



GASLAMP QUARTER ASSOCIATION
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
MINUTES

Wednesday, December 4th, 2024, | 3:30 PM
The Water Grill San Diego

Present Board Members	Absent Board Members	GQA Staff
Carlos Becerra Lucy Burni Cindy Blair Josefina Jandinger Laurie Peters Jeffrey Burg Howard Greenberg Stephen Sherman Joe Santos Vania Raitano Chris Lott Rick Borba Francesca Ramirez	Aron Langellier Kim Shattuck Sean Renard	Alma Ascencio Michael Trimble

1. **Call to Order** – Directors Present

- Carlos Becerra
- Josefina Jandinger
- Joe Santos
- Jeffrey Burg
- Howard Greenberg

2. **Minutes not approved in this meeting: Executive Board-**

Public Comment: Leticia

Leticia expressed concerns about ongoing illegal activities in the area, sharing that she had been harassed by a hot dog vendor during Thanksgiving. She mentioned facing issues with approximately 50 illegal vendors and the illegal sale of alcohol. Leticia also referenced receiving a text from a sergeant instructing her to call 911, questioning why she had to take such action when the problem had been ongoing for years. She noted that she had worked on solutions, such as securing permits for legal vendors, but the issues persist. Leticia emphasized the need for stronger enforcement, stating that legal businesses are being impacted while illegal vendors appear to have more rights. She also raised concerns about security, citing the presence of dangerous individuals with weapons and a lack of support from law enforcement.



Public Comment: Leticia (Continued)

Leticia continued, stressing that the responsibility for security should not fall on businesses. She criticized the lack of clear action from law enforcement and urged them to take responsibility for enforcing regulations. Leticia expressed frustration that the situation had persisted for five years without resolution.

SDPD

An SDPD representative responded, explaining that six officers are currently assigned to the downtown area, which spans from National City to the airport. Due to limited staffing, non-violent infractions, such as illegal vending, are not prioritized, as they fall under administrative citations rather than criminal violations. The representative clarified that enforcement was initially intended to be handled by Park Rangers and code enforcement but has since shifted to the police department. They also explained that, given the current workload, it is challenging to respond to every call immediately, and there are limitations on what can be done regarding illegal vendors.

Public Comment: Leticia (Continued)

Leticia argued that the issue is of great importance to the business community and should be treated as such by law enforcement. She expressed frustration that illegal activities continue unchecked while legal businesses struggle.

SDPD (Continued)

The SDPD representative reiterated that while the department understands the concern, their hands are tied by the administrative nature of the citation. They cannot force individuals to identify themselves or stop if they choose to walk away. The representative noted that some vendors are able to evade enforcement by stepping outside the designated zones.

Public Comment: Leticia

Leticia shared her frustration with the situation, citing an incident where a single officer struggled to manage a situation. She questioned who she should contact when such incidents occur and expressed doubt about the effectiveness of the current system. Leticia suggested that, given the lack of enforcement, she might consider applying for a permit herself.

Michael Trimble

Michael Trimble acknowledged Leticia's frustration and reassured her that her concerns would be addressed.

Public Comment: Maria

Maria asked for clarification regarding the recent changes to the bollards. She noted that while the bollards were adjusted to end at midnight, the changes had not been implemented consistently over the past few days.

Michael Trimble

Michael Trimble assured Maria that the issue would be addressed.

Public Comment: Leticia (Continued)

Leticia made a final remark, expressing skepticism about whether the mayor would take action to resolve the ongoing issues, citing a perceived lack of attention to the situation in the past.

SDPD Representative

The representative explained that some incidents have been addressed through interventions like the "ballpark" initiative. They emphasized ongoing collaboration with local businesses and efforts to tackle illegal activities, including the sale of counterfeit goods.



Michael Trimble

Michael emphasized that these issues were affecting not just individual businesses but the entire community.

SDPD Representative

The SDPD representative explained efforts to address the situation by increasing patrols in specific areas. They were considering distributing their team more broadly to address issues across the Gaslamp area more effectively.

Michael Trimble

Michael raised concerns about overcrowding in certain areas and discussed how the SDPD Vice Unit might be involved in addressing service-related violations.

SDPD Representative

The representative clarified that if over-service violations occurred, the Vice Unit would be responsible for investigating and addressing any licensing violations.

