

**MANHATTAN BEACH  
OUTDOOR DINING TASK FORCE  
MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING  
July 9, 2024**

**A. CALL MEETING TO ORDER**

Community Development Director Talyn Mirzakhianian called the meeting to order at the hour of 1:05 p.m.

**B. ROLL CALL**

Roll call was taken, and the following task force members were present for the meeting:

Bob DaGiau – Parking and Public Improvements Commission  
David Archer – Chamber of Commerce  
Maureen McBride – Chamber of Commerce  
Jill Lamkin – Downtown (DBPA)  
Jim Burton – Downtown resident  
Mike Simms – North MB (BID)  
Kimberlee Kelly – North MB resident  
Don Ziss – Commercial (MVSC)  
Harout (Harry) Ashikian – Commercial (Non-MVSC)  
Bridgette Goodman – At-large resident  
Faith Lyons – At-large resident/business  
Peir Serota – At-large resident/business  
Audrey Judson – At-large resident/business

Joseph Ungoco (Planning Commission) and Paul Mullin (At-large resident) were absent from the meeting.

**C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

A motion was passed to approve the minutes from the May 28, 2024, task force meeting.

**D. OUTDOOR DINING PROGRAM REGULATIONS**

Senior Planner Jaehee Yoon presented an overview of the task force consensus and recommendations over the last year and highlighted items that require additional input from the task force. The program overview included a recap of the visioning exercise, program objective, SWOT analysis, outdoor dining definition, program scope, documents that were referenced in developing the program, input on public flex spaces, sidewalk dining and private property outdoor dining regulations, and other provisions that should be considered related to heaters, lighting, shade structures, and electrical connections.

Subsequently, Senior Planner Yoon provided information on the preferred program vision's pilot project being considered along Manhattan Avenue between Center Place and Manhattan Beach Boulevard. The intent of the pilot project is to test how the preferred vision will work and provide an opportunity for the community to experience it prior to investing in permanent improvements. The location for the pilot project was selected based on several factors, including the number of different businesses (i.e., Dash Dashi, Tacolicious, and Nando) being able to participate, all of

which have agreed to do so when staff reached out; the topography being flat; how there will be no net loss of street parking spaces as existing spaces will be reconfigured on the opposite side of the pilot project to make up for the loss and how that will help create a street lane that aligns with the northern block; and the ability to continuously widen the entire block without creating bulb outs in between.

Discussion ensued amongst the task force with questions to staff regarding the pilot project as follows:

- Whether the pilot project would be under the proposed program regulations, to which staff responded that the participants were informed that current sidewalk dining regulations will continue to apply. However, the task force noted that the pilot project should be operated under similar conditions being proposed to better understand how the program will work. Staff commented that we are open to discussing further but should be mindful that as this is a pilot project, the participating businesses may not want to make huge investments such as building awnings, wall mounted heaters, etc.
- As the pilot project's modular system appeared similar to temporary dining decks, how debris, rodents, drainage, and overall maintenance issues will be addressed. Staff noted that the pilot project is intended to be there temporarily and the modular system itself will be used as a pedestrian pathway and not for dining, which caused many of those issues. In addition, that the durability of the modular system has considered the unique coastal environment and will look more into the maintenance concerns with the vendor.
- The cost difference between the modular system and the permanent improvements, to which staff noted that it is a significant difference and will know more when we receive cost estimates from the consultant team based on the preliminary plans.
- Further clarification on where the modular system will be set up, which will extend into the street lane from the edge of the existing sidewalk curb.
- The transition strips between the existing sidewalk and modular system appear to be metal, in which case should be avoided as it may get too hot during the summer when some people walk barefoot. Staff made a note to look into alternative materials with the vendor.
- The types of barriers that will be used for the pilot project where planter boxes are proposed near the street side parameter of the modular system and how the participating businesses are required to have stanchions to delineate the dining area during the pilot project.
- Suggestions from the task force that there should be signage incorporated into the pilot project to inform the public of what it is. Also, including a QR code to help evaluate the success of the pilot project and receive input from the community.
- With the modular system's lead time of approximately 10 weeks and another week to install and build out the right-of-way improvements, staff initially anticipated having the pilot project up for at least the summer of 2025. The task force suggested it should be maintained for a full year with a set start and end date, so we may assess what months were better or not. Also, that staff should consider taking this pilot project to the City Council as a separate item as soon as possible since having this built before mid-December will be beneficial to the overall economy of Downtown.
- Whether the existing parking meters will be removed, to which staff noted it will likely stay in place as this is a pilot project.
- The possibility of having another pilot project in North Manhattan Beach, to which staff responded that the proposed location was based on several factors, and this was the only area that met all the criteria.

