



Services and Public Safety Committee Meeting

Tuesday, January 21, 2025

9:00am–10:30am

Hybrid Meeting via Zoom and In-Person at 291 Geary Street, Suite 200

Minutes

In attendance: Don Thomas (Club Donatello), Steven Suen (Biscuits & Blues), Tammy Brock (Property Owner), Chip (Block by Block), Don Lepana (Block by Block), Adrian Garcia (Block by Block), Joe Shelley (Legion), Israel Ginez (Legion), Jackson Alcantra (Legion), Joe Garrity (SFPD), Dmitri Shimolin (AVS), Russell Keil, Jr. (The Keil Companies), Wes Tyler (Chancellor Hotel), Maxine Papadakis (Odeon HOA), Dominique Charles (DPW), Capt. Ja Han Kim (SFPD), Lt. Dean Hall (SFPD), Mark Hennon (BRV), Nina Coveney (BRV).

Staff: Benjamin Horne (CFO), Daniela Vasile (COO), Melanie Medina (Executive Assistant), and AnaKatrina Cortado (Intern).

1. Welcome, introductions, & brief announcements

Don called the meeting to order at 9:03 a.m. Then, introductions are made.

2. Public Comment

Don called for public comment. Tammy expressed concerns about increasing graffiti in Union Square. She asked if a police officer is assigned to handle graffiti. Don acknowledged the issue and stated that there may be a need for response times to improve. Ben also announced that Jason Cherniss, the Director of Services, will not return due to health reasons. Daniela Vasile, previously Interim Director of Services, has been promoted to Chief Operating Officer, and the Alliance will begin hiring a new Director of Services.

3. ACTION to Approve Committee Meeting Minutes

a. Services Committee Minutes from November 2024.

Don directed the Committee to review the previous Services Committee meeting minutes sent out in advance.

Action: The Services Committee unanimously approved the November 19, 2024, meeting minutes as motioned by Don Thomas and seconded by Steven Suen.

4. Committee Updates

a. Block by Block staffing update.

Don Lepana reported that Block by Block is filling the Operations Manager position and has decided to hire Jaffar Mendieta. His anticipated start date is January 29th. Don also introduced Adrian Garcia, Block by Block's Project Manager for the West Coast, who is managing the Operations Manager responsibilities until Jaffar's start date.



b. District360 project updates.

Daniela updated the Committee, stating that text messages are working well, although there are still a few issues to resolve. Daniela also mentioned that the Alliance is nearly finished with the process of integrating the Legion team into District360. Additionally, geolocation is functioning, and all Ambassadors are currently being updated.

c. Union Square Derby Alley working group update/DPW

Domenique updated the committee noting that she is still awaiting a quote for the removal of the Derby Alley gate. She has received two responses from property owners, both opposed to its removal, and plans to speak with the remaining property owners soon, though some wish to opt out of involvement. Additionally, she highlighted the need to adjust flood lighting and camera placements, as they are frequently vandalized. Domenique will also meet with the new management company of the parking garage to discuss the issue. Don agreed that removing the gate could improve security and support the cleanup process of the area. Lastly, Domenique emphasized the importance of reporting vandalism and will encourage property owners to document incidents.

d. Bigbelly program updates ad sponsorships for 2025.

Ben announced that the Bigbelly program is back after a hiatus for repairs and replacements, with the majority of the fleet now fully operational again. The Alliance will be selling sponsorships at \$1,500 per can, with sponsors having branding options. Ben also mentioned that most of the units' leases expire in the fall, and the Alliance will discuss renewal options with Bigbelly. Domenique added that the city started delivering trash cans, but installation is slow; she will follow up soon.

5. SFPD Updates – Captain Kim, Lt. Hall (Central Station), Acting Captain Manning (Tenderloin)

Captain Kim updated the committee on the recent success of the JP Morgan Healthcare Conference, noting positive feedback from security personnel and hopes for future events in Union Square. SFPD is finalizing plans for the upcoming Chinese New Year Parade and the NBA All-Star Game, which will occur simultaneously, presenting staffing challenges. However, current plans indicate sufficient resources for both events. Captain Kim also highlighted ongoing work with the Hospitality Task Force, aiming to ensure safe passage from Yerba Buena Garden to Union Square, a key priority for the mayor's office. Crime in the city continues to trend downward, with statistics available from both online and for the Alliance office.

Lt. Hall shared an update on the Tenderloin Station following the retirement of Acting Captain Danny Manny, with Captain Kevin Noble taking over. Lt. Hall also discussed challenges related to Derby Alley, noting that SFPD does not have sufficient resources to address the broader issues but can provide support as needed. Additionally, the Alliance has been in communication with Stephen Jonas regarding the Drone First Responder (DFR) program, with ongoing discussions to identify the best locations for the drone program and response times in the downtown area.

6. Union Square Plaza 2025 Activations – BRV Report

Mark introduced himself and Biederman Redevelopment Ventures. BRV has received a grant from OEWD to manage Union Square Plaza programming from January until October. BRV's approach



centers on providing free, diverse activities that attract a wide range of visitors, particularly focusing on family-friendly events. The park will feature four main amenity areas: a Kid Zone, a Recess Cart (with crafts and games), a Reading and Chess Pavillion, and a Large Games area. The existing park furniture will continue to be managed by the city and local partners, while the ping pong table will remain at the park overnight and be maintained by BRV. BRV staff will be on-site from Tuesday to Sunday, with amenity areas open from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. BRV is also exploring ways to expand programming, including de-escalation training from staff to address safety concerns. Weekly reports will be shared with the Alliance and Rec and Park. To increase outreach, BRV is collaborating with local businesses and organizations, including daycare centers and schools. Programming will officially begin on January 30th.

