



Legacy Business Registry Staff Report

Hearing Date: March 13, 2023

THE BLUE LIGHT

Application No.: LBR-2022-23-014
Business Name: The Blue Light
Business Address: 1979 Union St.
District: District 2
Applicant: Johnny Metheny, Owner
Nomination Date: September 12, 2022
Nominated By: Supervisor Catherine Stefani
Staff Contact: Richard Kurylo and Michelle Reynolds
legacybusiness@sfgov.org

BUSINESS DESCRIPTION

The Blue Light, located at 1979 Union Street in San Francisco's Cow Hollow neighborhood, was first opened in 1978 by Boz Scaggs, a local rock star. Upon its opening, the venue became an institution for live music, with Boz Scaggs often himself performing on premise.

In 1991, the Blue Light was purchased by a group of bartenders that included John (Johnny) Metheny, Jeff Jordan, Lance Cossey, Peter Snyderman, Terry Brown, Jeff Ames, and Eddie Petrillo. Mayor Frank Jordan himself toasted to the opening night atop the bar, and the new ownership group turned The Blue Light into a destination for locals, neighbors, and visitors who wanted to enjoy a cocktail or beer, food, and live music.

In 1995, Johnny Metheny left the partnership to open a chain of successful nightclubs called Johnny Love's, but maintained contact with some of his past partners who continued to run The Blue Light.

Peter Snyderman, Terry Brown, and Eddie Petrillo all left The Blue Light when Metheny departed, but in 2015, Metheny put together an investment group to repurchase The Blue Light. Upon requiring the business, The Blue Light again became a busy meeting spot for neighbors and locals. In 2019, Metheny purchased the shares from his investment group and has been the sole owner since, continuing to run The Blue Light in its same location where it was founded in 1978.

CRITERION 1

Has the applicant operated in San Francisco for 30 or more years, with no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years?

Yes, The Blue Light has operated in San Francisco for 30 or more years, with no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years:

1979 Union St. from 1978 to Present (45 years)

CRITERION 2

Has the applicant contributed to the neighborhood's history and/or the identity of a particular neighborhood or community?

Legacy Business Program
Office of Small Business
City Hall Room 140
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place
San Francisco, CA 94102
(415) 554-6680
legacybusiness@sfgov.org
www.legacybusiness.org





Yes, The Blue Light has contributed to the history and identity of the Cow Hollow neighborhood and San Francisco.

The Historic Preservation Commission recommended the applicant as qualifying, noting the following ways the applicant contributed to the neighborhood's history and/or the identity of a particular neighborhood or community:

- The Blue Light was the first live music venue on Union Street and has hosted many of the Bay Area's best musicians, including Boz Scaggs. The business was later co-owned by John Stephen Metheny, also known as "Johnny Love," who is a famous San Franciscan bartender and was a championship rugby player.
- The Blue Light has been featured in local news publications, including the San Francisco Chronicle, San Francisco Examiner, 7x7, and other trade articles; on local television and radio news like KTVU, KCBS, KRON, and KGO; and in a national news story on MSNBC. The Blue Light was a source for stories on the local music, social, and political scenes during the recent COVID-19 pandemic.

CRITERION 3

Is the applicant committed to maintaining the physical features or traditions that define the business, including craft, culinary, or art forms?

Yes, The Blue Light is committed to maintaining the physical features and traditions that define the business.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

The Historic Preservation Commission recommends that The Blue Light qualifies for the Legacy Business Registry under Administrative Code Section 2A.242(b)(2) and recommends safeguarding of the below listed physical features and traditions.

Physical Features or Traditions that Define the Business:

- Food and beverage service.
- Occasional live music shows.
- Bar and lounge space.
- Blue exterior canopy.

CORE PHYSICAL FEATURE OR TRADITION THAT DEFINES THE BUSINESS

Following is the core physical feature or tradition that defines the business that would be required for maintenance of the business on the Legacy Business Registry.

- Bar.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the San Francisco Small Business Commission include The Blue Light currently located at 1979 Union St. in the Legacy Business Registry as a Legacy Business under Administrative Code Section 2A.242.

