support for the Comprehensive Downtown Plan, as motioned by Mark Sullivan and seconded by Russ Keil Jr.
- **Action:** The Committee unanimously approved the BART letter of support for the 2024 Solutions for Congested Corridors Program for the Powell Street Station Traction Power Substation replacement project, as motioned by Don Thomas and seconded by Mark Sullivan.
- **Action:** The Committee unanimously approved the Amazon sponsorship for Winter Walk 2024 and Blook 2025 for a total of \$85,000, as motioned by Don Thomas and seconded by Mark Sullivan.

#### Meeting Notes by Agenda Topic (see CLOSED Session Minutes for Items 14-18)

##### 1. Call to order and roll call.

Marisa called the meeting to order at 9:09 a.m. and took roll call.

##### 2. Public comment.

No public comments were made.



**3. Action to approve the meeting minutes from June 27, 2024, and July 3, 2024.**

**Action:** The Committee unanimously approved the meeting minutes from June 27, 2024, and July 3, 2024, as motioned by Mark Sullivan and seconded by Manuela King.

**4. Financial and administrative updates**

a. Audit and 990 updates.

Ben reported that the Alliance's audit is complete, and preparation of the IRS Form 990 is underway. A key issue identified during the audit was tracking how staff distribute their time across different projects (funds). Given the Alliance's growth, auditors recommended implementing a system with some regular testing. To address this, the Alliance will introduce a time test document to track staff time across various projects. This "time test" will be conducted several times a year to provide a more accurate reflection of time spent on different initiatives.

b. Time study

This was discussed in the previous agenda item.

c. New compliance postings for City funded organizations.

Ben informed the committee that the City now requires all non-profit organizations to publicly post a list of their Board members and the other governing boards they are affiliated with. He asked that members complete the conflict-of-interest form provided in this meeting. Also, the IRS Form 990 and audit reports must be posted on a newly created webpage for the Foundation and Alliance websites. He noted this was due by the end of the calendar year.

**5. Clean & Safe services updates.**

a. Block by Block management changes and improvement plan.

Marisa informs the Board that Block by Block's Operations Manager, Lance Goree, has stepped down from his role, with his last day scheduled for November 19, 2024. Block by Block will be conducting a search (internally and externally) for a new operations manager. In the meantime, an interim replacement is overseeing the account. They are continuing to work on an improvement plan.

b. Bigbelly program updates.

Marisa and Ben report that all damaged Bigbellies have been repaired, though a few have yet to be returned to their locations with spares currently in storage. Block by Block is in the process of replacing all the wraps on the Bigbellies before the holiday season. Additionally, the Alliance plans to relaunch the Bigbelly sponsorship program in 2025. Hilton San Francisco has expressed interest in budgeting for Bigbellies next year and requested to continue their sponsorship of 7 units. The repairs of late were funded by a \$50,000 grant, which enabled the Alliance to purchase replacement/reconditioned Bigbellies at \$500 each. It was noted that sponsorships are required to make the program financially sustainable.

c. LPR pilot program update.

Ben reminded the committee that they approved the launch of the License Plate Reader (LPR) pilot program. Applied Video Solutions (AVS) plans to connect the system during the week of this meeting for a three-month trial. Since initial discussions, there has been a shift in SFPD's use of the technology. Initially intended to assist with real-time arrests, the LPRs are now being used for criminal investigations due to high volumes and staffing limitations, which make real-time monitoring challenging. Russ noted that in areas with lower volumes, such as Marin, officers receive LPR alerts directly to their phones, but this approach is not really feasible in San Francisco. Marisa added that the SFPD will be presenting a request to streamline the Alliance's process for approving real-time



monitoring of Union Square's security cameras. Historically, the Alliance has adopted a conservative policy due to concerns over lawsuits involving video surveillance, reflecting a cautious approach to risk. However, with changing circumstances, the Alliance is now more open to exploring this option, and the SFPD will present its proposal at the next Services Committee meeting.

d. Contracts updates

Ben and Marisa informed the committee that new contracts are needed for Block by Block, Legion Security, and Applied Video Solutions (AVS). The committee extended these contracts by 1-2 months (through November), depending on timing, as the Alliance works toward securing RFP 230. This grant would significantly adjust the contracts and impact the Alliance's security operations. Block by Block's contract will be structured to align Ambassador Services with funding from grants and assessment funds. If RFP 230 grant is secured, it would free up assessment funds, allowing the Alliance to allocate those resources toward hiring added security personnel. Ben also noted that the grant tied to RFP 230 has a two-year lifecycle, with a maximum funding of \$2.5 million. The current budget allocation is approximately \$1.25 million per year. This funding would effectively double the security efforts, with a concentrated focus on the Powell Street corridor along Market Street and the Stockton Street corridor.

