



GASLAMP QUARTER ASSOCIATION
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
MINUTES

Wednesday, January 29th, 2025, | 3:30 PM
Marriott Gaslamp

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

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

- Carlos Becerra
- Aron Langellier
- Lucy Burni
- Joe Santos
- Howard Greenberg
- Jeffrey Burg – came in late

2. **Minutes approved by: Executive Board- All in favor Lori, Carlos (seconds) Aron & Kim abstaining**

Carlos Becerra: Welcomed everyone to the first board meeting of the year, confirming attendance at 3:33 PM on January 29th.

Michael Trimble: Officially welcomed attendees and acknowledged the start of the new year for the Gaslamp Quarter Association board meetings. He opened the floor for public comments, allowing two minutes per speaker.



Ken Schulenburg (Cali Cream Ice Cream): Expressed interest in becoming more involved with the Gaslamp Quarter Association and highlighted Cali Cream’s growing presence in the community. He raised concerns about an increase in ADA-related lawsuits in various neighborhoods, specifically mentioning Jesse Jones and Aaron Murphy. Schulenburg noted that Jesse Jones’ case was dismissed early.

Ken Schulenburg (Cali Cream Ice Cream):

- **ADA Lawsuits:** Schulenburg informed the board about ongoing ADA-related lawsuits targeting businesses, mentioning that Aaron Murphy has filed over 20 cases in the last 10 days and more than 100 in recent years. He explained that Murphy is targeting outdoor seating and fencing, labeling them as construction violations. Schulenburg described these lawsuits as frivolous and offered assistance in resolving them, providing documentation and legal contacts to Michael Trimble.
- **Political Advocacy:** He expressed concern about the lack of political support for the Gaslamp Quarter and suggested that, instead of relying solely on the association, businesses should consider forming a political action committee (PAC) to support candidates aligned with their interests. He emphasized the need for proactive engagement rather than simply complaining about elected officials.
- **Gaslamp Quarter Identity:** Schulenburg shared insights from a personal survey, noting that many people in San Diego lack a clear perception of what the Gaslamp Quarter represents. He compared the district to Little Italy, which successfully rebranded itself as a restaurant destination. In contrast, the Gaslamp Quarter is often seen primarily as a nightlife hub. He suggested a collective effort from restaurants, landlords, and businesses to redefine the district’s identity.
- **Franchise vs. Local Business:** He raised concerns about the increasing presence of chain establishments, stating that franchises like Houston Hot Chicken do not align with the historical and cultural character of the Gaslamp Quarter. He urged property owners to invest in maintaining their buildings without shifting costs to tenants, contributing to an improved district aesthetic.
- **Call for Action:** Schulenburg reiterated the importance of businesses taking initiative to improve the Gaslamp’s reputation and urged collaboration among all board members. He emphasized the need for long-term strategic planning to reshape the district’s image beyond nightlife.

Michael Trimble:

- Thanked Schulenburg for his input and acknowledged his concerns and suggestions.



Zayn (Branding and Marketing):

- **ADA Compliance for Businesses:** Zayn shared that his company recently relocated to San Diego from Palm Springs. He discussed the importance of ADA compliance for websites, especially for businesses in real estate and restaurants, citing a new California law requiring websites to be ADA-compliant. Zayn highlighted the risk of lawsuits, with an average claim of \$80,000 that many businesses' insurance would not cover. He emphasized his company's ability to provide ADA compliance services for a minimal cost, preventing businesses from potential lawsuits.

Michael Trimble:

- **Clarification on PAC Formation:** Trimble responded to Schulenburg's suggestion of forming a PAC by explaining that the Gaslamp Quarter Association (as a BID) cannot form one. However, he mentioned that the association has a 501(c)(3) entity that could be explored for such purposes in the future.

Howard Greenburg:

- **Discussion on Legal Fees and Settlement:** Greenburg asked about the legal fees related to ADA compliance lawsuits and suggested the possibility of settling cases. Schulenburg explained that settlements cost around \$1,000 for the first letter, with further costs reaching \$3,500–\$4,000.

Ken Schulenburg (Cali Cream Ice Cream):

- **Settlement Strategy for Lawsuits:** Schulenburg clarified that while settlements could stop further litigation, they might lead to ongoing cases. He explained the costs involved, stating that settlement could be a strategy to avoid further escalation but could perpetuate the cycle. He also noted the targeting of ethnic restaurants in these lawsuits.

