



**UNION SQUARE ALLIANCE
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING**

Minutes

November 21, 2024 – 9:00-11:30 a.m.

The Marker Hotel – 501 Geary Street

Board Members in attendance (all in person): Stephen Brett, J. Timothy Falvey, Shirley Howard-Johnson, Evan Kaizer, Russell D. Keil, Jr., Erik Murray, Jim Sangiacomo, Maxine Papadakis, Peter Hart, Mark Sullivan, Lauren Ellis, Kevin Flanagan, Julie Taylor, Wes Tyler, Jordan Buckley, Don Thomas, Spencer Sechler, Manuela King, and Clifton Clark.

Staff and contractors: Marisa Rodriguez (CEO), Ben Horne (CFO), Ken Rich (Director of Policy and Economic Development), Zarrina Yousufzai (Finance & HR Associate), Eva Schouten (Public Realm & Events Manager), Melanie Medina (Executive Assistant), Jessica Chilingirian (Marketing & Communications Associate), Liza Bernard (Events Coordinator), AnaKatrina Cortado (Intern), Beau Simon (Legal Counsel), Chip (Block by Block), Don Lepana (Block by Block), Miracle Matau (Block by Block), Joe Shelley (Legion).

Guests: Chief David Lazar (SFPD), Capt. Thomas Maguire (SFPD), Lt. Ryan (SFPD), and Sgt. Anthony Suhrke (SFPD).

Summary of Actions Taken by the Board of Directors

- **Action:** The Board unanimously approved to accept the CEO's report including ratifying the actions of the Executive committee from October 24, 2024, as motioned by Shirley Howard Johnson and seconded by Don Thomas.
- **Action:** The Board unanimously approved the September 26, 2024, meeting minutes as motioned by Evan Kaizer and seconded by Erik Murray.
- **Action:** The Board unanimously approved the grant contract as motioned by Don Thomas and seconded by Shirley Howard-Johnson.
- **Action:** No action was taken at this time.
- **Action:** The Board unanimously approved the bonus for Clean & Safe teams as motioned by Mark Sullivan and seconded by Don Thomas.
- **Action:** The Board unanimously approved policy to allow SFPD access to security cameras as motioned by Julie Taylor and seconded by Don Thomas.
- **Action:** The Board unanimously approved Union Square in Bloom 2025 sponsorship deck as motioned by Julie Taylor and seconded by Shirley Howard-Johnson.
- **Action:** The Board unanimously approved to extend Union Square Park Services agreement through June 30, 2025, as motioned by Don Thomas and seconded by Evan Kaizer.



- **Action:** The Board unanimously approved the contract with IPS (security) as motioned by Don Thomas and seconded by Mark Sullivan.
- **Action:** The Board unanimously approved the contract with Events and Ideas as motioned by Mark Sullivan and seconded by James Sangiacomo.
- **Action:** The Board unanimously approved the 990 as motioned by James Sangiacomo and seconded by Shirley Howard-Johnson.
- **Action:** The Board unanimously approved the Unaudited Financial Reports of October 2024 as motioned by Stephen Brett and seconded by Julie Taylor.
- **Action:** The Board unanimously approved a \$500,000 draw on the line of credit as motioned by Jim Sangiacomo and seconded by Shirley Howard Johnson.

1. Call to order, roll call, introductions, and welcome to the Marker Hotel.

Ben called the meeting to order at 9:07 a.m., expressing his gratitude to the Marker Hotel for hosting the Board meeting. Then, Marisa took roll call.

2. Public comment

Ben called for public comment. Hearing none, he proceeded to the next agenda item.

3. CEO's report

- Staffing Updates

Marisa informed the BOD that Jason Cherniss, the Alliance's Director of Services, has extended his medical leave to January. Daniela Vasile will continue to serve as Interim Director of Services.

- Election

This item was not discussed in this meeting.

- Upcoming parking changes 20 feet from intersections

This item was not discussed in this meeting.