6. **Discussion and possible action to extend contract for Daniela Vasile through January 15, 2025.**

Marisa informed the committee that the Alliance would like to extend the contract for Daniela Vasile, highlighting her extensive experience and valuable contributions to neighborhood services and public space management. Mark inquired about the specific extension date of January 15. Ben explained that this date aligned with the ongoing leave of Director of Services, Jason Cherniss (who is on leave through January 1). Ben further noted that while the Alliance is interested in making a permanent job offer to Daniela, the decision depends on assessing the organization's needs once Jason returns and resumes his duties. The Alliance plans to propose a more permanent solution at the Executive Committee meeting in December.

**Action:** The committee unanimously approved to extend the contract for Daniela Vasile through January 15, 2025, as motioned by Don Thomas and seconded by Mark Sullivan.

7. **Discussion and possible action to approve receiving grant for RFP230 and possible action to approve expanding security contract and coverage including overnight security coverage for Macy's Great Tree.**

Marisa informs the committee that the Alliance has not yet secured the RFP 230 grant. In the meantime, Macy's has approached the Alliance to share the cost of overnight security for the Macy's Great Tree during the holiday season. This request follows incidents from last year, including a viral video of unauthorized gatherings that led to copycat events. The proposed security, provided by Legion, would cover November and December through the holiday season, with an estimated cost of \$13,000. The Alliance will fund the overnight security (½ with Macy's paying other ½), with support from Ice Rink security staff.

The Board also discussed the potential costs of maintaining a holiday tree in Union Square if Macy's were to leave the District. Marisa noted that while Macy's currently donates the tree, the cost of installation and storage could be approximately \$100,000/year, with an additional \$50,000 for security. Ideally, the Alliance would seek a sponsor to cover these expenses and associate their name with the tree. While the Alliance remains optimistic that Macy's will remain in the District, the tree could serve as a holiday activation for Union Square if Macy's departs.

**Action:** The Committee unanimously approved expanding security contract and coverage including overnight security coverage for Macy's Great Tree, as motioned by Don Thomas and seconded by Russ Keil, Jr.



8. Discussion and possible actions to approve contracts or amendments for streetscape projects. Including:

- a. Amendment for Field Operations for Powell Street Improvement project.  
Ben informed the committee that the amendment for Field Operations is not yet ready for discussion. While the details have been agreed upon verbally, further preparation is needed, including finalizing payment arrangements. The Alliance anticipates that the amendment will be ready for discussion and approval soon.
  
- b. Amendment for We Are the Kind to provide entertainment and production for Winter Walk and for the Union Square Stage Improvement Project consulting (\$60,000 for Winter Walk entertainment and production and \$23,000 for Union Square stage improvement consulting – total \$83,000).  
The Alliance is seeking the committee's approval for the amendment with We Are Kind to provide entertainment and production for Winter Walk, continuing the collaboration with David, who has previously assisted with the SF Live events. He will also serve as a consultant for the Union Square Stage Improvement Project due to his expertise with sound and lighting. This project will be funded through grants, one of which is currently being amended (RFP226). Discussion took place regarding David operating as a DBA rather than an LLC.

**Action:** The Committee unanimously approved the amendment for We Are Kind to provide entertainment and production for Winter Walk and for the Union Square Stage Improvement Project consulting, as motioned by Mark Sullivan and seconded Manuela King.

- c. BuildGroup agreement to acquire and install blue turf on the Powell Street Promenade for the holiday season (\$32,577).  
As part of the Winter Walk activation and in partnership with the City, the Alliance would like to extend the blue turf on Winter Walk to be on the Powell Street Promenade to create a cohesive and vibrant atmosphere throughout the district. Ben raised a potential concern, noting that the blue turf could inadvertently become bedding for unhoused individuals. Large, oversized ornaments will also be added to the light posts, alongside the blue turf and ornament trail, contributing to the festive atmosphere. BuildGroup generously provided in-kind services by installing, storing, and removing the blue turf for Winter Walk and assisted with the Macy's Tree load-in, again as an in-kind contribution. The Alliance will pay for their services for purchase and installation of the turf on the promenade for a cost of \$32,577.

**Action:** The committee unanimously approved the BuildGroup agreement to acquire and install blue turf on the Powell Street Promenade for the holiday, as motioned by Don Thomas and seconded by Mark Sullivan.

