



Statement from Owen Byrd, Board Chair, Downtown Streets Team, in response to allegations contained in recent Metro Silicon Valley/sanjoseinside.com articles

December 18, 2019

- Downtown Streets Team has always taken any claim about harassment, disparity, or workplace professionalism very seriously.
- The time frame of the allegations pre-dates 2016.
- The Board is committed to promptly addressing all complaints. A clear and confidential internal reporting process allowed employees to report allegations. These issues were not raised, however, until October 2017, when we received the first letter from CLSEPA. I immediately called a meeting and sat down with CLSEPA's lawyers to address their concerns.
- CLSEPA met with us then admittedly dropped the conversation until another letter was received in August 2018.
- Upon receiving the August 2018 letter, the Board immediately initiated a comprehensive, independent, and confidential investigation that consisted of intensive document review (including salary data) and 23 interviews by a neutral outside attorney investigator regarding the allegations and also evaluated the current work environment. The investigation was extensive and methodical, involving three phases to assess current employees' feelings, investigate claims, and collect factual evidence regarding promotions, pay equity, and other claimed inequities and concerns.
- The conclusion of the investigation was that there was not gender bias in salary levels, promotions, or opportunities. Additionally, there was no evidence to indicate that any staff was rewarded based on perceived favoritism or socializing with management.



- The claims regarding sexual comments, alcohol misuse, and misbehavior were greatly exaggerated by former employees, and such behaviors are not ongoing.
- The organization has made these changes:
 - A strengthened Human Resources department with added resources including a Director of HR with direct access and reporting to the Board,
 - the creation of a board-level HR governance committee,
 - increased manager and employee training,
 - guidelines to ensure standards of professionalism which align with the organization's growth and evolution were implemented.