



**8:30 AM BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
WEDNESDAY JANUARY 8, 2025
WALLING BUILDING 3RD FLOOR
USE RDP OFFICE ENTRANCE**

Minutes

Present: Brian Percy, Chad Collopy, Chuck Beaty, John Adkins, Jesse De La Cruz, Kyle Warsinski, Joe Ramos, Emilio Ramirez, Broc Yoshida, Nanci Larsen, Ron Loveridge, Shalini Lockard, Stan Morrison

Excused: Amy Hoyt, Collette Lee, Jennifer Gamble, Joe Guzzetta, Justin Tracy, Rachael Dzikonski, Randy Hord, Samuel Precie, Shelby Loomis, Sorelle Williams, Zoe Ridgeway

Absent: Andrew Walcker, Cherie Crutcher, Jean Eiselein, Lou Monville, Mercedes Serrano, Philip Makhoul, Bob Nagle, Clarissa Cervantes

Ex-Officio ABP / City Council: Sarai Arellano, Melanie Bruins, Philip Falcone

Staff: Janice Penner, Shirley Schmeltz

1) Call to Order

Shalini Lockard called the meeting to order.

2) Self-Introductions

Self-introductions were conducted.

3) Approval of Minutes of December 11, 2024.

Motion: To Accept the Minutes of the Meeting of December 11, 2024

Motion made by: Brian Percy **Motion Seconded by:** Chuck Beaty

Motion carried by subsequent email vote.

4) Chair's Report

Shalini Lockard spoke about public outreach to promote what RDP provides for downtown. She attended a Chamber Downtown Business Council meeting and many of those in attendance were unaware of what RDP does, how the City was involved with RDP, and the overall structure of the organization. She said that Janice Penner presented on RDP at both the Chamber Downtown Business Council meeting and Inside Downtown meeting, and present at DANA later this month.

5) Items for Discussion

5a) Presentation By Ron Loveridge on IDA Conference

Ron Loveridge attended the IDA Seattle Conference in September and had offered to present to the Board on some of his key takeaways from attending the conference.

Some of the highlights of the presentation:

- 1,400 people attended the Seattle Conference, including the Riverside City Manager Mike Futrell, and the Economic Development Director Jennifer Lilly. Ron Loveridge said that RDP should have at least three people attend the annual conferences. The next conference will be in Washington, D.C.
- Downtown Riverside presents an exceptional opportunity and promise with extraordinary resources. It serves as a cultural center, an entertainment center, a historic center, a justice center, a government center, a hospital center, and a convention center. There are many excellent restaurants, and shops as well as parks that people can enjoy.

- RDP has an important role to play in moving the downtown area from good to great. RDP offers leadership and partnerships between the City and the businesses.
- Data is important. RDP should be tracking the trends and what is happening overall in downtown over time. Visitors, homeless, crime, retail vacancy, graffiti, etc. are important data points. There should be annual surveys to get the BID members' concerns and what their priorities are.
- RDP Ambassadors do a lot but there are many different examples of ambassadors and what work they do. The monthly report with data of what the Ambassadors do and the types of contacts they have throughout the month is important information. RDP should also look at best practices, what kind of data they can gather, and what could be done with it.
- The Brookings Report discusses possible solutions to the Doom Loop that occurred after COVID and the effect COVID had on people's perceptions of crime, homelessness, and disorder in downtown.
- It is important to have a Strategic Plan that goes over what services are being offered and what the priorities are for the organization.
- Any BID budget less than a million dollars is considered small. RDP only has 2 staff members and while they are efficient and exceptional in what they do, without sufficient funding RDP can't expand its services. A PBID could be a possible solution.
- UCR/RCC needs to be connected to downtown so the students can get into downtown to spend their time and money. Downtown could be more friendly to students with student discounts to shows, student coupons, etc. Someone from UCR should be on the Board.

Chuck Beatty mentioned that UCR is getting a new chancellor, so RDP could reach out to that individual. Janice Penner said RDP has a good relationship with the UCR Artsblock, helping to promote them and their events downtown.

John Adkins said that all the things going on are a challenge with connecting to audiences. RCC has roughly 150 events each year in the arts genre, but attendance is not as high as they would like. They have discussed having an app with the information in one place so that a person can find it easily. Logistics, practicality, and financial feasibility all play a role.

