



Public Affairs Committee
January 14, 2025, 9:00 am – 10:30 am
Zoom OR 291 Geary Street, Suite 200
Minutes

In attendance: Stephen Brett, J. Timothy Falvey, Russell D. Keil, Jr., Erik Murray, Beau Simon, Donald Thomas, Wes Tyler, Josh Callahan, Darcy Brown, Brian Fenwick, Jessie Kozar, Tammy Brock, and Thomas Brock.

Staff: Melanie Rodriguez (CEO), Ken Rich (Director of Policy and Economic Development), Melanie Medina (Executive Assistant), and AnaKatrina Cortado (Intern).

Guests: Mark Hennon (Biederman Redevelopment Ventures), Nina Coveney (BRV), and James Kirby (BRV).

1. Call to order and Introductions.

Marisa called the meeting to order at 9:05 am. Marisa took roll call.

2. Public Comment

Marisa called for public comment.

3. Announcements & Updates

- Happy New Year!
Marisa extended her warm wishes to the committee, greeting them with a Happy New Year.
- Winter Walk 2024
Marisa shared that Winter Walk was a success and noted that there had been feedback suggesting the event could be extended to New Year's Day if funding permits.
- PAC 2025 Schedule
The committee briefly reviewed the scheduled meeting dates for 2025.
- PAC Chair Discussion
Erik announced that he will be stepping down as Chairman of the PAC Committee. He expressed his gratitude to Marisa and the Alliance team for their dedication to Union Square and emphasized his continued support of the PAC committee. He also shared his confidence in the committee's ability to achieve its goals moving forward.
- Powell Street Updates
This item was discussed later in the meeting.



- **R-Evolution**

Marisa reminded the committee about the upcoming unveiling party for the R-evolution statue, scheduled for February 6th at Union Square Plaza. She mentioned that further details and an official invitation would be sent to the committee as the date approaches.

4. Action to approve the October 8, 2024, minutes.

Marisa directed the committee to review the October 8, 2024, meeting minutes.

Action: The committee unanimously approved the minutes from October 8, 2024, as motioned by Tim Falvey and Darcy Brown.

5. Biederman Redevelopment Ventures; Activations at Union Square Plaza

Mark provided an update on the ongoing pilot program funded by a grant from OEWD, which aims to offer year-round programming at Union Square Plaza. This initiative includes various free amenities and activity zones designed for all age groups, from Tuesday to Sunday, with additional operation on some holidays. Key features include a Kid Zone with toddler-focused programming, a Craft Zone with free activities, a Reading and Chess Pavillion, and an Active Zone with games like ping pong and foosball. These areas are strategically placed to ensure families can enjoy different activities while staying in close proximity. BRV is also coordinating with local organizations and businesses within the district for weekly events, including music, fitness classes, and craft sessions, while continuing to explore potential future expansions.

The programing officially launches on January 30th with ongoing efforts to engage the local community, particularly targeting children and families through collaborations with the SF Public Library and local schools. The Union Square Alliance's marketing team is supporting BRV through social media promotion, with initial amenities like Scrabble and the Recess Cart already active in the park. BRV is working on its outreach strategies to attract more families and increase engagement from local businesses, while also exploring the possibility of incorporating food options into the park's activities. Future adjustments and evaluations of the program will be conducted based on feedback and its needs. Discussion also occurred regarding security for the park.

6. PAC 2025 Goals

Melanie reminded the group of their main goals for 2024, which were centered on promoting a safe, welcoming environment and building a stronger economy in Union Square. The committee reviewed their progress, beginning with its efforts to address challenging behaviors within the district. Marisa provided updates on efforts to address homelessness, reflecting on past presentations, including one from Block by Block that assessed the district's needs. She also discussed the potential of outsourcing services from the Tenderloin or Salvation Army to help address this issue, with plans to resolve it in the coming year. The committee also revisited security improvements made throughout the year. Daniela shared how RFP 230 allowed for additional funding, enabling the Alliance to expand its safety efforts by adding 20 new Safety Ambassadors.



These Ambassadors patrol Union Square 24/7, with a focus on evening and overnight shifts. Additionally, two new security kiosks were introduced to improve both safety and the overall visitor experience.

Discussion continued around the potential for a valet service in the district. While there is a strong community interest, Ken pointed out that without financial backing from local retailers, the valet service would not be practical. The Alliance is working with a parking operator to assess the feasibility, though the service would require local businesses to share the costs. Furthermore, there are other challenges related to liability and finding the right partners.

Marisa also highlighted the efforts made to improve Union Square's image, sharing that a \$15,000 donation from a local hotel helped fund sponsored content aimed at promoting the district. Articles in the *SF Business Times* were part of this initiative and helped reshape Union Square's narrative, with plans to continue this positive push in the future. The committee then briefly redirected their attention to the Alliance's broader economic development work, including collaboration with OEWD on the Vacant to Vibrant program, its efforts to attract new tenants, and advocacy for Prop B funding for the Powell Street Redesign Project. Finally, the committee discussed their future plans for 2025, including the potential for another Summer Summit to explore topics like Macy's future and strategies for bringing businesses to Union Square. Marisa concluded by reviewing the guest speakers that were scheduled in 2024.

7. Upcoming Events

- a. Union Square Alliance Board Meeting – Thursday, January 23, 2025 – Location at Parc 55
- b. Next Committee Meeting – Tuesday, February 11, 2025

Adjourned: 10:41 a.m.