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For business leaders unaccustomed to leading a workforce comprised of both paid and unpaid people, the challenge can be overwhelming. Nonprofits generally operate in a dynamic work environment that most business folks would consider messy. Their operating structures pair employees and volunteers to get things done; but, because there are highly diverse motivations and roles at play, the nonprofit landscape holds great promise for misunderstandings to occur.

Unlike corporations, nonprofit boards and their members are generally more closely integrated into the overall workforce infrastructure. Directors have specific roles and are given responsibilities that have direct impact on the people, resources, and processes involved in serving the community.

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Southwest Airlines Adding Flights From Long Beach Airport

By SAMANTHA MEHLINGER
Senior Writer

Southwest Airlines, which began operating from the Long Beach Airport in June, has been granted some of JetBlue Airway’s unused flight slots, according to a July 13 statement issued by the City of Long Beach.

A spokesperson for Southwest told the Business Journal that there are “no new service details” about potential new destinations at this time. Currently, Southwest flies four daily flights to Oakland from the airport.

Under the city’s Flight Allocation Resolution, flight slots that are allocated to but aren’t used by an airline — in this case, JetBlue — may be temporarily reassigned to another airline, according to the city.

“The Southwest Airlines has reserved three unused flight slots for use Sunday through Friday and two unused flight slots for use on Saturday, beginning September 18 through December 31, 2016,” the city statement said.

“We are delighted that Southwest is putting these unused slots to use at the Long Beach Airport,” Mayor Robert Garcia stated. “This will attract new customers and bring additional revenue to our airport.”

According to the city, all air carrier operators at the airport must submit a 180-day outlook on a monthly basis, “which forecasts the availability of temporary flight slots.” Once Southwest’s temporary allocation period ends, continued use of those flight slots is contingent upon the information in the outlook reports.

An earlier version of this article appeared on the Business Journal’s website, www.lb.bizjournal.com, on July 13.

2017 Fiscal Year Long Beach Budget Process Underway

By GEORGE ECONOMIDES
Publisher

Earlier this month, Long Beach City Manager Pat West presented Mayor Robert Garcia city staff’s proposed budget for Fiscal Year 2017, which begins October 1. The mayor has been reviewing the budget and is expected to forward it with his recommendations to the city council during the first week in August.

When the FY 16 budget was approved by the city council last September, the city had estimated an approximate $7.5 million deficit for FY 17 and $7.8 million a year later.

Most of the deficit for the next two budgets is due to city pension contributions. But the city also projected oil revenue at $55 a barrel, which has not materialized, further straining the revenue side.

Several factors are expected to impact the new budget, including ongoing negotiations with city unions for new memorandums of understanding (MOU) that are likely to include pay increases. The MOUs of seven of the city’s nine unions have expired, and the city’s police and fire contracts end September 30. Any salary increase also pushes pension costs higher.

Another major factor is that budget revenue will be boosted on January 1 when the one percentage point increase in the city’s sales tax goes into effect (from the current 9% to a rate of 10%).

The voter-approved increase should generate about $4 million a month in new revenue to the city’s General Fund. However, the mayor and council members have pledged to use the additional funds strictly for infrastructure improvements and to beef up public safety, including the reopening of the police department’s south division.

The public will have an opportunity to weigh in on the budget during city council sessions held around the city and at several council meetings held at city hall. A schedule of meetings is expected to be announced soon.

City Council Tables Minimum Wage Ordinance For A Month

By SAMANTHA MEHLINGER
Senior Writer

The Long Beach City Council has tabled reviewing the proposed Long Beach Minimum Wage Ordinance for 30 days pending the completion of a meet and confer process on the matter with the International Association of Machinists (IAM) and Aerospace Workers. The union represents the largest number of city employees.

City Attorney Charles Parkin had placed an item on the July 12 agenda requesting further direction from the council on the proposed ordinance that the council had ordered his office to draft in January. Further direction was needed because the ordinance would be applicable to city employees, and IAM had not yet completed its meet and confer process on potential impacts to its members.

Parkin also requested more input because of variances between the ordinance and the state’s new minimum wage law, including the city’s more expedient timeline (see chart).

Vice Mayor and 2nd District Councilmember Suja Lowenthal kicked off the discussion with a four-part motion to address these concerns, including removing city employees from the ordinance to “allow the city and its employees to negotiate MOUs [memoranda of understanding] outside of the ordinance.”

Lowenthal also proposed maintaining the existing schedule for implementation of a higher minimum wage as originally approved by the council, aligning the city’s

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Lowenthal also proposed maintaining the existing schedule for implementation of a higher minimum wage as originally approved by the council, aligning the city’s
minimum wage with the state’s after it reaches $15 an hour, and amending the ordinance to make a learners’ exemption consistent with existing labor code.

Her proposal was met with dismay by a representative for IAM, Richard Suarez, shortly thereafter. “I don’t know how you circle this. You purport that every other employer in the city must pay a Long Beach minimum wage, but you exclude yourselves from paying that minimum wage,” he said. “We’re speaking about the folks that I represent here in Long Beach, who is the only unit really that is affected by this. . . And to exclude people in this manner is just simply wrong.” Suarez indicated that the city manager has suggested Suarez or IAM would bring litigation against the city if IAM employees were included in the ordinance, and he called this notion “preposterous.” He suggested tabling discussion of the ordinance for 30 days to allow IAM and the city to meet and confer. “After we waited from January to now to get the ordinance — we waited seven months — we seem to be in a real hurry to pass something this evening that in reality does not go into effect until January of next year,” he noted.

Lowenthal rescinded her proposal and instead made a motion, as Suarez requested, to delay drafting the ordinance for 30 days until the IAM meet and confer process is completed. The motion passed unanimously.

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Once the minimum wage hits $15 an hour, state legislation calls for future increases tied to the Consumer Price Index (CPI). However, if the state economy is stagnant, the increase can be delayed. The city ordinance is not tied to the CPI.
New Civic Center Will ‘Change People’s View Of The City,’ Former Mayor Foster Says

By BRANDON RICHARDSON
Staff Writer

After 10 years of discussion and planning, city officials broke ground on the $533 million Long Beach Civic Center on July 8, in what Mayor Robert Garcia called a “historic” day for Long Beach.

Speaking about initial talks for a new civic center 10 years ago, former Mayor Bob Foster said, “I knew we needed one, and we didn’t have the funds for it. I knew about public-private partnerships, so I was interested to see if we could put this together.”

Located at the site of the old courthouse on Ocean Boulevard in Downtown Long Beach, the new center is being financed through a public-private partnership with Plenary Edgemoor Civic Partners and will house the new city hall, Port of Long Beach headquarters and a main library. Combined, the three main structures totally nearly 600,000 square feet.

Also included in the project are $400 million in residential units, a hotel, retail space and Lincoln Park restoration and expansion.

According to Foster, one of the problems of public buildings is “when it’s being taken care of by a public entity. As soon as there are budget problems, the first thing to go is maintenance.” He went on to say that through the design-build-finance-operate-maintain agreement, Plenary Edgemoor would be in charge of maintaining the properties for the duration of the 40-year contract.

Along with Foster, Vice Mayor Suja Lowenthal spearheaded the project and became emotional during her speech at the groundbreaking ceremony. “A development of this magnitude provides tremendous opportunity that speaks to human interaction and truly reflects the vision of an incredible city and its residents,” she said. “A lot of chance and a lot of magic has to happen for this kind of project to take place.”

Clark Construction is overseeing construction of the development project, which, according to its website, is estimated to “bring 1,000 new residents to Downtown Long Beach and generate 8,000 direct, indirect and induced new jobs.”

During the ceremony, Garcia presented Foster with a ceremonial gold shovel for his key role in seeing the project realized. Foster said that he did not know or expect that Garcia was going to call him up to the stage, as he initially was not going to be able to attend the event.

“He’s a very gracious person, and I think he meant everything he said,” Foster said. “I feel like I did have a significant role in this, and it’s nice to see him acknowledge that.”

Construction of the city hall, port headquarters and the main library is scheduled for completion in 2019.

“This is going to be just marvelous for the city,” Foster said. “I don’t think we yet understand how impactful it’s going to be once this thing is open. I think it’s going to change people’s view of themselves and their view of this city. This city is in a renaissance, and this is one of the final touches. You’re going to be proud to be a Long Beach person.”

Queen Mary

Task Force Shares Progress, Receives Positive Response

By BRANDON RICHARDSON
Staff Writer

At a special meeting on July 9, the Queen Mary Land Development Task Force shared its progress with the public, including ideas for outdoor entertainment, a promenade and other amenities. More than 50 people attended the event.

Task force chair Michael Bohn said the meeting was a success and that there was great diversity in those who attended. From residents and to members of the business community, to union representatives worried about their workers, Bohn said the group was very respectful when voicing its concerns and comments.

“I do a lot of outreach in my profession, and I’ve probably done a couple hundred of these, and I have to say this was one of the best,” Bohn, a senior principal of Studio One Eleven, said. “The audience provided a lot of great and thoughtful ideas . . . very positive, and presented concerns and questions.”

Some of the concerns regarded sustainability, the importance of not overpowering the Queen Mary and why the task force did not focus on ship improvements, which, as Bohn pointed out, was not the reason the task force was formed.

“I think what we got out of it was elaborating a little more on the incorporation of art, sustainability, fitness and events,” Bohn said. “A lot of us are beginning to ask what is going to be unique about this area and I think the ability to have multiple and many events over there could be great.”

Bohn also noted that many people were intrigued by the idea of the project engaging with the water. He said the task force is open to the idea of a floating hotel or restaurant, or even a pool that floats in the bay.

Right now the sidewalks in the area are five-feet wide with light poles and trash cans that make it difficult to walk side by side with one another, Bohn said. The new walkways will be wider and continue over the rock formation that is the breakwater for the Queen
Developer And CSULB

(Continued From Page 1)

The project will also contain 3,200 square feet of university space, 5,212 square feet of retail space and 3,873 square feet of flex office space, and an adjacent “academia court” for student galleries, performing arts, receptions and other university-related activities. The project will also contain 6,200 square feet of outdoor networking and meeting space. Also included in the proposal is 1,311 square feet of ArtExchange space and 3,200 square feet of loft space.

Mary on the water side, allowing guests to view the ship from a new perspective.

“I’m most excited about creating a grand promenade along the waters edge that is accessible to all people,” Bohn said. “If you choose to walk over or bike over, you won’t have to pay for parking and you can enjoy it for free.”

Bohn envisions the promenade going right up to the waters edge and possibly even having large steps that lead down to water level.

The next step for the task force is to update the guiding principals and incorporate public comments and concerns from the meeting. After amendments are made, the task force will present its draft to the mayor’s office and to the city council.

The next task force meeting is Wednesday, July 27, at 5:30 p.m. at the First Congregational Church, 241 Cedar Ave. ■

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Long Beach Council Of Business Associations

Continued From Page 1

On Broadway Business Association and the Long Beach Area Chamber of Commerce. In an interview at Berlin Bistro in the East Village, Kerstin Kansteiner, the restaurateur’s owner and board chair of the 4th Street Business Improvement Association, and Krag Kojian, president and CEO of the Downtown Long Beach Associates, joined Cohn to reflect on how COBA has evolved and its direction moving forward.

Before COBA was formed, the three knew each other, but not in a formal context related to their positions in the business community. “We maybe ran across each other, but we had never met as entities and compared notes and talked,” Kansteiner recalled.

The organization began holding fairly informal meetings where members of the business community could come share their experiences and identify common issues and problems.

“In the beginning, we were focused on smaller things, like advertisement,” Kansteiner said. “We were given the opportunity to meet, and we had to find our mission.” In the early days of COBA, city staff meetings were often invited to meetings to explain processes relating to business operations, she explained.

“It was pretty open in the beginning,” Cohn said. “Just a what’s going on kind of talk. How are you doing with the planning department? How are you doing with [the] health department?”

Now, the group has agendas for its meetings, and it has evolved to serve as an influencer with the City of Long Beach and to offer guidance to the greater business community, Kansteiner explained. For example, COBA’s members, particularly its long-time ones, are a resource to communities trying to establish business improvement districts, she noted.

Kojian said part of the organization’s purpose is to maintain communication between business districts and associations to understand what individual areas are experiencing and effect what affects businesses through the city. “We’re trying to make Long Beach truly business friendly – and not just use that as a business district, she added.

