



## Public Affairs Committee

February 8, 2022 – 9:00 -10:30 a.m.  
Via Zoom

### MINUTES

#### In Attendance

Committee members: Don Thomas, Wes Tyler, Corinna Luebbe, Beau Simon, Russ Keil Jr., Kelly Powers, Stephen Brett, Spencer Sechler, Terry Lewis, Tim J. Falvey, Carie Yox, Lauren Ellis, Anna Chung, and Benjamin Duverge.

Staff: Marisa Rodriguez (Executive Director) and Melanie Medina (Intern).

Guests: Juile Taylor (Colliers International), Kazuko Morgan (Cushman & Wakefield), Pamela Mendelsohn (Maven Properties), Ken Rich

#### 1. Call to Order and Introductions

Marisa Rodriguez called the meeting to order at 9:02 a.m. Introductions were made.

#### 2. Public Comment

Marisa called for public comment. Seeing none, she moved to the next agenda item.

#### 3. Announcements

- PAC goals and advocacy strategies 2022  
The 2022 goals for PAC are focused on safety of the community, resolving the issue of vacancies and the overall state of retail in Union Square. The plan is to include more city leaders in the process and invite them to speak at meetings and summits.
- Retail Summit- Save the Date 3/29  
The next retail summit will be on March 29,2022. There is discussion of a possible virtual live stream to reach a bigger audience. This summit will be an update from the city to the retailers.
- Powell Street Promenade  
An emergency meeting with SFMTA and city leaders took place on January 24<sup>th</sup> and discussed the project history and status of the Powell Street Promenade. A next meeting is in the works.
- Lighting



There has been additional lighting in the east and west sections of Union Square Park. The Alliance is working on adding more lighting in alley ways to brighten up the Square.

- SFPD Updates

Despite a lower number of police presence, crime has gone significantly down. The command van remains in front of the park.

- 711 Post Street Advocacy

Marisa gave a recap of the 711 Post Street shelter. The proposed shelter has full support from the Board of Supervisors except for Aaron Peskin and will go to a vote this week.

**4. Action to Approve the January 11, 2022, Minutes**

Marisa directed the committee to the minutes of the last meeting and provided a summary.

**Action:** The Committee unanimously approved the January 11, 2021, minutes as motioned by Kelly Powers and seconded by Spencer Sechler.

**5. The State of Retail in Union Square Post Pandemic Presentation: Julie Taylor with Colliers International, Kazuko Morgan with Cushman & Wakefield, and Pamela Mendelsohn with Maven Properties.**

Marisa introduced Julie, Kazuko, and Pam to the committee. They are retail brokers in Union Square and came to share their experiences with trying to sell spaces to potential retailers. Common issues include dealing with mentally unstable individuals roaming Union Square, prolonged permitting process, and lack of commitment from the city. Julie, Kazuko, and Pam have expressed the importance of the city's support to showcase to potential retailers that it is worth investing in space in Union Square.

Julie Taylor spoke on the uncertainty of public disturbance. This includes mentally disturbed individuals, open use of drugs, and squatters in empty retail spaces. This has been a main issue for her when showing retail space to potential retailers. She stated that overall reduction in crime and helping the mentally disturbed should be a main priority. Kazuko then spoke on her experiences and expressed that the current conditions of SF does not make it an attractive destination for tourism and conventions. Her suggestions to attract businesses into the area consist of police presence, positive PR surrounding Union Square, and having zero tolerance of current issues. Pam listed her thoughts as to what needs to happen to save the retail business. This includes



cleaner streets, positive press, accessible parking, more activations, short- and long-term solutions for store fronts, merchant friendly incentives, and a cohesive atmosphere among tenants.

Ken Rich then spoke on the legality of the proposed solutions and the relationship building with city officials.

Questions asked by the committee:

- Potentially working with the Chamber of Commerce
- How to get more support from the city
- Get support of the press for more positive messaging
- Possible activations that include more food and art, not just retail
- How to better relationships between landlords and brokers
- How to rezone to help occupy office spaces on second and third floors
- Possible incentives to bring locals to Union Square

## **6. Other Legislative Updates**

- Illegal Vending  
There have been several conversations at the state level regarding the issue.
- Supplemental Police Budget- Hotel Council  
The Hotel Council will be launching a survey in March to all communities throughout San Francisco regarding safety and reporting crime statistics. There will be a meeting on Friday February 11, 2022, to discuss the supplemental police budget.

## **7. Adjournment and Next Meeting: March 8, 2022, 9:00am**

Marisa adjourned the meeting at 10:35 a.m.