Malik (District 3 Representative)

Malik provided updates, mentioning that he had spoken with the mayor's office about addressing concerns, including the need for new lighting in the downtown area. He emphasized the importance of prioritizing necessary projects while considering potential delays due to the budget.

He shared updates regarding the city budget plans, which include halting certain non-essential spending and reassessing projects that are not a priority. Malik also noted that an upcoming budget survey would allow the public to provide input.

Malik concluded his update by stating that, while some projects are facing delays, the city is committed to ensuring transparency throughout the process.

Michael Trimble

Michael asked about the status of the streetlight issues on 4th Avenue and Broadway. He inquired if the problem was related to underground systems.

Malik (District 3 Representative)

Malik confirmed that there are ongoing issues with streetlight revitalization efforts in certain areas and that they are in the process of gathering proposals for improvements.

Public Comment: Maria

Maria asked for clarification about the expansion of the convention center, inquiring whether the mayor's office was involved in the process. Also asked for an update on the situation regarding the expansion of the convention center.

Malik (District 3 Representative)

Malik confirmed that the city had overcome legal obstacles related to the convention center expansion. However, he did not have specific details about when or how funding for the expansion would be secured.

Malik concluded that the issue is complex and has been ongoing for a long time, but efforts are being made to address it. He offered to provide further contact details if necessary.

Michael Trimble

Michael thanked Malik for the updates and concluded the discussion on revitalization efforts.



Assemblymember Tasha Boerner Horvath - Representative:

- The governor met his deadline for bills, and updates on legislation are ongoing. The legislative session officially starts in January, but currently, feedback is being collected from the community.
- Community members can submit bill ideas, even if not fully developed, through the website.
- Representative Horvath encourages outreach for questions regarding bill submission or how the state operates.
- Also invites newcomers to join for an in-person meeting.

Rhiannon Luna - GQHF

- Rhiannon mentioned upcoming events, such as the Friday the 13th event, and other activities at the Gaslamp Quarter. She thanked everyone for attending and reflected on the recent fall festival.

Michael Trimble's Meeting Discussion:

- Michael shared updates about the annual file review and training requirements for the team.
- He emphasized the importance of having a clear ask when meeting with public officials.
- The discussion touched on issues such as illegal vending, enforcement, and training, with the focus on clear solutions and requests from local officials.
- The importance of financial backing for public outsourcing was also discussed.

Howard Greenburg:

- He pointed out that enforcement actions for illegal vending are still not as effective as needed, even though an ordinance has been passed.
- Despite efforts, some illegal vendors persist, and more proactive action is needed.
- He suggested that, despite all the discussions, a clearer enforcement approach and better collaboration between the city and local businesses are necessary to address these ongoing issues.

General Themes and Issues Discussed:

1. **Bill Submissions:** Community members were encouraged to provide feedback and ideas for future legislation.
2. **Illegal Vending:** Continued enforcement issues, despite the existence of an ordinance.
3. **Public-Private Collaboration:** The need for more concrete actions and support from city leadership and local businesses.

Howard Greenburg

Howard Greenburg expressed concerns about the current approach to problem-solving, emphasizing the need to proactively address issues before they escalate.



Michael Trimble

Michael Trimble referred to a specific legislative issue, mentioning the passing of Senate Bill 43, which had an impact on law enforcement procedures. He stressed the importance of addressing this issue now that it's passed and pointed out the significance of taking action.

Cindy Blair

Cindy Blair shared details of the sidewalk café permits process and code enforcement, mentioning an ongoing case regarding an ADA lawsuit that is affecting sidewalk café permits in a busy area. She expressed concerns that the city's focus on these older issues is distracting from more urgent matters.

Malik (Representative of District 3)

Malik responded by acknowledging the challenge of addressing long-standing issues, such as those related to sidewalk cafés, and noted the confusion around the enforcement process. He added that a more streamlined approach is necessary. He clarified that code enforcement begins with complaints and emphasized that his office has been advocating for more enforcement and additional support for businesses dealing with violations. He also clarified that his office cannot directly enforce but will support complaints directed to the appropriate departments.

Michael Trimble

Michael Trimble mentioned that the mayor's office and code enforcement are working to address ongoing issues, including a list of 12 merchants who will be visited regarding violations. He stressed that this effort should help, but the full impact is still pending.