“We have the red phone. The red phone [means] we can call the departments directly or the city manager directly and get a commitment,” Cohn said. “But we say, it shouldn’t be like that…”

Permits and fees from the health department. “We re-ceived an explanation of alternatives, he said. Permits and fees from the health department were also too costly, he added. “Their goal should not be to punish us, but to be an educational tool,” Kansteiner said of the health department.

“Since the conversation, they’ve changed the pricing for nonprofits and across the board,” Cohn noted. Kansteiner, who owns both Berlin Bistro and Portfolio Coffeehouse on 4th Street, experienced the transition personally. “They have changed their staff from the top down. Everyone has a completely different agenda,” she said. “We see it as a benefit now. . . . We actually sit down at a table and have a long visit. So it’s very educational.”

The city also listened to COBA on one of the largest issues it has ever tackled – one that is still ongoing – raising the minimum wage. When the City of Los Angeles raised its own minimum wage, COBA’s members realized Long Beach would likely be next and went to work surveying local businesses for their input and to put together their own proposal.

“From the very beginning, we said we weren’t going to say no to minimum wage,” Kojian said. “We felt as though it was time to have a very earnest and open discussion to determine what is really good for the city economically. We need to understand how we don’t want to talk about it or listen. In fact, we encouraged the open conversation.”

COBA’s recommendations were included in a report by the city’s economic development commission – of which Cohn is a member – to the city council. Ultimately, however, the city council passed a proposal asking an ordinance to be drafted that would put the city on a pathway to a $15 minimum wage by 2021. Although COBA was heard, there were wealthy interests with strong numbers involved in the discussions who distracted from the conversation the organization was trying to have, interjecting unrelated issues like wage theft into the conversation, said leaders explained. “The topic of discussion was kind of hijacked and issues are being brought up that have nothing to do with it,” Kansteiner explained.

“Long Beach is a city of lots of small businesses,” Kansteiner said. “Is that something that small business can sustain or not? We’re not talking about the McDonald’s or the Burger King that have a large machinery [in place]. . . . And that conversation was about what was the agenda that wanted to present a different story?”

Cohn recalled how at economic development commission meetings he would keep track of the types of businesses scrutinized by the long lines of public speakers advocating for a minimum wage increase and noted that they were almost entirely fast food chains.

As a business owner herself, Kansteiner was unhappy with the outcome of the council’s vote in January and is now left wondering if her businesses’ model will continue to work with a higher minimum wage. “My thing is the left hand versus the right hand,” Cohn said. “The city says [it wants] economic development. We want business here. We want to be business friendly. And then they overcharge for an event or for a li-

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To receive notifications of bid opportunities, register with the City of Long Beach at www.longbeach.gov/finance/business-info/purchasing-division/purchasing-division/. Additional details on upcoming bids and how to register can be found on the website.
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1. 4th Street Retro Row
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2. Belmont Shore Business Association
   [www.belmontshore.org]

3. Bixby Knolls Business Improvement Association
   [www.bixbyknollsinfo.com]

4. Midtown
   [www.cambodiatown.org]

5. Downtown Long Beach Associates
   [www.downtownlongbeach.org]

6. East Anaheim Street Business Alliance
   [www.zaferia.org]

7. East Spring Street
   [www.facebook.com/eastspringstreetlb]

8. Magnolia Industrial Group
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9. Naples Island Business Association
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Commune Communications

(Continued From Page 1)

Zealand, for both, the International City is their chosen home.

“My name is Kerstin Kansteiner. We have a unique perspective. We have referred them to others – and the business has grown,” said La Rosa.

“The city itself is doing, at least in our eyes, a poor job of marketing to its own citizens. At the end of the day, that’s why we’re here,” Kansteiner said. “The city needs to do better.”

Eventually, she said, Commune wants to work with the city’s Innovation Team, to “produce meaningful, small projects of a different kind” and to convert “all the people who aren’t going to the council chambers” into “innovators.”

“Business improvement districts typically work with limited resources,” Whale said. “For that reason, when Commune works with these districts, the firm creates a set of tools that are ready to use with ease.”

“We don’t stretch it, because if you give them something they can’t use, they’ll fail,” Whale said.

Recently, Commune began working with one of the city’s largest (both in terms of geographically and budgetary) districts – Downtown Long Beach. The area is overseen by the Downtown Long Beach Associates, which Commune is helping to rebrand as the Downtown Long Beach Alliance with a new logo and website.

“We haven’t needed to do the heavy lifting (search engine optimization or marketing), or traditional advertising or marketing,” Whale said of Commune Communications’ growth. “We’ve purely relied on the strength of our work and word of mouth.”

As La Rosa and Whale tell it, the firm’s success is driven not only by the backgrounds of its co-founders but also by its work culture. La Rosa’s background includes work for brands such as Taser, PGA, Aflac and many others.

“We have a lot of experience . . . we wanted to create a business where we can work with because we wanted to come to work happy and leave happy,” he explained.

“You give them a little marker, and they can make a label for all of the different parts.”

“Y ou give them a little marker, and you give them the freedom to squeeze business out, we want to leave as much potential as possible.”

Ultimately, the role of the BIDs, and of COBA, is to “provide a customer service to our stakeholders,” Kojian said. “When we are working with the city on things of where to open up their establishment, we have to first realize that they have a lot of choices. So how do we make those choices easier for him or her? Are there barriers, or are there doors that are open?”

“Ultimately, our goal is to leverage the economic potential of where to open up our business,” said La Rosa. “Our idea is to always maintain that we’re a Long Beach agency – a small company with a big vision. Our main focus is to be regarded as the best design firm in Long Beach.”

The two got started by cold-calling potential clients.

“While they thought they needed something more, the organization, La Rosa explained. Surveys and one-on-one interviews are also sometimes employed.

The Commune team, which includes four other staff members, then develops a strategy that satisfies the community stakeholders, which is often the board for the organization, La Rosa explained. Surveys and one-on-one interviews are also sometimes employed.

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Businesses may be charged a flat rate or may pay different amounts based on the type of establishment and number of employees. Similarly, property owners may pay a flat rate based on square footage, but in some cases, owners of larger parcels pay more.

The nonprofit organizations running the BIDs range in size and structure. Some, like the 4th Street Business Improvement Association, are run by unpaid volunteer boards. Others, like the Uptown Property and Community Association, employ an executive director to oversee operations.

To form a BID, a group of business or property owners must form an association and develop a management plan identifying geographic boundaries, assessment fees, proposed services and a budget. This plan must be submitted to the Long Beach City Council for a public hearing. For property-based districts, a petition signed by at least 50% of the property owners must be submitted with the management plan. Approval of at least 50% of the business or property owners is required to form a BID.

The city’s business-based assessment districts are Belmont Shore, Zaferia (formerly referred to as East Anaheim Street), Bixby Knolls and 4th Street. The property-based improvement districts in Long Beach are known as the Magnolia Industrial Group, Uptown and Midtown/Cambodia Town. The latter two are the city’s newest BIDs.

Downtown Long Beach is unique in that it has both a business-based assessment zone and a property-based assessment zone, both of which are overseen by the Downtown Long Beach Associates.

Another unique case is the Long Beach Tourism Property and Business Improvement Area, which assesses 17 hotel property owners located downtown and near the Long Beach Airport. Those funds contribute to the marketing, promotion and economic development efforts of the Long Beach Area Convention & Visitors Bureau (CVB). This BID is not profiled in this section, as it differs so greatly from the others.

“At the time the BID was formed, the city was in a position where financially it didn’t have additional monies for the CVB, and we had been rather static for several years,” Steve Goodling, president and CEO of the CVB, told the Business Journal. “We had cut and cut. The next cuts were going to be sales people and trade shows.”

The general manager for the Hyatt Regency at the time told Goodling, “If that happens, I might as well just put chain links around my doors and close,” he recalled.

She proposed creating a BID to save the efforts of the CVB, and the district was quickly formed. “We had the support of [former Mayor] Beverly O’Neill and the council,” Goodling said.

The tourism BID pays for the CVB’s sales efforts, marketing and special events. The district’s assessment constitutes about 52% of the CVB’s funding, according to Goodling. “If it weren’t for the BID, the CVB would not exist. That would greatly impact room nights at the hotels, conventions in the city, the bed tax and the $300 million a year in economic impact,” he said.

Aside from the tourism BID, Long Beach BIDs represent business thoroughfares and corridors. The services provided by their governing nonprofit organizations typically include some combination of security, clean teams, marketing and promotion, special events, beautification and economic development.

Some districts are newer than others, and are still getting off the ground in terms of creating a clean and safe environment, like the Midtown BID. Others, like Downtown or Belmont Shore, are further along in their evolution and, having created appealing environments, are now more focused on economic development matters.

Overall, the goal of each BID is largely the same: to create a welcoming environment for businesses and their patrons and to attract and retain businesses.

Jim Fisk, project manager overseeing BIDs for the City of Long Beach, indicated that corridors along Broadway, Wardlow Road and in the Wrigley neighborhood have expressed interest in forming BIDs, but nothing is official at this time.
Belmont Shore Business Association

By SAMANTHA MEHUNGER

Senior Writer

The Belmont Shore Parking and Business Improvement Area, which covers the 2nd Street shopping and dining corridor between Bay Shore and Livingston drives, was one of the first areas to seek designation as a business improvement district, according to the city. Officially formed in 1983, the district now has about 240 businesses paying an annual assessment for marketing, events and other services.

The area is known for its shops, restaurants and bars, but there are also professional and service businesses in the area, including photography studios, hair salons, travel companies and others.

Although the district’s annual total assessment is $140,000, the total budget is closer to $400,000 due to funds earned from events and other sources, according to Executive Director Dede Rossi. Businesses in the district pay a different fee based on type. Retailers, for example, pay an annual assessment of $584.73, plus $8.25 per employee. Contractors pay the lowest rate of $194.80, plus $16.50 per employee, and financial institutions pay the highest rate of $1,952.22 plus $56.50 per employee.

About one-fourth of the total budget (beyond the assessed funds) for the Belmont Shore Business Association – the organization that runs the district – goes toward administrative costs, including Rossi’s salary, rent for its office, insurance, office supplies and other necessities.

Unlike many of the other business improvement districts, Belmont Shore’s BID doesn’t have to fund cleaning and beautification efforts thanks to the existence of the Belmont Shore Parking and Business Improvement Advisory Commission run by the city. The commission oversees funds collected through the district’s parking meters and determines how to spend them. “They pay for cleaning, trash pick up [and] beautification,” Rossi said.

The BSBA is working with the commission to identify opportunities for median improvements, including new landscaping and lighting, Rossi said. Discussions also include replacing old cement trash cans with new ones that can’t be rummaged through and replacing asphalt with a new design that hides cigarette butts, she noted.

Although the BSBA does not pay for added security, Rossi does keep track of phone calls about crime and homeless people in the area. The organization works closely with the police department to report and address these issues, she said.

Marketing and special events account for the majority of the BSBA’s spending, according to Rossi. Belmont Shore holds events year-round, with many in the summertime. The annual Stroll & Savor summer series, for example, highlights local restaurants, which provide food and beverage samples in exchange for purchased tickets. The annual car show on September 11 – about to enter its 27th year – is a big draw to the area, as is the annual Christmas Parade.

Funds earned through these events go right back to promotional efforts, Rossi said. The BSBA also promotes the area through advertising in area newspapers and other sources, she noted. The organization used to have brochures about the district printed and distributed to area hotels but has since ceased the effort. Rossi is considering revisiting that strategy, although perhaps in the form of a one-page brochure or flyer.

While the BSBA has successfully promoted local shopping amongst residents, the organization is now examining how to attract more tourists to the area. “We feel like we need more of that tourism, especially in the summertime. That’s number one,” Rossi said. One avenue to accomplish this might be upping social media strategy and coordinating with other Long Beach entities like the Long Beach Area Convention & Visitors Bureau, she explained.

Turnover of businesses “is normal, at least in terms of what’s historically been the case on 2nd Street, according to Rossi. Every few months, a business leaves and a new one comes in, she said. “People leave for a lot of reasons. It could be because they’re not making it. It could be because the rents are too high,” she reflected. “It’s hard being a small business.” While Rossi assists businesses looking to move into the area, she said the BSBA doesn’t have much control over which tenants move into the properties.

