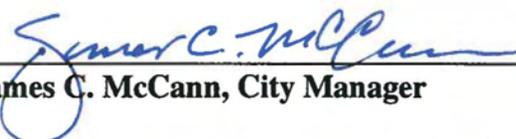




STAFF REPORT

TO: Mayor and City Council
FROM: Linn Walsh, Assistant to the City Manager
SUBJECT: Business Advisory Board Final Report
DATE: January 17, 2012

Approved for Forwarding:


James C. McCann, City Manager

1 **Issue:** Business Advisory Board Final Report.

2

3 **Recommendation:** Receive presentation.

4

5 **Background:** In 2009, City Council established a City-appointed Business Advisory Board
6 (BAB). The BAB's Mission was to advise the City Council on economic development issues
7 and other business related issues with the overall objective of encouraging a healthy, vibrant
8 business community in Mill Valley with an appropriate mix of resident serving businesses,
9 while also preserving the City's unique small-town character.

10

11 **Discussion:** Paula Reynolds, Business Advisory Board Chair, will present a Final Report.

12

13 **Attachments:**

14

- 15 1. BAB Final Report
16 2. Mill Valley Chamber of Commerce "2.0" - A Proposed Framework for 2012-2014
17 3. Business Advisory Board Meeting Draft Minutes, October 25, 2011
18 4. Mill Valley Business Advisory Board Focus Group Report, October 2011

January 10, 2012

Dear Mayor Garry Lion, City Manager Jim McCann and Members of the City Council:

You have been more than generous in affording the BAB and me significant time on your agendas throughout our two year tenure to showcase our work and results which you've captured on the City's robust website. I would like to use this time on Monday to thank you for your leadership and my BAB Colleagues for their support, and share a few highlights, particularly our unanimously-adopted one page "Chamber 2.0" Proposal which has become a reality. I attach this "Chamber 2.0" Proposal, our meaty Final Meeting Minutes from October 25, 2011, and our Business Focus Group Results for your review.

In Summary, the BAB's successes include:

- Encouraging the City to hire a City Manager committed to partnering with the business community—which we got in Jim McCann;
- Developing a comprehensive and still very relevant Marketing Strategy for Mill Valley "94941" based on engaging and targeting "communities of interest" to spend time and money in our community;
- Executing five key marketing programs with City financial support including the "Dipsea Deals", the MVFAF public art and raffle, the RSVP Parking sticker program, a Library Foundation partnership with the local business community; and two social media sites "Enjoy Mill Valley" and "Mill Valley Food, Drink and Hospitality";
- Promoting streamlined processes for business and regulatory changes at City Hall;
- Developing a succession strategy with "Chamber 2.0" drawing on our two years of work and an October, 2011 Business Focus Group Report (attached) that highlighted three near term unmet needs in the business community: advocacy, beautification and marketing programs.

On January 12th the new "Chamber 2.0" will have its first meeting with BAB Member, Alan Abrams, as Chair and four other BAB members joining a strong core group of local business advocates. We will welcome Mayor Garry Lion as our City Council liaison. One of our top priorities will be partnering with the City Council and City Manager to shape and communicate back to our expanded membership key policies and plans that affect the economic vitality of our community and the health of our businesses. We want to develop a Professional Services Agreement with the City that codifies our relationship and work together. We also intend to expand significantly our membership, build a sustainable business model and commit early to host two excellent community events: Wine and Gourmet in June and Winterfest in December, 2012. This will all be possible through the volunteer work of a distinguished new Board I have the privilege of joining: Alan Abrams, Suzanne Burrows, Ron Vidal, Judy Gilmore, Thomas Jones, Paolo Petrone, Dough Canapa, Ann Aversa and Ken Brooks, an ever expanding group of committed volunteers and one part time assistant.

The BAB leaves a rich legacy of marketing strategy and programs, of relationships with the City, and recommendations to streamline and improve policies and programs. Chamber "2.0" needs to walk before it can run. But this new successor group intends to build on the BAB's momentum and successes.

