



**UNION SQUARE ALLIANCE
BOARD OF DIRECTORS REGULAR MEETING**

Minutes

**March 27, 2025 – 9:00-11:00 a.m.
Westin St. Francis Hotel – 335 Powell Street
2nd Floor, California East Room**

Board Members in attendance (all in person): Clif Clark (Westin St. Francis), David Lewin (Grand Hyatt Union Square San Francisco), Evan J. Kaizer (Sieroty Company, Inc.), J. Timothy Falvey (Hanford-Freund), James Sangiacomo (Trinity Properties), Jordan Buckley (Paramount Hotels, Inc), Julie Taylor (Colliers International), Kevin Flanagan (Recology), Lauren Ellis (CK Contemporary), Mark Purdy (Grosvenor Americas), Mark Sullivan (Community At-Large), Maxine Papadakis (Resident), Opio Dupree (Macy's), Peter Hart (Hilton Union Square San Francisco), Russell D. Keil, Jr. (The Keil Companies), Spencer Sechler (ACE Parking), Shirley Howard-Johnson (Entertainment & Arts Consultant), Stephen Brett (Brett & Co.), Manuela Anne King (RHAA), Wes Tyler (Chancellor Hotel Union Square), and Brian Fenwick (The Marker Hotel).

Staff and contractors: Marisa Rodriguez (CEO), Benjamin Horne (CFO), Daniela Vasile (COO), Zarrina Yousufzai (Finance & HR Associate), Eva Schouten (Public Realm & Events Manager), Liza Bernard (Events Coordinator), Melanie Medina (Executive Assistant), AnaKatrina Cortado (Intern), Beau Simon (Legal Counsel), Chip (Block by Block), Don Lepana (Block by Block), Miracle Matau (Block by Block), and Jaffar Mendieta (Block by Block).

Guests: Sarah Moos Thompson (Bionic), Marcel Wilson (Bionic), Scott Rowitz (Yerba Buena CBD), Jackie Hazelwood (OEWD), Ken Bukowski (Convention Facilities), Mark Hennon (BRV), Matthew O'Neil (Invesco), and Tammy Brock (Property Owner).

Summary of Actions Taken by the Board of Directors

- **Action:** The Board unanimously approved to accept the CEO's report including ratifying the actions of the Executive committee from February 27, 2025, as motioned by Clif Clark and seconded by Mark Sullivan.
- **Action:** The Board unanimously approved the meeting minutes of January 23, 2025, as motioned by Mark Purdy and seconded by Peter Hart.
- **Action:** The Board unanimously approved Brian Fenwick as a new Board member, as motioned by J. Timothy Falvey and seconded by Wes Tyler.
- **Action:** The Board unanimously approved the renewal and additional insurance policies and levels of coverage, as motioned by Spencer Sechler and seconded by J. Timothy Falvey.
- **Action:** The Board unanimously approved the Unaudited Financial Reports of February 2025, as motioned by Spencer Sechler and seconded by Shirley Howard-Johnson.



- **Action:** The Board unanimously approved the delay of 10B return until July 2025, as motioned by Wes Tyler and seconded by Mark Sullivan
- **Action:** The Board unanimously approved the grant contract for RFP 230, as motioned by Mark Sullivan and seconded by Evan Kaizer.
- **Action:** The Board unanimously approved the contract to complete a survey for Powell Street Improvement Project, as motioned by Evan Kaizer and seconded by Shirley Howard-Johnson.
- **Action:** The Board unanimously approved to continue funding Powell Project with potential delays on RFP 224 funding, as motioned by Mark Sullivan and seconded by Mark Purdy.

1. Call to order, roll call, introductions, and welcome to Westin St. Francis

Marisa called the meeting to order at 9:10 a.m., thanking Clif Clark and the Westin St. Francis for hosting. Clif announced that Nintendo will open its second official U.S. store at the Westin building, expecting over 1,000 attendees for the grand opening, and noted that high foot traffic during Tulip Day contributed to a positive period throughout the district. Then, Marisa took roll call. Jaffar recognized Safety Ambassadors Robert Hoover and Davonte Blackston for their contributions to Block by Block's success on Tulip Day, particularly in managing the public inside and outside the event.

