



Marketing Committee Meeting Agenda

Wednesday, January 8, 2025, 12:00 p.m.

Hybrid: 291 Geary Street or Zoom

Chair: Mark Sullivan

Minutes

In attendance: Mark Sullivan (Retail Consultant), Liz Polo (Polo Promotions), Tammy Brock (Property Owner), Rhealyn Serrano (Rae Studios), Mark Hennon (Biederman Redevelopment Ventures), Aaron Danzig (SF Travel), Carolina Data (Chotto Matte), Kat Cruz (Chotto Matte), Caitlin O'Carroll (Back at the House), Krystyn Carter (Convene), Lydia Jackson (Mastro's Steakhouse), Roger Barrantes (The Barnes Hotel), Stefan Aronsen, (Hilton/PARC55), Taylor Enstall (Samuel Scheuer Fine Linens), Kelly Lukens (The Westin St. Francis), Isaiah Holt (CARMINA Shoemaker), Dustin Soper (The Barnes Hotel), and Blake McCall (Blake Charles Salon).

Staff: Daniela Vasile (COO), Dianna Cavagnaro (Consultant), Jessica Chilingirian (Marketing and Communications Associate), and AnaKatrina Cortado (Intern).

1. Call to Order and Introductions

Mark called the meeting to order at 12:02 p.m., and introductions were made. He announced that Daniela Vasile, who had previously served as Interim Director of Services, has been promoted to Chief Operating Officer (COO). In her role, Daniela will also be attending Marketing Committee meetings.

2. Public Comment

Mark called for public comment. Hearing none, he proceeds to the next agenda item.

3. ACTION to approve the November 6, 2024, meeting minutes

The Board reviewed the minutes from the November 6, 2024, meeting, distributed prior to this meeting.

Action: The committee unanimously approved the November 6, 2024, meeting minutes as motioned by Liz Polo and seconded by Tammy Brock.

4. Introductions & Announcements: What's Happening in Union Square

Mark shared that the holiday season passed quickly, with Macy's Great Tree taken down and the Safeway Holiday Ice Rink scheduled for removal in two weeks. As 2025 approaches, he highlighted the upcoming JP Morgan Healthcare Conference. He also reminded new Marketing Committee members that meetings are held every two months, to keep all members informed on the Alliance's marketing initiatives, events, and promotions, supported by an annual calendar of key activations. Mark encouraged those interested to join the committee's Slack channel, which now has over 42 active participants, by contacting Jessica, and to share any relevant promotions with her. Additionally, he noted significant activity in the city through Easter, including extensive media coverage of the new mayor's inauguration.



5. Overview: 2024 Recap

Mark presented the marketing recap for 2024, spotlighting the accomplishments of the committee and Alliance marketing staff. Jessica shared a few slides outlining the year's successes, including 14 million impressions across social media. TikTok and LinkedIn saw significant audience growth, with Instagram being one of the Alliance's strongest platforms. Notable posts included a viral TikTok promoting a croissant competition in Union Square, which led to a sell-out. Jessica also highlighted Union Square's media coverage, featuring both paid and earned magazine placements, and the successful performance of newsletters, which had a 52% open rate. Additionally, the Alliance's website saw 97K active users, a 34% increase from the previous year, with the Winter Walk page attracting 20K views. The website improvements included better navigation and monetization testing, with ongoing efforts to enhance SEO and attract more organic search traffic.

Looking ahead to 2025, Mark emphasized two major initiatives: Union Square in Bloom, which kicks off with Tulip Day and attracts 50K-60K attendees, and the Winter Wonderland and Winter Walk events during the holiday season. While the Alliance will continue to promote other events, these two are the largest and require significant time, funding, and effort. Mark invited feedback from the committee on areas for improvement or new focus as they move into the new year. Discussion occurred around promoting Union Square through various ideas like partnerships with Bay Area sports team and using AI, such as language translation to enhance the visitor experience. Positive feedback on Winter Walk included suggestions to expand the Holiday Market and introduce branded items like umbrellas or ponchos. The committee also emphasized the importance of early planning for Winter Walk to ensure sponsors and ensure the event's success.

6. Presentation: Biederman Redevelopment Ventures

Mark Hennon presented BRV's plan to activate Union Square Plaza with free programming, aimed at increasing visitor dwell time. Nina introduced BRV, highlighting its success in activating parks and their philosophy of enhancing visitor experiences through various amenities and activities. Planned initiatives include a Kid Zone with a Recess Cart offering games and crafts, a Reading and Chess Pavillion with free books and chess tables, and an "Actives Games" area featuring ping pong, pop shot, and foosball in the summer. BRV will also purchase bistro furniture that aligns with the Alliance's branding to ensure a cohesive aesthetic. Programming will run from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., Tuesday to Sunday, with extended hours on holiday Mondays, and will include a busking program featuring performers in partnership with the City.

Nina and Mark will lead the project, working closely with Rec and Park and Union Square businesses to make these initiatives possible. Targeted outreach will focus on families, especially in the Tenderloin and Chinatown areas, with potential STEM activities introduced later in the year. The program will be previewed during the week of the JP Morgan Healthcare Conference. BRV will provide print collateral and collaborate with nearby hotels and concierges to promote the programming to visitors, while the Alliance team will support marketing efforts across various channels. Discussion followed on other activities to feature and strategies for marketing this initiative.



7. Discussion: Winter Wander-land and Winter Walk 2024

Mark shared that Union Square saw 1.3 million visitors between December 25th and 29th, showing increased foot traffic. He discussed the successful VIP opening of Winter Walk on the 14th, despite the weather, with performances by the San Francisco Gay Men's Chorus and seasonal food and drinks creating a festive atmosphere. Mark also reviewed marketing KPIs, including billboard ads, social media efforts, and the impact of influencers. Blake mentioned how his friend Jake Hammel contributed to the success of Winter Walk by helping to manage influencer partnerships, resulting in great social media content. Jessica will share an economic impact analysis of Winter Walk once the report is available.

8. Overview: R-Evolution Comes to Union Square

Mark announced that the *R-Evolution* statue by Marco Cochrane, featured at the Burning Man festival, will be coming to Union Square. The 45-foot-tall sculpture has been sponsored and will be unveiled on February 6th, where it will remain on display until early May. He invited the committee to attend the unveiling and launch party on February 6th, from 4:00 to 8:00 p.m., which will feature a live band.

9. Overview: Union Square in Bloom 2025

Mark discussed Union Square in Bloom and highlighted key dates for promotions including Tulip Day, Mother's Day, Blooms and Bubbles Bar Crawl, and Private VIP Closing Event and Bloomies Award Ceremony. He recommended that the committee keep in mind the increased foot traffic during these events, noting that businesses may experience higher demand for restroom access and shopping. Additional details will be shared with businesses interested in promoting during this time. Mark also mentioned that a local designer will create a dress for Bloom.

10. Overview: Additional Upcoming Events

Mark presented the annual calendar, highlighting key events in Union Square throughout the year, including Union Square in Bloom, the Annual Luncheon, Annual Holiday Party, Dreamforce, and Fleet Week. He also pointed out upcoming events, such as Lunar New year, and the NBA All-Star Game, which are expected to draw large crowds. Mark reminded the committee that businesses interested in promoting deals or events, like the upcoming Valentine's Day, should share their promotions by emailing Jessica.

Adjournment & Next Meeting:

The meeting was adjourned at 1:20 p.m. The next meeting is on Wednesday, March 12, 2025, at 12:00 p.m.