We need the City's help during this transition year. Specifically, in the interests of giving the new Chamber time to rebuild and the Chamber Chair/City Manager time to develop a Professional Services Agreement, we ask that the City NOT change its long time policy of directing all Employee parking sticker revenues to the Chamber (Approximately \$16,000/year) in return for Chamber marketing of this program and that you DO continue to make available, gratis, the office space at the Depot.

Thank you all again for creating and nurturing the Business Advisory Board. It has been my honor and privilege to serve as its Chair and now to serve on Chamber "2.0". We all also owe a debt of gratitude to the many BAB Members who gave so much of their time as well: Alan Abrams, Ann Aversa, Doug Canepa, Betsey Cutler, Liana Orlandi, Paolo Petrone, Chris Raker, Jim Revoir, Linda Rosso, Den Satake and early members Dori Beron, Elaine Cramer, Ryan Rilette and Ellen Seebold. Each remains committed, like you, to revitalizing our local economy for the benefit of its citizens, businesses and local visitors.

A special thanks to Mayor Lion and to City staff Jim McCann, Mike Moore, Linn Walsh, Angel Bernel, Ken Dunkel and Mary Lansing for being with us when it mattered.

Again, I attach for your review the core documents of our BAB work. You'll find even more on the City's website! I look forward to seeing you on January 17th.

Sincerely, Paula Reynolds

Mill Valley Chamber of Commerce “2.0”

A Proposed Framework for 2012-2014

Adopted Unanimously on 10/25/11 by the Business Advisory Board

1. Re launch a new deliverables-driven Chamber on January, 2012 with strong BAB representation.
2. Establish compelling mission, strategy and action steps to revitalize Mill Valley’s local economy.
3. Do a few things really well at first. Establish credibility. Build from there.
4. Distribute leadership to volunteers on specific initiatives.
5. Build membership with value added service commitments.
6. Create a sustainable business model to deliver service, raise funds and hire staff and/or contract for targeted resources (eg. marketing).

Proposed 2012 Priorities

1. Advocacy (60% time and energy). Institutionalize a “seat at the table” with City Government to help shape and communicate back to members City policies, plans, rules and practices that affect local businesses throughout Mill Valley. Share job between two Chamber Board Members.
2. Beautify Mill Valley. Create standards and incentives for businesses/City to upgrade the look, feel and accessibility of our communities. Advocate for a public bathroom in downtown Mill Valley with highly visible local map. Partner with Bloomathon.
3. Business to Business Marketing. Maintain Chamber website that generates advertising revenue. Maintain regular communication/email blasts with robust content. Augment Member communication and engagement with intranet. Re-purpose Mixer program.
4. Business to Consumer Marketing. Create and implement compelling marketing opportunities for members that support local business growth and generate incremental revenue for the organization—ie. “fee for service”. Baseline PR outreach to reach local/regional audience, to include Facebook/Twitter page maintenance. Publicize member-run events to public.
5. Build Sustainable Business Service Financial Model. Develop tiered Membership pricing and mark up “fee for service” programs. Expand Wine and Food Festival as primary fundraiser for marketing programs and potentially expand Winterfest as well. Build membership to at least 600 offering high value advocacy, marketing programs and beautification.

CITY OF MILL VALLEY

BUSINESS ADVISORY BOARD MEETING

Minutes

October 25, 2011

6 – 8 pm

Mill Valley Community Center

Alan Abrams	Present	Chris Raker	Present
Ann Aversa	Present	Jim Revoir	Present
Doug Canepa	Absent	Paula Reynolds, Chair	Present
Betsey Cutler	Present	Linda Rosso	Present
Liana Orlandi	Present	Den Satake	Present
Paolo Petrone	Absent		

Staff Present: Jim McCann, City Manager
Mike Moore, Director of Planning and Building

6:00 pm Chair Paula Reynolds called the meeting to order, noting that it was the last BAB meeting. The Chair thanked Mary Lansing, who was home sick tonight, for her excellent staff support over the two years. The agenda was approved unanimously as were the Minutes for the June 7th, 2011 BAB meeting. The Chair noted that all documents presented this evening, and throughout the BAB's tenure, are available on the City website under "Business Advisory Board".