- Safe Shopper press conference

Marisa reminded the Board that Mayor Breed and SFPD will hold a press conference at 11:30am, immediately following the Board meeting, at the Market Hotel to launch the Safe Shopper campaign.

- Bollards or planters and Mayor's announcement

Marisa updated the Board regarding Mayor London Breed's commitment to support Union Square with bollards and planters following the Louis Vuitton incident. While a master permit for bollards is still under development, a pilot program for planters is currently underway. The Alliance will work with DPW regarding the permitting of the planters and



bollards. For businesses seeking to install planters and bollards immediately, they will need to obtain their own permit from the city.

Marisa and Daniela presented two bollard designs for the Board's consideration: a modern steel bollard and a black bollard that better aligns with the district's historic character. Discussion focused on the challenges of installing bollards in a historic district, particularly concerns regarding underground conditions, and the proposed design's aesthetics and effectiveness.

- Prop B updates
This item was not discussed in this meeting.
- Union Square Foundation Holiday Fundraiser – December 5th
Marisa encouraged the Board to attend the Union Square Foundation Holiday Party on December 5th at the Town & Country Club. She also reminded them to invite friends and family, noting that the dress code is black tie optional.
- Office build-out
This item was not discussed in this meeting.
- **Executive Committee met on October 24 and approved:**
 - Contract extension for Daniela Vasile
 - Acceptance of RFP 230 and expanding services to include overnight security coverage for Macy's Great Tree
 - Amendment for We Are The Kind (David contract for Winter Walk and for the Union Square Stage Improvement Project)
 - BuildGroup agreement for turf installation along Powell
 - SF Holiday lighting contract for district wide decor
 - BART Letter of Support – 2024 Solutions for Congested Corridors Program for the Powell Street Station Traction Power Substation replacement project.
 - Amazon sponsorship for Winter Walk 2024 and Bloom 2025

CLOSED SESSION

- Closed session minutes from June 27, 2024.
- 401K matching plan (excluding bonuses)

Action to accept the CEO's report including ratifying the actions of the Executive committee from October 24, 2024.

Action: The Board unanimously approved to accept the CEO's report including ratifying the actions of the Executive committee from October 24, 2024, as motioned by Shirley Howard Johnson and seconded by Don Thomas.

4. **Action** to approve the September 26, 2024, meeting minutes
The Board reviewed the previous meeting minutes which were sent out ahead of the meeting.



Action: The Board unanimously approved the September 26, 2024, meeting minutes as motioned by Evan Kaizer and seconded by Erik Murray.

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

a. Services & Public Safety (Don Thomas)

• September & October 2024 Operations Report

Don summarized the September and October operations reports, noting that Block by Block is recruiting for the Operations Manager position. In the meantime, Johnny Linares, Regional Director of Operations, will fill the role as an operations manager is hired. During September and October, Block by Block addressed challenges such as encampments in collaboration with SFPD and other services. The Clean Team reported increased demand, collecting over 20,000 pounds of litter—30% more than in previous months—removing 800+ bags of litter and addressing 400 hazardous waste incidents. Seasonal changes and other factors may have influenced these increased trends. Don also highlighted Miracle Matau for her effective management of operations and Celaya Gavina, recognized as Employee of the Month for her auditing of service logs.

Finally, Don recognized Ambassador Jerome Hunter for his quick actions during a medical emergency on October 7th near Market Street. While on patrol, Jerome noticed a man in distress and immediately called 911. Following instructions from the dispatcher, he performed chest compressions until the individual regained consciousness. Don commended Jerome for his professionalism and dedication to public safety.

• Update on RFP230 grant and possible **action** to approve grant contract.

Ben informed the Board of RFP230 which is a \$1.9 million grant that will increase safety ambassadors throughout the district. With this funding, the Alliance plans to increase safety ambassadors by over 20, and reallocate assessment funds to double Legion security team from two to four guards providing 24/7 coverage. This expansion is only funded through June 2025, with hopes for program continuity under the next mayoral administration. The period of the grant is expected to run from December 2024 to June 2025. Jackie Hazelwood from OEWD further explained how the grant would enhance safety measures in Union Square, ensuring more security coverage to benefit both the community and visitors.

