

**LDA Meeting Minutes**  
**February 26, 2024**  
**Meeting Via Zoom**

Board Members Attending: Alysia Gritz, Lorie Mata, Vincent Phua, Kao Saelee, Jain Williams, and Joanne Wong-Lam.  
Guest: Juno Thomas, Building Dept., City of Oakland  
Executive Director: Daniel Swafford

**Call to Order:** President Jain Williams

Welcome and Introductions

Review of Agenda

Approve January 2024 Minutes: Motion made to approve by Jain; seconded by Vincent, all in favor.

**1. D4 Councilmember Ramachandran Office – Iris Merriouns**

- Updates – 1) Recent Newsletter – Councilmember Ramachandran seeking response from constituents on staffing shortage.
- Public Safety – 1) Working on Ambassador program with EWD and hopes that some funding should come through.
- Traffic Calming – Oak DOT – There may be leftover funds from Councilmember Sheng Thao period. Three potential areas to reduce speed identified: 1) ‘Lane Drop’ on 35<sup>th</sup> (MacArthur to California) - \$60K; 2) Kansas St. crossing that leads to Laurel Elementary - \$90K; 3) Beacon pedestrian crossing lights along MacArthur at Brown and Maybelle (Board resonated with this option). Iris wants to confirm priority project with LDA before communicating with Oak DOT.
- Problematic traffic area backing up at High St. coming down to MacArthur with a bike lane taking out one lane before intersection.
- Oak DOT Town Hall meeting March 28<sup>th</sup>.
- City of Oakland pushing for funding on Federal and State levels for traffic and safety.
- Confirming request for Charlie Reem, DOT to come to 3/18 meeting to discuss Measure KK and other issues.
- Small Business Support and Permitting – Juno Thomas
  - Economic Development Small Business Week – April 29-May 4<sup>th</sup> to include: 1) Sponsoring workshop on safety and security; 2) April 30<sup>th</sup>, 4-6 PM, Workshop for Multi-Ethnic businesses and 5 Departments (OPD, Planning, Permitting, Ed Massee) to help navigate the process; 3) Program for assistance in 6 locations throughout City for entrepreneurs to help navigate City and resources.
  - ‘Oakland Fresh’ – Next 90 days to clean up City—deal with illegal dumping and abandoned vehicles.
  - Extensive discussion on permitting challenges – How to streamline process. Kao’s situation given as example. Challenges due to Planner shortage, lack of interdepartmental communication, pushing City to open counters, increase hours of in-person operations, new HR Director, new City Administrator who need to be aware of the issues and loss revenue to City.
  - Issue of long term Laurel District vacancies and blight – difficult to address due to staff shortage to cite code violations, elderly property owners, cost to re-tenant and bring building up to code.

**2. LDA Business**

- Ambassador – Good response from businesses and data show program’s effectiveness. Report is forthcoming.
- CIP MacArthur – Brief conversation with Charlie Reem.
- BID Renewal 2025 – Still reaching out to consultants and working on RFQ. Will pair property owners in database with Board members for outreach effort.
- LDA Treasures Financial Report – Dorothy - See Dorothy’s email dated 2/17/24 for bank balances.

**3. Laurel Security - Merchant Watch**

- Clayton and Urban Shield is LDA’s security point person.
- “Feet on Street” Tuesdays at 6 PM, Laurel Hardware. Trying to build momentum with volunteers.
- Walking Officers – Would like them to walk at night to address break-in’s.

**4. Events and Promotions**

- Holiday Marketing Report – Valentine’s Day promo went well and will revive Merchant Profiles.
- Laurel Lunar New Year – 2/17 event went well with 37 businesses participating and good crowd at Taoist center and crowd following the lion blessing.
- Live in the Laurel 2024 – Third Saturdays of month - April – Oct. with June 21<sup>st</sup> Make Music Day event planned.

**5. Business Attraction and Land Use**

- Ten Planters Refresh - High St. Coalition, March 23<sup>rd</sup> work day.

- Closure of Louisiana Fried Chicken

**6. Open Forum**

- Question raised of why Chinatown/Downtown to get all funds in mid budget cycle and not shared with other business corridors. LDA Board needs to be more engaged – Request via Iris to set up meeting with new City Administrator, Justin Johnson, Mayor Sheng Thao, etc.
- Daniel's idea to create income generating pathway for LDA, partial income from parking meters, stays in District to fund ambassador program and district infrastructure.

Next meeting Monday, March 18, 2024, 6-8 PM via Zoom