



## Marketing Committee Meeting Agenda

Wednesday, May 14, 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), Jessica Rae (Rae Studios), Mark Hennon (Biederman Redevelopment Ventures), Brian Fenwick (The Marker Hotel), Trayan Piroev (ONE65 Patisserie & Boutique), Lydia Jackson (Mastro's Steakhouse), Dustin Durham (Morton's Steakhouse), Kelly Lukens (The Westin St. Francis), Isaiah Holt (CARMINA Shoemaker), Dustin Soper (The Barnes Hotel), Blake McCall (Blake Charles Salon), Heiko Novak (Axiom Hotel), Sylvia Faison Wilkerson (Event Organizers), Azucena Pérez (Barnes Hotel), Alesandra Keys (Neiman Marcus), Stefan Aronsen (Hilton Hotel), Sophia Krauer (Barnes Hotel), Amanda Morales, Lily Mejia, Tony Wessling (Wessling Contemporary), Abby (Abby Young Styling), and Tammy Brock (Property Owner).

**Staff:** Daniela Vasile (COO), Melanie Medina (Executive Assistant), Eva Schouten (Public Realm & Events Manager), Liza Bernard (Events Coordinator), Hollie Chiao (Marketing and Communications Associate), Dianna Cavagnaro (Consultant), Kevin Bartram (Consultant), and E. Ryan Santamaria (Intern).

#### 1. Call to Order

Mark called the meeting to order at 12:01 p.m.

#### 2. Public Comment

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

#### 3. ACTION to approve the January 8, 2025, meeting minutes

The committee reviewed the minutes from the January 8, 2025, meeting, distributed prior to this meeting.

**Action:** The committee unanimously approved the January 8, 2025, meeting minutes as motioned by Liz Polo and seconded by Blake McCall.

#### 4. Introductions

Mark announced the new Alliance hires in the room: Hollie Chiao, the Marketing and Communications Associate and Ryan, the Intern. They provided brief backgrounds of their work experience, and the rest of the committee introduced themselves.

#### 5. Overview: 2025 & Bloom Recap

Hollie provided an overview of the Tulip Day event, which drew 146,000 visitors to Union Square and generated \$3.7 million in economic impact in just a single day. She then gave a recap of the annual spring luncheon, which raised over \$145,000 in fundraising. The 3<sup>rd</sup> annual bloom gown was featured during the event, designed by Jad Racha and a Cable Car award was awarded to Assistant Chief David Lazar. As for the Mother's Day event, the Alliance saw 41,000 impressions on social media platforms alone, not



counting the nine media and news outlets, including ABC News, NBC News, Kron4, and more. In terms of social media statistics, the Alliance gained 550 new followers.

Mark Sullivan briefly summarized the earlier 2025 events in the district such as the JP Morgan event, Valentine's Day event, NBA All-Star weekend, Lunar New Year Parade, and convention, proving that downtown and the city of San Francisco as a whole, is more than capable of handling thousands of visitors.

#### **6. Overview: Newsletter, Social Media, & Website Strategy**

Hollie reminded the committee that the Alliance distributes two different newsletters monthly: consumer marketing newsletter and BID Members & Affiliates newsletter. She described the purpose of each one, with the consumer newsletter consisting of special events announcements, new store openings, and special offerings. Similarly, the BID Members & Affiliates newsletter consists of special events announcements, project updates, and new residents' section: Union Square Roots, including BRV activations and special offerings for residents.

Hollie expressed her interest in her role at the Alliance to change the narrative of Union Square across channels, but specifically social media. It is her goal to drive engagement, increase in foot traffic to the district's businesses, and ultimately show the positive changes of Union Square. An example would be posting full day itinerary posts in Union Square to showcase a variety of stores, restaurants, bars, hotels, etc. while also making it convenient for a visitor to explore what businesses here in the district have to offer. Another strategy to drive engagement is boosting posts with ad campaigns.

