



Public Affairs Committee
October 8, 2024, 9:00 am – 10:30 am
Zoom OR 291 Geary Street, Suite 200
Minutes

In attendance: Stephen Brett, Tim Falvey, Russell D. Keil, Jr., Beau Simon, Donald Thomas, Wes Tyler, Spencer Sechler, Carie Yox, Josh Callahan, Casey Neuberger, Darcy Brown, Pulkesin Mohan, Tammy Brock, Thomas Brock, Pam Mendelsohn, Manuela King, Mark Sullivan, Julie Taylor, Kelly Lukens, Russ Keil III, William O'Daly.

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

Guests: Dan Biederman, James Kirby, Nina Coveney, and Mark Hennon (All from Biederman Redevelopment Ventures)

1. Call to order and Introductions.

Marisa called the meeting to order at 9:03 am. Marisa took roll call.

2. Public Comment

Marisa called for public comment. She then provided an update on the ongoing hotel strike, informing the group that the Board of Supervisors was holding a hearing on the matter that day. Russ also made a public comment regarding the upcoming opening of an official Nintendo store in Union Square.

3. Announcements & Updates

- Union Square Foundation Holiday Party
Marisa reminded the committee about the Foundation's Annual Holiday Party, a celebration to recognize the hard work and accomplishments of both the Foundation and the Alliance. She encouraged committee members to invite friends to join in the event.
- Powell Street Project Update
After the SF mayoral election, the committee will reconvene to determine the next steps for the Powell Street project. The Alliance is collaborating with two designers, Field Operations and SITELAB, both of whom are on schedule and under budget. The Alliance is in the process of finalizing details with the City and OEWD to create an opportunity for further collaboration with SITELAB in developing a larger-scale plan for Powell Street. This design will complement the efforts of the Vacant to Vibrant initiative, which is also focusing on revitalizing the Powell Street corridor.
- SF Business Times Article #3
Marisa provided an update on the Alliance's progress with the third SF Business Times article, which will focus on zoning and the Alliance's efforts to create a more



flexible and attractive environment for businesses looking to establish themselves in Union Square. The article will also highlight Union Square's emergence as a hub for Artificial Intelligence and its growing reputation as a center for world-class music, particularly following the success of the SF Live series.

- Winter Walk 2024

Marisa informed the committee that the Alliance is still seeking sponsors for the Winter Walk and confirmed that two blocks of Stockton Street will be closed for the event.

4. **Action to approve the September 10, 2024, minutes.**

Marisa directed the committee to review the September 10, 2024, meeting minutes.

Action: The committee unanimously approved the minutes from September 10, 2024, as motioned by Russ Keil Jr. and seconded by Tim Falvey.

5. **Biederman Redevelopment Ventures; Activations at Union Square Plaza**

Marisa introduced the Biederman Redevelopment Ventures team. The Biederman team have been chosen by the city to provide daily activations in Union Square Plaza in 2025. Dan Biederman introduced himself and his team, with Nina highlighting their mission and experience in renovating and activating public spaces and citing their successful work at Bryant Park and ongoing involvement with Salesforce Park since 2017. She emphasized that programming is key to creating vibrant and safe spaces, which in turn generate revenue and increase real estate value. By attracting a diverse range of visitors and encouraging longer dwell times, BRV aims to foster a sense of community through daily and weekly programming. They also plan to collaborate with local businesses to ensure the programming is reflective of Union Square's character.

The team presented examples of successful amenities, such as food vendors and intellectually engaging activities at Salesforce Park and shared their proposed plans for where activations could take place within Union Square Plaza. Nina explained that success will be tracked using various metrics, including visitor counts through click counters and data from PlacerAI, which the Alliance already uses. Additionally, there was a discussion about catering to different audiences, particularly women and children, to create a sense of safety and attract more visitors to the park. Security concerns, especially during late evening and early morning hours, were also addressed.

Mark further discussed the logistics of adding furniture for programming, such as tables for activities like table tennis and performance spaces. It was noted that BRV is still finalizing their agreement with OEWD. The discussion also covered the project's budget, timeline, the Alliance's role in the plan, permits, and ways to involve Union Square businesses in the activations, along with community outreach strategies. The BRV team will return to present to PAC in 2025 their finalized plans.

6. **Discuss San Francisco Empty/2nd Homes Tax**

This item was not discussed.



7. Upcoming Events

- a. Safe Shopper – *tentative date* Wednesday, November 13, 2024 – Location TBD
- b. Union Square Alliance Board Meeting – Thursday, November 21, 2024 – Location TBD
- c. Union Square Foundation Holiday Party – Thursday, December 5, 2024, at Town and Country Club, 6 pm – 9 pm
- d. Winter Walk – December 13 – 22, 2024
- e. Next Committee Meeting – Tuesday, January 14, 2025

8. Adjourned: 10:28 a.m.