Update from Planning Streamlining Committee – Parking Requirements

Chair Paula Reynolds expressed appreciation to Planning Streamlining Committee Chair Betsey Cutler, and her colleagues Chris Raker, Ann Aversa and Planning Director Mike Moore, for their hard work and successes. Betsey reviewed the work of the Committee over the past two years which included

- making it easier and more transparent for businesses to work with the City; and
- recommending to the Planning Commission zoning and regulatory changes that are now working their way through the process.

Betsey Cutler asked Mike Moore to present the Committee's consensus on the parking management issue contained in the attached document "Addressing Zoning Ordinance Parking Requirements", which was, after considerable review, a decision to define clearly for the first time the core problems, not outline detailed solutions. These problems include the fact that the current zoning requirements are over 40 years old and do not reflect that there is little room for parking expansion. Most importantly, the document redefines parking as a "management" not a supply issue. The Committee concluded that it did not have sufficient time to reach meaningful conclusions. The "Problem Statement" was unanimously approved by the BAB. The next step is for the Planning Department to

generate discussion of Parking Management solutions in the update of both the General Plan and zoning requirements.

Input on Parking Finances Facing the Council

Chair Paula Reynolds introduced and thanked City Manager, Jim McCann, for the time and energy he had devoted to the BAB. Mr. McCann expressed his appreciation for the BAB's shared interest in finding a balance among parking enforcement/turnover requirements, budget needs and customer satisfaction. He asked for BAB input on several questions now before the Council, given the success of the RSVP Parking Sticker Program and BAB interest in rolling back Sunday parking meters. Mr. McCann indicated that Sunday roll back might result in a \$95,000 shortfall in the parking enforcement budget and asked for input. He heard many ideas from BAB Members including:

- partner with private lot owners during special events to expand parking;
- keep Holiday meter-free parking to encourage local shoppers
- recapture revenue loss with increased meter costs M-Saturday
- keep Saturday parking meters to ensure turnover;
- loosen weekend parking restrictions
- create a City/Chamber map of parking alternatives to distribute to customers, particularly at restaurants.
- relocate City employees to streets or private lots and/or create employee shuttle.
- approach this issue with experimental solutions.

Chair Paula Reynolds thanked the City Manager for requesting BAB input, underscored that the issues were very complicated and interconnected and expressed confidence that the City Council could roll out parking "beta tests" as they did with the RSVP Parking Program and adjust accordingly, without need for a community wide survey.

Marketing Focus Group Results and Social Media Project Results

Chair Paula Reynolds introduced and thanked Linda Rosso, BAB Board member and Co-Creator of the BAB's 2010 Marketing Strategy and programs, for conducting four marketing research focus groups in October to test BAB conclusions about what is important to the business community in a new "Business 2.0" organization that succeeds the BAB. Ms. Rosso walked through the focus group findings, contained in the attached report "Mill Valley Business Advocacy Board Focus Group Report, October, 2011" which include strong support for three near term priorities: advocacy, beautification and marketing programs. These conclusions from 22 tapped businesses tracked the original BAB recommendations. Discussion ensued.

Chair Paula Reynolds introduced and thanked Ellen Seebold, past BAB Board member and BAB social media beta test project leader, for her 5 month social media project. Ms. Seebold presented her findings, contained in the attached report "Enjoy Mill Valley, Social Media Marketing Final Report 10.24.11". Ms Seebold reported her conclusion

that the social media experiment has been a success and should be continued and enhanced with a clear owner, and budget. The Facebook “Enjoy Mill Valley” site has 792 fans (goal was 500) and the Twitter site has 346 followers. It cost approximately \$1/fan in advertising to build. Discussion ensued.