Rossi said one of the standouts successes of the district is that it has many businesses that have been there for decades – Herman’s Shoe Fashions, Legends Sports Bar, Sweet Jill’s Bakery, Luna, Shear Pleasure and Sea-side Travel House are just a few of these.

Midtown Property & Business Owners Association

By SAMANTHA MEHUNGER

Senior Writer

Long Beach’s newest business improvement district (BID) was approved in August 2015 for an area known as Cambodia Town, named for having the largest population of Cambodians outside of their home country, and for the businesses they have established there. The district, called the Midtown BID, is in the process of getting off the ground, according to Board Chair Kenneth McDonald, president and CEO of Long Beach Transit.

The Midtown BID is property-based, with property owners paying $0.0836 per square foot of buildings on-site and for the total parcel square footage. The district runs along Anaheim Street, including some side streets, between Raymond Avenue and Alamitos Avenue. The estimated annual total assessment is $161,230.

“There are two ways we are establishing a baseline for improvements,” McDonald said. “The first is to identify opportunities for median improvements, including new landscaping and lighting.”

Rossi said one of the standout successes of the district is that it has many businesses that have been there for decades – Herman’s Shoe Fashions, Legends Sports Bar, Sweet Jill’s Bakery, Luna, Shear Pleasure and Sea-side Travel House are just a few of these.

Midtown Property & Business Owners Association

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Midtown Property & Business Owners Association

“"The way we have it structured now, we have estimated maybe 60% of our budget going to the clean, safe and beautiful [efforts].” McDonald explained. “Marketing and communication, about 17% of our budget will go to that area. And then management, we are estimating about 23% of the budget.”

“Each of the programs are designed to improve safety of each individual parcel, increased building occupancy – these are the goals we have established,” he said.

These efforts are aimed at attracting new businesses and developments, he noted.

Once an executive director is hired, McDonald said he hopes to start tracking turnover of businesses in the area, “We would know exactly what the challenges are and the turnover and what we can do to help,” he said.

Right now, McDonald and the board are focusing on identifying the state of the district and establishing a baseline for improvements.

“The message we want is that we’re working towards building this Cambodia Town BID,” McDonald said. “We want to make it a vibrant area in the city.”
With historic neighborhoods, professional offices and services, boutiques, specialty stores and pretty much any kind of eatery you can think of, the Bixby Knolls Parking and Business Improvement Area is home to more than 800 businesses. The district has two major corridors – Long Beach Boulevard and Atlantic Avenue – and it extends northward from the 405 Freeway to 46th Street.

The Bixby Knolls BID was founded in 1989. Its annual assessment, collected from business owners in the district, is $161,000. The base assessment fee is $250 for businesses and $150 for nonprofit organizations. Beginning in 2016, $20 is assessed for part-time coordinators for the district’s clean team and First Fridays events.

The number one goal and priority of the association is to “make our boundaries and borders as clean, safe, attractive and vibrant as we can.” Cohn told the Business Journal. “We have private security patrols that go through the area to make sure that the neighborhoods are safe.”

Cohn noted. “The challenge is to become more engaged by our monthly programs,” Cohn said. “We have private security patrols that go through the area to make sure that the neighborhoods are safe.”

Beautification and maintenance services include weeding, tree and plant trimming, pressure washing, litter removal and graffiti abatement. The BKBIA also has a facade improvement program for local buildings and businesses. All of these efforts, which make up the largest portion of the organization’s budget, make business patrons comfortable and “raise the profile of the neighborhood,” Cohn said.

Another major focal point for the BKBIA is marketing and promotion. One of the key ways the association promotes the district is through a regular series of events and clubs, including a supper club, a book club, bike rides for kids, a “good spirits” cocktail hour club and more. The largest of these efforts is First Fridays, a monthly event where businesses keep their doors open later, special promotions are offered, drinks and food are available and attendees are entertained with music.

“Since we’re a bedroom community that surrounds the business corridors, we want to make sure that the neighborhoods are engaged by our monthly programs,” Cohn said. “First Fridays had existed for a year before I said, let’s co-opt it and let the association take it over;” he recalled. “I was able to raise money to get a coordinator – somebody who works on it all month,” he said. “The crowds are big and steady, and I think it’s leaving a mark.”

The BKBIA also promotes the district and businesses within in through social media. Its new online campaign, Discovers In Bixby, provides a platform for visitors to talk about the area online. “Discovers In Bixby promotes [the concept of] ‘hey, everybody, whatever you see and like and find in the neighborhood, share it,’” Cohn said. “We push it all the time for neighborhood pride but also for people to share their discoveries.”

“We have to work harder at marketing and promotion because it’s not like we have the foot traffic of Belmont Shore,” Cohn noted. “The challenge is to become a destination, be unique and provide a great experience for people to come. That’s why here we have to push a little harder on the marketing piece, both individually for businesses but also for us . . . trying to promote the whole area.”

The association is also there to help as a liaison between the City of Long Beach and businesses. Cohn assists with issues as minor as businesses being billed twice by the city – “It may have been an error, and we can call and get that straightened out,” he said – or assisting a new business through the city’s planning and building processes. “We’re there to get on the phone and see what we can do to help. . . . And I think the businesses appreciate that fast attention so they don’t feel they’re left in no man’s land.”

The BKBIA tries its best to keep track of vacancies, but with limited staff the effort is a challenge, Cohn said. The association’s relationship with local commercial real estate brokers has grown in the past few years, so Cohn said he often checks in with them to discuss vacancies in storefronts and office buildings. “We have had more businesses coming in than leaving,” he observed. “Those that have had to close, someone has been right behind them to take the space.”

When there is a vacancy, the organization “puts out feelers” to find new tenants. “If we get a lead from someone, we’ll try to reach out to the broker and say this would be perfect for that space,” Cohn said.

“For instance, Luis from Lola’s [Mexican Cuisine on 4th Street] came up here. I know he was looking in other places,” Cohn recalled. “He came in, and we met for an hour or more. And I gave him the whole speech about what we do, how we can help. . . . and he just gently twisted his arm and made him an offer he couldn’t refuse, which is like, this is the promised land. We don’t want you going anywhere else. So here he is.”

Moving forward, Cohn intends to remain focused on clean and safe efforts, as well as promotion of the district to “keep raising the profile of the district and spreading our wings even a little wider.”
Downtown Long Beach Associates

By SAMANTHA MEHLINGER
Senior Writer

Long Beach’s downtown is unique among the business improvement districts (BIDs), not only because it spans a much larger geographical area and has a significantly higher budget than the others, but also because it includes both a property-based BID and a business-based BID. The Downtown Long Beach Associates (DLBA) – soon to be rebranded as the Downtown Long Beach Alliance – oversees both assessment zones.

From south to north, the total area spans from the waterfront to 10th Street at its northernmost point. From east to west, it runs from Alamitos Avenue to West Shoreline Drive.

“The difference between the downtown and all the other business nodes throughout the city is that downtown is made up of a series of neighborhoods,” Kraig Kojian, president and CEO of the DLBA, told the Business Journal. These areas include the waterfront (with Shoreline Village and the Pike Outlets), North Pine Avenue and the Promenade, the West Gateway and the East Village.

At the waterfront, businesses are retail heavy, while the rest of the downtown is a mix of apartment buildings and condo high-rises, office towers and ground-floor retail. Businesses range from small mom-and-pop grocers to boutiques, restaurants and bars, major corporate businesses like Molina Healthcare, creative agencies, trade and logistics-related firms and much more.

According to city documents, the Downtown Parking Improvement Area, which is the business-based BID, assesses about $415 per business and $6.99 per employee. Service-based independent contractors are assessed $225.33 per business and $4.84 per employee. The total annual assessment for the area is $610,046.

Downtown’s property-based improvement district assesses property owners based on the square footage of the parcel and buildings on-site, the linear footage of the property and the “level of services rendered to benefit the area,” according to city documents. This area is the major budget source for the DLBA with an annual assessment of about $2.4 million.

Additional revenue is sourced from the successor agency to the former redevelopment agency, parking meters, ticket sales and vendor fees. The DLBA also contracts out its clean team services to Long Beach Transit to maintain the downtown transit mall restrooms.

For their investment into the greater business district, businesses and property owners “get a cleaner, safer, more vibrant community to live, work and play,” Kojian said. “That investment is going to be protected by this organization through a variety of programs and services.”

The largest chunk of assessment dollars – about 40% – goes to the DLBA’s Clean and Safe program. “Put it this way: if it’s not clean and safe, would you want to make an investment?” Kojian said. “Would you want to come downtown if it’s not clean or safe?”

The DLBA contracts with three companies to employ a Clean and Safe team of 50-60 people. Clean initiatives include picking up trash and pressure washing the sidewalks. The members of the safety-oriented team are known as downtown guides, according to Broc Coward, chief operating officer. “They’re our ambassadors. The job is not only to provide a safe environment through the eyes and ears in the community, but they also provide directions,” Coward said.

The downtown guides also act as escorts in the downtown area who wants to be accompanied while moving from point A to point B, Coward said. Escorts are available from 7 a.m. to midnight during the week and extended hours until 1:30 or 2 a.m. on the weekends.

Kojian called these services “the foundation of everything else that we do.” He added, “If we’re not providing that inviting environment, nothing else is going to happen. It’s a house of cards after that.”

Special events also make up a significant portion of the DLBA’s spending. The organization...
Downtown Long Beach Associates President and CEO Kraig Kojian, left, with Chair Elect Toliver Morris, Manulife Real Estate

Beautification and activation of the public realm is another focal point for the organization. For example, through its 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, the Long Beach Downtown Development Corporation, the DLBA recently activated the long-vacant southeast corner of Pine Avenue and Ocean Boulevard with an art installation called The Loop. The DLBA also facilitates community grant projects for public beautification and has helped to implement and fund scramble crosswalks and pedestrian-friendly infrastructure.

Marketing and promotion of the area and its businesses also take priority. About a year-and-a-half ago, Kojian brought on former Long Beach Post Executive Editor Brian Addison to head up communications and spearhead a new social media strategy. “I put a lot of effort into building our main platforms,” Addison said. His efforts helped grow the DLBA’s number of Facebook likes from 14,000 to nearly 40,000 and its Twitter followers from about 6,000 to 12,000.

Addison has shifted the DLBA’s social media focus to highlight local businesses, artists and the community. For example, the owner of a restaurant might call the DLBA and ask for a special event to be promoted through its social media pages, and the DLBA is more than happy to oblige, Addison explained.

The DLBA also helps the business community via its economic development services, which aim to attract new businesses and assist existing ones in the area. When there are vacant storefronts, the DLBA works with local brokers, including its own Board President-elect Toliver Morris of William Morris Commercial, to help fill those spaces.

“The old adage of ‘put up a sign and wait for a call’ is not our program. We’re actively going out and recruiting folks,” Morris said. “We’re really focused on the local and regional [businesses] versus the big nationals. We’re trying to retain the character, integrity and authenticity of Downtown Long Beach as kind of part of that recruitment effort,” he explained.

“We want to see the most unique and interesting retailers and businesses moving into downtown,” Morris said of his vision for the next few years. “We want to see diverse and vibrant residents moving into downtown.”

The sale of many former redevelopment agency properties in the area, including two at the intersection of Long Beach Boulevard and Broadway, will help aid in these efforts, Coward observed. “These successor agency properties are going to provide an opportunity to close the gap between the core of downtown and the East Village and that canyon area that has been there historically,” he said.

“Density is key. Connectivity is key. Destination is still key,” Kojian said of downtown’s future. “I would like to see Downtown Long Beach become a stronger destination from a visitor standpoint – to expand and extend the stay for those people who use downtown as a destination.”

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4th Street Business Improvement Association

By SAMANTHA MIEHNER

Senior Writer

The 4th Street Parking and Business Improvement Area in Long Beach’s 2nd Council District may be one of the city’s smaller business improvement districts (BIDs), but its personality looms large. The area is known as Retro Row for its collection of vintage clothing and furniture stores – which, as 4th Street Business Improvement Association volunteer board President Kerstin Kansteiner pointed out, has garnered it major national press.

The BID’s origins date back 25 years, to when Kansteiner – who owns Portfolio Coffeehouse and co-owns the Art Theatre within the district – and two other business owners began meeting once a week to pick up trash. “We did projects together, from cleaning up to events. Then we started asking business owners to chip in,” she recalled. Back then, there was only about a handful of businesses in the area, she recalled. “Now it’s full of thrift stores, vintage shops and international restaurants.