2. Public comment

Marisa called for public comment. Hearing none, she proceeded to the next agenda item.

3. CEO's report

- Union Square in Bloom: Tulip Day

Marisa reported that Tulip Day was a huge success, with a massive turnout and an extensive line that stretched through multiple streets in the district. The first person arrived at 5 a.m., and some even camped out overnight. Despite a global tulip shortage, the Alliance managed to source tulips from Pennsylvania, requiring transport from soil-based growers across the country. She thanked the Alliance staff, Block by Block, and Board members for managing the line, assisting attendees, and supporting the event, as well as Mark Sullivan and the Westin St. Francis staff for hosting the VIP Party.

- Staffing and hiring updates.

Marisa announced that the Alliance is hiring for multiple positions, including a Marketing & Communications Associate, a Director of Services, a Public Realm Project Coordinator, accounting and finance support and an intern. Daniela added that offers for two of these roles are expected by the end of the week. Marisa also acknowledged the staff for handling additional responsibilities during the transition and hiring process.

- **The Executive Committee met on February 27 and discussed and approved:**

- Final Mid-Year Report for July – December 2024
- Body cameras for safety ambassadors and security- Discussion took place regarding Alliance funds and city funds to purchase the body cameras.
- Letter of Support AB 255
- Scotty Jacob's contract for consulting services for social media management.
- Contract Extension for Dianna Cavagnaro
- Springboard MRI contract

CLOSED SESSION



- Closed session minutes from December 19, 2024
- New positions

Action to accept the CEO's report including ratifying the actions of the Executive committee from February 27, 2025.

Action: The Board unanimously approved to accept the CEO's report including ratifying the actions of the Executive committee from February 27, 2025, as motioned by Cliff Clark and seconded by Mark Sullivan.

4. **Action to approve the January 23, 2025, meeting minutes.**

The Board reviewed the previous meeting minutes which were sent out ahead of the meeting.

Action: The Board unanimously approved the January 23, 2025, meeting minutes, as motioned by Mark Purdy and seconded by Peter Hart.

5. **Board member and officer discussion and action to approve new Board Member.**

Marisa informed the committee that there is an open seat on the Board of Directors (due to the resignation of a previous Board Member) and introduced Brian Fenwick, general manager of The Marker Hotel. She noted his ongoing contributions to meetings and events in support of the downtown recovery. Brian spoke about his strong ties to Union Square, his relationship with the city where he raised his family, and his commitment to enhancing the district. As a Board member, he aims to contribute his time, resources, and connections to support Union Square's growth, including the realization of the Powell Street Project. He stepped out while the Board discussed his membership.

Ben explained that Brian would be filling a term ending in July, at which point an election would be held, with Board terms staggered over two years. He clarified that Brian is stepping into Lin Huber's vacated seat and reminded Board members with expiring terms to notify the Alliance if they wish to continue serving. He also stated that the Board slate would be approved at the next Board meeting before being sent to property owners for a vote. After further discussion, Brian was welcomed back as the newest Board member.

Action: The Board unanimously approved Brian Fenwick as a new Board member, as motioned by J. Timothy Falvey and seconded by Wes Tyler.

6. **Presentation from Yerba Buena and Bionic – Proposed Streetscape Improvement Plan connecting Moscone with Union Square.**

Scott Rowitz, Executive Director of the Yerba Buena Partnership, shared that he, Marisa, and the Hotel Council discussed the corridor connecting Moscone Center and Union Square, leading to a study funded by an OEWD grant. Eight firms submitted proposals, with Bionic selected to lead the project. The goal is to create a more connected, engaging space, in collaboration with the Union Square Alliance and Yerba Buena CBD.