Richard Kurylo and Michelle Reynolds
Legacy Business Program

Legacy Business Program

Office of Small Business
City Hall Room 140
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place
San Francisco, CA 94102
(415) 554-6680
legacybusiness@sfgov.org
www.legacybusiness.org





Small Business Commission

Resolution No. _____

March 13, 2023

THE BLUE LIGHT

Application No.: LBR-2022-23-014
Business Name: The Blue Light
Business Address: 1979 Union St.
District: District 2
Applicant: Johnny Metheny, Owner
Nomination Date: September 12, 2022
Nominated By: Supervisor Catherine Stefani
Staff Contact: Richard Kurylo and Michelle Reynolds
legacybusiness@sfgov.org

Adopting findings approving the Legacy Business Registry application for The Blue Light, currently located at 1979 Union St.

WHEREAS, in accordance with Administrative Code Section 2A.242, the Office of Small Business maintains a registry of Legacy Businesses in San Francisco (the "Registry") to recognize that longstanding, community-serving businesses can be valuable cultural assets of the City and to be a tool for providing educational and promotional assistance to Legacy Businesses to encourage their continued viability and success; and

WHEREAS, the subject business has operated in San Francisco for 30 or more years, with no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years; or

WHEREAS, the subject business has operated in San Francisco for more than 20 years but less than 30 years, has had no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years, has significantly contributed to the history or identity of a particular neighborhood or community and, if not included on the Registry, faces a significant risk of displacement; and

WHEREAS, the subject business has contributed to the neighborhood's history and identity; and

WHEREAS, the subject business is committed to maintaining the physical features and traditions that define the business; and

WHEREAS, at a duly noticed public hearing held on March 13, 2023, the San Francisco Small Business Commission reviewed documents and correspondence, and heard oral testimony on the Legacy Business Registry application; therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Small Business Commission hereby includes The Blue Light in the Legacy Business Registry as a Legacy Business under Administrative Code Section 2A.242.

Legacy Business Program
Office of Small Business
City Hall Room 140
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place
San Francisco, CA 94102
(415) 554-6680
legacybusiness@sfgov.org
www.legacybusiness.org





BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Small Business Commission recommends safeguarding the below listed physical features and traditions at The Blue Light.

Physical Features or Traditions that Define the Business:

- Food and beverage service.
- Occasional live music shows.
- Bar and lounge space.
- Blue exterior canopy.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Small Business Commission requires maintenance of the below listed core physical feature or tradition to maintain The Blue Light on the Legacy Business Registry:

- Bar.

I hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was ADOPTED by the Small Business Commission on March 13, 2023.

Katy Tang
Director

RESOLUTION NO. _____

Ayes –
Nays –
Abstained –
Absent –

Legacy Business Program

Office of Small Business
City Hall Room 140
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place
San Francisco, CA 94102
(415) 554-6680
legacybusiness@sfgov.org
www.legacybusiness.org





Legacy Business Registry

Application Review Sheet

Application No.: LBR-2022-23-014
Business Name: The Blue Light
Business Address: 1979 Union St.
District: District 2
Applicant: Johnny Metheny, Owner
Nomination Date: September 12, 2022
Nominated By: Supervisor Catherine Stefani

CRITERION 1: Has the applicant has operated in San Francisco for 30 or more years, with no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years?
 X Yes No

1979 Union St. from 1978 to Present (45 years)

CRITERION 2: Has the applicant contributed to the neighborhood's history and/or the identity of a particular neighborhood or community?
 X Yes No

CRITERION 3: Is the applicant committed to maintaining the physical features or traditions that define the business, including craft, culinary, or art forms?
 X Yes No

NOTES: NA

DELIVERY DATE TO HPC: January 18, 2023

Richard Kurylo and Michelle Reynolds
Legacy Business Program

Legacy Business Program
Office of Small Business
City Hall Room 140
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place
San Francisco, CA 94102
(415) 554-6680
legacybusiness@sfgov.org
www.legacybusiness.org



Member, Board of Supervisors
District 2



City and County of San Francisco

CATHERINE STEFANI

September 7th, 2022

Office of Small Business
Attn: Legacy Business Registration Application
City Hall, Room 110
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place
San Francisco, 94102

Dear Mr. Kurylo,

We would like to nominate the Blue Light – a classic San Francisco bar and grill that has been operating for 30 years – as a legacy business. The Blue Light was founded in the late 70s by rock ‘n’ roll star Boz Scaggs, who was a frequent performer at the bar. Additionally, Scaggs invited various top performers to play music there too. Scaggs’ relentless efforts helped to establish the liveliness that is still present at The Blue Light today.