Action: The Board unanimously approved the grant contract as motioned by Don Thomas and seconded by Shirley Howard-Johnson.



- Discussion and **actions** to approve new contracts (effective 12/1/2024).
 - Block by Block
 - Legion
 - Applied Video Solutions (AVS)

Ben reported that during the last Board meeting, the Board of Directors approved the extension of all contracts through November 30, 2024. Today, he is requesting the Board to approve extending these contracts with adjustments to incorporate funding from RFP 230.

Ben provided a breakdown of the costs for the new Block by Block contract, including the base core assessments contract and the monthly expense for pressure washing services. He also proposed extending Legion's contract through June 2025, with plans to enhance security coverage and add a new supervisor, supported by RFP 230 funds. Additionally, AVS's maintenance agreement for monitoring the camera systems and upgrading security software will require an update by October 2025. No action was taken on the renewal of these contracts as the matter will be discussed at the January Board meeting.

Action: No action was taken at this time.

- **Action** to approve bonus for Clean & Safe teams.

Ben reminded the Board that a budget of \$50,000 was approved for the Clean & Safe teams' holiday bonuses. Additionally, the Alliance will be hosting an appreciation event for the Clean & Safe teams at the Golden Gate Tap Room.

Action: The Board unanimously approved the bonus for Clean & Safe teams as motioned by Mark Sullivan and seconded by Don Thomas.

- Project Updates:

- Bigbelly updates and sponsorships

Ben briefly reported that repairs and replacements have been made to several Bigbelly units, with new wraps being added. A few units still need to be wrapped, and Daniela is working on replacing three units, as five are currently stored. Ben shared that the Alliance will be relaunching the BigBelly sponsorship program and will be contacting past and potential sponsors to ensure continued funding for the program.

- Security cameras and LPRs and possible **action** to approve policy to allow SFPD access to security cameras.



Assistant Chief Lazar addressed the Board, emphasizing the importance of leveraging technology for criminal identification and apprehension. He highlighted the need for security cameras within Union Square, proposing that near real-time access to these cameras would enhance investigations and facilitate safe arrests. Capt. Maguire referenced an incident in which SFPD used License Plate Readers (LPRs) to track suspects involved in a violent home invasion, demonstrating how near real-time technology allowed for the rapid identification of vehicles and suspects, even when they switched cars. The use of drones prevented dangerous pursuits and guided the response among multiple law enforcement agencies, resulting in the arrest of the suspects.

Capt. Maguire also mentioned the recent involving a robbery at Dior in Union Square, where a vehicle was used to steal merchandise. Due to the Alliance current security camera policy, it took four hours for SFPD to obtain camera footage, delaying the investigation. The delay demonstrates the challenges posed by the current system and the need for faster access to support timely investigations.

Discussion occurred regarding the parameters for granting near real-time access to Union Square cameras, with SFPD noting they operate under 19B of the Administrative Code. Legal concerns were raised, particularly regarding the potential for misidentification by the police in an investigation. Assistant Chief Lazar acknowledged the strain on resources, especially with the upcoming holiday season, while Julie emphasized the importance of safety for businesses in the area. Marisa stated that if the motion passes, the Alliance will amend the policy, work with Beau for legal counsel, and draft a compliant policy for Board ratification at the next meeting.

Action: The Board unanimously approved policy to allow SFPD access to security cameras as motioned by Julie Taylor and seconded by Don Thomas.

- District360 projects
This item was not discussed.

- Derby Alley.
This item was not discussed.

b. Marketing & Communications (Mark Sullivan)

- Social media and PR updates.



The Alliance has been actively promoting holiday events on its social media platforms and is now increasing focus on the upcoming Winter Walk. Additionally, the Alliance partnered with Do the Bay for a holiday social media giveaway. The Alliance's social media following has grown by 2,200 followers, and Jessica highlighted a rise in holiday mentions. She also shared that the Alliance expects further media attention and influencer coverage in the coming weeks.