Overall, the task force was in support of the pilot project moving forward.

## **E. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

There were no public comments received at the meeting.

## **G. TASK FORCE DISCUSSIONS**

### **Standard Design Elements**

The task force discussed regulations that should be considered for heaters, lighting, and shade structures as follows:

- The effectiveness of heaters to patrons sitting 7-8 feet away in the sidewalk when they are mounted to the building wall.
- The negative aspects of propane heaters such as storage issues and associated costs.
- Fire code requirements in terms of heaters, shade structures, sprinkler systems, propane gas tank storage, etc.
- The possibility of also considering AC units and mists for summer months.
- Lighting fixtures that may be too bright or obtrusive to residential uses will be prevented as plans are reviewed to ensure compliance with relevant code and requirements.
- The shade structure's vertical clearance and horizontal projections into the right-of-way.
- How to balance preserving sight lines versus providing shade to patrons without being too restrictive.
- The use of umbrellas/awnings on flat terrain versus sloped areas, and the costs associated with awnings which may be too burdensome if it is the only option for some businesses.

After further discussions, the task force unanimously agreed upon the following motions:

- Sidewalk dining will only allow natural gas and electrical heaters, while propane heaters will also be allowed on private property outdoor dining areas.
- Branding or identification signs will be prohibited on shade structures, and the vertical clearance and horizontal projections of the shade structure will be governed by the California Building Code.

An additional motion was passed with nine members voting in favor and three dissenting (Mike Simms was not present for the vote at the time) for the following on shade structures:

- On east/west streets, umbrellas shall be prohibited on the ground floor, and awnings are acceptable; and on north/south streets, awnings or umbrellas shall be allowed.

### **Deviations**

Discussion ensued amongst the task force and staff on whether deviations should be allowed from sidewalk dining regulations and if so, who would be reviewing and approving the request. The Parking and Public Improvements Commission (PPIC) was noted as being the appropriate body since they review activities in the right-of-way. However, it was noted that the PPIC generally does not make decisions and rather makes recommendations to the City Council. As such, staff will look into this matter with the City Attorney's office on whether staff can act upon the PPIC's recommendation without going before the City Council.

### **Sidewalk Dining Prototype Design**

Discussions ensued amongst the task force and staff on whether a prototype design should be established for sidewalk dining and what those elements should include as follows:

- Tables, chairs, and color of materials should not be regulated.
- The City may procure removable railings that delineate the sidewalk dining areas for a uniform look and feel which can be leased to participating businesses. However, the task force felt that it should be up to the establishments to provide their own, so it is consistent with their design, as long as they follow set guidelines for barriers/fencing.
- Since the program development has changed to only have sidewalk dining in the right-of-way, some task force members wanted to consider keeping the outdoor dining furniture and barriers on the sidewalk without having to remove it when the business is closed as use fees are being imposed. However, the task force was inclined to require removing outdoor dining features for special events.
- There was mention of also regulating items on or attached to umbrellas but was dismissed.

Based on discussions, the task force agreed on creating guidelines for sidewalk dining area barriers/fencing to wood, metal, or composite materials, no taller than 42 inches in height, that are 50% open to light and air, with no branding or identification signs allowed.

### **Tiered Use Fee**

The task force and staff discussed how a tiered use fee may be implemented with higher rates than the current \$3 per square foot per month for sidewalk dining. The task force commented that use fees should be higher given that Hermosa Beach, for example, is up to \$6 and based on empirical knowledge by members who represent commercial interest, they advised the proposed rates are still on the lower end. There was additional discussion on whether the current use fee covers the cost of associated services rendered by the City and how the use fee does not necessarily have to account for City costs as there is enough buffer in the City's budget that can be used to subsidize for the difference.

At the end, the task force agreed that higher use fees than proposed should be considered and that the tiered use fee system is acceptable.

## **H. ADJOURNMENT**

Staff announced that the next City Council status update report is tentatively scheduled for September 17, 2024, and the meeting was adjourned at 3:32 p.m. to August 27, 2024, at 1:00 p.m., at the Manhattan Beach Library Meeting Room.