Officially formed as a BID in 2007, the district spans 4th Street from Cherry Avenue to Temple Avenue and includes 60 merchants as members. Those business owners are assessed an annual fee of $200, while nonprofit organizations and miscellaneous vendors are assessed $100.

The total annual assessment for the area is $14,000 – the smallest amount of any of the city’s BIDs. For that reason, the 4th Street Business Improvement Association is run by a volunteer board. There are no staff salaries, apart from contracted work by an accountant and a social media manager. “If we are doing anything or even distributing materials, one of our stakeholders has to physically walk down the block and do it on their own time,” Kansteiner said of the volunteer nature of the organization.

Kansteiner has served as the organization’s volunteer president throughout much of its history. Chris Giaco, owner of vintage store Inretrospect, is taking on the position in September.

The district’s assessment dollars are used for events, marketing and a website, Kansteiner said. A small amount is set aside for beautification efforts, including the maintenance of a parking lot and a small garden of succulents that fronts the street lighting come to fruition.

4th Street’s website and developed a new cohesive branding and marketing plan dubbed “I Am 4,” which is also used as a social media hashtag. “We do a lot of outreach on Instagram and Facebook,” Kansteiner said. “That’s a cheap way of keeping the word out on the street about 4th Street.”

Events are the main aspect of marketing and promotion for the district, according to Kansteiner. “We do three bigger events per year,” she said. Retro Ramble, an annual sidewalk sale, includes entertainment as well as deals from local vendors. The area was also recently host to a portion of Beach Streets, an event in which streets throughout the city were closed to vehicular traffic for use by pedestrians and bicyclists.

Last year, the association debuted a new event in the form of a “progressive beer and wine festival” in which attendees strolled among stores and restaurants sampling beverages. “It was very successful. We’re doing it again,” Kansteiner said. In all, these events eat up about $9,000 of the area’s budget due to the city’s permit fees alone, she noted.

A challenge for local business owners is that, due to the area’s coverage and recognition in regional and national media, property owners feel the area is doing well for distribution, she noted. A local design firm, Commune Communications, is currently working to redesign the brochure.

Commune also recently revamped 4th Street’s website and developed a new brochure for financial outreach to property owners, some of them are quite active in the BID’s efforts, she noted.

In the future, Kansteiner hopes to see the association’s advocacy for additional cross-walks, dedicated bike lanes and pedestrian street lighting come to fruition.

“It’s a new era,” Kansteiner said. “We [will] have a new councilperson . . . so we’re kind of looking forward to meeting with her and hopefully with her make a plan that takes us through the next 10 years.”

Chris Giaco, owner of Inretrospect (pictured), and Kerstin Kansteiner, owner of Portfolio Coffeehouse, are co-presidents of the 4th Street Business Improvement Association.
Long Beach Playhouse
Vice President Andrew Vonderschmitt
President Tracy Ames, The Red Lobsterchaun
Treasurer Alisha Adrial, Law Offices of Alisha Admiral
Secretary Kourosh Davatolhagh, Farmers & Merchants Bank
Executive Director Kristine Hammond
Boardmembers
Cameron Crockett, Ultra-Unit Architectural Studio
Becher Neme, Ultra-Unit Architectural Studio
Michael Schafer, Edward Jones Investments

The total annual assessment for the district is $145,000, but Hammond said about $10,000 of that is identified as non-collectible, so the total is closer to $135,500. The rebranding of the area as Zaferia began before Hammond came on board this year. A new logo—a design of the letter Z in a shade of bright green—is the unifying identifier for the region and now appears on banners throughout the district, as well as on the new website. The green color used in the logo will be implemented throughout the district, such as on bike racks.

“We’re hoping to get this area known as Zaferia. People would say, ‘Let’s go get a drink in Zaferia,’” Hammond said. “My take is that previous efforts were trying to call the area EASBA, but nobody knows what that is. In the process of putting together a directory for the website, Hammond began calling businesses in the district only to discover that “some of the members don’t even realize they’re members” even though they’ve been paying the assessment, she said. “It’s interesting. About eight out of ten people I talk to don’t realize they’re members,” she added. For this reason, Hammond is focusing efforts on outreach to businesses in the area.

Hammond has been digging into the budget to reassess spending priorities. For example, the district’s primary marketing strategy has been the production of a four- to eight-page magazine about the area, which is being discontinued. “From what I understand, they just distributed it to the members. So I don’t know how effective that was, because you’re just sort of marketing yourself to yourself,” she said.

Other expenses, such as on bike racks, are also on the chopping block. “I’m told my predecessor . . . involved a marketing campaign that he had an interest in,” Hammond noted.

An annual event, Discover Zaferia, also might not be effective to continue, according to Hammond. “You block the street. People are there for the stuff under the tents rather than visiting the businesses. So I think that money can be better spent in different promotions,” she explained.

Hammond and the board are looking into bringing people to the area with new events. On July 23 and 24, for example, the EASBA is paying the Long Beach Playhouse to put on “A Midsummer Night’s Dream” at Recreation Park, which will be free and open to the public. Attendees will be given a program that includes coupons to Zaferia businesses. “There will also be an insert listing the types of businesses that are in our area,” Hammond said.

Another potential new promotion to highlight local businesses might involve music. “One of the things I’m looking at in October is to promote ‘Rocktober’ and advertise for all of the entertainment places with live and recorded music, and push that out, particularly to Cal State Long Beach students who are back in school,” Hammond explained.

EASBA is continuing to contract with the Conservation Corps of Long Beach for litter removal and weed abatement services, Hammond noted. To promote further beautification of the area, the organization helps local businesses take advantage of the city’s facade improvement program, she said.

### Magnolia Industrial Group

The Magnolia Industrial Group (MIG) Property and Business Improvement District (PBID) is unique among the other business districts in Long Beach in that it is an industrial zone. Unlike other business improvement districts, the assessment fees paid by property owners in the area go to one major purpose: private security.

Founded in 1996, the Magnolia Industrial Group PBID is bounded from west to east by the Los Angeles River and Magnolia Avenue. The southern border stretches to an undeveloped parcel past 12th Street, and the northern boundary is Pacific Coast Highway.

Owners of properties measuring less than 20,000 square feet pay an annual assessment of $744.06, while owners of larger properties pay an additional assessment of slightly more than $0.01 per square foot. The total assessment fee is capped at $1,488.12. The total annual assessment is $85,350.

The Magnolia Industrial Group is comprised mostly of port-related and manufacturing businesses. Goodwill, Serving the People of Southern Los Angeles County is also headquartered there and has training facilities and a retail store. There are 100 property owners within the district, which is run by a volunteer, unpaid board of directors.

“Years ago, we had issues with crime, vandalism, graffiti, prostitution,” Board President Bill Townsend, who is also president of Long Beach real estate firm INCO Commercial, told the Business Journal. “It was hard to get tenants and buyers to invest in that part of town.” So the area property owners and Townsend—who works in the area as a broker—banded together with the assistance of the City of Long Beach to form an improvement district.

“The owners really took it on themselves,” Townsend said of the effort. “We had tremendous help from the city forming this. I think it was one of the first industrial BIDs that was ever done.” Townsend said the PBID has proven to be a success, and that “owners see it’s a good return on their investment.”

The PBID’s assessment dollars go towards night security for the district, which is contracted through Platt Security, a Long Beach business. “We work in conjunction with the Long Beach Police and it’s a really good partnership with the city, the owners and our security firm,” Townsend said. “We’re all working together for the same goal.”

Industrial areas as a whole have less crime, despite increases in crime rates in other parts of the city, Townsend noted. “Our crime is very low. There is certainly graffiti and things like that, but it’s handled immediately,” he said. “Having security in the area at night keeps the crime away.”

As a real estate broker, Townsend keeps track of vacancies and turnover in the district—but of which he said are minimal. “There are small businesses that come and go,” he said. “But overall, the core businesses have been there for years. It’s a very stable area.”

Having a low vacancy rate keeps crime down, Townsend noted. It does, however, create pressure on sales prices of properties and rental rates, making it expensive for businesses to locate there. In general, though, real estate prices are high throughout the state, he said.

“The one success that we have is that we have a very secure area,” Townsend said. “As you’re improving the neighborhood, it helps real estate values go up, and it helps attract tenants and buyers,” he explained. The city has also helped to improve the area by planting trees and repaving streets, he pointed out. “Owners feel secure in buying in the area. It’s a solid investment.”
Uptown Property And Business Improvement District

**By** SAMANTHA MEHLINGER
Senior Writer

Formed in 2013, the Uptown Property and Business Improvement District (PBID) features two main arteries: the stretch of Atlantic Avenue from Market Street to Artesia Boulevard, and Artesia Boulevard from Orange Avenue to Atlantic Avenue. It also includes Houghton Park, Jordan High School and a portion of North Long Beach along the Los Angeles River. The district’s relatively new manager, Tasha Hunter, is focused on building upon what she calls a “renaissance” already starting in the area.

Uptown, as it is known by shorthand, is a property-based assessment district with assessments varying by property type: mobile home parks are assessed $0.001 per parcel square foot, schools are assessed $0.005, parks pay $0.02 and apartment building owners pay $0.035.

Owners of commercial parcels smaller than 20,000 square feet are charged $0.08 per square foot, while parcels between 20,000 and 100,000 square feet are charged $0.09. Large commercial parcel owners are assessed $0.10 per square foot. The total annual assessment funds paid into the district are $180,770. In addition to these, the organization running the PBID – the Uptown Property and Community Association – also receives grant funding.

There are 235 property owners in the district, which is home to more than 140 businesses. Most of these are “small mom and pop” operations, Hunter said.

Property owners paying into the district are getting a cleaner, safer Uptown, according to Hunter. “Since I have been in the office, I have changed who I am working with for keeping our streets clean,” she said, noting that Uptown now uses the services of the Conservation Corps of Long Beach. “Before, we had one person cleaning 30% of our BID four days a week. Now we have anywhere from six to 10 young individuals cleaning 100% of the BID five days a week.” An added benefit is that the Conservation Corps trains local youth, she added.

Uptown contracts with C.S.I. Patrol Service for patrols throughout the district. “Since I have been in this position at the BID, we have increased our security so that we have a mobile patrol, in addition to our bicycle team,” Hunter said. Homelessness is an issue in the area, as it is in other parts of the city, she noted. The security team assists when calls are made to our bicycle team,” Hunter said. “We do a lot of social media. We’re on Instagram, Twitter [and] Facebook.” On holidays, the district uses these outlets to highlight local businesses offering specials to help boost sales. A hair salon promoted for Mother’s Day had a 20% boost in sales that day, Hunter said.

Economic development and business assistance efforts are also a point of focus. “What I have noticed is a lot of our business owners see what we’re doing and the improvements we’re making for the area and this community, [they won’t be able to] imagine this community without us here.” Hunter is confident that the Uptown BID’s efforts are creating change. “I get at least three to four phone calls daily of people from other areas that want to move into the area,” she said. “They just know this is the next big thing, and they want to get a piece of it. They want to be here. They like the culture. They see where Uptown is going, and they want to be a part of that journey.”

**Uptown Property And Business Improvement District Board Of Directors**

President Yanik Greenspan, Westland Real Estate Group

Boardmembers
Aaron Blackburn, Kupata Protection Services; Phil Saumur, Steven Neal, Molina Healthcare; Candace Mesham, Long Beach Unified; Martha Sandavol, Villa Park Mobile Home Community; and John Atkinson, Calvary Chapel of North of Long Beach

Assessment dollars also fund beautification efforts like graffiti removal and facade improvements. The organization also works with the City of Long Beach to improve conditions of streets and landscaping. To create a more aesthetically pleasing environment, Hunter has been working with property owners to remove bars from windows, or at least to place them on the interior of windows so they appear less intimidating, she noted.

Marketing and promotion are another focus for Uptown. “We have a monthly newsletter,” Hunter said. “We do a lot of social media. We’re on Instagram, Twitter [and] Facebook.” On holidays, the district uses these outlets to highlight local businesses offering specials to help boost sales. A hair salon promoted for Mother’s Day had a 20% boost in sales that day, Hunter said.