Michael Trimble:

- **Next Steps for Legal Issues:** Trimble suggested that the District Attorney might investigate these ADA lawsuits, which seem to disproportionately affect restaurant owners without giving them a reasonable timeframe to address the violations.

SDPD (Jake):

- **Police Update:** Jake, filling in for Captain Larry, shared that the past couple of weeks have been violent and busy for the department, with two officer-involved shootings and a death in custody. However, no major violence has been reported in the Gaslamp Quarter. He mentioned



that the department is hopeful that incoming wet weather will help calm things down for a while. Jake also discussed the ongoing issue with illegal vendors, noting that state law has limited enforcement actions, as the vendors have become adept at avoiding contact with officers. The department is trying to find proactive solutions, especially since illegal vendors continue to affect businesses in the Gaslamp at night.

- **Recruitment Update:** Jake stated that recruitment efforts are going well, though the department is dealing with many retirements due to changes in the retirement system. The department is trying to recruit new officers and keep things steady until the situation with retirement systems and city budgets is resolved. He noted that the department is still actively hiring and pointed out a billboard in the Gaslamp showcasing the local team. Despite some challenges, they're maintaining their recruitment efforts.

Michael Trimble:

- **Questions and Comments:** Trimble acknowledged Jake's recruitment efforts and complimented the Gaslamp team's bike team. He also appreciated the department's support and help in the area.

SDPD (Jake):

- **Continued Hiring and Budget Challenges:** Jake reassured the group that SDPD continues to actively recruit, despite budget cuts and challenges, especially with public safety budgets facing a 5% reduction. The department is trying to balance these cuts without impacting response times or the quality of service.

Michael Trimble:

- **Further Appreciation:** Trimble thanked Jake for the update and his continued support.

Michael Trimble:

- **Introduction of Jason Weiser:** Trimble acknowledged Jason Weiser from Senator Robert Pearson's office and thanked him for his continued advocacy.

Jason Weiser:

- **Update on Legislative Affairs:** Jason introduced himself and shared that his contact information remains the same. He highlighted the legislative committees Senator Robert Pearson is involved with, including governmental organization, Senate budget, business and professions, and the Joint Committee on Aquaculture.
- **Street Vendor Legislation:** Regarding the issue of street vendors, Jason expressed willingness to discuss further. He noted that state law does not currently prohibit officers from interacting with vendors, but the city has been working on its own street vending program. He was unaware



of any limitations in enforcement power but offered to discuss the matter further with the city and explore how the legislature might be able to address it.

- **Support for Local Initiatives:** Jason also expressed his willingness to collaborate on any issues related to state law and street vendor enforcement.

Michael Trimble:

- **Follow-up on Vendor Enforcement:** Trimble mentioned that during a previous meeting with the police chief, it was suggested that strengthening state ordinances could grant the police department more enforcement power regarding street vendors. He asked Jason if the state could review potential legislative changes to help with enforcement.
- **Thanks for Support:** Trimble thanked Jason for his office's support for the Gaslamp Quarter BID, particularly the funding that helped produce the Pet Parade event.

Jason Weiser:

- **Closing Remarks:** Jason expressed his appreciation for the work being done in the Gaslamp Quarter and reiterated his willingness to assist further.

Alonzo Vivas: Clean & Safe Updates

Cyclone Machine for Sidewalk Cleaning

- Alonzo reported that the Gaslamp Quarter is using a new machine, the Cyclone, to clean sidewalks. For the past few months, they have been experimenting with various cleaning methods and chemicals. They've finally found the right products to effectively remove grime from sidewalks. The Cyclone not only power-washes but also absorbs water into a filtration system, allowing for water reuse. This improves efficiency, as crews no longer need to return to the city yard for water refills. The sealing process on the sidewalks will help keep the area cleaner for 6-12 months. The machine's ability to seal the sidewalks is a new approach that's expected to reduce the need for frequent pressure washing.

Gaslamp Quarter Sidewalk Sealing

- The sidewalk sealing process is ongoing, with work currently focused on 4th to 5th Avenue. The goal is to finish this area by tomorrow, and then the focus will shift to 6th Avenue. The sidewalk sealing is expected to be completed by early March. The sealing helps to prevent grime from penetrating the concrete and will keep the sidewalks cleaner for up to a year. Alonzo emphasized that while the process is still experimental, it has shown positive results so far. This improvement is crucial to ensure that the district is prepared for busy seasons like Comic-Con and the spring and summer months.