Howard Greenburg

Howard Greenburg suggested that while meetings are being held with city officials, enforcement remains inconsistent, particularly with businesses operating in violation of regulations. He recommended that the police should be more involved in these enforcement actions.

Summary of Discussions Regarding Permits and Enforcement

- **Joe Santos**
Joe Santos expressed frustration over issues with his contractor and the delays in his project's completion. He noted that while he had permission to build, permits and progress had been delayed. He emphasized his intention to finish the project quickly, rather than prolonging it.
- **Michael Trimble**
Michael Trimble referenced previous discussions and examples, mentioning that permits needed to be finalized by specific dates to avoid further complications. He explained that enforcement was difficult due to a lack of proper monitoring and inconsistent action from authorities.
- **Lucy Burni**
Lucy Burni highlighted the cancellation of permits due to incomplete documentation, threatening fines if necessary removals and changes were not made. She expressed concern about the repeated failure to act, despite multiple warnings.
- **Vania Raitano**
Vania Raitano shared her struggles with code enforcement and permits, noting the delays and setbacks she faced despite meeting the necessary requirements. She discussed her ongoing efforts to resolve these issues, including obtaining final permissions to proceed with construction.
- **Carlos Becerra**
Carlos Becerra emphasized the need for better resolution and the potential for engaging other avenues or



mechanisms to address ongoing permit and enforcement challenges. He highlighted the importance of ensuring legitimate operations and fair treatment for all businesses involved.

- **Malik (District 3 Representative)**

Malik acknowledged the situation and promised to bring the issues back to a policy team to examine how enforcement can be better handled. He noted concerns about discrepancies across different parts of the city and mentioned that other neighborhoods were facing similar frustrations with enforcement practices.

- **Cindy Blair**

Cindy Blair contributed to the discussion, noting that discrepancies and delays were not isolated to the area, as similar issues had been reported in other parts of the city.

- The conversation ended with a commitment from officials to continue working on enforcement challenges and address safety, compliance, and fairness across the city.
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Malik - Representative of District 3

Malik acknowledged the concerns regarding enforcement and stated that the issue would be taken back to the appropriate team to investigate potential solutions.

Michael Trimble

Michael discussed the concerns regarding fines and enforcement, particularly regarding those who are working within the bounds of permit regulations. He expressed that individuals following proper permit procedures are being fined, while those engaging in illegal activities are not facing similar penalties. He proposed that increasing fines could encourage proper action, suggesting that higher fines would deter illegal activity.

Malik - Representative of District 3

Malik reiterated that proper enforcement must be applied where permits are being followed. He raised concerns about the process of increasing fines, noting that it would require policy changes and likely involve the mayor's office or other higher-level decision-makers. He acknowledged that staffing limitations may be contributing to delays in enforcement.

Michael Trimble

Michael brought up the recent change to SP43, a law set to go into effect on May 1. The law will allow police to intervene and take individuals into facilities without requiring them to break the law first. He emphasized that this change could alleviate some challenges that law enforcement has faced.

Michael also provided an update on ongoing legal discussions, mentioning he had been in touch with various legal contacts and planned to meet with the city attorney to address ongoing issues.

Michael shared an update on changes to the MOU (Memorandum of Understanding), particularly focusing on the adjusted hours for street closures. The new hours will be Monday to Thursday from 5:00 PM to 2:00 AM, with police discretion on street closures for safety. He also discussed a revised plan for weekend hours to better manage traffic flow and safety.

Michael continued to provide details about the ongoing adjustments to the street closure hours, noting that the schedule changes are still in progress and being refined for better enforcement and area flow.