**The Benefits of Weddings**

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Wedding Traditions Through The Generations

Intimate Wedding Venues In Long Beach
With A Replenished Reserve Fund, Signal Hill Continues To Thrive

By BRANDON RICHARDSON
Staff Writer

ow in its 92nd year, the 2.2-square-mile City of Signal Hill has replenished its reserve funds that were drawn on due to the Great Recession and the subsequent fallout.

“The general state of the city now is really sound,” Signal Hill Mayor Lori Woods said. “We came through the recession really well. We did have to dip a little into the reserves set aside, but that’s what they are for … and now we’ve built our reserves back up.”

The city recently adopted a $21 million budget and, according to City Manager Charlie Honeycutt, the city is projecting a surplus of around $170,000. He went on to explain that if the general fund reserve were to be combined with the city’s “rainy-day” fund reserve, the total would be 85% of the city’s annual operating cost, which Honeycutt attributes to a fiscally conservative city council that understands how important it is to “have money in the bank for when the economy turns sour.”

The city generates about 70% of its general fund revenue from sales tax, according to Woods. Having a bustling auto center, big-box stores such as Costco and two Home Depots, countless smaller retailers, as well as a sales tax sharing agreement with Office Depot, the city works to make operating a business as easy as possible.

“We’re pretty focused on making sure that our businesses are successful, and we try to have a business-friendly environment by allowing businesses to come in and not get in their way too much with bureaucracy and red tape,” Honeycutt said. “We try to make staff always available to businesses – they can walk up to the front counter or make a phone call, and they can meet with the city manager because we are so dependent on successful business.”

Melissa Guy, president of the Signal Hill Chamber of Commerce, agreed, saying that Signal Hill is “one of the easiest places to do business.” With new legislation and rising prices, Guy said that business is getting far more difficult to conduct in surrounding cities such as Long Beach, Lakewood and Seal Beach.

“The City of Signal Hill really prides itself on staying out of your business,” Guy said. “You get the support of the city, but they are not managing your business. It’s not like a big brother over your business.”

After five years under the same leadership, the chamber has a new board and is “young and on the move,” according to Guy. Membership is currently around 100, but she is expecting that number to grow to 200 businesses by the end of the year. And the chamber will be launching a new website at signalhillchamber.org by the end of the month.

More new leadership is on its way to the community as interviews for the vacant deputy city manager position are underway. According to Woods, there are four or five applicants and the city council will hopefully have a decision some time in August.

“A major project that is nearing completion is the activation of the city’s new water well, which Honeycutt said has been years in the making.

“Because of the drought conditions, it will really help our water reliability and actually help us manage water cost to our customers,” he said. “The city council takes great pride in keeping the water rates low here.”

The city also has a number of projects in the works, such as a new public works yard on 28th Street, should be completed by the end of the year, according to Public Works Director Steve Myrter.

The city is also in the process of completing construction drawings for a new dog park across the street from the Gateway Center on California Avenue, just north of Spring Street, and has plans for a view park and trail on the corner of Cherry Avenue and Burnett Street, across from the vacant Fresh & Easy building.

“The view park will have electronic message boards that will help announce meetings, events, get public service announcements out, so it will be a really nice added feature,” Honeycutt said. “It’s just our continued effort to create walking opportunities. That’s a big focus now, active transportation – walking and being able to ride bikes.”

Construction on the new 20,000-square-foot, two-story public library is set to begin early next year and be completed in 2018.

The Signal Hill City Council, which meets at 7 p.m. on the second and fourth Tuesdays each month, consists of five members elected at-large to four-year terms. There are no term limits. The position of mayor is rotated annually among the members. Pictured from left are: Vice Mayor Tina Hansen, first elected to the city council in April 1994; Councilmember Edward Wilson (March 1997); Mayor Lori Woods (March 2013); Councilmember Larry Forester (July 1998); and Councilmember Michael Noll (April 1992). The city council recently approved a $21 million budget for the 2016-17 fiscal year that began July 1, and expects a surplus of $170,000, according to City Manager Charlie Honeycutt. Photograph provided by the City of Signal Hill.
“We don’t like to sit here in city hall and think we know what the community wants. I think our city council has done a good job of regularly asking the community.”

Honeycutt estimates the assessment to take a year to complete once the contract is finalized. He said the process will include a series of surveys and phone calls and that he is looking forward to the community participation.

The city is, however, facing several large expenditures in the coming years as new state mandates are introduced. One of the largest expenses will be to comply with National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) mandates, which the city will spend around $30 million on over the next 20 years.

“Basically, they don’t want any pollutants to get to the L.A. River, the San Gabriel River or the Los Cerritos Channel that ultimately flow into the ocean, and there’s a high price tag to do that.”

Signal Hill is leading a $10 million project to divert runoff into an underground chamber at Los Angeles International Airport. Partnered with the City of Long Beach, Long Beach Airport, the California Department of Transportation and Los Angeles County, Signal Hill is taking the lead on designing and building the project, while funds are to be provided by Caltrans, Honeycutt said.

Aside from this regional runoff project, Signal Hill will continue other programs, such as street sweeping, providing ample public trashcans and putting screens on storm drains, all in hopes of keeping trash and debris out of the ocean.

Another large annual payout from the city comes in the form of the California Public Employee Retirement System (CalPERS). Though employees now contribute 7% of their compensation into CalPERS and new employees are being hired with less expensive benefits, the city is still projecting the retirement plan to continue to increase.

“We actually have a reserve set up, we call it our PERS reserve. We put money aside . . . so if there are spikes in our annual fee, we can go to that reserve,” Honeycutt said. “In terms of challenges on the city budget, that is something the council is very concerned about, and we continue to try to address it in various ways.”

Despite these looming expenses, Honeycutt is confident in the city, which he has been a part of for three decades.

“I just completed my 29th year here with the city, and you couldn’t ask for a better organization to work for,” Honeycutt said. “I live here also, and it’s a great place to live. I think the city really works hard to deliver for its residents and its businesses.”

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here may not show you that you’ll be successful, but if you look around the community and you look at the businesses, they all do well,” City Manager Charlie Honeycutt said. “I think there is a reason Home Depot felt comfortable opening a second store in Signal Hill.”

Honeycutt said that all business in the city seems to be thriving. He said Costco is doing well and is only going to see more revenue with the opening of its gas station. He said he’s also happy to see new businesses still wanting to open locations in the city.

“One of the more interesting additions we’ve had to Signal Hill is GD Bro Burger, which is a burger place,” he said. “It originated from a food truck that participated in Food Network’s ‘The Great Food Truck Race.’ I’ve eaten there a couple times myself, taken my family there, so I think that’s a really nice addition to our Towne Center West.”

With the exception of Fresh & Easy, which saw the entire corporation go bankrupt at the end of 2015, Honeycutt said the city has a strong business retention rate and does not lose business to surrounding cities. “The problem we’re having is we’re running out of room,” he said. “We’d love to have more space for them.”

There’s a lot of interest in about 25 acres of property that the former Signal Hill Redevelopment Agency owned, Honeycutt said. The city’s economic development division would like to see new retail space, housing, a new grocery store at the debunked Fresh & Easy location, and even a hotel.

A key factor that Honeycutt attributes to the success of businesses of all sizes, as well as businesses wanting to be located in the city, is the small size of the city and the police department’s reputation. “I think a lot of that has to do with the feeling of being safe in Signal Hill,” he said. “Our police department is well-respected, and I think people feel safe here and like to come here to shop.”

Another main component of business success in the city is the relative ease businesses have when dealing with officials, according to Mercedes Sepko, co-owner of Marketink LG, a printing company that focuses on large graphics.

“Signal Hill is very friendly to businesses, very helpful, a lot of resources,” she said. “And since it’s a small community, you get to know the people in the city and city hall and the [Signal Hill] Chamber, and it opens up a lot of resources.”

Some of Marketink’s top clients include the Spanish television network Telemundo, the City of Long Beach and the Long Beach Area Convention & Visitors Bureau. The company recently provided the City
of Long Beach with the programs for the civic center groundbreaking ceremony on July 8. The programs were printed on glossy, black acrylic. “It’s gorgeous, and it’s something that was unthinkable before. So I think new equipment and new ideas and creativity are opening up marketing in many different ways.”

Sepko said her company tries to stay local because it allows for faster service and turnaround times. Business has been up for Marketink because other businesses are finally out of the hole after the Great Recession, which means they are spending more money on marketing, according to Sepko. “I’ve been seeing an ambience of growth, and people are finally having hope of businesses growing.”

With auto sales being a driving force for the city, the auto repair business sees heavy traffic as well. “This past year has just been going great,” Sal Lombardi, store manager at LB Walker Automotive on Wardlow Road, said. “I can’t describe it – every day we’ve been busy. There’s not one day that we’ve been slow.”

Lombardi is not new to the auto services industry, having owned a 76 Station on Atlantic Avenue and Carson Street for 26 years and a small shop on Spring Street and Orange Avenue for another five.

Other service industries are seeing increased business as the economy continues to grow. Ben Morey, owner of Morey Remodeling Group, said his industry continues to grow steadily as home values improve and interest rates remain low.
very active, despite the recent Brexit vote. The company has been operating since 1982 and has been located in Signal Hill for the last 10 years. “It’s been the best location for us to be in since we’ve been in business – a central hub close to the freeway, and we’re just happy to be here because we believe it’s such a positive business environment in Signal Hill.”

The restaurant business has experienced continued business growth and is seeing new brands opening their doors in the city. Recent additions include the previously mentioned GD Bro Burger and Fish-O-Licious. Big E Pizza owner Jimmy Eleopoulos said business is up 5% from last year. “We extended [our restaurant] so dining and catering has gone up. Overall, business has been steadily on the upswing.”

Next month, Big E Pizza will celebrate its 30th anniversary at the location. Eleopoulos said a celebration is being planned and will include free slices and other activities in the parking lot in front of the location at 3225 E. Pacific Coast Hwy. “I couldn’t be happier conducting business in Signal Hill,” Eleopoulos said. “After 30 years, I still enjoy coming to work every day. The community is very special.”

According to Ryan White, the retail manager at Liberty Coin on Willow Street, the store has been seeing increased sales as well. For his company specifically, he attributes some of the growth to the overall precious-metals market being very active, despite the recent Brexit vote in the United Kingdom.

Liberty Coin relocated to Signal Hill shortly after the 1992 Los Angeles riots. “For the last two years, I’d say our business is up about 15% to 18%,” Morey said. “He attributes some of the growth to sales as well. For his company specifically, he attributes some of the growth to the overall precious-metals market being very active, despite the recent Brexit vote in the United Kingdom.

Kaiser Opens Medical Offices In Signal Hill, Addressing Patient Needs In The Area

In an effort to expedite medical services to residents of Signal Hill and Long Beach, Kaiser Permanente opened its new office at 745 E. Willow St. on June 29. The 20,000-square-foot Signal Hill office is expected to serve approximately 75,000 Kaiser members. “[Services] are going amazingly well,” Dr. Barbara Carnes, area medical director for Kaiser, said. “I have to say, the staff and the physicians have been preparing quite a bit. This office is a little different than our other offices, so they’ve been training on new workflows that really, in our mind, change the care experience.”

Carnes said the goal at the new office is to increase patient comfort and convenience to create a warm and welcoming environment that inspires patients. With about 50 staff members – including six adult primary care physicians (all with nearly full patient loads already), three pediatricians, three obstetricians and gynecologists (OB/GYNs) and four behavioral health providers – the facility is open Monday through Friday from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., Saturdays from 7 a.m. to 1 p.m. and closed on Sundays.

Signal Hill Mayor Lori Woods was unable to attend the grand opening event but plans on soon having a private tour of the facility. She said Kaiser is well-known for trying to meet the needs of its patients in a modern way. “What I’ve heard of the facility is, it’s top-of-the-line and can cover a lot of health services under one roof,” she said. “So I think it’s going to be a benefit to the community and Kaiser patients.”

In addition to primary care, pediatrics,
OB/GYN services and behavioral health, the facility has a nurse clinic, X-ray facility, a pharmacy, a blood draw station and is offering virtual care through telephone and video visits.

The use of new technology is the driving force behind the changes at the Signal Hill location according to Carnes. These improvements are to “create more coordination of care, help patients know about their screenings, provide education around health and support them to live their healthiest lives,” she said.

Customer convenience begins before they set foot in the building, Carnes said. Patients can use express check-in, confirm appointments, pay their copay and update personal information online to avoid lines or checking in at the front desk.