- Winter Wander-land & Winter Walk

Marisa appeared on Live on the Bay with a pastry chef from Flour & Branch to debut specialty treats for Winter Walk and to promote Winter Wander-land activities in Union Square. The Alliance has received sponsored coverage from SF Magazine and Nob Hill Gazette, and a final SF Business Times article is expected on December 6th. The sponsored content has garnered 250,000 impressions, helping raise positive visibility for the Alliance.

Mark provided an overview of Winter Wander-land activities, including Macy's Great Tree and the Safeway Holiday Ice Rink. He reminded the Board that businesses wishing to promote holiday events should contact Jessica and the Marketing team. With an unexpected 1.5 million visitors in Union Square during the holiday period, this is an important time to promote holiday offerings. Mark also noted that Winter Walk will run from December 13 – 22, with a variety of events. He highlighted the VIP Opening Event on December 14th from 4:30-7:00 p.m., featuring performances by the San Francisco Gay Men's Chorus and a formal ribbon cutting.

- Action to approve Union Square in Bloom 2025 sponsorship deck.

Mark discussed the history and impact of Union Square in Bloom on San Francisco, emphasizing its role in beautifying the neighborhood and promoting community collaboration. Mark reviewed the media coverage and impressions generated throughout last year's Bloom campaign, displaying examples of Bloom activations across the district. He highlighted major events, including Tulip Day and the Bloomies Award Show. Lastly, Mark presented the various sponsorship levels: Presenting Sponsor (\$100,000), Garden Sponsor (\$50,000), and Public Realm Sponsor (\$20,000 - \$30,000).

Action: The Board unanimously approved Union Square in Bloom 2025 sponsorship deck as motioned by Julie Taylor and seconded by Shirley Howard-Johnson.

c. Streetscapes and Public Realm (Manuela King)

- RFP226



Eva reminded the Board that RFP 226 is the Public Realm Exhibitions grant, which was awarded in 2023. It is currently being amended, with the additional funds allocated to Winter Walk 2024, as well as Bloom 2025, Tulip Day, and Maiden Lane and Cable Car Turnaround activations, all planned for 2025. The original contract amount was approximately \$440K, and with the amended funds, the total will reach around \$1.2 million.

- Update on the Powell Street Improvement Project

The Alliance has been waiting for the results of the GO Bond election, which has now passed. With its approval, the Streetscapes Committee plans to request a quote from Field Operations for a full-development design to better understand the potential costs. The more prepared the Alliance is with plans for the Powell Street Improvement Project, the greater the opportunity to secure additional funding. Ken noted that Union Square is competing with other districts for city funding for public realm projects, with the estimated high-end cost of the complete Powell Street Improvement Project being \$31 million.

- Discussion and **action** to extend Union Square Park services agreement through June 30, 2025

Ben informed the Board that the Union Square Park services has expired with LAZ parking. The Alliance provides services to the park including one security guard from 6:00 am to 2:30 pm and Ambassadors for park cleaning from 2:00 pm to 10:30 pm. The Alliance will receive nearly \$28K monthly for these services, covering the compensation for both the security guard and Ambassadors, along with an administrative fee of \$2,045 and an operations fee of \$2,955. The contract will be extended until June 30th.

Action: The Board unanimously approved to extend Union Square Park Services agreement through June 30, 2025, as motioned by Don Thomas and seconded by Evan Kaizer.

- Update regarding Field Operations contract.

This was discussed in a previous action item.

- Project Updates:

- Stage Improvements

The Alliance is moving forward with plans to add a permanent sound system, and potentially a lighting system, to the Union Square Plaza stage. Eva reported that meetings with Rec & Park are ongoing to finalize the exact location for the poles, which will support the support sound system and make it easier for artists to set up



for their performances. Once the pole locations are determined, the next step will be to proceed with a detailed structural engineering plan.

