

MINUTES

BOARD MEETING

Trellis, 981 Mission Street, San Francisco

Commenced – 12:00 pm

Adjourned – 1:15 pm

1. Welcome and Introductions

The meeting opened with introductions and recognition of board members and guests. Several members were unable to attend. Attendees introduced themselves, including representatives from local business, nonprofit, community, and social-service organizations.

2. Presentation: AI Automation for Businesses

Nikki from Sora Labs presented the company's approach to using artificial intelligence and automation to improve business operations. Key points included:

- Sora Labs is a boutique AI company that develops customized AI agents based on the specific needs of individual businesses.
- AI automation can reduce time spent on repetitive administrative tasks and allow employees to focus on higher-level responsibilities.
- Examples included:
 - An education company that increased sales-call bookings by approximately 98% through automated outreach and market research.
 - A dental practice where an AI agent automated portions of the insurance billing process, including identifying relevant X-rays and preparing claim information.
 - A construction company that receives automated reports identifying newly permitted properties that may represent potential business opportunities.
- The company also develops AI agents for marketing, research, newsletters, project management, billing, and other business functions.
- Off-the-shelf AI agents are available, but they generally require integration and customization to work with a particular business's systems.
- Initial development costs can vary significantly, from approximately \$20,000 to \$150,000 or more, depending on the scope and complexity of the project.
- A proof-of-concept prototype can potentially be developed within approximately two weeks, although larger projects require additional discovery and development time.
- AI agents can also assist with writing books, newsletters, travel planning, reservations, and other tasks.

- Ongoing operating costs depend on the AI and other technology services integrated into the system.

The presentation generated discussion about potential applications for nonprofits, including grant writing and communications. Sora Labs expressed interest in exploring nonprofit-specific applications.

3. Guest Speaker: Supervisor Connie Chan

Supervisor Connie Chan was introduced and discussed her background and candidacy for Congress. She noted that she has served on the San Francisco Board of Supervisors since 2021, was reelected in 2024, and served as Chair of the Budget Committee for four fiscal years. She discussed her extensive experience in San Francisco government and her work with merchants, community organizations, and nonprofits.

Supervisor Chan discussed her view that San Francisco is recovering but continues to face significant challenges, particularly regarding:

- Public safety and clean streets.
- Small-business support and revitalization.
- Tourism and economic conditions.
- The impact of federal policies on healthcare, immigration, and other areas.
- The need for greater federal investment in San Francisco's struggling commercial corridors.

4. Small Business and Economic Revitalization

Supervisor Chan emphasized the importance of supporting small businesses rather than relying on a single large employer or industry to revitalize an area.

She cited previous local efforts to provide fee waivers and tax incentives for new businesses and argued that similar programs should be expanded at the federal level. She advocated for a federal small-business program that recognizes the unique challenges faced by small and micro-businesses in urban communities.

She also supported business incubators and a greater diversity of businesses, including restaurants, grocery stores, retail establishments, bookstores, coffee shops, and other neighborhood-serving businesses.

Supervisor Chan also discussed the importance of mixed-income housing, including workforce housing for teachers, nurses, firefighters, service workers, and other middle-income residents, as part of creating economically diverse neighborhoods.

5. Public Safety and Conditions in SoMa

Board members expressed serious concerns regarding deteriorating public safety conditions in SoMa, particularly around Sixth Street, Mint Plaza, Stevenson Street, and surrounding areas.

Concerns raised included:

- Increased drug use and public disorder.
- Lack of visible police presence, particularly at night.
- Businesses closing because of safety concerns.
- Difficulty attracting previously closed businesses back to the neighborhood.
- Continued challenges with homelessness and street conditions.
- Concerns regarding enforcement of existing regulations.
- The perception that SoMa and Mid-Market have become a “containment zone” for the City’s social problems.

Members emphasized that **security is a major factor in business retention and attraction**, in addition to financial incentives. They noted that several businesses have closed and have not returned despite efforts to encourage them to reopen.

6. Housing and 469 Stevenson Street

The discussion included the proposed development at 469 Stevenson Street and broader concerns about the balance between housing, commercial activity, and neighborhood revitalization.

Members expressed concern that the area needs greater socioeconomic diversity and questioned whether concentrating affordable housing and social services in the same area contributes to the perception that SoMa is a containment zone.

Supervisor Chan stated that she favors a mixed-income approach and believes successful neighborhood revitalization requires a combination of housing, businesses, services, transportation, public spaces, and other forms of activation.

7. Federal Role in Public Safety

A significant portion of the discussion focused on the potential role of the federal government in addressing public safety and drug-related problems.

Supervisor Chan distinguished between **federal law enforcement and military intervention**. She stated that she would not support deploying the National Guard or military personnel into San Francisco, but believes federal law-enforcement agencies, including the FBI and DEA, should play a stronger role in addressing drug trafficking and organized criminal activity.

She also emphasized that addressing the challenges facing SoMa requires more than policing and should include:

- Healthcare.
- Housing.

- Education.
- Small-business resources.
- Transportation.
- Federal support for community revitalization.

8. Police Department Resources and Accountability

Supervisor Chan noted that the San Francisco Police Department's annual budget has increased substantially over the past four years, from approximately \$650 million to approximately \$850 million. She pointed to investments in technology, including real-time crime investigation capabilities, automated license-plate readers, and drones.

Board members questioned why public safety conditions remain problematic despite increased funding and technological resources. The discussion highlighted the need for greater accountability and effectiveness in the use of existing resources.

9. Community Perspectives

Members shared personal experiences regarding deteriorating conditions in SoMa and expressed frustration that residents and businesses have heard repeated promises from elected officials without seeing sustained improvements.

There was broad agreement that addressing the challenges will require cooperation among local government, federal agencies, businesses, nonprofits, residents, and community organizations.

10. Closing

The meeting concluded with appreciation to Supervisor Connie Chan for attending and engaging in an open discussion with the board and community members. Members expressed interest in continuing communication and working together on small-business revitalization, public safety, and federal support for San Francisco.

The meeting closed with informal discussions among attendees regarding continued community involvement and collaboration.