Social Media and Marketing Update: Alma Ascencio



- **Engagement & Growth:**

Engagement on social media showed significant improvements, with awareness increasing by 237.5% compared to previous months. The overall engagement rate rose by 226.6%, and audience growth reached 203%. Video views surged by 11,152%, demonstrating the effectiveness of video content in featuring local merchants.
 - **Promotional Campaigns:**
 - Promotions for the Holiday Pop-ups and upcoming events were highlighted across various social media platforms.
 - Collaborative efforts include partnerships with local businesses to promote events such as tea parties and holiday-themed activities.
 - **Partnerships & Collaborations:**
 - A partnership with Universal Films is in progress to promote an upcoming movie in connection with Gaslamp events like the Gaslamp Pet Parade.
 - Marketing strategies include Google Ads, social media collaborations, and radio partnerships to enhance awareness of key events, such as the Gaslamp Pet Parade.
 - Gift cards and giveaways are used to engage the public in event promotion.
 - **Special Events:**
 - Events such as the Pet Parade, mascot appearances, and performers interacting with the public aim to establish Gaslamp as a hub for family-friendly holiday fun.
 - **Content Creation:**
 - A small, trusted group of content creators is developing engaging content for these events.
 - **Micro Event:**
 - The Gaslamp Craft Cocktail Crawl is underway with 67 participants. Attendees receive prizes like T-shirts and staycations as they complete various activities.
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SEO & Online Presence:

- **SEO Strategy:**
 - The top 9 keywords for Gaslamp Quarter's online presence are driving traffic to the district's website. Keywords such as "nightlife," "best restaurants," and "dining" are key.
 - Efforts to improve SEO ensure that when users search for these terms, Gaslamp is prominently featured on the first page of Google search results.
 - The events and dining pages are the top-performing in driving traffic.
 - **Website Updates:**
 - Ongoing updates to the Gaslamp Quarter website ensure that it aligns with current search trends and consumer interests.
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Upcoming Plans

- Alma discussed future plans for the February holiday events, emphasizing the importance of maintaining strong content for social media, websites, and updates to keep followers engaged.
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Michael Trimble's Input Regarding Placer AI Discussion:

- **Placer AI Overview:**



- Placer AI was introduced as a tool to track movement patterns using cell phone data, offering insights into people's visits to various locations. This data is based on geo-fencing around areas like Little Italy, the Park Bureau, and other neighborhoods.
- Michael explained that this data is valuable for analyzing trends over time, comparing current growth with past data (e.g., from a year or two ago). The program is designed to provide insights into the effectiveness of various events and promotions by examining foot traffic and geo-location data, including spending patterns and movement between areas.
- **Data and Reporting:**
 - The data will be used for monthly reports to track performance and identify growth or declines over time. Key metrics include tracking where visitors come from, how long they stay, and how they engage with events and promotions.
 - Michael emphasized that this data would provide a clearer picture of where marketing and event investments are paying off, especially by comparing trends and understanding community engagement with the Gaslamp and surrounding districts.
- **Further Steps and Partnerships:**
 - There is already shared partnership information, enabling collaborative insights across districts like North Park and Little Italy. This collaboration will help develop more targeted strategies for future marketing efforts.
 - Data-sharing agreements have been made to allow for the exchange of insights, which can be used to tailor marketing campaigns and enhance engagement.
- **Additional Insights:**
 - The data collected will also help analyze the declining popularity of certain areas or venues and suggest ways to refocus marketing efforts where necessary.
 - An ongoing effort is being made to track foot traffic patterns and adjust strategies to ensure resources are spent in the most effective way.

Sponsorship Update:

- Michael reminded everyone that he secured a \$32,000 sponsorship from the State of California for the Pet Parade, which covers two years.
- Additionally, he raised approximately \$80,000 for other events.

Digital Conversion of Kiosks:

This initiative focuses on converting existing kiosks into digital platforms, which may display event information, local promotions, and digital advertisements.

Monetizing the Kiosks:

The digital conversion of kiosks could provide an additional revenue stream through digital advertising and local event sponsorships, as discussed with the banner program. This conversion will make the kiosks more flexible and dynamic in showcasing content. Furthermore, it could generate funds for future projects or community support, contributing to the growth and vibrancy of the area.

Upcoming Reports and Follow-Up:



- Michael mentioned having some preliminary numbers related to their ongoing efforts but stated that he wasn't ready to share them yet. He plans to follow up with more definitive data once it becomes available.

City and Mayor Support:

- Michael referenced ongoing discussions with the city and the mayor, highlighting opportunities for further funding and support through these connections.

Sponsorship:

- Michael mentioned securing a \$10,000 sponsorship for the banner program.
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Closing Remarks:

- He concluded by wishing everyone happy holidays and safety, encouraging everyone to stay connected as the office remains open during the holiday season.

MEETING ADJOURNMENT –meeting ended: 1 hour 29 minutes