



Public Affairs Committee

May 12, 2026, 9:00 am – 10:30 am

291 Geary Street, Suite 200 or Zoom

Minutes

In attendance: Russell D. Keil Jr. (The Keil Companies), Donald Thomas (Club Donatello), J. Timothy Falvey (Hanford – Freund & Co.), Lauren Ellis (CK Contemporary), Pulkesin Mohan (Taj Campton Place), and Lori Coleman (Kidder Mathews), Beau Simon (Legal Counsel), and Karin Flood (Flood Building).

Staff: Marisa Rodriguez (CEO), Melanie Medina (Executive Assistant)

Guests: Adrian Covert (Bay Area Council)

1. Call to order and Introductions

Marisa Rodriguez called the meeting to order at 9:08 am.

2. Public Comment

Lauren Ellis asked who the appropriate point of contact should be when someone expresses interest in opening a storefront in Union Square. Specifically, she asked whether prospective tenants should be directed to the Union Square Alliance or to a commercial real estate broker. Marisa shared that the Alliance is actively addressing this topic as part of its upcoming Strategic Plan and is working to establish a more formalized approach. In the meantime, she encouraged committee members to refer interested businesses to the Union Square Alliance as the initial point of contact.

3. Announcements & Updates

- Union Square in Bloom 2026- Fashion Show & Tulip Day
Marisa provided a recap of the Union Square Fashion Show held on May 8 in Union Square Plaza. She shared that the event, presented in partnership with the Love, Halston Foundation and the Academy of Art University, featured floral-inspired couture designs created by Academy of Art students under the mentorship of Foundation members. One student was recognized with this year's "Bloom Dress" award. Marisa reported that the event was well attended and well received, followed by a reception at Tiffany & Co. She also thanked attendees and acknowledged District Attorney Brooke Jenkins and State Senator Scott Wiener for their participation.
- Strategic Plan Update
Marisa provided an update on the Strategic Plan, noting that the Alliance's consultants, Uncommon Bridges, continue to advance the planning process. She thanked the Alliance Board members who were able to join the Board retreat to help frame the next steps of the plan. The next phase includes convening work groups for each programmatic area, comprised of Alliance staff and community stakeholders, to



gather additional input on the organization's priorities and strategic focus over the next three to five years as the Alliance prepares for its renewal.

- Project Updates:
 - Farmer's Market
No updates were given at this time.
 - Maiden Lane Resolution
No updates were given at this time.
 - Powell Street
Marisa informed the Committee that the DDC continues its fundraising efforts to help close the remaining funding gap for the project.

4. Action to approve the February 10, 2026, minutes.

Marisa directed the committee to review the February 10, 2026, meeting minutes.

Action: The committee unanimously approved the minutes from February 10, 2026, as motioned by Russ Keil Jr. and seconded by Lauren Ellis.

5. Kat Daniel- Re-Introduction

Marisa reintroduced Kat Daniel to the Committee. Kat previously worked with the City's Office of Economic and Workforce Development before transitioning to consulting. She is now working with the Union Square Alliance to support the organization's economic development and policy initiatives, with a particular focus on defining the Alliance's role as part of the strategic planning process.

Kat provided an overview of her current projects, including enhancements to the Alliance's "Do Business Here" webpage to improve its functionality and value as a resource for prospective businesses. She emphasized the importance of leveraging data to better support the district and discussed the need to identify what data the Alliance should collect, analyze, and share with the community. Kat shared that she is focused on ensuring the "Do Business Here" section of the website is easy to navigate, accessible to users, and effectively promotes Union Square as a business destination. She is also meeting with Union Square brokers to better understand how they currently engage with the Alliance, identify what is working well, and uncover opportunities for stronger collaboration.

Kat also referenced the Broker Committee that previously existed and raised the question of whether it would be beneficial to revive the group as a forum for communication and partnership. Marisa asked the Committee for feedback on the potential reestablishment of the Broker Committee. Committee members discussed the value of strengthening relationships with the brokerage community and shared perspectives on related topics, including the role of ICSC, the continued importance of



promoting public safety improvements, and the potential development of an interactive map on the Alliance's website to better showcase available properties and neighborhood assets.