“They are actually greeted by staff with tablets,” Carnes said. “The tablets are connected to our back office and can monitor wait times, as well as when the physician will be seeing them. Because the staff isn’t tied to a computer, they are able to move around the entrance and waiting room to help facilitate the patient’s visit.”

Patients can also opt for text alerts that will inform them when the physician is ready to see them and when their prescriptions are ready for pickup.

Exam rooms include flat-screen monitors that physicians utilize in a variety of ways. Carnes said. “Through our electronic medical records, a physician can actually share the patient’s own chart or progress – show them how their blood pressure is tracking or different things that are personal to their medical record.”

The most exciting technological addition, according to Carnes, is that exam room monitors are connected to the main medical center. Through this link, specialists at the main center will be able to live-chat with patients for consultations and even examinations, saving the patient a drive to other facilities.

“We have a direct link to our urgent care clinic in Harbor City from the Signal Hill and video visits. “We are actually providing greater capacity in the Signal Hill area and we recognized that,” she said. “Even though we have an office in Long Beach, by being able to relocate one of our offices to Signal Hill, we’re actually providing greater capacity in the Greater Long Beach Area.”

Kaiser has been looking to move into Signal Hill for a long time, according to Carnes, but struggled to find the right space. She said the company is very happy with the selection it made on Willow Street.

“It’s like a dream come true for us,” she said. “Kaiser Permanente seeks to be an anchor institution in this community. We’re excited to be part of that community – and not just providing medical services but enhancing the strength of the community from a health perspective.”

Dealerships Look To Expand As Business Continues To Improve

A business continues to grow for Signal Hill auto dealers, big changes are still to come that could create even more revenue for dealers and the city.

With the addition of a BMW showroom on Spring Street and the new owners of Long Beach Honda increasing sales, the city is enjoying the prosperity of one of its largest revenue generators, according to City Manager Charlie Honeycutt.

“Kaiser Permanente is an anchor institution in this community. We’re providing greater capacity in the Signal Hill area and we recognized that,” she said. “And we continue to try to add different automakers to our auto center.”

Davis, who is also the owner of Glenn E. Thomas Dodge Chrysler Jeep Ram, reported a 10% growth in overall sales from last year, with Jeep being his most popular brand. According to Charron, Cadillac sales are up 21% from last year, while GMC and Buick are up 12% and 5%, respectively.

Great product, good value and a production team all contribute to the success of Boulevard, Charron said. “There was some amazing product last year. But to see some of the enhancements this year, it’s just great to be part of the team,” he said. “That [is] combined with our efforts on the dealer level: trying to spend more time coaching and inspiring the team through product knowledge and proper training – empowering them.”

Davis, who is also the owner of Glenn E. Thomas Dodge Chrysler Jeep Ram, reported a 10% growth in overall sales from last year, with Jeep being his most popular brand.

“Let’s go ahead and make this bigger for our local dealers to be able to take advantage of the traffic that’s on the 405 Freeway,” Davis said. “We’re actually providing greater capacity in the Signal Hill area and we recognized that.”

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A lack of space is holding dealerships back, Davis said, but the amendments to the ordinances should alleviate the restraint. “They’re opening up avenues for us. We’d like to stock more vehicles, but I can’t park them on top of one another.”

Glen E. Thomas has plans for expansion, but Davis did not want to disclose any details at this time.

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FOCUS ON THE CITY OF SIGNAL HILL

As Oil Prices Stabilize, Industry Executives Are Hopeful For Next Year

Despite reductions in the price of oil, Signal Hill Petroleum (SHP) has remained profitable, said Dave Slater, the company’s executive vice president and chief operating officer. “Production operations are running smooth and extremely well,” Slater said. “We have adjusted our cost structure by significantly reducing any new activity but not short-changing maintenance for any of the ongoing operations.”

Though the company owns two drilling rigs and is still maintaining them, it did stop drilling and re-drilling activities as a capital conservation measure when oil prices dropped. Prices dipped from around $100 per barrel to below $50, but SHP officials have been watching the market very closely and are happy with what they are seeing and, therefore, are looking to increase capital spending.

“We are looking at what prices are doing and our opportunity base,” Slater said. “We are optimistic that we will be operating one or more of the drilling rigs early in 2017.”

Price drops in oil and the prospect of renewed drilling have a significant impact on the City of Signal Hill, as well as surrounding Long Beach, as both cities are beneficiaries of taxes and royalties on oil sales.

“Oil is one of our larger revenue streams. With the drop of the price of oil, the oil producers in town have slowed their production,” Charlie Honeycutt, Signal Hill’s city manager, said. “We’ve seen that revenue drop. It’s gone from a high of about $1.1 million to about $500,000 to $600,000. It’s a significant portion of our revenue, but because we’re strong in sales tax, we’ve been able to offset that loss.”

Oil production is down by about 3% or 4%, according to Slater, who added that this type of decline is normal. He said drilling and re-drilling operations, as well as workovers—which are types of major maintenance—are used to offset the natural decline of production.

Signal Hill wells produce an average of more than 1 million barrels of oil per year, while the Los Angeles Basin produces about 75,000 barrels per day, Slater said.

“Our local production and that of other California producers is critically important to California’s economy,” he said. “California imports about 60% of its crude oil. When those supertankers unload, there is no tax on that oil. Our equivalent oil that we produce at the wellhead and send to the refinery generates a huge amount of taxes and a great number of good paying jobs.”
Why do these businesses call Signal Hill Home?

- Business Friendly
- Low Crime
- No Utility Users Tax
- Freeway Accessible
- Low Business License Fees
- Easy access to experienced staff at City Hall

Looking For A Place To Locate Your Business?

Contact: Elise McCaleb
Economic Development Manager
(562) 989-7379
emccaleb@cityofsignalhill.org

2175 Cherry Avenue, Signal Hill, CA 90755
562/989-7300 • www.cityofsignalhill.org

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California is being looked at closely.”

“Of the public and state regulators in regards flooding,” Slater said. “Given the concerns process called secondary recovery or water-injection, Slater said. “It’s a high and enhance oil recovery. “It’s a order to keep the pressure in the reservoir injection, Slater said. New regulations regarding underground in-

jection, through the division of oil, gas and ge-

izations as having definite benefits that are costly and unnecessary. Slater said these regulations could be separated into “smart regulation” and “dumb regulation.” He defined smart reg-

ulations as including SHP, does business; however, some ideas appear to be

Because of the risks to groundwater, new regulations are often presented by the state. Slater explained that many aspects of new regulations appear to enhance how the industry, including SHP, does business; however, some ideas appear to be costly and unnecessary.

Slater said these regulations could be separated into “smart regulation” and “dumb regulation.” He defined smart regulations as having definite benefits that exceed any costs, and dumb regulations as those that have minor benefits that are

outstripped by the cost, or actually have negative impacts. “As the world moves on and things change, new and smart regulation is needed,” Slater said. “The history in California has been we generally get smart regulation, but we’re always vigi-

lant and lobbying to push back on dumb regulation.”

The substantial drop in oil prices has also had a severe impact on oil services companies, such as Signal Hill’s Black Gold Pump & Supply Inc., which manufactures and repairs rod pumps and ships them worldwide.

“It’s been a challenging year for our business,” Steve Bollweg, chief financial officer for the company, said. “Everyone has cut back because of the price of oil, so last year was probably one of the most challenging in my history in this business.”

Black Gold is also not immune to state regulations that Bollweg said make manufacturing products more difficult in California in general. Even so, he said Signal Hill is a great place for the company to be located. “They’re very reactive to our needs,” he said. “I’ve had no problems with the city whatsoever. I’m actually thrilled that we’re in the tiny City of Signal Hill, even versus Long Beach or Los Angeles. Sig-

nal Hill does its best to accommodate us.”

Despite the decimation of oil prices, Bollweg said Black Gold was able to maintain full employment and even invest in itself to develop products based on in-

tellectual property. He attributes this continued innovation to the company’s close proximity to an education system that he says is “second to none.”

Black Gold employs mechanical engi-

neers who graduated from Cal State Long Beach and Cal State Fullerton. “There’s such a wealth of knowledge and talent in our backyard, and we’ve been able to draft off that, which I think is just wonderful,” Bollweg said. “That’s what differentiates Signal Hill from the rest of the oil industry. You can throw Bakers-

field into that. You can throw Texas into that. We have a university on every cor-

ner and we have innovation coming from these universities.”

Bollweg commended the city on its work with oil production and service companies. “Signal Hill understands our business, and they work with us very nicely when any type of situation comes up. I’m not sure other cities would be that understanding of our industry.”

Future Developments

Promise Affordable Housing, Retail And Commercial Space In Signal Hill

The real estate market in Signal Hill remains strong – from residential to commercial and industrial – and new af-

fordable housing will be a welcome addi-

tion to the small city.

The 72-unit Gunther Hill development project on the corner of Gundy Avenue and East Hill Street across from Signal Hill Elementary School is in the early stages of construction and will provide af-

ordable housing in the low to very-low income range.

“We had several different developers come to us with proposals for the site once we identified we would use it for low-income housing,” Signal Hill Mayor Lori Woods said. “We chose a developer that not only builds the site but also keeps ownership and maintains it. So they have a vested interest in making sure it’s top-

notch and maintained well and in keeping quality tenants.”

Woods said the placement for the afford-

able housing is ideal because tenants with limited transportation will be conveniently located near bus stops and a Blue Line sta-

tion, as well as being walking distance from schools and other amenities.

City Manager Charlie Honeycutt said the development, which is scheduled for com-

pletion in mid-May, 2017, would also alle-

viate stress for many residents in Signal Hill with children in the district. “It has a number of abandoned oil wells that are
dated throughout California and the city of Signal Hill is looking at new ways to use them. One proposal is to use the oil wells to help meet the city’s demand for water. This would be a smart way to use the resources that are already there.”

Another major residential project is Crescent Heights – 25 high-end, single-

family homes on land owned by Signal Hill Petroleum at Crescent Heights Street and Walnut Avenue.

“It’s a really promising site: three-story homes, two- or three-car garages with eleva-

tors, so it’s going to be high-end,” Woods said. “Several of them will have great views of Downtown Long Beach and Los Angeles.”

The project has not broken ground as it has a number of abandoned oil wells that

must be considered. Woods admits that having oil wells throughout the city adds several steps when dealing with develop-

ment, but she said since the city has always

With oil prices low, oil services companies such as Black Gold Pump & Supply Inc. have had a challeng-

ing year, according to Chief Financial Officer Steve Bollweg. Despite that, Bollweg said the company was able to maintain full employment and invest in itself. He attributes its success to being located in Sig-

nal Hill, a city he says “understands our business.” (Photograph by the Business Journal’s Larry Dunbar)
FOCUS ON THE CITY OF SIGNAL HILL

had to deal with these conditions, officials have it down pat.

Signal Hill Petroleum has several development projects in the conceptual phase, according to Dave Slater, executive vice president and chief operating officer. He said the company is looking at a number of concepts and is in discussions with city planning staff and city leaders.

“We have some exciting things that we’re not ready to announce publicly, but with a little more hard word, I think we’ll have some things to talk about in the near future,” Slater said.

Among these preliminary concept discussions are residential, retail and commercial spaces. Though no plans are in the entitlement process, Slater hopes to begin the process soon.

Additional commercial real estate will be welcome as there is not a tremendous amount of space in the city, according to Jeff Coburn, a principal at Lee & Associates Commercial Real Estate Services. He said Lee & Associates represents the Signal Hill Towne Center at 2501 and 2525 Cherry Ave. and is working on several deals now.

“[Prices] have increased, as there is low inventory for quality properties,” Coburn said. “Usually it’s the buildings with decent parking that have a lot of people looking for them. Five parking stalls per 1,000 square feet, those properties attract a much higher sales price.”

Lease prices can range from $1.80 to $2 per square foot, Coburn said, while sale prices vary greatly depending on the condition of the property and available parking. He said sale prices can range from below $200 per square foot to $215 or higher.

Industrial site vacancies are even less common in Signal Hill. Brandon Carrillo, also a principal at Lee & Associates, described the market as anemic, with vacancy below 1%.

Carrillo attributes low vacancy rates to the desire of many companies to be located in the city because of what he calls the “Signal Hill premium.” Being a smaller city, the police have faster response times, which businesses find appealing. Also, the city is travel-friendly with the 405 Freeway and the proximity to Long Beach Airport.