Janice Penner commented that RDP prepares an monthly downtown event calendar which includes events at UCR Artsblock and RCC Coil School for the Arts and Landis Performing Arts Center. Information can also be shared on Facebook. John Adkins said people are more Tik Tok and Instagram users so they have slowly been moving their marketing onto those platforms. There is also the challenge of adjusting to the newer, younger audiences.

Philip Falcone said this year will be announced as the year of Arts and Culture at the Mayor's State of the City address. They have already identified over 200 events. They have already branded the announcement with signs and such but now they are discussing how to take it from people just seeing the brand to it actually meaning something.

5b) Update on Annual Meeting and Awards Ceremony on February 20, 2025

Shalini Lockard said Save the Date notices and sponsorship/donation solicitations have gone out. All awards now have a sponsor, and an event sponsor category has been added with one already received. Staff will be encouraging 'early bird' ticket sales with the goal of 250 in attendance. Invitations are being finalized and will include the Roy Hord Award recipient and all major sponsors to date.

6) Financial Reports

6a) Financial Update at December 31, 2024 – Motion

Nanci Larsen said the financial report for the month of December showed a year to date surplus of approximately \$533 compared to a budget deficit of \$43,773, resulting in a positive variance of \$44,326. BID Levy income was \$30,932 higher than budgeted which accounted for a portion of the variance. Timing of expenses accounted for the remainder.

As of December 31, 2024, RDP had \$300,852 in two checking and one money market account with Citizens Business Bank and Provident Bank. RDP reserves include two CDs with Pacific Premier Bank and one CD with Provident Bank for total reserves of \$289,672.

The accounts receivable was \$5,895. The accounts payable equaled \$3,539. The liability for accrued staff benefits (vacation and other time) as of December 31, 2024 was \$55,955.

Motion: To Approve the December 31, 2024 Financial Report.

Motion made by: Brian Percy **Motion Seconded by:** Chuck Beaty

Janice Penner said she will send out an email for an electronic vote to have both the financials and the minutes formally approved, as there was no quorum for the meeting.

Motion carried by subsequent email vote.

7) RDP Security Updates

Shalini Lockard introduced Chad Collopy who is the new Area Commander for the downtown area, noting that Bryan Crawford was promoted to Captain and moved to field operations.

Chad Collopy said FOL was an overall success and was heavily attended. There were no major issues but a few minor ones such as unpermitted vendors. There were a few fights around the bars upon closing as well. There was an electronic ticket scam on Eventbrite which was selling tickets for people to attend the FOL Switch-on Ceremony, and there is an investigation to find who created the scam post. They are also investigating the fake QR code to pay for parking that was posted on the parking meters. It is going to be difficult to identify those involved in the parking scam as there are many ways for a person to hide their identity online.

Janice Penner said there were a large number of food vendors cooking in the streets as well as vendors selling trinkets during the last two weeks of FOL. Brian Percy asked if the City deployed Code Enforcement on those nights, because he understood that Code Enforcement works more Monday through Friday day, not on evenings and weekends. Janice Penner said this situation was mentioned at the RDP Security Meeting and it was mentioned that the Police were tasked with taking a more dominant role in dealing with illegal vendors. Chad Collopy said they do try and work with both Code Enforcement and Public Health to make sure everything is legal and safe, but the hours of operation for the various groups is an issue. Philip Falcone said there is an issue that the illegal vendors can be chased off the area, but their carts cannot be confiscated so they just move locations. This is one of the things Philip Falcone would like to talk about at the FOL meeting in February. There were no issues at the Chanukah Festival.

Shalini Lockard mentioned various groups of people were picking oranges from the orange trees on Victoria Avenue. She does not believe that they were City employees but rather enterprising individuals looking to make money selling oranges. Philip Falcone said he would let the Ward 5 councilmember know.

8) County of Riverside Updates – On Hold Pending New Supervisor

Janice Penner said Emilio Ramirez is the Chief of Staff for Jose Medina and will be the County representative attending the meetings. He will be attending once they transition.

9) Mayor's Office Update

Zoe Ridgway was unable to attend the meeting today. She advised that they are focused on the Mayor's State of the City address at the Convention Center.

Janice Penner also mentioned the Mayor's Office is working with the Riverside Arts Council for the Mayor's Ball taking place in April.

10) City Council Updates

Philip Falcone said there are a few businesses on Sixth Street that said that the amount of police and fire personnel was excessive during the FOL Switch-on Ceremony. However, what happened in New Orleans brings to light why all the extra security and precautions are necessary. This will be mentioned at the FOL meeting, and why Sixth Street is used as the staging area.

