

DOWNTOWN MANAGEMENT CORPORATION OF SANTA CRUZ
A CALIFORNIA NON-PROFIT BENEFIT CORPORATION
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes
Thursday, January 25, 2024
Zoom Meeting

Members Present: Ian McRae, Larry Pearson, Ryan Coonerty, Scott Newsome, Bonnie Lipscomb, Renee Culver, Chris Murphy, Shebreh Kalantari-Johnson, Kris Reyes

Members Absent:

Others Present: Rebecca Unitt, Carter Jones, Jorian Wilkins, Lily Perry

1. **Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order by Connerty at 8:32 am.
2. **Additions to the Agenda:** None
3. **Approval of Minutes:** Minutes approved unanimously with a motion by Pearson and second by McRae.
4. **SC Police Report:** Jones reported that there are currently four officers dedicated to Downtown and PD is working to get more CSOs trained and placed downtown. Team is getting adjusted for the new metro location. DMC members all agree there has been significant positive changes since the increase in police presence.
5. **Downtown Ambassador Program:** Wilkins reports that since the expanded district was approved the Ambassador staffing has doubled and the team expected a fifty percent increase in outcomes but their outcomes have actually tripled. The calls for service to PD have decreased by thirty percent. Safety services and vacant property checks are being tracked and DTA is focusing on the special attention they need. Welcoming services have increased and a record number of contacts were made in December. Hospitality services have tripled from previous year. Cleaning services quadrupled since the district expansion and larger ambassador team. Coonerty would like to see if property owners receive this info. Wilkins sends year end letters to business owners, but needs to expand the address database for property owners. McRae suggested handing out flyers to business owners with DTA stats and team info. Kalantari-Johnson suggested more news coverage and op-eds to help recognition of Ambassador services.
6. **Downtown Outreach Worker:** Perry reports one third of outreach services for December were new clients. December had a record number of 206 referrals and a seventy percent success rate. Housing, shelter and clothing were the top referrals for services. Partnership with Thrive Hive and Link 4 Health have helped the success rate for the positive referrals. Ninety six percent of contacts are unhoused. There are now two and a half DOW workers on shift at a time. Workers are now paired up for safety. Kalantari-

Johnsonts would like more information on other partnerships that Encompass is working with in the community and Perry will work to get more data on that. Coonerty would like additional info on where the new clients are coming from. Perry reports that DOW is available 7 days a week from 8am-6pm.

- 7. Downtown Activation Update:** Lipscomb updated the group on an update Economic Development gave to City Council on the department's economic development strategy progress and new actions Council has directed staff to work on. Vacant storefronts have been significantly reduced but there remain long standing vacancies and absentee property owners that present challenges. ED will be evaluating the possibilities to provide incentives and perks to activate them. She is working to explore the challenges and impact of this and working on getting the statistics so we can address the issues. There is capital funding in place to activate the alleyways. This could include lighting and DTA will help to advise what is appropriate. An interim home for the farmers market is in discussion and will be finalized in the next few months. There is potential for the farmers market to move to the existing library site as a future permanent home. Newsome reports vacancy rates are historically low but wants lower further to keep the momentum. Lipscomb works to make sure that the new housing project is covered by uncle poop services and that any negative impacts are addressed. There are future possibilities for a midtown and westside activation expansion with business improvement efforts as well. Pearson is waiting for results for the empty storefront activations and is interested to further the discussion regarding property owner sanctions. Lipscomb reports that the projected completion date for 205 units is within the next few months. There will be a total increase in housing units over the next five years that is expected to bring approximately three thousand new community members to the downtown. Wilkins will do outreach to businesses to help integrate new community members by providing local swag to welcome them upon move in. The possibility for a new hotel to be approved for downtown is still under review with planning and City Council.
- 8. Measure L- City Sales and Use Tax :** Lipscomb led a discussion with the Board for a potential endorsement of Measure L. The half cent sales tax increase will help the City invest in climate impacts, youth services, housing creation, homeless response, farmers market match and more. There is a challenge to progress in these programs since the one time funding received previously will be depleted in 2025 and structural funding is needed. The increased sales tax is estimated to provide eight million annually to help fund these endeavors. The Board was unable to reach consensus so no action was taken on the endorsement. Reyes commented that he would like to see a framework on how this group makes future endorsements and staff agreed to look into the by-laws for future discussion of an endorsement policy.
- 9. Financial Report:** Unitt reports that January starts the new billing for assessments and they are on track. There was an increase in clean up calls for Uncle Poop but the expense is within the expected budget.
- 10. Meeting Adjourned:** 9:37 am

Dated: 1/25/24

Renee Culver, DMC Secretary