Business Advocacy 2.0

Chair Paula Reynolds introduced a one page “Chamber of Commerce “2.0” Proposed Framework for 2012-2014” (attached) for discussion which built on the prior presentations and recommended supporting a new, deliverables-driven Chamber with strong BAB representation. Ms. Reynolds reported that the current Chamber Board invited all BAB Members to join its Board and is committed to re-invent itself based on member needs. Discussion ensued on the priority activities (advocacy, beautification, marketing). Chair Reynolds opened the meeting to public comment, which was uniformly supportive of this planned direction. The BAB Board adopted the proposal unanimously. To date, Paula Reynolds, Doug Canepa, Paolo Petrone and Ann Aversa have committed to join the Chamber Board, starting in January, 2012. Other BAB members will likely participate in other volunteer ways to continue supporting Mill Valley’s economic vitality.

Wrap Up

Ms. Reynolds closed the meeting by recapping the BAB’s successes over the past two years and thanking the many people on whose “shoulders” the BAB stood over the past two years, including the City Council and particularly Garry Lion, past Chair of the Business Task Force, and his 15 colleagues from the business community.

The BAB’s successes include:

- Encouraging the City to hire a City Manager committed to partnering with the business community—which we got in Jim McCann;
- Developing a comprehensive and still very relevant Marketing Strategy for Mill Valley based on engaging and targeting “communities of interest” to spend time and money in our community;
- Executing five key marketing programs with City financial support including the “Dipsea Deals”, the MVFAF public art and raffle, the RSVP Parking sticker program, a Library Foundation partnership with the local business community; and two social media sites “Enjoy Mill Valley” and “Mill Valley Food, Drink and Hospitality”;
- Promoting streamlined processes for business at City Hall;
- Developing a succession strategy with “Chamber 2.0”.

Ms. Reynolds also thanked the Chamber of Commerce and its past leaders and staff, including Elaine Cramer, Stan Gassman, Kathy Severson and Denise Meehan for their contributions, as well as current Board Member/BAB Liaison Alan Abrams and past Member Steve Bajor for their help. Ms. Reynolds expressed gratitude to City staff members Angel Bernal and Ken Dunkel, and retired police officer, Jim Wickham, for

their support of the RSVP Parking Program. Ms. Reynolds acknowledged the long hours and ideas contributed by marketing consultants Linda Rosso, Danny Altman and Rich LeFurgy in creating the BAB Marketing Strategy. Lastly, Chair Reynolds thanked the original and current BAB team, including Ryan Rilette from the Marin Theatre Company and Dori Beron from Whole Foods, and all current BAB participants: Ann Aversa, Doug Canepa,.....(List all BAB Members).

Alan Abrams thanked Paula Reynolds, on behalf of the BAB, for her leadership, as did Jim McCann, on behalf of the City.

Chair Reynolds indicated that she would deliver a final BAB Report to the Council in January.

Meeting adjourned at 8:15 pm.

Addendum Items: (1) Mill Valley Business Advisory Board Focus Group Report
(2) Enjoy Mill Valley Social Media Marketing Final Report
(3) Mill Valley Chamber of Commerce “2.0”: A Proposed

Framework for 2012-2014

(4) Planning Department Chair, Mike Moore, Memo: Addressing Zoning Ordinance Parking Requirements.

Mill Valley Business Advisory Board Focus Group Report

October 2011

BAB member/marketing consultant Linda Rosso moderated a series of five focus groups comprised of Mill Valley business owners and managers in the following segments: commercial real estate/landlords; retail merchants; restaurants; banking; residential real estate; and architecture. We had a total of 22 discussion participants and lively discussions around key business issues.

The sessions were introduced by stating that the BAB will disappear this month and the Chamber of Commerce is in the process of reorganizing and re-inventing itself and that a “new” Business 2.0 will emerge. The goal of each focus group was to provide businesses an opportunity to voice what is important to them in a new organization.

Structured discussion was around two categories of services that a new organization could provide: Business to Business, an internal focus within the local business community and relationships with the City and County; and Business to Consumer, an external focus on marketing, communication and promoting Mill Valley as a place to spend time and money.

Free discussion varied from group to group, and included specific advocacy, marketing and event ideas, how to fund a new organization and what the focus and execution can look like.

