

## **MODESTO D.I.D. MINUTES**

**May 19, 2021**

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:** Bart Barringer, David Boring, Charles Doll, Thomas Lopes, Lauren Trevino

**BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:** Joe Muratore, Tom Slater

**GUESTS:** Josh Bridegroom, Ryan Foy, Jaylen French, Mike Hammond, Ivy Mayol

**STAFF:** Heidi Savage

The Downtown Improvement District Board of Director's Meeting was called to order by Chairperson David Boring at 12:16 p.m.

**PUBLIC COMMENT** – None

**CORRESPONDENCE** – None

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES** – Bart Barringer moved to approve the minutes of the Modesto Downtown Improvement District Board of Director's Meeting of February 17, 2021. Lauren Trevino seconded. Unanimous approval.

### **MATTERS FOR THE GOOD OF DOWNTOWN**

**Downtown Merchant Report** –Mike Hammond explained that Modesto PD now has a newly-started Outreach team. They have hired outreach workers from the County and there's now a three-prong process: Outreach that touches homeless population first. Then if they choose not to accept services there's the Enforcement team. Next, depending on scenarios they have, the Abatement team (comprised of employees that are actually homeless who were hired from DST). Mike shared April crime statistics for downtown. Thomas Lopes said he is having a problem with people ordering food and not paying. Mike discussed the options to deal with those incidents. Josh Bridegroom asked if individuals are taking food from other restaurants in the district, could there be an aggregate accounting for that person's theft over the whole district and use that as a means of charging and sentencing someone. Mike said they need to be able to identify them, first and foremost, which is why cameras are important. He reinforced that it is not a waste of time for businesses to call PD when these kinds of thefts occur. The Sheriff in our County will let PD book people in these kinds of incidences.

Mike informed the board that the Department of Justice was not going to prosecute bars operating during Covid closures on bars. Josh explained that the DMP and the City are looking at changing the zoning to disallow nightclubs and hopefully amortize out the ones who are here. Bars are not conducive to residential and don't benefit the other businesses due to their hourly operations. He stated that in most cities, nightclubs work well in industrial districts.

**Gallo Center for the Arts Report** – David Boring reported on their behalf that there's excitement about the new CEO, although sadness over Lynn riding into the sunset (though much deserved). The incoming CEO comes from a performing background and was at one point on the Gallo stage as one of the Ten Tenors. They also got their season brochure out yesterday, so they are coming to life again.

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**City of Modesto Report** – Jaylen French said that as we begin to open up on June 15<sup>th</sup>, the City is considering revising the parklet guidelines to make them more permanent. David wholeheartedly backs the parklets as they give restaurants extra space, which is good for those businesses in our district who took a huge hit during Covid. They also bring cuisine into the public eye and let people passing by see that restaurants are open for business. Mike Hammond thinks parklets reduce the amount of homeless hanging out on sidewalks.

Jaylen said City will receive \$45 million in stimulus funds. Some of those funds will go towards increased expenses from dealing with COVID. Council will initially approve on May 25 and finalize the budget. There are several line items associated with downtown including RAD Card, Children’s Museum, downtown beautification, business support, and building redevelopment.

The courthouse, an eight-story, nearly \$300 million project could be started by the end of this year and completed by 2024. It could be a significant driver of things along 9<sup>th</sup> Street in addition to the Ace Train. He added that there has also been increased interest in residential and mixed-use in downtown.

**DMP Report** – Josh Bridegroom said the Experience Engineers now have a full staff of five. They’re hitting weeds on the periphery and working on identifying the need for trash receptacles in certain parts of the district. The team is also helping the Modesto D.I.D. with assessing parking turnover on K, L and 15<sup>th</sup> Streets.

Related to J Street, Josh is hearing that there is a lot of interest in putting in landscaping and electrical for lighting in trees. Collins Electric wants to donate money toward lighting up J Street. So Josh is coordinating a meeting to determine costs and then find out if the City, DMP and possibly the DID will want to contribute. Buses are finally being diverted off of J Street, now going up I and K Streets. There will be a meeting about the transit center tomorrow. The hope is that signs at the terminus facing J Street that say “Do not enter, wrong way” will be replaced by a big plaza with bollards, pavers, and possibly a piece of public art.

City Council has already approved the RAD Card as part of the fiscal year budget that’s being adopted for 2021/2022 and part of the overall direction in how to use stimulus funds. The meeting will take place next Tuesday. There will be another \$1.3 million in dedicated funds, which matches the first go around. Jaylen thinks RAD Card funding could be available by the first of second week of June and reminded the group that this supports businesses across Modesto. Josh agreed it would be city-wide, but that we would make sure to crowdsource the downtown to get as many of those dollars spent in our district. He also explained that the RAD Card is working on a full overhaul and redesign of the app so it’s more consumer centric. They are adding in rewards and developing gift cards, so that even when donor funds run out, it could drive a significant volume of traffic into our downtown. That model should be released in 2022.

