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DOWNTOWN LONG BEACH ASSOCIATES BOARD BACKS CEO

DIRECTORS DISCUSS INCREASED COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Long Beach, CA — (June 19, 2009)—Today a Special Closed Session of the Board of Directors of the Downtown Long Beach Associates met to address allegations that were contained in a petition delivered to it on Tuesday of this week regarding its President and CEO, Kraig Kojian. The result of the meeting was a unanimous vote of confidence excepting one abstention. Jim Anderson, DLBA Board Chair stated, “We have a process in place to evaluate our President and CEO and after weighing all relevant aspects, we offered support for Mr. Kojian. More specifically, we all agreed that Mr. Kojian’s tasks and actions are directed by the Board and we must take the responsibility if there are concerns in the community. Representatives from the Downtown Long Beach Associates (DLBA) Board of Directors will meet personally with members of the Downtown business community to discuss their concerns and challenges.”

The petition, signed by 32 of the approximately 1,800 business and/or commercial property owners in the Downtown business and property based improvement districts, states that the DLBA has been unwilling to implement the improvements perceived by the signatories as necessary for the upturn of the current business climate.

“Our role as leaders in the business community is to ensure that the organization is delivering the highest level of service possible and while the Board of Directors is confident in the direction and leadership of the DLBA, we welcome dialogue about ways in which we can improve.” said Anderson. “In these difficult times, we will look to this situation to energize us even more to better communicate with our stakeholders and the Downtown community.”

An estimated 70 Downtown residents signed a similar petition, citing their desire for a change in leadership. While residents do not pay into the business improvement district and are not directly represented by the DLBA, Anderson said the Board does take their concerns to heart.

“As a business organization, the DLBA recognizes and respects the role residents play in the success of our Downtown,” said Anderson. “In fact, we’re working aggressively to engage residents in events, programs and services and to build stronger ties between the business and residential communities.”

Anderson said that members of the Board will request meetings in the coming weeks with signers of the two petitions in an effort to better understand their concerns. The information obtained in these meetings will be brought to the entire Board at a future meeting for consideration and discussion as it relates to the goals and priorities of the organization.

“In the meantime, the Board is dedicated to the continued implementation of the DLBA’s strategic plan,” said Anderson. Many of the concerns that have been brought to our attention are identified in this plan and are in the process of being addressed. Further, the Board committed to the process of reviewing its strategic plan and its priorities on a more frequent basis in order to make sure that it is properly addressing the needs of the community.”

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Downtown Long Beach Associates 2010: A Focus for Leadership and Development

In July of 2008, the DLBA Board of Directors engaged in a self-evaluation process that included several months of surveys, focus groups and third-party reviews to assess the organization and its priorities based on the current and anticipated future needs of Downtown. The result of that process was the development of a strategic plan, ***Downtown Long Beach Associates 2010: A Focus on Leadership and Development***, which was adopted by the Board in July of 2008.

Among the top four of twelve high-priority recommendations established in the plan is to engage Downtown residents. In the past six months the DLBA has helped to facilitate the formation of a Downtown Residential Council (DRC), which serves as a conduit to this increasingly important constituency.

Chaired by DLBA Board member, Neysa Colizzi, the DRC is made up of representatives from residential buildings and home owners associations throughout Downtown and meets regularly to discuss the issues and establish priorities that are important to existing and potential future residents.

The DLBA Board also chose to provide a louder voice to the residential community by, for the first time, creating a voting seat on the Board to be filled by Colizzi, who also serves as DRC President. Additionally, the organization has created two seats on each of its Task Forces (Public Safety, Marketing & Special Events, Economic Development and Capital Improvement) that have been filled by residents as appointed by the DRC.

Second to residential engagement, Economic Development was also identified as a top priority for the organization, including the creation of a permanent staff position and the development of a retail attraction and retention program. In February 2009, the DLBA added Kristopher Larson to the staff roster in the position of Vice President. Larson brings an extensive background in the fields of urban planning and economic development and has engaged in more than 100 meetings with Downtown stakeholders during his brief tenure.

Larson's work plan includes the development of an online portal that will help to position the DLBA as a one-stop-shop for potential retail tenants, offering information about Downtown demographics, vacancy listings and financial incentives available to new and/or existing businesses.

Other priorities identified in the plan include advocacy, communications, marketing & events, beautification, and the development of a Downtown Action Plan.

Among the actions taken by the Board since the plan was adopted eleven months ago have been the re-tooling of the organization's governance structure to create a more diverse and truly representative body, a collaboration with the City to develop a strategic vision for Downtown's future and the introduction of four working task forces made up of representatives from all areas of the business district.

In October 2008, the Board allocated \$500,000 of deferred revenue funding to support Capital Improvement and beautification projects, including the widely-acclaimed LED lighting installations visible throughout Downtown and public art currently being fabricated for installation in the Ocean Boulevard median.

More than \$350,000 was allocated to Marketing & Special Events, which has supported the organization's efforts to produce and/or sponsor more than 22 events in Downtown this year. Among the new events being produced by the DLBA are the Taste of Downtown, Latin American Festival, Summer And Music (S.A.M.) series and Halloween on Pine. In addition, the newly-formed Marketing & Special Events Task Force has been able to implement vacant storefront activation, cooperative advertising and other programs designed to drive foot traffic and business into Downtown.

A Bright Future for Downtown

Anderson points to a number of significant improvements to the landscape of Downtown Long Beach in recent years as a sign that the community is headed in a positive direction.

“In the past five years, more than 2,500 residential and mixed-use units have been constructed, driving thousands of new residents into the area,” said Anderson. “Construction on the Long Beach Promenade is nearly complete and the area has already attracted interest from a diverse pool of investors and developers. More than 215 new businesses opened their doors in Downtown in 2008 and 93 new businesses have moved in since January of this year at the height of a national economic crisis. These are all very positive things and are important to acknowledge.”

Downtown Long Beach has received many honors in recent years, including the distinction of being named one of the Top 10 Turnaround Downtowns by the Urban Land Institute and was named one of America’s Top 10 Most Walkable Neighborhoods by Walkscore.com.

Anderson credits the work of the DLBA and its Board of Directors, along with a number of civic, community and residential partners, with the great strides being made toward a more vibrant and prosperous Downtown.

“I truly believe that Downtown Long Beach is on the right track toward realizing its full potential, said Anderson.” “It’s an honor to work with the DLBA on the development of programs and services that are contributing to the revitalization of our City’s urban core. It’s an ongoing process and one that will not happen overnight, but with the help of our partners in the community, Downtown will become the thriving metropolis we all know it can be.”

For more information about the DLBA and/or events happening in Downtown, please visit www.downtownlongbeach.org or call (562) 436-4259.

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About DLBA:

The Downtown Long Beach Associates is a non-profit organization operating on behalf of the property owners and tenants of the Business Improvement District. It is dedicated to the management, marketing, security, maintenance, advocacy, and economic and community development of the assessment districts in cooperation with the City of Long Beach and the private sector.