- d. SF Holiday Lighting contract for district wide décor purchases and installment.  
Ben informed the committee that the cost for acquiring and installing the ornaments was about \$150,000. Snowflakes will be hung above Maiden Lane, Hallidie Plaza, and the Cable Car Turnaround. SF Holiday Lighting also installed 16 36-inch ornaments on street poles within the District. The ornaments have existing storage on Treasure Island; however, the Alliance may need to reevaluate storage options due to concerns regarding the condition of the Alliance's holiday assets.

**Action:** The committee unanimously approved the SF Holiday Lighting Contract for district wide decor purchases and installment, as motioned by Manuela King and seconded by Mark Sullivan.



**9. Comprehensive Downtown Plan discussion and possible action to support.**

Marisa explained that with new leadership, the Alliance has an opportunity to create a comprehensive downtown plan, addressing the needs of Union Square and greater Downtown San Francisco. East Cut CBD, Downtown Partnership, Union Square Alliance, and the Yerba Buena CBD are working with former controller Ben Rosenfeld, now a consultant, to bundle key capital projects like the Powell Street Improvement, Hallidie Plaza, and Maiden Lane enhancements with other downtown projects into one unified plan. This plan would also look at activations/events as well as uses of unused real estate. The Alliance would like to contribute to this plan, focusing on retail safety, corridors, and potential police stations, and would require \$10,000 for participation. Ben noted the challenge of vacant properties downtown, as property tax revenue declines. Russ added that with low occupancy and deals at \$25 per square foot, many buildings remain mothballed, affecting Union Square, where businesses are closing. The Alliance relies heavily on grants, and these economic trends are a significant concern.

**Action:** The committee unanimously approved support for the Comprehensive Downtown Plan, as motioned by Mark Sullivan and seconded by Russ Keil.

**10. Discussion and possible action to approve BART letter of support for the 2024 Solutions for Congested Corridors Program for the Powell Street Station Traction Power Substation replacement project.**

Melanie reported that BART contacted the Alliance for a letter of support for a 2024 grant application. The grant would cover maintenance costs and updates to BART's electrical grid to streamline services that would allow for additional trains and reduce delays and technical difficulties. Russ shared his experience with a similar project at 1200 Market Street. He noted that the project would involve significant disruption, including installation of chain link fencing, and the potential loss of Hallidie Plaza. He added that the project was expected to take at least two years. A construction zone would also be created, like the current canopy work on Market Street, but on a larger scale. Marisa stated that the Alliance would reach out to our BART contact for further updates on the project's impact on the district, as well as timeline and would request her response before sending the letter of support. The Alliance planned to follow up with additional details in the letter.

**Action:** The Committee unanimously approved the BART letter of support for the 2024 Solutions for Congested Corridors Program for the Powell Street Station Traction Power Substation replacement project, as motioned by Don Thomas and seconded by Mark Sullivan.

**11. Update on grants & assessment dollars and prohibition on use in campaigns.**

Ben and Marisa updated the committee that the Alliance had exhausted the non-assessment funds when the August books were closed. For September and October, payments were made from the Foundation and non-city funds. Also, the Alliance remained extremely conservative and mostly stayed out of the campaigning for the GO Bond.

**12. Action to approve Amazon sponsorship for Winter Walk 2024 and Bloom 2025 for a total of \$85,000.**

Amazon would like to contribute an additional \$10k to their existing sponsorship bringing it from \$75k to \$85k. These funds would be divided between Winter Walk 2024 and Bloom 2025. Discussion took place about Tulip Day 2025.

**Action:** The Committee unanimously approved the Amazon sponsorship for Winter Walk 2024 and Bloom 2025 for a total of \$85,000, as motioned by Don Thomas and seconded by Mark Sullivan.

**13. Union Square Foundation contract, grants, and other programmatic updates.**

- a. Save-the-Date Holiday Fundraiser – December 5, 2024.



Marisa reminded the committee of the Union Square Foundation Holiday Party that sponsorships are available. She also noted that the ice rink and tree would be opening soon, with installations completed in early November.

- b. RFP 224  
The Alliance is currently waiting for the GO Bond results before moving forward with two deliverables for the Powell Street Improvement Project. This would result in a budget variance, both in revenues and expenses. The same applied to SF Live, which included the Union Square Stage Improvements. While the project was moving forward, it was slightly behind, also leading to budget variances.
- c. RFP 226  
RFP 226 is currently being amended, and the Foundation would approve it as soon as a formal amendment document was available.
- d. SF Live  
This was discussed in a previous action item.
- e. Community Challenge Grant  
Ben provided an update that the Community Challenge Grant should be expensed and completed with the purchase of some holiday expenses.

**The open meeting concluded and adjourned at 10:20 a.m.**

**CLOSED SESSION (See Closed Session Minutes for items 14-18)**