Kat also provided an update on her involvement with the Economic Core Collaborative, an initiative that brings together organizations actively implementing downtown revitalization efforts, including the Downtown SF Partnership, Yerba Buena Partnership, The East Cut CBD, Mid-Market, Into the Streets, AdvanceSF, SF New Deal, and the San Francisco Chamber of Commerce. She explained that the Collaborative was formed to develop a comprehensive set of recommendations for the City identifying the tools, resources, and policy changes needed to support downtown San Francisco's recovery. The group presented its recommendations to the City last year and has since continued discussions focused on implementation and long-term coordination. Kat shared that her current work is centered on advancing those conversations and helping define the future role of the Downtown Development Corporation (DDC) in supporting downtown recovery efforts.

6. Bay Area Council; Adrian Covert- AB 1556: Drug Free Recovery Housing

Adrian Covert, Senior Vice President of Public Policy for the Bay Area Council, presented to the Committee on AB 1556, legislation authored by Assemblymember Matt Haney and co-sponsored by Mayor Daniel Lurie and the Bay Area Council. Adrian requested the Alliance's support for the bill and encouraged the organization to submit a letter of support as the legislation advances through the State Senate. He also encouraged Committee members to share the opportunity with their respective networks to help build broader support.

Adrian explained that AB 1556 is intended to expand access to drug-free recovery housing throughout California by providing housing operators with greater flexibility to maintain recovery-focused environments while protecting residents. He noted that the current version of the legislation is stronger than last year's proposal, incorporating feedback received from the Administration and improving its likelihood of success. The Committee asked how the current bill differs from the previous version. Adrian explained that while the overall intent remains the same, the updated legislation provides greater flexibility within existing housing laws and addresses funding limitations by allowing jurisdictions to access state funding for drug-free recovery housing.

In response to questions regarding the bill's impact on San Francisco, Adrian shared that the legislation would allow the City to build or convert existing properties into permanent drug-free recovery housing. He noted that Mayor Lurie supports expanding access to recovery housing and explained that, under current law, San Francisco is unable to



utilize certain state funding sources for these projects. If enacted, AB 1556 would enable the City to access state funding, reducing its reliance on local funding alone.

The Committee also discussed how residents would be admitted into drug-free recovery housing and how relapses would be managed. Adrian explained that housing operators would have the authority to establish admission criteria and make decisions regarding resident participation on a case-by-case basis, allowing them to maintain a recovery-focused environment while exercising operational discretion. Committee members also inquired whether there are any planned drug-free recovery housing projects in or around Union Square. Adrian discussed the current landscape and future opportunities that could become available should the legislation be approved.

7. Liquor License Update; Ben VanHouten, OEWD

Ben VanHouten provided the Committee with an update on the proposed Hospitality Zone liquor license program. He informed the group that the purpose of the legislation is to support downtown nightlife by providing discounted liquor licenses to new hospitality businesses located within the City's designated Hospitality Zone. The initiative is intended to encourage investment and attract new restaurants, bars, and entertainment establishments to the district. Ben acknowledged Marisa for providing public comment in support of the legislation at the Rules Committee meeting the previous day. He shared that the legislation was scheduled to be considered by the full Board of Supervisors later that day. If approved, a total of 15 liquor licenses will be made available within the Hospitality Zone.

Ben then explained the application process and eligibility requirements. Beginning in September 2026, eligible businesses may apply to enter a lottery for one of the available licenses. Businesses selected through the lottery must secure a leased space within 90 days or forfeit the license opportunity, which would then be offered to another applicant. He clarified that the liquor license application must be submitted by the business operator rather than the property owner. The licenses are nontransferable and are expected to cost approximately \$20,000. The Committee discussed the nontransferable nature of the licenses, specifically whether a future tenant could retain the license if the original business were too close. Ben confirmed that the license would not transfer to a new operator, and any subsequent business would need to apply independently through the established process.

8. Adjourned: 10:38 a.m.

9. Upcoming Events

- Next PAC Meeting- Tuesday, July 14th, 2026, at 9am
- Alliance Board of Directors Meeting- Thursday, May 28th, 2026 - location TBD