The first question posed to the groups was about the key areas of emphasis of a “Business 2.0,” or a reinvented, reinvigorated Chamber of Commerce – is it advocacy or marketing? The answer – it’s both.

Advocacy with City and County (and beyond) is a critical reason for such an organization to exist. Local businesses want to be kept informed of issues and consequences and want to have an advocate representing their interests.

Advocacy in the landlord/tenant relationship was discussed. Some businesses liked bringing ideas to landlords of vacant storefronts in general while others did not. In general, businesses believe in a free-market economy, realizing that there are challenges in Mill Valley. Comments reflected a desire to: maintain a mix to keep vibrancy; not lose the texture of the town; loosen the red tape; explore a ceiling on the number of chain stores. A point was made to support and encourage young entrepreneurs such as the owners of Proof Lab and Mill Valley Beerworks. An important suggestion was to convene the landlords as an interest group.

How important are the following BUSINESS-TO-BUSINESS services in a “Business 2.0” organization in Mill Valley?	Scale of Importance to ME/MY BUSINESS				
	Not at all	Not very	No Opinion	Some-what	Extremely
ADVOCACY Official representation with City/County on business issues, e.g. zoning, permitting, parking, fees, green business/sustainability, transportation, housing	0	1	2	3	15

Other “business to business” services were significantly less important to participants, with the exception of member-to-member communication through e-mail and website. The idea of an intranet – where members could communicate in private forum/discussion group about issues was proposed. Traditional mixers hold little interest.

How important are the following BUSINESS-TO-BUSINESS services in a "Business 2.0" organization in Mill Valley?	Scale of Importance to ME/MY BUSINESS				
	Not at all	Not very	No Opinion	Some-what	Extremely
MEMBER TO MEMBER COMMUNICATION/EVENTS					
Membership website	0	3	5	6	5
Membership e-mail blasts	0	3	4	5	6
Monthly mixers/meetings	0	5	12	3	0
Networking beyond mixers	0	3	6	7	2
Annual membership dinner	1	7	7	3	0

Business Education and Shared Services were introduced as discussion items with little or no engagement. The assumption made is that these services can be attained through a variety of other channels and are not a critical offering for the new organization.

How important are the following BUSINESS-TO-BUSINESS services in a "Business 2.0" organization in Mill Valley?	Scale of Importance to ME/MY BUSINESS				
	Not at all	Not very	No Opinion	Some-what	Extremely
BUSINESS EDUCATION					
Seminars on key business topics, e.g. HR, insurance, finance, marketing, city/county updates, etc.	1	7	9	1	2
SHARED BUSINESS SERVICES					
HR consulting, e.g. hotline, phone access, key documents	6	4	5	4	1
Insurance pools	3	6	4	5	1
Mutual discounts among members	3	3	7	4	2

Of all the consumer-facing attributes discussed, keeping a well-maintained and beautiful Mill Valley is paramount to local businesses. Some of the individual service elements benefit from partnerships with local community groups, e.g. Bloomathon for flower planting. Others require advocacy and cooperation with the City and County, e.g. watering plants or providing ADA-accessible public restroom.

How important are the following BUSINESS-TO-CONSUMER services in a "Business 2.0" organization in Mill Valley?	Scale of Importance to ME/MY BUSINESS				
	Not at all	Not very	No Opinion	Some-what	Extremely
MAINTENANCE & BEAUTIFICATION					
Street sweeping/trash removal	1	2	1	6	11
Public landscaping/flowers	0	2	2	7	10
Holiday/special event lighting	0	2	1	7	11
Signage	1	2	1	5	12
Public restroom downtown	0	2	3	6	10

Marketing to consumers is the lifeblood of business, and nearly all participants recognize that individually marketing their business is their responsibility. However, they are looking to the new business organization to help them aggregate their efforts, by creating co-operative partnerships to bring customers to Mill Valley.