Big Belly Trash Cans

- Alonzo proudly shared that the Gaslamp Quarter is the first neighborhood in downtown to replace all trash cans with Big Belly tamper-proof bins. These bins are now in place along 4th Avenue, 6th Avenue, and other parts of the district. He explained that they had issues with homeless individuals tampering with the previous trash cans, so a welding shop was hired to redesign the tamper-proof plates. This modification has been working well so far, and Alonzo asked for feedback if there are any further issues with tampering. Additionally, the trash bins now feature updated high-definition images to make them more vibrant and visually appealing to pedestrians.

Sidewalk Cleaning and Disruptions

- Alonzo noted that while cleaning and sealing the sidewalks, they do use cones and signs to warn pedestrians. The sealing process itself is quick, usually taking just a few minutes, and doesn't require the closure of the sidewalk for long periods. Once the sealer is drying, the area is still walkable. The cleaning team tries to minimize disruption to businesses and hotels by completing work within a short window of time.

App for Reporting Maintenance and Safety Issues

- Alonzo provided an update on the use of the Clean & Safe app, which allows users to report maintenance and safety issues. Currently, there are about 4,000 users of the app, and last year, there were approximately 45,000 service requests, with 75% of them related to safety concerns. He highlighted that while the app is widely used, there is still room for growth in user adoption, as there are about 35,000 residents and businesses downtown. Alonzo encouraged spreading awareness of the app by using pamphlets, which are available for distribution. He also mentioned that the app is the fastest way to report issues, as phone calls may lead to delays in response.

QR Codes for Reporting Issues

- Alonzo shared that QR codes have been added to the Big Belly trash bins and the Clean & Safe work trucks, allowing people to easily access the app for reporting. In the future, QR codes may also be added to dog stations to encourage pet owners to report any issues they encounter during walks. This is part of an ongoing effort to make the reporting process as accessible as possible for the community.



Robson Windsor's Legislative Update

- Robson Windsor introduced himself and shared updates regarding the 2025 legislative session, which began in early January. He emphasized that this is the critical time for introducing legislative packages. Robson highlighted Assembly Bill 87, which aims to clarify the density bonus policy. The bill ensures that 100% residential projects can apply the density bonus, including projects with rental properties, provided that a specific percentage of affordable housing is included. This update is part of a broader effort to ensure that projects align with legislative goals and density standards. Robson mentioned that there will be other bills introduced in the downtown area in the coming months.

Catastrophic Insurance Webinar

- Robson also noted that his team is hosting a webinar on catastrophic insurance, addressing current concerns related to weather events in urban areas, like Los Angeles. The webinar will discuss available resources and preparedness measures for such events. The session will be held on January 30th from 5:00 to 6:00 PM. Flyers for the event were available to distribute, and Robson encouraged people to visit their website or sign up in advance through a CPA for more information.

Discussion and Questions

After Robson finished his presentation, there was brief interaction with Michael Trimble, who expressed interest in sharing the webinar details. Robson appreciated the support and confirmed that the flyer could be sent out for further promotion. Michael Trimble offered to send out the information.

Larry Turner's Additional Comments

Michael Trimble acknowledged Larry Turner's presence and inquired if he had any additional comments. Larry Turner mentioned he would share information about an incident after the meeting but did not elaborate during the meeting.

Approval of Minutes

Michael Trimble opened the meeting with a request for a motion to approve the minutes from the October 30th and December 4th meetings. Lori made the motion, and Carlos seconded it. The motion passed unanimously, with Kim and Aaron abstaining.



Approval of 2023 Audit

Michael Trimble introduced the 2023 Audit and asked for approval. He noted that the audit had been posted on the website. Stephen Sherman raised a concern about a discrepancy in the rent plan items listed in the audit, where the line item showed \$11,600 instead of the expected \$33,000. Michael Trimble confirmed he would look into this issue and ensure the correct figures are reflected. The motion to approve the audit was made by Stephen Sherman, with the condition that the issue is clarified. Jeff seconded the motion, and the approval passed, pending further clarification.

Compliance Training

Michael Trimble discussed the annual mandatory Compliance Training, which is now available online and self-paced, with a due date of March 1st. He encouraged those who have completed it to submit their certificates. Joe Santos mentioned a few updates in the training, including additional topics beyond harassment, and recommended further investigation into these changes. Michael confirmed that anyone who hasn't completed the training should notify him to be added to the list.

Parking Meter Revenue and City Council Update

Michael Trimble provided an update on the parking meter rate increase effective February 1st, where parking rates in San Diego will double. He mentioned that the City Council is reviewing this change, with discussions involving the mayor's office and council members about the disproportionate impact on downtown. He urged the inclusion of other neighborhoods, such as beach areas, in future plans. He clarified that Sunday meter parking is not part of this initial rollout and will require a separate policy amendment.