The Blue Light’s ideal location in the heart of Cow Hollow has allowed it to become a neighborhood institution. The bar serves excellent food that is reasonably priced while also having a wide selection of craft beers, local wines, and creative cocktails. Although The Blue Light’s expansive menu is certainly impressive, it is likely the shared sense of community that attracts guests of all ages and backgrounds.

Since it was established in the early 90’s, The Blue Light has played a significant role in fostering community. It is the place to be for Giants games, the Warriors playoffs, or to ring in the new year. The Blue Light has also continued to foster community throughout the pandemic – a time when a shared, welcoming atmosphere was very much needed. During the pandemic, The Blue Light built a parklet in front of the bar to ensure that guests could enjoy their food and drinks with the utmost safety.

Most recently, however, The Blue Light has established live music entertainment during happy hours, and in a nice full-circle moment is rekindling the passion that Scaggs had when founding the bar. The nominee not only allows for friends and family to enjoy food, drinks, live music, and perhaps the game together, but also allows for new friendships to be formed. Coming out of a devastating pandemic, The Blue Light is exemplary of the importance of local restaurants and bars, and the major role they play in fostering community.

The nominee can be contacted here: Johnny Metheny, 1979 Union St. San Francisco, CA 94123, 415-939-9040; johnny@bluelightsf.com.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Catherine Stefani".

Catherine Stefani
San Francisco Supervisor, District 2



Legacy Business Registry Application



Business Information

Business name: The Blue Light

Business owner name(s): Johnny Metheny

Identify the person(s) with the highest ownership stake in the business

Current business address: 1979 Union Street, San Francisco, CA 94123

Telephone: (415) 922 – 5510

Email:

Mailing address (if different than above):

Website: www.bluelightsf.com

Facebook: www.facebook.com/TheBlueLightSF

Twitter:

7-digit San Francisco Business Account Number (BAN):

1

0

1

6

8

3

9

Do any of these describe your business? (select all that apply)

Requires at least 51% of the business be owned, operated, and controlled by the business designation below.

☐ Immigrant-Owned Business

☐ Owned by Person with a Disability

☐ LGBTQ+-Owned Business

☐ Veteran-Owned Business

☐ Minority-Owned Business*

☐ Woman-Owned Business

**Minority is defined as on or more of the following racial or ethnic groups: American Indian or Alaska Native; Asian; Black or African American; Hispanic or Latino; Middle Eastern or North African; Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander*

Contact Person Information

Contact person name: Johnny Metheny

Contact person title: Owner

Contact telephone: () –

Contact email:

Business Location(s)

List the business address of the original San Francisco location, the start date of business, and the dates of operation at the original location. Check the box indicating whether the original location of the business in San Francisco is the founding location of the business.

If the business moved from its original location and has had additional addresses in San Francisco, identify all other addresses and the dates of operation at each address.

Original San Francisco address: 1979 Union Street Zip Code: 94123

Is this location the founding location of the business? (Y/N): Y

Dates at this location: From: 1978 To: Present

Other address (if applicable): Zip Code:

Dates at this location: From: To:

Other address (if applicable): Zip Code:

Dates at this location: From: To:

Other address (if applicable): Zip Code:

Dates at this location: From: To:

Other Address (if applicable): Zip Code:

Dates at this location: From: To:

Other address (if applicable): Zip Code:

Dates at this location: From: To:

Section Three:

Disclosure Statement.

San Francisco Taxes, Business Registration, Licenses, Labor Laws and Public Information Release.

This section is verification that all San Francisco taxes, business registration and licenses are current and complete, and there are no current violations of San Francisco labor laws. This information will be verified. A business deemed not current with all San Francisco taxes, business registration and licenses, or has current violations of San Francisco labor laws, will not be eligible to apply for grants through the Legacy Business Program.

In addition, we are required to inform you that all information provided in the application will become subject to disclosure under the California Public Records Act.