The primary finding about target audiences is consistent with the "concentric circles" outlined in the original BAB marketing plan – residents are critical to the sustainability of local business, followed by local visitors and tourists. Different businesses have different needs – some specifically locate in Mill Valley for the town's character and their "known" ability to draw customers into town.

In general, how important are marketing efforts for your business to reach...	Scale of Importance to ME/MY BUSINESS				
	Not at all	Not very	No Opinion	Some-what	Extremely
Residents	1	2	1	1	14
Local Visitors (Marin and Bay Area)	2	1	1	5	8
Tourists (Primarily via San Francisco)	2	3	1	6	6

How important are the following BUSINESS-TO-CONSUMER services in a "Business 2.0" organization in Mill Valley?	Scale of Importance to ME/MY BUSINESS				
	Not at all	Not very	No Opinion	Some-what	Extremely
MARKETING PARTNERSHIPS TO REACH CONSUMERS					
With non-profits (e.g. % of proceeds are donated)	0	1	3	6	6
By business category (e.g. Restaurants, Retail, Health & Beauty)	0	2	2	4	10
By demographic (e.g. Men's Shopping Night event)	0	2	2	5	9

Multiple ideas were discussed, from Sidewalk Sales to co-operative advertising media buys. One group rallied around the idea of creating a “Welcome Wagon” promotion, offering introductions, small gifts and coupons to new residents. Groupon-type deal promotions were discussed, and some merchants noted they tried these promotions to seek new customers, but a majority of sales and redemptions are from existing local customers in search of bargains.

Communication to residents and visitors is highly important. A physical map “billboard” on the exterior wall of a downtown public restroom was an idea brought up in several of the focus groups and was well-received by participants. An online visitor center – likely in the form of a website with links and an inclusive directory (meaning not just members of the Business 2.0 organization) was encouraged. A single mechanism for opting in to receive existing electronic communication was also seen as a worthwhile idea.

How important are the following BUSINESS-TO-CONSUMER services in a “Business 2.0” organization in Mill Valley?	Scale of Importance to ME/MY BUSINESS				
	Not at all	Not very	No Opinion	Some-what	Extremely
RESIDENT & VISITOR COMMUNICATION					
Information on local businesses, services, events, promotions at a Visitor Center/Kiosk	1	2	3	6	12
“Opt-in” program to subscribe to various electronic communications, e.g. City, Library, Individual Business Blogs, Facebook, Twitter, Deals, Newsletters, Emails, MV Patch	1	1	3	11	8

Much discussion centered around events in Mill Valley. The consensus is that events are important because they bring people to town. Coming into downtown Mill Valley is viewed as a commitment – it is a long way from the highway, there is often heavy traffic into town and parking is limited. Additional events were suggested, such as Friday night picnics and music, dog shows and events in areas other than downtown. At the same time, many merchants experience reduced business during events. Suggestions were made to time events to benefit merchants and leverage with pre- and post-event sales promotion, and to have merchants sell tickets to events in their stories. Membership-run events are viewed as important to promote Mill Valley beyond the City limits, and more marketing of these events (specifically Wine and Gourmet) is desired. One suggestion was to have special offers and promotions from Mill Valley businesses in the program for the Wine and Gourmet event. We created a distinction around existing “membership-run” events that have been historic fund-raisers for the Chamber of Commerce and the iconic Mill Valley events that can be tapped to create marketing tie-ins.

How important are the following BUSINESS-TO-CONSUMER services in a “Business 2.0” organization in Mill Valley?	Scale of Importance to ME/MY BUSINESS				
	Not at all	Not very	No Opinion	Some-what	Extremely
MEMBERSHIP-RUN” PUBLIC EVENTS					
Gourmet Food & Wine Festival	0	0	6	2	12
Winterfest	0	0	6	3	10
MARKETING PARTNERSHIP WITH ICONIC/PUBLIC EVENTS					
Memorial Day Parade/History Walk, Dipsea Race, Mountain Play, Fall Arts Festival, Mill Valley Film Festival	0	0	2	4	12

We wanted to find out if BAB social media experiments with Facebook and Twitter resonated with businesses. They do, and it remains to be seen if Businesses are somewhat less interested in the new organization offering individual businesses marketing support.