Michael also shared updates on ADA issues in the Gaslamp Quarter. He mentioned that groups are proactively reporting issues, which are being routed to Sustainability and Mobility for action. The city is focusing on compliance to avoid potential lawsuits. He encouraged board members to report any issues and copy him on complaints for further review. Kim Shattuck suggested addressing ADA issues through direct outreach to businesses. Michael agreed and emphasized collaboration with the Gaslamp Land Use and Planning Committee.

Social Media Update – Alma Ascencio

Alma Ascencio provided a social media update, reporting a 28.1% increase in engagement across platforms compared to last month. Video views saw a significant boost, rising by 38.9%. She also highlighted strategies to optimize Instagram for SEO and shared that the Gaslamp Instagram account



reached 100K followers. Alma is exploring ways to monetize Instagram content and mentioned the account now has a blue checkmark, allowing for the use of copyrighted audio in reels.

Alma also shared updates on social media initiatives for Valentine's Day and the Super Bowl. She is reaching out to merchants and incorporating events into both social media and the Gaslamp website. Alma is maintaining the website, updating merchant listings, and aligning SEO efforts with their goals. Gaslamp Quarter ranks highly for key search terms like "nightlife in San Diego." She also shared a report from Placer AI, revealing 10.3 million visits to Gaslamp in 2024, with peak days on Fridays and Saturdays. The data, which includes ZIP codes and average visit duration, helps target specific audiences for marketing and compares Gaslamp with other neighborhoods like Little Italy, showing higher foot traffic.

Michael Trimble mentioned using this data for businesses to track trends, particularly for events like opening day at Petco Park, and to leverage it for targeted marketing strategies.

The conversation then shifted to TikTok. Alma mentioned its growing role in search and marketing. While Gaslamp has a small TikTok following, efforts are underway to create content tailored to the platform. The group discussed ways to improve Gaslamp's presence on TikTok and shared ideas for using other social media platforms like ChatGPT for SEO and content strategies.

Marketing Update – Laurel McFarlane

Laurel McFarlane recapped successful marketing efforts over the past three months, including events like Gaslamp October, Día de los Muertos, Gaslamp Chills, Small Business Saturday, the holidays, New Year's Eve, and the Pet Parade. These events generated significant media coverage, with a total online traffic of 4.57 billion, 216,000 in print circulation, and 3 million broadcast views. The Pet Parade saw a major turnout this year with 272 participants, compared to 140 last year. The event also made a profit, which was a positive change after a loss in 2023.

Laurel highlighted the success of the Pet Parade and plans for next year, including potentially extending the parade route and increasing entertainment. KUSI might broadcast the event live next year. The board also discussed upcoming holiday promotions like Valentine's Day, Mardi Gras, and Cinco de Mayo, with a focus on a one-day event for Cinco de Mayo and securing sponsorships, including Anheuser Busch.

Laurel addressed the challenges of hosting a national Mardi Gras parade, citing high police fees and logistical costs. She also discussed the rising special event fees, which are significantly impacting smaller community events. She is advocating for changes in fee structures to support local events. Laurel emphasized the need for board members to speak out against these fee increases.



Gaslamp Promenade Update – Michael Trimble

Michael Trimble shared that after months of working with the City of San Diego, they were informed that the city would not reimburse the Gaslamp Quarter for the operating costs of the Gaslamp Promenade. This has put their nonprofit in a difficult financial position, and operations will cease on February 1st. The team is working with the City Council and the Executive Board to determine next steps. Michael noted that the city's budget delays, and last-minute changes had affected the project. He is consulting with their attorney and meeting with the Executive Board to discuss further actions.

Joe Santos inquired whether the decision to halt the promenade would be communicated to teams and businesses, given the short-notice. Michael responded that they are awaiting legal counsel's advice on the message to be sent, as the city has yet to reply to their letter.

Gaslamp Promenade – Continued Discussion

Howard Greenburg and Michael Trimble discussed challenges regarding the Gaslamp Promenade. Michael mentioned PBID fees and funding, while Howard pointed out that they had previously asked for TOT funding but did not receive the expected support. It was noted that citywide initiatives would be necessary to continue the project. Michael thanked the group for their input and support regarding the Gaslamp Promenade.

Adjournment

Carlos Becerra thanked everyone, and the meeting was adjourned at 5:07 PM.

MEETING ADJOURNMENT –meeting ended: 1 hour 49 minutes