As for the Alliance website, Hollie expressed her determination to make significant changes, as the format for streamlined navigation and having updated content and data. She took inspiration from websites of Oakland, Los Angeles, and New York. Next steps would be to monetize the website with ads and boost SEO. She also mentioned about potentially incorporating an AI virtual tour of Union Square to enhance the user experience. Discussion took place regarding additional outreach to businesses to ensure everyone is aware of upcoming events, activations, and specials in the district. Incentives on social media and the Alliance website were also discussed as a means to gain traction and followers.

#### **7. Overview: Nintendo**

Hollie announced that the Alliance and Nintendo will be having an exciting collaboration this summer. In addition to actively promoting the opening of Nintendo on social media, there will be planned activations in Union Square Plaza in May and July.

#### **8. 2025 – 2026: What Would You Like To See?**

Hollie welcomed the committee to provide feedback on marketing strategies. Brian Fenwick noted that the Marker Hotel had a positive with their Bloom cocktail during last year's bar crawl and questioned how we can ensure the other businesses experience the same success. Dustin Durham raised concern from previous years about the event having too many participating locations. Liza clarified that for this year's event the Alliance is aiming for 5-6 bars as bar crawl participants.

#### **9. Presentation: Biederman Redevelopment Ventures**

Mark Hennon gave an overview of their summer programming at Union Square Plaza.



Through their data analytics, Mark happily announced that growth in the daily amount of people in the plaza has doubled. BRV staff are out in the plaza daily for support and supervision. Mark listed a few of the amenities, including a recess cart, arts and crafts, ping pong tables, foosball tables, toddler programs, fitness programs, and many more. Mark thanked the Alliance for their support promoting the daily activations on social media.

#### **10. Discussion: Winter Walk 2024**

Hollie reported that social media marketing brought in most of the traffic, with 33% of attendees coming from that form of marketing, while 24% of attendees came from word-of-mouth. The total economic impact was \$27.2 million in total revenue within the district, as well as 633,000 impressions. Some takeaways for growth include more thematic decorations, more interactive children's events, and overall, general efforts for local businesses to promote and diversify their seasonal offerings to broaden reach. Based on the HPG study of the total spending during this time, the revenue of Winter Walk during that 10-day period last year was 33.4% higher than a 10-day average in the rest of December. Furthermore, it was 52% higher than a similar 10-day average for the rest of the year. Winter Walk for 2025 will tentatively occur between December 12-19, covering two blocks of Stockton Street. Liza noted that funding is tight this year and we will know more about available funds soon and encouraged the members to outreach to their network for support.

#### **11. Sponsorship: Holiday Deck & Sponsorship Tracker**

Kevin introduced himself to the committee noting he helps organize and develop sponsorships to present them to bigger brand names to help increase funding for Union Square in Bloom and Winter Walk. His focus has been primarily major employers based in San Francisco since they are more inclined to be involved and sponsor. Some sponsorships Kevin mentioned were Nintendo, Lyft, and Waymo. Beyond these major employers, Kevin expressed that he continues to expand out to national companies that are in certain sector categories through email outreach. For the holiday season, Kevin stated that Union Square Alliance is expanding the offering from Thanksgiving to New Year's, since sponsors lost two days from rain last year. This way, the sponsors gain more value when it comes to a spread of five weeks.

#### **12. EVENTS Overview: Additional Upcoming Events**

Liza proposed the idea of combining marketing and events as one committee, especially since in the post pandemic era, there's been a huge drive and need for more activations and events. The committee responded in a positive way and welcomed event updates during the marketing committee. Liza then listed the upcoming Alliance events.

- June 5<sup>th</sup>: SF Mag Launch Party
- July 19<sup>th</sup>: Bloom and Bubbles Bar Crawl
- August 21<sup>st</sup>: Bloomie Awards

#### **Adjournment & Next Meeting:**

The meeting was adjourned at 1:20 p.m. The next meeting is Wednesday, July 9<sup>th</sup>, 2025, at 12:00 p.m.