The topic of cannabis was discussed at the City Council meeting yesterday evening, and they will come back in 90 days regarding this issue. Philip Falcone deferred to Kyle Warsinski for the update.

The needs of downtown in 2025 are extensive, but Philip Falcone said he has always been big on infrastructure and beautification which are the things that are most visible. They are looking at Mission Inn Avenue, Vine Street, University Avenue, Lime Street, and Main Street from Tenth to Fourteenth as the focus for 2025. There are already projects taking place in those areas so they are leveraging existing work already happening.

They have several businesses that are sponsoring electrical box wraps for beautification to help discourage graffiti on Vine Street.

The State will hopefully be opened by the end of this month. Janice Penner said that she talked to Billy Haig, the owner, and the windows are the last thing that needs to be done for the restaurant. They plan to do a soft opening for family and friends at the end of the month.

Dapper Dining restaurant opened two weeks ago on Vine and University. The building is beautiful on the inside and on the outside.

Fleming's restaurant is coming to the Mark by the end of 2026. The reason for the long build is that the bottom level of the Mark is an empty shell so there is a lot of infrastructure work to be done.

Downtown does not look its best right now due to a few things. They need to clean up after FOL; hot chocolate spills are everywhere and the landscape has gotten trampled once again. The wind is also causing a delay in getting all the decorations removed from Main St. The workers are having to pick up fallen tree branches and palm fronds rather than deal with the decorations.

Melanie Bruins said there will be a pop up exhibition at the Civil Rights Institute on January 12 featuring Eastside.

The Artist in Residency pilot project is now live. There is a call for local artists. This project will fund six artists which will eventually lead to 14 new murals throughout the City of Riverside. Applications are due at the end of the month.

11) City Community Development Department Update

Kyle Warsinski said there is a groundbreaking ceremony for the Northside Agricultural Innovation Center tomorrow at 9:30 am. There have been 250 plus RSVP's for the event so far. Melanie Bruins interjected that the groundbreaking ceremony had been canceled due to the severe winds. They will be rescheduling to a date/time with less wind.

Kyle Warsinski said that two City Council members asked staff to bring back the item about the cannabis program and permitting process for further discussion. The lengthy discussion and public comments caused the decision to have staff pause the current permitting process for 90 days and do research and then bring back recommendations to Council. One was to allow police to research certain aspects of cannabis; to see if too many cannabis distributors in an area is problematic or whether data from other jurisdictions show that to be a fallacy. They will also be looking into safety and patrol issues, such as whether cannabis distributors result in high numbers of calls to police. City staff will be researching the two per ward limit which would allow for 14 cannabis locations overall. When the ordinance was originally passed in 2023, the two per ward limit was not included. They will be also looking at additional sensitive use categories. They currently have schools, daycare centers, and community centers under sensitive use but they will be looking to see if more exist and the minimum distance requirements if any.

12) Items for Information

12a) FOL Business Recap Meeting on February 13, 2025

Shalini Lockard said Philip Falcone has scheduled a meeting on February 13 for businesses to discuss changes/improvements for next year's FOL. RDP will be gathering input from the Land Use and Security Committee members to provide as feedback for the FOL meeting. Sending out a short survey to downtown businesses in early January was suggested. Input from the Board was requested to be sent to RDP staff.

12b) RDP News, Activities, and Other Items

Shalini Lockard said RDP was present at the Metrolink Holiday Express Train event at the Riverside Downtown Station on December 7, and then at the Miracle on Main event on December 15. Just under 2,000 people rode the train and enjoyed family activities on December 7 and approximately 1,000 children got gifts from Santa on December 15.

The January 28, 2025 luncheon will be at Palenque by Mezcal with Alyssa Digangi of Stronghold Engineering speaking about the Farm House Collective on University and Sandrine Cassidy of Environmental Innovations speaking about the relaunch of the City's Green Business Program. There will be no luncheon in February due to the Annual Meeting.

The March 25, 2025 luncheon is scheduled at the new The State restaurant in the Walling Building and will feature Erin Edwards speaking on the Blue Zone Riverside and a representative from RAM speaking on the Riverside Art Market. The April 22, 2025 luncheon is scheduled at the Riverside Game Lab with Bricks and Birch providing the food and featuring Matthew Taylor speaking on the 2025 General Plan.

13) New Business

There was no new business.

14) Adjournment – Next Meeting Date February 12, 2025 at 8:30 am.