Marcel and Sarah presented their plans to improve the corridor, focusing on Stockton and Fourth Streets. The goal is to enhance the pedestrian experience on the east side and highlight key points on the west side for easier navigation. The plan includes creating a pedestrian promenade to define Stockton Street and address the area's lack of identity. While the west side has transit infrastructure constraints, the east side offers more space for widening sidewalks, concentrating foot traffic, and adding activities. Sarah



showed visuals of opportunities for short-term facade improvements on city-owned properties, with longer-term plans for private partnerships.

Ben asked about the feasibility of the ideas in particular around closing a lane of vehicular traffic (which was presented), and Marcel explained that studies on foot traffic are still ongoing to determine the best activation. Marisa then inquired whether there were additional goals beyond just directing foot traffic, to which Marcel responded that the wider sidewalks would not only improve pedestrian flow but also accommodate elements like bollards and planters. Mark Purdy raised concerns about potential challenges with loading zones, but Marcel assured him that the impact on Stockton would be minimal, as most loading zones are for cabs. Sarah added that Bionic is exploring alternatives nearby for relocating these zones. Discussion followed regarding the project's timeline and funding.

7. To Receive the BID's Advisory Committee reports and to take action to approve several Committee recommendations:

a. Marketing & Communications (Mark Sullivan)

- Biederman Redevelopment Ventures.

Mark Sullivan shared that the Alliance is close to hiring a Marketing & Communications Associate, with Scotty Jacobs and Dianna Cavagnaro continuing their valuable support during the transition phase. Mark Hennon from BRV updated the Board on successful free programming in Union Square Plaza, funded by an OEWD grant, with events like juggling classes and Toddler Tuesdays drawing families. BRV is expanding outreach and cultural performances, attracting international visitors. With positive results, BRV will increase paid promotions, host a media day in April, and expand to six days a week, adding more activities and an additional ping pong table.

- Union Square in Bloom.

Mark Sullivan reported that Union Square was bustling on Tulip Day as people lined up to receive their free bouquet of eight tulips. The Westin St. Francis hosted a VIP party for influencers to promote the event. It served as a great launch for the district's "Union Square in Bloom" campaign. Marisa added that this year's community recipient was the Booker T. Washington Community Center, allowing children and families to have the first pick of the tulips.

- Social media and PR updates.

Mark shared that 2025 has been an exciting year for Union Square, with events like the JP Morgan Healthcare Conference, Chinese New Year Parade, and NBA All-Star Weekend attracting large crowds. Scotty Jacobs, the Alliance's social media consultant, played a key role, with many of his posts going viral. Union Square was also promoted on BART ads, and Marisa discussed the campaign on *Live in the Bay*. The Alliance is collaborating with SF Magazine and the Nob Hill Gazette to highlight *Union Square in Bloom*, with opportunities for businesses to be featured. Discussion followed about viral social media posts for Bloom and Tulip Day.

Mark confirmed sponsors for *Union Square in Bloom* 2025 include JPMorgan Chase & Co., United Airlines, and Amazon, with Nintendo expected to join. Nintendo will place *Pikmin* figures in storefronts to promote Bloom. He reminded the Board about upcoming Bloom events, including Mother's Day and the Bubbles and Bar Crawl. Mark also stressed the need for early sponsorship planning for Winter Walk 2025, with a sponsorship deck coming soon. Finally, he encouraged the



Board to save the date, purchase tickets or a sponsorship for the Annual Luncheon on May 2, 2025, at the Westin St. Francis.

b. Finance & Audit (Jim Sangiacomo)

- Discussion, review, and **action** to approve the renewal and additional insurance policies and levels of coverage.

Ben explained that the Alliance renews its insurance policies every March and the Finance Committee recently met with its broker, who highlighted California's ongoing insurance crisis. The Alliance's current carrier won't renew its \$10M umbrella liability policy, and premiums are rising by about 20% on average. However, the Alliance secured a \$5M umbrella liability policy for \$3,500, despite some exclusions. Coverage for large events like Tulip Day is becoming more challenging, as they are not included in the general liability policy and require a special event additional insurance policy, and the Alliance hopes to secure similar coverage for Winter Walk. Ben also presented the schedule of insurance policies. All in all, the costs were relatively flat (with the exception of the additional event policies) but as mentioned the coverage is reduced some.