So many amenities in a small area is another attraction for businesses, according to Carrillo. Stores such as Costco and Home Depot, gas stations, and numerous eateries are convenient for businesses.

“Time is money, so those types of variables get cut down immensely when you are strategically located in Signal Hill,” Carrillo said.

The real estate market for existing homes continues strong with a high demand for limited units. According to Ian Hand, a real estate broker with Keller Williams Realty. He also said that property time on the market has extended recently to an average of 42 days for current listings, but he added that first-time buyers are still buying up the less expensive property.

Speaking on why the Signal Hill market has remained strong, Daskam said, “Loca- tion-wise, they’re centered between Orange County and L.A., and the buyers like the newer homes; you just can’t find new homes priced like this if you go into Orange County.”

Hand said a more buoyant economy, a great community and “a gradual realization that it is a place that offers views but isn’t going to cost the same as views in Rancho...”
Signal Hill Impacted By Prop 47, But Community Policing Proving Effective

Things have been pretty quiet here in Signal Hill, not a lot of major crime concerns," Police Chief Michael Langston told the Business Journal. "However, we’ve certainly seen an increase in property crimes, mostly shoplifting, which essentially replaced petty theft due to the impact of Proposition 47," he explained.

City Manager Charlie Honeycutt also attributed recent shoplifting and car break-in spikes to Prop 47, which passed in November 2014. He said since the proposition changed petty theft and other non-violent crimes to misdemeanors instead of felonies, there isn’t much deterrent for criminals. "I think there’s a sense from the California Police Chief’s Association that it has to do with early release of nonviolent criminals and changes in law that basically make shoplifting a slap on the hand," Honeycutt continued.

The group has established relationships with mental health professionals to go out and develop our own mental health evaluation team that can be called in when a situation arises. “Certainly we’re seeing an increase in people dealing with mental illness," Langston said. “So we’ve developed our own mental health evaluation team where we partner police officers with mental health professionals to go out and provide services to those folks in need."
GB Remanufacturing Celebrates 30th Year

GB Remanufacturing, located at 2040 Cherry Industrial Circle in North Long Beach, recently celebrated its 30th anniversary. The company remanufactures and distributes premium gasoline and diesel fuel injection products to customers around the world. Pictured is President & CEO Michael Kitching, who said the company has grown to more than 90 employees working in more than 40,000 square feet of state-of-the-art manufacturing facilities. "I look forward to working with our employees, representatives and customers to ensure that we continue to provide the best remanufactured products in the industry for many years to come," he said. Also pictured is a remanufactured Ford 6.0L Power Stroke high pressure oil pump at the final stage of production/packaging. For more information, visit: www.gbreman.com. (Photographs by the Business Journal’s Larry Duncan)

Dickey’s Barbecue Pit Opens Near Traffic Circle

Dickey’s Barbecue Pit held a ribbon-cutting ceremony on July 7 to mark the opening of its restaurant at 1950 Ximeno Ave. at the Circle Center Shopping Center near the Traffic Circle. Considered the largest BBQ chain in the country, the Texas-based company recently expanded into California, with the Long Beach eatery being its third in the state. Grand opening specials run through the end of July. Dickey’s, open daily from 11 a.m. to 11 p.m., provides family packs, catering and online ordering. For more information, visit dickeys.com or call 562/494-6666. Pictured at the cutting the ribbon are co-owners Merna Girgis, left, and Nancy Girgis, who are joined by family members and, at far right, Long Beach 4th District Councilmember Daryl Supernaw. (Photograph by the Business Journal’s Larry Duncan)

Victoria Bryan, Former Arts Council Leader, Debuts Photography Exhibit At Utopia Restaurant In East Village

Victoria Bryan, former director of the Arts Council for Long Beach, debuted a photography exhibit of her own works in the East Village’s Utopia Restaurant earlier this month. The exhibit, “METRO NATURE,” contains 366 images taken on Bryan’s daily walks from November 2011 to July 2016. Most of the stills were taken on the streets of Long Beach. The art installation examines nature in urban environments. "In ways both obvious and subtle, signs of nature change our experience of living and working in a busy urban center," Bryan said in a prepared statement. Bryan has lived in Long Beach since 1985. She currently teaches at California State University, Long Beach’s College of Education and its School of Art. Utopia Restaurant is located at 455 E. 1st St. (Photograph by the Business Journal’s Larry Duncan)
POW! WOW! Long Beach 2016 – Artists And Walls

The artists listed below completed their murals by Sunday, July 17.

1. Sean “Hula” Yoro @ Under Queenway bridge / LA River (pylon on Queen Mary side, facing Aquarium)
2. Pantonio @ Aquarium of the Pacific / 100 Aquarium Way
3. Defer @ LB Convention Center parking structure (opposite Seaside Way meeting room entrance)
4. The Draculas @ Westin Hotel Courtyard / 333 E. Ocean Blvd.
5. OG23, Jaime Molina & Dragon 76 @ Edison Apartments alley / E. Alta Way
6. Hifotzuki @ Psychic Temple 228 E. Broadway
7. Aaron Li-Hill @ Mark Schneider Fine Jewelry / 245 Promenade N.
8. Sarah Joncas @ Toxic Toast Records / 757 Pine Ave.
10. Ernest Zacharevic @ 419 E. 6th St. (apartment building)
11. Dave Van Patten @ The Made Agency / 425 E Broadway
12. Pantonio @ Hotel Royal (side alley parking) / 431 E. Broadway
13. Gail Werner @ Super Suds Laundromat / 250 Alamitos Ave.
14. 123Klan & OG Slick @ Liberty Gallery / 437 Alamitos Ave.
15. Telmo Miel @ LB United Boxing Club / 1396 E. 4th St.
16. Kashink @ The Center / 2017 E. 4th St.
17. Cinta Vidal @ Art Theatre of Long Beach (back alley) 2025 E. 4th St.
18. Ske One @ Pacific Gallery at the Long Beach Arena, 300 E. Ocean Blvd.
19. Andrew Hem, Edwin Ushiro & Yoskay Yamamoto @ Steelhead Coffee / 1208 E. Wardlow Rd.
20. MR44 @ Expo Arts Center / 4321 Atlantic Ave.
21. James Haunt @ La Bodega Mexicana / 6001 Atlantic Ave.

A July 12 ceremony in Downtown Long Beach marked the beginning of POW! WOW! Long Beach 2016, featuring the painting of 21 murals throughout the city (locations and artists listed at right). Pictured from left are: Jasper Wong, POW! WOW! founder and director; Andrew Hosner, owner of Inkspace Gallery; John Hall, POW! WOW! Long Beach regional lead director; Jes Gress, POW! WOW! Hawaii operations director; and Emily Okamoto, POW! WOW! Japan director. (Photograph by the Business Journal’s Larry Duncan)

Portuguese street artist Antonio “Pantonio” Correia paints a mural of stingrays on the nearly 2,600-square-foot front wall of the Aquarium of the Pacific. The mural is part of the 2016 POW! WOW! Long Beach festival, a weeklong celebration of art that brought world-renowned artists to the city to paint large-scale murals. On Thursday, July 14, the Aquarium held a POW! WOW!-themed Night Dive event that featured live music and DJs. “Art helps people make an emotional connection to the social and environmental issues of the day,” Jerry Schubel, president and chief executive officer of the Aquarium, said in a press release. “It is our hope that this mural will leave a lasting impression with our visitors and inspire them to act on behalf of marine life facing extinction.” (Photographs by the Business Journal’s Larry Duncan)
People In The News

Jayne Lastusky
Rotary Club Of Long Beach

Jayne Lastusky is the new president of the Rotary Club of Long Beach, which is celebrating its 100th anniversary in 2017. Lastusky, who in 1987 became one of the first four women to join the club, previously served as region vice president of the American Cancer Society. The 320-member strong organization is planning a series of events leading up to its centennial year. According to its website, “The object of Long Beach Rotary is to encourage and foster the ideal of service as a basis of worthy enterprise.”

Bhavesh B. Shah
Long Beach Memorial

Bhavesh B. Shah, M.D., is the new medical director of interventional gastroenterology at Long Beach Memorial and the gastroenterology director at the MemorialCare Todd Cancer Institute (TCI) at Long Beach Memorial. She is also an associate with Long Beach Gastroenterology Associates. According to a hospital statement, “TCI will now be able to diagnose and treat a much wider range of gastrointestinal conditions.”

Sonia De La Torre-Iniguez
Long Beach City College

Sonia De La Torre-Iniguez has been named the director of student success and support program (SSSP) at Long Beach City College. SSSP is a new statewide program for community colleges, aiming to “help students achieve their educational objectives in a more timely manner.” De La Torre-Iniguez most recently worked at Scripps College in Claremont, where she was the senior assistant dean for academic resources and services.

Kevin Peterson
P2S Engineering

Kevin Peterson, founder and president/CEO of P2S Engineering, Inc., has been elected president of the YMCA Greater Long Beach. He is serving a two-year term, leading a 45-member board of directors, which “sets strategic direction and policy to guide the Y’s work of strengthening communities through youth development, healthy living and social responsibility.”

The YMCA of Greater Long Beach serves the cities of Long Beach, Signal Hill, Lakewood, Hawaiian Gardens, Bellflower, Paramount, Cerritos, Artesia, Los Alamitos, Rosemont, Seal Beach and Big Bear.

Michael Golob
Frontier Communications

Michael Golob has been named senior vice president, engineering and technology, for Frontier Communications’ West Region, heading up engineering initiatives for California, Oregon and Washington. His previous assignments with Frontier included leading the national engineering operations and the engineering efforts during the company’s acquisition of Verizon access lines and Internet customers. Among his new responsibilities, Golob will lead an organization of more than 1,000 team members, regional network planning and implementation, overseeing Central Office and construction operations. Additionally, he will continue to manage the national Central Office Installation team and program manage Frontier’s Connect America program.

Brandon Hovard
City National Bank

Brandon Hovard has been named senior vice president and business development officer for City National Bank. He serves the needs of business in the greater Long Beach area. Hovard, a Long Beach native, has nearly two decades of financial services experience, and most recently served as a managing director of U.S. Bank’s commercial banking unit. He earned a bachelor’s degree from UCLA.

Third Sector Report

Firing A Boardmember: Strategic Leadership In Action

(Continued From Page 1)

By JEFFREY WILCOX

dents at your organization when a boardmember disregards his or her responsibilities, assumes inappropriate roles, advocates a personal agenda over the mission, or behaves in such a way that the governance obligations of the board are obstructed?”

Volunteered time and talent are scarce valuable commodities. Many leaders find the idea of disengaging a prominent citizen willing to provide board duty as unthinkable. Yet, when a boardmember’s performance or lack thereof obstructs organizational progress, a change should be made.

Highly successful board chairs have experience terming boardmembers or calling the question as to whether a boardmember and the board are a “good fit.” A manager of a board has the same obligations to his or her team as any other manager responsible for a team charged with important responsibilities.

The leadership scar tissue that comes from terminating or counseling a disgruntled, absent or renegade boardmember reveals five valuable lessons board chairs should consider as they fulfill the obligations that go with their titles and positions.

The first lesson is exercise care when engaging boardmembers in order to lower the risk of having to disengage them. Recruiting boardmembers with specific obligations and responsibilities in hand are vital. When a director writes his or her own job description, a no-fail recipe for trouble is in the making.

The second lesson is annually review policy that outlines the processes for recruiting and onboarding boardmembers, resolving conflict that may arise within the board, and the grounds and processes for dismissing a director. Carrying out board-approved policy is easier for a board chair than having to fend for his or her subjective decisions about the status of a boardmember.

The third lesson is conduct an annual board assessment. A practical evaluation provides a gauge for how the board, as a whole, is performing, while giving each director an opportunity to draw his or her own conclusions about personal contributions and fit. As in any organization when data reveals there is poor performance, leadership needs to cite the results and then do something about it.

The fourth lesson is recognizing boardmembers function best in a culture of peer accountability. A Board Development or Governance committee is a “must have” in any board structure. With a committee, boardmembers are charged with coordinating the recruitment, training, retention, assessment and recognition of their peers. When the going gets tough, having a committee of peers whose job is to assure a well-functioning and successful board lowers the risk of a chair being accused of unilateral decision-making when things aren’t working right.