**Modesto Children’s Museum** – Ryan Foy provided a detailed presentation about the Modesto Children’s Museum that will be located at 928 11<sup>th</sup> Street. The Modesto D.I.D. board is supportive of the museum and thinks it will be great for downtown.

**Executive Director’s Report** – Heidi Savage gave the Executive Director’s Report and Financial Report. She updated the group about the first collaboration meeting between the

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Modesto D.I.D./DMP on May 5. They discussed the two joint projects including an art installation either at the transit center or in a parklet and a storefront window makeover. She said they are leaning into doing an installation at the transit center. So where there are currently no-entry signs, an Ace Train rider will see a pedestrian plaza with pavers and bollards and potentially a sculpture. Then they could see expanded sidewalks, landscaping, lighting in trees along J Street. It was moved by Thomas Lopes to fund the joint art project of DMP and Modesto for \$15,000. It was seconded by seconded by Lauren Trevino. Unanimous approval.

Heidi detailed the storefront makeover program that would be conducted by Michele Reeves, of CIVILIS Consultants, who gave a presentation at the State Theatre back in 2017. David Boring said the things Michele showed us were mind blowing and that we need to go and tell everybody on our blocks to get people in the seats. The umbrella committee talked about charging \$100 for admission, which would be applied toward makeover costs for those interested. Her program would have four components: 1) Michele would come give a presentation to businesses that would provide a step-by-step guide that anyone can follow, whether they're a restaurant, office or retailer. 2) She would give a presentation to City leadership about the kinds of initiatives the Modesto DID and DMP are working on together to enhance downtown and why/how the city can better support those things. 3) Live window makeover that business owners can watch while she and her team do it. 4) We would want to offer a matching grant program of up to \$1,000 per business to execute a makeover at their operation. Michele will make two trips and will bring a team of consultants with her to execute the makeover. The fee of \$30,000 plus travel expenses will be split between the DMP and the Modesto D.I.D. Thomas Lopes moved to support the storefront window makeover program for \$15,000. It was seconded by David Boring. Unanimous approval. Bart suggested that board members of the Modesto D.I.D. and DMP be allowed to attend the event at no charge.

Heidi explained that as the DID and DMP blend together to eliminate redundancies, avoid duplication of effort, and have economies of scale, it would make for a more quick and efficient process if a board member could sign-off on necessary items along the way. Staff, umbrella committee members and consultants will be working together on this effort. Thomas Lopes moved that David Boring be authorized to sign-off on necessary steps for the blending of the DMP/DID. Bart seconded the motion. Unanimous approval.

Joe Muratore will no longer be able to serve on the board. In order to replace him and fill vacancies, David suggested each board member think about their own block. Board members should consider anyone they've had contact with, worked with, or that they know and might be a good addition to the board. David added that consideration be given to professions that would be nice to have on the board, like an architect. Diversity in age might also allow for better discussion and brainstorming. Thomas said it would be challenging to get anyone right now.

A business owner, Buddy Wesson, contacted the D.I.D. about a grove of City-planted trees in front of his office along Eight Street. The trees are dying because the irrigation system has failed due to vehicles driving over the wet soil, crushing the pipes underneath. Two separate times, Buddy and his Eagle Scouts and Boy Scouts have replaced the irrigation equipment. Heidi asked if the D.I.D. has ever supported a project like this. Bart said in the past, we've given money to the Garden Club to do beautification like that and put bark in the tree wells in

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downtown. David said trees are typically more of a City responsibility, but we could possibly chip in a bit. Thomas said he'd need to go by and look at the tree grove. Heidi pointed out that she would put Buddy in touch with the City. There was discussion about giving attention to parts of the district outside the core. Thomas suggested that we get someone from the other side of 9<sup>th</sup> Street onto our board.

Heidi and Josh had a meeting with Dave Schroeder from the Mistlin Gallery and Stanislaus Arts Council. He's going to check with the individuals who have been involved in the Art Walk in the past to assess what their level of interest is this year. Josh and Heidi told Dave that they don't have the bandwidth to help with Art Walk now, but maybe next year.

Music in the Plaza is on hold for now.

The City gave permission for Graffiti Summer events to be held in August. Heidi will meet with Todd Aaronson to find out about the various events on Friday.

**ISSUES THAT NEED DOWNTOWN IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT SUPPORT** – None.

**MATTERS TOO LATE FOR THE AGENDA** – None.

Adjourned at 2:40 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Heidi Savage