



Midtown Neighborhood Association

Formerly the Winn Park/Capitol Avenue

Neighborhood Association

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Sacramento, CA 95816-2555

www.sacmidtown.org

Dear Councilman Cohn,

As you are aware, the greater Midtown area has been faced with serious problems caused by certain bars and restaurants and their patrons. These problems include: loud music, loud drunken behavior and fights, vandalism including destruction of newly planted city street trees, public urination and defecation, drunk driving and accidents, brandishing of weapons, drunks remaining in Midtown and continuing to drink after bars close, trash dumped throughout Midtown, bar and restaurant patrons taking neighborhood parking spaces displacing residents, over concentration of bars and restaurants at the expense of other neighborhood serving businesses, and bars and restaurants functioning as de-facto nightclubs. These problems are having a serious impact on the livability of our neighborhood and all of Midtown. These impacts have also negatively affected many of our small unique retail businesses that are not part of the nighttime economy.

When the Midtown Business Association (MBA) brought in the Responsible Hospitality Institute (RHI) as a consultant, our board felt relief and hope. Several of our board members participated in meetings with Allison Harden, of RHI and felt that she was very helpful and knowledgeable and that the process she set up provided a good way for us to express our concerns and begin to identify solutions.

The last meeting with Ms. Harden was October 8, 2009. At that meeting five task forces were established to develop recommendations with respect to five major areas of concern: 1) Attracting new businesses and a greater variety of patrons to Midtown; 2) Reducing the impact of bars and restaurants on other types of businesses and neighborhood residents; 3) Improving perceptions of safety (and actual safety) in Midtown; 4) Building capacity for hospitality excellence; and 5) Modifying and strengthening city processes, systems and ordinances to deal better with nighttime activity. We were told these task forces had an initial six month time frame in which to identify potential ways of addressing these areas of concern.

It is now March and none of the task forces have even met. Members of Task Force 2 contacted MBA Executive Director, Rob Kerth in December 2009, and asked that MBA set up task force meetings. MBA's only response was to set up a meeting of Task Force 2, and give members two days notice. Two days is too short a time for members to arrange their schedules, and then MBA canceled the meeting less than two hours before it was to begin. Members of Task Force 2 contacted MBA again in January 2010 requesting that the task forces begin meeting. This time they were asked to choose from a series of dates in the first week of February. The first week of February came and went with no further word from MBA and no meeting. Follow-up e-mails to Mr. Kerth have gone unanswered.

The problems facing Midtown residents and businesses are serious. Absent proactive intervention they will continue and get worse. It appears MBA does not consider the livability of the Midtown neighborhoods to be important and lacks the capacity and the desire to follow through with the process the RHI consultant outlined. Our board wants to find constructive solutions to the problems our neighborhoods face. You are our council representative and we need your help to do that. The MBA is a PBID and has received city money. We need you to hold it accountable for its actions and non-actions and make sure that the RHI process moves forward. As you are well aware, if our neighborhoods fail, the non-evening businesses fail, bars and restaurants will fail, and everyone loses.

Thank you in advance your assistance. Members of our board are happy to meet with you to discuss both the problems that we are experiencing and our ideas for potential solutions.

Best Regards,

Matthew Piner, Board Chair

Matt Piner

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