Action: The Board unanimously approved the renewal and additional insurance policies and levels of coverage, as motioned by Spencer Sechler and seconded by J. Timothy Falvey.

- **Action** to accept the Unaudited Financial Reports of February 2025

Ben clarified that the financial reports reflect some estimates due to delays in city grants, reconciling grant budgets and actual expenses, and invoicing. The Alliance is still submitting final deliverables for Winter Walk (December 2024), and contract finalization with Block by Block has slowed invoicing. Once these processes are completed, the financial reports will be more precise.

Ben then reported that the Alliance continues to spend down reserves after receiving the first assessment payment in December and had a \$567K deficit through February 2025. However, the organization has a positive budget variance of \$282K, with core operations outperforming by \$311K due to lower marketing and administrative expenses and additional revenue of \$207K came from event sponsorships like Winter Walk and Bloom. Other (grant and contract) Revenues had a negative variance of \$388K due to grant delays and large public realm projects. The forecasted surplus is \$304K, though some grants, like RFP 231, remain uncontracted. Net assets stand at \$1.78M, with a cash balance of \$1.9M as of February. Ben praised Zarrina for her work in closing the books and handling higher-level accounting tasks, noting that the finance team has been the same since 2019 and during that time the organization's budget has doubled, they are now looking to expand the finance and accounting staff by bringing in some support.

Action: The Board unanimously approved the Unaudited Financial Reports of February 2025, as motioned by Spencer Sechler and seconded by Shirley Howard-Johnson.

c. Public Affairs (Erik Murray)

- Powell Street funds advocacy update.

Updates were given during the Streetscapes and Public Realm updates.

- State of Retail since January 2025.



Marisa quickly updated the Board about Maven Retail's presentation during the February public affairs committee meeting noting that there continues to be strong interest in Union Square despite the negative media narratives.

- Economic Downtown Core updates.

Marisa informed the Board that the Alliance is collaborating with the downtown CBDs and has brought on Kat Daniel and Ben Rosenfield to develop an economic development plan focused on the downtown area. The group is currently in discussions with the Mayor's Office to help secure long-term funding support for the initiative.

d. Services & Public Safety (Don Thomas)

- January & February 2025 Operations Reports

Ben stated that the Alliance is working to simplify and standardize the Operations Report (which is a work in progress) and may hire a designer to assist with this and other reports like the Mid-Year and Annual Reports. Jaffar Mendieta was introduced as Block by Block's new Operations Manager, highlighting his strong leadership and extensive experience in business operations, customer service, and team management.

Jaffar reported a temporary decline in cleaning statistics from December to February due to staff retraining and operational restructuring but noted a sharp improvement in March. Safety statistics saw a 113% increase from January to February, with over 20,000 incidents logged by the end of February. He recognized several team members for their contributions: Wayne Alex for his 10-year anniversary, Monroe Quarles for his outstanding pressure-washing work, Robert Hoover for leading safety retraining, Davonte Blackson as February's Ambassador of the Month with over 6,000 statistics logged, and Miracle for her efforts with Member Services.

Because Legion was absent due to an emergency, Daniela reported that RFP 230 funding has allowed Legion security to double its patrols to four guards operating 24/7, leading to fewer service requests and overall positive results. Guards are now equipped with body cameras and undergoing training. The Alliance is also collaborating with District360 to develop an app for Legion security, expected to launch before the May Board meeting.

- Discussion and possible **action** to delay 10b return until July 2025

Ben stated that 10B services have been paused since October 2024 and the staff recommends extending the hold through July 2025 due to staffing and funding limitations. The Executive Committee previously approved extending the pause through March, but now the Alliance is asking for another extension until July 2025.

Action: The Board unanimously approved the delay of 10B return until July 2025, as motioned by Wes Tyler and seconded by Mark Sullivan.

- Discussion and **action** to approve grant contract for RFP 230 and services contractor updates.