The fifth lesson is the simplest and most important: Never underestimate what a lack of attention to the topic of board term limits can do to obstruct progress. Without term limits, there is no mechanism for natural attrition. Today, the trend is one-year terms, up to a maximum of six, which causes boards and their members to regularly look at levels of performance, participation and results.

No board chair wants a reputation for firing volunteers. More importantly, a board chair can’t afford a reputation for ignoring his or her leadership obligation which is asuring employees, consumers, contributors and the community that a functional and successful board is at work advancing an important mission.

(UCLA. (Photograph by The Business Journal’s Larry Duncan)
Why Does Long Beach Have Both A City Attorney And A City Prosecutor?

Once ran for city prosecutor many years ago on the platform that the position eventually should be merged with the city attorney in order to save money. I didn’t win — and currently, the budget for the city prosecutor’s office is $5 million and the budget for the city attorney’s office is $9.4 million.

Few cities in California elect both a city attorney and a city prosecutor. City attorneys, who handle civil matters and advise elected officials, are usually retained as outside counsel. Three major cities utilize prosecutors: Long Beach, Los Angeles and San Diego. Both Los Angeles and San Diego prosecute misdemeanors under their city attorney offices.

Our city prosecutor handles criminal matters — offenses such as assault, prostitution, drunk driving, commercial burglary, animal cruelty, graffiti, child abuse and domestic violence — but only at the misdemeanor level. All felony charges are handled by the office of the Los Angeles County District Attorney.

Since its beginnings in the 1890s, Long Beach has always had an elected city attorney. It took until 1929 for the city charter to be changed by voters to add a city prosecutor.

It was the move to have a city prosecutor apparently was driven by the Ministerial Union and the United Church Brotherhood as well as the owners of the Pike Ministerial Union and the United Church Brotherhood as well as the owners of the Pike.

The vote was close. The move to have a city prosecutor apparently was driven by the Ministerial Union and the United Church Brotherhood as well as the owners of the Pike. The idea that planning can predict the future is at a risk. Strategic thinking should be rational and intuitive.

William Starbuck, a scholar and management expert, talks about the downside of planning. He says, “Often strategic planning is little more than superstitious ravings — a guaranteed recipe for shallow thinking.” The idea that planning can predict the future is at best a myth. Risk can be reduced, but far from eliminated.

This is why it is important for strategic thinking to be at the core of strategic planning.

Here are 5 things strategic thinking includes:

1. Strategic thinking should be rational and intuitive.
2. Strategic thinking needs time margin.
3. Strategic thinking is proactive. Without uninterrupted focus, we will always be reacting to our environment. We need to be proactive. Data comes at us at a constant barrage. Sorting out important data from insignificant debris saves time and money. This allows us to step away from tactical execution to ensure we are heading in the right direction.
4. Strategic thinking broadens knowledge. The dark side of focus is the loss of peripheral vision. Strategic thinking helps broaden our context. This helps clarify where our organization is and where it should be going. Good judgment and creativity are enhanced. An organization’s plan should never lead to a missed opportunity.
5. Strategic thinking questions assumptions. Questioning assumptions is often – sometimes subtly — colored as a non-team attitude. In reality, questioning assumptions is a fundamental management function and taking objectivity if we assume our assumptions are accurate. We should allow for surprises, admit error, and improve as we correct. Questioning assumptions should be a core competency.

What Small Business Owners Should Think About When Evaluating Funding Options

The lending environment is constantly evolving, which means more options for small business owners. In the last few years, non-bank online lenders have entered this landscape adding more choices. Factors to consider:

Do they offer a range of lending options?

Selecting the right small business lender and type of loan for your business can be difficult as there are so many options available. From traditional loans, credit cards and lines of credit to community development micro loans, grants or U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA)-backed loans, you’ll want to seek out a lender that offers a variety of funding options to meet you wherever you are in the business lifecycle. Consider making time to meet with your banker to learn more about the various financing options.

Do they offer fast and convenient lending products?

While numerous factors can impact the length of time it takes to get a decision on a small business loan application, the best lenders make it as easy as possible and keep customers informed throughout the process. Many small business owners are strapped for time, and are seeking faster, more convenient online lending options at competitive interest rates. With Wells Fargo’s new FastFlex℠ Small Business Loan, for example, a business owner can complete an application in minutes, receive a quick decision after applying and obtain funding in as little as one day. Other credit products – such as real-estate secured loans – will require more time and effort.

Are they transparent about terms and pricing?

Borrowers should look for a loan product that clearly states its terms and pricing upfront. Take time to fully understand how much the loan will cost, frequency of payments and any additional fees associated with the loan. As you pursue credit for your business, make sure lenders provide you with the interest rate as well as how much you will owe each payment period. Compare all of your options to ensure you’re getting the product that best meets your financial needs.

Obtaining funding for your business may seem challenging, but entrepreneurs have more options today than ever before. It’s important that you take the time early on to research and assess all your options so you can determine what works best for you and what you want to work with and which financing option is best suited to meet your business needs.

Inside City Hall

What Small Business Owners Should Think About When Evaluating Funding Options

Small Business Dollars & Sense

Effective Leadership

Is Strategic Thinking One Of Your Core Competencies?

“The 10% success rate of strategy is wildly inflated” — Tom Peters

Once ran for city prosecutor many years ago on the platform that the position eventually should be merged with the city attorney in order to save money. I didn’t win — and currently, the budget for the city prosecutor’s office is $5 million and the budget for the city attorney’s office is $9.4 million.

Few cities in California elect both a city attorney and a city prosecutor. City attorneys, who handle civil matters and advise elected officials, are usually retained as outside counsel. Three major cities utilize prosecutors: Long Beach, Los Angeles and San Diego. Both Los Angeles and San Diego prosecute misdemeanors under their city attorney offices.

Our city prosecutor handles criminal matters — offenses such as assault, prostitution, drunk driving, commercial burglary, animal cruelty, graffiti, child abuse and domestic violence — but only at the misdemeanor level. All felony charges are handled by the office of the Los Angeles County District Attorney.

Since its beginnings in the 1890s, Long Beach has always had an elected city attorney. It took until 1929 for the city charter to be changed by voters to add a city prosecutor.

It was the move to have a city prosecutor apparently was driven by the Ministerial Union and the United Church Brotherhood as well as the owners of the Pike. The idea that planning can predict the future is at a risk. Strategic thinking should be rational and intuitive.

William Starbuck, a scholar and management expert, talks about the downside of planning. He says, “Often strategic planning is little more than superstitious ravings — a guaranteed recipe for shallow thinking.” The idea that planning can predict the future is at best a myth. Risk can be reduced, but far from eliminated.

This is why it is important for strategic thinking to be at the core of strategic planning.

Here are 5 things strategic thinking includes:

1. Strategic thinking should be rational and intuitive.
2. Strategic thinking needs time margin. Free space is necessary for strategic thinking — creating blocks of time as buffers. Businessness gets in the way of business. Einstein was known to create multiple buffer blocks. Imagination needs room to both see and soar. Make time for imagination, insight and innovation. Too many leaders today short-circuit imagination, insight and innovation, and rush to implementation — an approach to strategic planning that is a guaranteed recipe for shallow thinking.
3. Strategic thinking is proactive. Without uninterrupted focus, we will always be reacting to our environment. We need to be proactive. Data comes at us at a constant barrage. Sorting out important data from insignificant debris saves time and money. This allows us to step away from tactical execution to ensure we are heading in the right direction.
4. Strategic thinking broadens knowledge. The dark side of focus is the loss of peripheral vision. Strategic thinking helps broaden our context. This helps clarify where our organization is and where it should be going. Good judgment and creativity are enhanced. An organization’s plan should never lead to a missed opportunity.
5. Strategic thinking questions assumptions. Questioning assumptions is often – sometimes subtly — colored as a non-team attitude. In reality, questioning assumptions is a fundamental management function and taking objectivity if we assume our assumptions are accurate. We should allow for surprises, admit error, and improve as we correct. Questioning assumptions should be a core competency.
Realty Views

What Is Going On With Brexit And Our Real Estate

by Terry Ross

The recent vote in Great Britain to withdraw from the European Union sent the hyperbolic meter way up and took our stock market down by 610 points as pundit predicted the end of the world economy in some sectors with investors wringing their hands in all corners of the globe. Now that there has been a little time (or at least one news cycle) since the vote and the subsequent wailing about what this means for Great Britain, Europe and of course the United States, various analysts and those that heavily influence our stock market have come to see that this action by voters in the United Kingdom is mainly just going to make things different – which tends to scare people.

For those who are old enough to remember, there was a day before the European Union was formed when countries had to negotiate their own deals with Great Britain and that country had its own say over these things, as well as how it wanted to be treated in matters like immigration, tariff and a myriad of other issues that have been turned over to the EU during the past 40 years. Now, these decisions will revert back to the way they were previously for Great Britain – or at least that is what it looks like – with that country taking control independent of the rest of Europe. It isn’t like nations will not trade or do commerce with Great Britain – but they will have to deal directly with them. And that could be a good thing in the long run.

For the U.S. real estate investor, homeowner or buyer there might even be some benefit – at least in the short term. As they say, out of chaos comes opportunity. According to the real estate website First Tuesday, one of the initial outcomes of the Brexit vote is that mortgage interest rates may fall. Going into this year, the Fed pretty much indicated that interest rates will be at their lowest point and that there won’t be much of a dip in the value of the pound sterling compared to the dollar, it would make it more difficult for U.S. exporters to compete. But when you consider that the European Union and Great Britain make up only 3% of the total U.S. trade market – for California it is even less – then the real impact doesn’t appear to be that great.

This looks to be a situation where the hype is going to have much greater impact than the reality – and the hype might just help with our interest rates for a while. (Terry Ross, the broker-owner of TR Properties, will answer any questions about today’s real estate market. E-mail questions to Realty Views at terryyoss1@cs.com or call 949/457-4922.)

Social Robotics

As an emerging field that combines several novel technologies, social robotics promises to generate widespread social and cultural impact, along with tangible economic return. Let’s take a look at how the enabling technology behind social robotics has evolved.

Today, there are many devices that are lumped together in the category of robots. Examples are plenty, and include such devices as medical robots, entertainment robots, industrial robots, household robots, service robots, and of course military robots. However, when Czech playwright Karel Capek introduced it to the world in the 1920 play “Rossum’s Universal Robots,” it was a reference to a hypothetical technology that manufactured simplified living creatures called “robots.” Obviously Capek didn’t elaborate on how the robots were manufactured, but their description certainly resembled the modern idea of what is now known as “android,” figures that can be mistaken for humans.

In today’s world of robotics, robots are generally described as having some social qualities (with the exception of industrial robots that mainly maneuver mechanical arms). Since the 1950s and the dawn of the field of artificial intelligence, robots have been envisioned as having the ability to explicitly or implicitly gauge social level. For example, the simple ability to interpret verbal commands is considered a stepping stone to more general discourse. Thus, as engineers designed more effective mechanics and electronics for building the physical structure, significant work had to be done to ensure correct operation of this technology juggernaut.

Building an autonomous social robot, however, is far more challenging because it must be able to correctly comprehend the changes of the real world and respond to the changes appropriately to do a limited scale at the present time.

Social robots are expected to be able to interact with humans and collaborate with other robots. More challenging is being aware of context, and understanding intentions and expectations. With such competencies, they can be personal robots that assist the elderly and persons with disabilities. Working at homes, they can improve the quality of life, replace current augmentation and rehabilitation devices, and assist in education, entertainment, and even gaming. Theoretically, they would perform any task that humans do, except that they would do it better. Yes, the sky may be the limit!

In Capek’s play, “Rossum’s Universal Robots,” the author wrote in the story was whether the mass-produced creatures, which were efficient but emotionless, were being exploited by their owners. The twist in the story came when a few specially manufactured robots — those that were capable of introspection and aware of the need for self-preservation — provoke a revolution by all robots around the world against the oppressive humans.

Now in the 21st century, could this really happen? Is it plausible that, as robots become more intelligent and their population increases, they may attempt a takeover? Could there be intelligent robots that now work feverishly as servants, free labor, and possibly soldiers, collectively decide that role reversal may not be such a bad idea? Imagine that! Having lost our supremacy to the revolutionary robots, taking orders from them is what we do. If it’s a consolation, some feel that today they are working for managers that are like robots!

(Firoozan Golshani is the dean of the College of Engineering at California State University, Long Beach.)
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