7. Hospitality Zone RFP 230 Updates

a. December Report

Daniela reminded the Committee that the Alliance, in partnership with Yerba Buena, has received a \$1.9M grant from OEWD for the hospitality zone. This funding will support the hiring of additional safety ambassadors through Block by Block, who began training on December 18th and started patrols on December 26th. These ambassadors, identifiable by their blue and black uniforms and Union Square Alliance caps, will focus on addressing quality-of-life issues within the district. Additionally, the grant has allowed the Alliance to double Legion security from two to four 24/7 guards and hire a Legions Operations Manager to supervise the team.

Ben noted that the grant document is not yet signed, and the Alliance is awaiting feedback from the city on the scope of services and indemnity terms. Once the contract is signed, Safety Ambassadors will begin patrolling outside the district, potentially by the end of January. The grant will also cover administrative and management costs for the Alliance, Block by Block, and Legion. The grant's duration has been extended through September, and Ambassadors will primarily patrol areas such as Derby Alley and Hallidie Plaza, with a focus on addressing criminal activities, including drug sales and usage. The Alliance is actively working with the city to address these concerns and secure additional resources.

b. Staffing, Schedule & Deployment

This was discussed in the previous agenda item.

8. November and December 2024 Operations Reports

a. Adrian Garcia, Project Manager, Block by Block

Don (Block by Block) provided an overview of the November and December Operations Reports. In November, a key month for the holiday season, Block by Block collected around 843 bags of litter, debris, and leaves, totaling about 21,000 pounds of waste. A strike team, consisting of a team lead and Cleaning Ambassador, was launched to address Union Square's hotspots before peak foot traffic, focusing on cleaning high-visibility areas. Graffiti abatement efforts resulted in the removal of 530 graffiti tags, with a noticeable decline in vandalism from July to November. Block by Block exceeded its contract hours by 5%, with a significant increase in cleaning and pressure washing to maintain the district's condition during the busy holiday period. Before-and-after photos of cleaned areas were presented, highlighting the team's efforts.



In December, the Alliance recognized the dedication of the Clean and Safety team through an appreciation event. Monroe Quarles was named “Ambassador of the Year” for his exceptional service. Ambassadors collected nearly 1,000 bags of litter, totaling 23,000 pounds (the highest monthly total in six months) due to the strike team prioritizing cleanliness. Graffiti removal continued to decline with 417 tags abated. Sweep requests and hospitality services, such as providing directions and safety escorts, increased.

b. Joseph Shelley, CEO, Legion Corporation

Israel presented Legion’s report for November and December, focusing primarily on incidents involving Legion security. For November, he highlighted several incidents where Legion assisted SFPD in resolving situations and de-escalating conflicts, emphasizing their commitment to ensuring all parties were safely guided to a positive environment. In December, the statistics reflected an increase in self-initiated activities, which led to a decrease in dispatches. Notable incidents included an arrest, Legion’s involvement in assisting SFPD with de-escalation, and managing situations involving health issues and aggressive panhandling.

9. Contract updates, discussion, and actions to approve renewals of contracts for recommendation to Board of Directors

- a. Block by Block
- b. Legion
- c. Delay of 10B return to March 2025

Ben also mentioned that the contracts for Block by Block and Legion have already been approved, though final legal details are still being worked out. Joe inquired about whether the Alliance had received the monthly statistics for SFPD Retired Ambassadors, and Daniela confirmed that the Alliance had received the December statistics. Ben also provided an update that the 10B program has been paused from October through January. The Alliance is asking the Committee to approve recommending the delay of 10B services until March 2025 to the Board of Directors, due to additional security requirements for the All-Star Game, Chinese New Year parade, and the Hospitality Zone.

Action: The Committee unanimously approved renewals of contracts for recommendation to the Board of Directors, as motioned by Don Thomas and seconded by Steven Suen.

10. Security Camera program updates

- a. SFPD camera access

Dmitri provided an update on their involvement with the Hospitality Zone Plan, focusing on technology planning for the Yerba Buena area and the JP Morgan Healthcare Conference. AVS successfully brought Metreon online, now managed by JLL, and is working to ensure a safe travel path between the Moscone Center and Union Square. He also highlighted the successful use of security cameras in resolving incidents. AVS continues to work on the LPR pilot program, with three selected locations for the pilot.

Dmitri also emphasized the importance of LPRs in Union Square to address blind spots and improve investigations. He also noted challenges with the Tenderloin district, where suspects



sometimes flee toward the Alliance's area, and suggested that amendments to access permissions could help resolve this. Ben mentioned the indemnity agreement between the Alliance and SFPD regarding the use of security cameras, ensuring legal protection for the Alliance. This agreement is set to be presented to the Board for approval next week.

Action: The Committee unanimously approved the recommendation to the Board to approve the real-time camera access agreement as motioned by Steven Suen and seconded by Maxine Papadakis.

- b. Recent/Current camera projects and LPRs updates
This was discussed in the previous agenda item.

11. Upcoming Events and Meetings

- a. Alliance Board of Directors Meeting – January 23, 2024, 9 a.m. (Parc55 Hotel)
- b. Next Services Committee – March 25, 2025
- c. R-Evolution Unveiling Party – February 6, 2025, at 4 p.m.
- d. NBA All-Star – February 13 – 16
- e. Chinese New Year Parade – February 15
- f. Tulip Day – March 22, 2025
- g. Annual Luncheon – May 2, 2025

12. Adjourned: 10:52 a.m.