Ben stated that RFP 230 includes a \$1.9M contract, providing a significant opportunity for the Alliance to enhance security across the district.



Action: The Board unanimously approved the grant contract for RFP 230, as motioned by Mark Sullivan and seconded by Evan Kaizer.

- Project Updates:

- Bigbelly updates and sponsorships.
- Security camera updates (new policy and SFPD access).

The Alliance is currently updating its security camera policy to incorporate language confirming that SFPD will have access to the cameras, as approved by the Board in November 2024. Once the policy is finalized, it will be shared with all property owners who have an Alliance-installed camera on their building.

- Derby Alley.

- e. Streetscapes and Public Realm (Manuela King).

- Bollards and planters.

Manuela explained that the Alliance is exploring bollards to protect storefronts from vehicle crashes, responding to recent incidents in Union Square. While the “Love Our Neighborhoods” grant allows DPW to install crash protection using planters, they require maintenance and retailer involvement. Placement depends on sub-sidewalk conditions and existing street elements, with priority given to vulnerable luxury stores. Manuela shared examples from cities like Paris and London, along with renderings showing how curbside bollards or a mix of bollards and planters could improve safety. Although the previous mayoral administration promised to fast-track approvals, the Alliance is now working with the current administration to keep the project moving, though funding remains uncertain.

- Update on the Powell Street Improvement Project.

- Review and **action** to approve contract to complete survey for Powell Street Improvement Project.

Ken updated the Board on the Powell Street project, now in the design development phase. In January 2025, the Board approved a \$988K contract with Field Operations for this phase, and staff plans to propose a \$288K amendment in April to include structural engineering and waterproofing services. Additionally, the Board was asked to approve a separate \$146K contract with Langan for a topographical survey, which must be contracted directly with the Alliance. Manuela explained that the survey will map elevations along Powell Street, a particularly complex task due to utilities and sub-sidewalk basements near the cable car turnaround. The Langan proposal includes three Powell Street-related tasks: the topographical survey, a review of sub-sidewalk basements between Market & Ellis and Geary, and a field investigation near the turnaround. It also includes a separate survey for the Union Square Garage to support the installation of new stage sound system pillars.

Funding for the design development phase will partially come from RFP 224, which funded schematic designs in 2024 with \$200K. The remaining funds will be covered by RFP 231, issued earlier this year, for which the Alliance has been awarded a grant. Contract negotiations for RFP 231 are in progress, with Alliance staff planning to bring the final contract to the Executive Committee in April or to the Board in May. Discussion followed regarding project timeline.



Action: The Board unanimously approved the contract to complete a survey for Powell Street Improvement Project, as motioned by Evan Kaizer and seconded by Shirley Howard-Johnson.

- Discussion and possible **action** to continue funding Powell Project with potential delays on RFP224 funding.
Ben explained that RFP 224 was a contract signed about two years ago, with \$165K allocated for the Powell Street project. However, due to the city's grant process, the Alliance has yet to receive the funds. Since the grant expired on December 31, 2024, the Alliance has requested an extension from the city. The contract must be amended to release the \$165K, which will then be used to support the design development phase of the project. Discussion followed regarding the advocacy and allocation of Prop B funding for the project.

Action: The Board unanimously approved to continue funding Powell Project with potential delays on RFP 224 funding, as motioned by Mark Sullivan and seconded by Mark Purdy.

- General RFP 231.
This item was briefly discussed in a previous agenda item.
- Project Updates:
 - Union Square stage improvements.
This item was not discussed.
 - Maiden Lane.
This item was not discussed.
 - Cable Car turnaround.
This item was not discussed.

8. Announcements & New Business

- Executive Committee – April 24, 2025, at 9:00 a.m.
- Union Square Foundation Annual Luncheon – Save the Date – May 2, 2025
- Mother's Day Union Square in Bloom event – May 11, 2025, at 1:00 p.m.
- Next Board Meeting – Annual Meeting – May 22, 2025, at 9:00 a.m. (Location TBD)

Adjourned: 11:20 a.m.