How important are the following BUSINESS-TO-CONSUMER services in a "Business 2.0" organization in Mill Valley?	Scale of Importance to ME/MY BUSINESS				
	Not at all	Not very	No Opinion	Some-what	Extremely
COMMUNITY SOCIAL MEDIA PROGRAMS					
Broad-based (e.g. Enjoy Mill Valley Facebook/Twitter)	0	0	3	7	8
Segmented (e.g. Food, Drink & Hospitality Facebook/Mill Valley Deals Twitter)	0	0	4	7	7
INDIVIDUAL BUSINESS MARKETING SUPPORT					
Outsourced Social Media (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, Foursquare, YouTube, Yelp) engagement and monitoring	2	1	5	4	6
Other Marketing Support (e.g. e-mail campaigns, direct mail, online/offline advertising, public relations, website development)	2	1	5	4	6

After an hour discussion, participants were asked to "put their money down" – each was given 3 chits to spend on the most critical services they would want a reinvented/reinvigorated Chamber of Commerce-type organization to provide.

So what do Mill Valley businesses want? On a macro level, the greatest number of chits were spent on Advocacy, followed by Maintenance and Beautification, Marketing Partnerships to Reach Consumers, Resident and Visitor Communication, and Membership-Run Events.

SERVICE	# CHITS	WEIGHT
Advocacy	18	27%
Maintenance and Beautification	13	20%
Marketing Partnerships to Reach Consumers	11	17%
Resident and Visitor Communication	8	12%
Membership-Run Events	7	11%
Marketing Partnership with Iconic Events	4	6%
Community Social Media Programs	2	3%
Member-to-Member Communication	1	1.5%
Business Education	1	1.5%

However when “like” categories are combined, the rankings shift in a way that more accurately mirrored the conversations, and might be used as a model for prioritizing a business work plan.

ADVOCACY	18	27%
Marketing Partnerships to Reach Consumers	11	17%
Marketing Partnership with Iconic Events	4	6%
MARKETING PROGRAMS	15	23%
MAINTENANCE & BEAUTIFICATION	13	20%
Resident and Visitor Communication	8	12%
Community Social Media Programs	2	3%
CONSUMER COMMUNICATION PROGRAMS	10	15%
MEMBERSHIP-RUN EVENTS	7	11%
Member-to-Member Communication	1	1.5%
Business Education	1	1.5%
MEMBERSHIP SERVICES	2	3%

How could the work plan be carried out? In the absence of staff, discussion centered on a “just do it” approach of small groups with distributed ownership for deliverables.

In order to be relevant, a new organization will need to provide what Mill Valley businesses want – and are willing to pay for.

Suggestions were made to categorize services and fees by audience – retail merchants and service businesses with storefronts have very different needs than professional services businesses. While we did not have specific questions about how a new organization will be funded, models discussed a membership fee, fee for add-on services, financial and volunteer participation in an annual fundraiser. Membership could be based on revenue. Sponsorships of events could be sold. The City could levy a .025 cent sales tax to be collected, or place a surcharge on business licenses that would be directed to help fund the new organization. One business owner stated that they just need to show up, and take along those who can’t afford to.

How do these findings sync with the BAB priorities outlined to the City Council in June 2011?

Ongoing marketing programs that target and attract residents and local visitors to spend time and money in our community	#2 Second only to advocacy
A coherent, consistent beautification and local infrastructure improvement initiative	#3 Highly important
Recruit and nurture new businesses that fill vacancies and meet local needs.	Not a critical component, but emphasize supporting new, local businesses and convene a subgroup of landlords as integral part of advocacy function
We need an ongoing, independent advocate for streamlined, business-friendly, transparent City policies and processes and two-way communication between the City and business community as new needs arise.	#1 Critical for the existence of a new organization
We need to renew and continuously improve the RSVP Parking Sticker program and improve parking access, policies and signage throughout Mill Valley.	Did not emerge as a major discussion point

###