- R-Evolution
R-Evolution is moving forward as the Alliance collaborates with Building180 to finalize the installation plan. A key example is Macy's Great Tree installation, which Building180 will replicate for the R-Evolution statue. It will remain in the plaza until May, with a potential extension depending on Rec and Park.
- Maiden Lane
Coordination between the Alliance's Streetscapes Committee, DPW, and stakeholders, took place for a paving project and design enhancement on Maiden Lane. Due to weather delays, work will now begin after Thanksgiving.
- Holiday decor
Snowflake decorations are currently suspended from the Maiden Lane and Hallidie Plaza bistro lights, with ornaments on Powell Street and blue turf along the promenade. The Union Square Plaza Stage now features a backdrop with Winter Wander-land signage. Additional street decor will be installed through December 27.
- Winter Walk and **actions** to approve contracts with IPS (security) and Events and Ideas
Liza reminded the Board that Winter Walk is scheduled for December 13th, with load-in beginning on December 9th. The Alliance is working with the same partners as last year, except for their security provider, IPS, which will handle security this year. IPS will provide 24/7 security starting on December 9th and continuing through December 24th, with 6-8 staff members assigned to three shifts each day.

Action: The Board unanimously approved the contract with IPS (security) as motioned by Don Thomas and seconded by Mark Sullivan.

Action: The Board unanimously approved the contract with Events and Ideas as motioned by Mark Sullivan and seconded by James Sangiacomo.

d. Finance & Audit (Jim Sangiacomo)

- 990 review and **action** to approve
Ben presented the Board with a draft of the Alliance's 990, prepared by Perotti & Carrade, who also conducted the Alliance's audit. He emphasized the importance of the Board's review, as it includes a list of Board members, employees and their compensation, as well



as the organization's mission and governance. Ben will adjust the draft, including names, descriptions, and data.

Action: The Board unanimously approved the 990 as motioned by James Sangiacomo and seconded by Shirley Howard-Johnson.

- **Action to approve the Unaudited Financial Reports of October 2024**

Ben reviewed the Unaudited Financial Reports of October 2024, noting that the Alliance is operating at a deficit as it spends down reserves from the prior year. However, there is a small overall positive budget variance of \$38K. The assessments/core operations showed a positive variance of \$20K, primarily due to Marketing and Administrative Expenses being under budget. There was also a significant negative variance of \$440K in Other Revenues, attributed to timing revisions with certain grants and public realm projects such as the Union Square Stage Improvement Project.

Action: The Board unanimously approved the Unaudited Financial Reports of October 2024 as motioned by Stephen Brett and seconded by Julie Taylor.

- **Action to approve \$500,000 draw on the line of credit**

Ben proposed drawing \$500,000 from the existing line of credit to support the organization's operations through the end of the year, as the first assessment payment will not be received until late December.

Action: The Board unanimously approved \$500,000 draw on the line of credit as motioned by Jim Sangiacomo and seconded by Shirley Howard Johnson

e. Public Affairs (Erik Murray)

- **BART letter of support and Powell Street Station work**

Marisa stated that BART requested the Alliance's support for their Solutions for Congested Corridors Program for Powell Street. The Alliance raised concerns, as there were too many unresolved questions. The Alliance will not be providing support for the project at this moment.

- **Valet Parking**

Marisa stated that the Alliance has been in discussions with the retail community about reintroducing valet parking. The Alliance successfully demonstrated to the city the capability of setting it up on Geary, in front of Neiman Marcus closer to the café.



- Biederman Redevelopment Ventures

Marisa mentioned that Biederman Redevelopment Ventures holds a grant to activate the park for next year and will begin various activations at the Union Square Plaza in January.

6. Announcements & New Business

- Holiday Fundraiser, December 5, 2024, at 6pm (Town & Country Club – 218 Stockton)
- Winter Walk Kickoff, December 14, 2024, at 5pm
- Executive Committee, December 19, 2024, at 9am
- Next Board Meeting – Thursday, January 23, 2025, at 9am, Location TBD