Please read the following statements and check each to indicate that you agree with the statement. Then sign below in the space provided.

- ☒ I am authorized to submit this application on behalf of the business.
- ☒ I attest that the business is current on all of its San Francisco tax obligations.
- ☒ I attest that the business's business registration and any applicable regulatory license(s) are current.
- ☒ I attest that the Office of Labor Standards and Enforcement (OLSE) has not determined that the business is currently in violation of any of the City's labor laws, and that the business does not owe any outstanding penalties or payments ordered by the OLSE.
- ☒ I understand that documents submitted with this application may be made available to the public for inspection and copying pursuant to the California Public Records Act and San Francisco Sunshine Ordinance.
- ☒ I hereby acknowledge and authorize that all photographs and images submitted as part of the application may be used by the City without compensation.
- ☒ I understand that the Small Business Commission may revoke the placement of the business on the Registry if it finds that the business no longer qualifies, and that placement on the Registry does not entitle the business to a grant of City funds.

Johnny Metheny

09/25/2022



Name (Print):

Date:

Signature:

BLUE LIGHT

Written Historical Narrative

INTRODUCTION

a. Describe the business. What does it sell or provide?

The Blue Light is a neighborhood staple since it was opened by legendary rock star Boz Skaggs in the late 1970s and has continued bringing locals together since. Whether it is to watch a sporting event, listen to live music, share local inspired eats, or enjoy a variety of beer or specialty cocktails, The Blue Light has been bringing locals together for years.

b. Describe who the business serves.

The Blue Light is a welcoming and warm place where neighbors, locals, and even tourists meet to enjoy a true San Francisco experience. It is located on the popular Union Street. With its myriad shops, cafés, and restaurants, Union Street attracts Bay Area shoppers in addition to visitors from all different parts of the world. Pedestrians in the business district are constantly drawn into the inviting space of The Blue Light. The business also attracts music enthusiasts who come to The Blue Light to hear their favorite musicians.

No matter where you are from, you leave The Blue Light cheerful and happier after having eaten good food, enjoyed a beer or cocktail, listened to great live music, caught up with old friends, and met new people – a real San Francisco experience.

c. In about 2-5 words (15-30 characters), describe what the business is known for.

Eats, drinks, music, and friends.

CRITERION 1: The business has operated in San Francisco for 30 or more years, with no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years

a. Provide a short history of the business, including locations and owners.

The Blue Light, located at 1979 Union Street in the Cow Hollow neighborhood, was opened in 1978 by the legendary local rock star Boz Skaggs. It became an institution for the live music scene, and Boz Skaggs would frequently perform at his venue.

In 1991, The Blue Light was purchased by a group of local bartenders that worked at some of the most legendary bars in San Francisco, including Perry's, Harry's Bar, and Southside Spirit House. This group included John (Johnny) Metheny, Jeff Jordan, Lance Cossey, Peter Snyderman, Terry Brown, Jeff Ames, and Eddie Petrillo. From opening night, when Mayor Frank Jordan himself stood on the bar to give his opening night toast to the new owners, this group

quickly turned The Blue Light into a destination for locals, neighbors, and visitors who wanted to enjoy a great cocktail, phenomenal shared plates, and wonderful music.

In 1995, Johnny Metheny left the partnership to open his chain of successful nightclubs called Johnny Love's but always kept in touch with his past partners / friends that continued to run The Blue Light. Peter Snyderman, Terry Brown, and Eddie Petrillo all left The Blue Light when Metheny departed.

Then in 2015, Metheny put together an investment group to repurchase The Blue Light, and it immediately again became a busy meeting spot for neighbors and locals. In 2019, Metheny purchased the shares from his investment group and has been the sole owner since, continuing to run The Blue Light in its same location where it was founded in 1978.

b. Provide the ownership history of the business in a consolidated year-to-year format.

1978 to 1991:	Boz Skaggs
1991 to 1995:	Johnny Metheny, Jeff Jordan, Lance Cossey, Peter Snyderman, Terry Brown, Jeff Ames, Eddie Petrillo
1995 to 2015:	Jeff Jordan, Lance Cossey, Jeff Ames
2015 to 2019:	Johnny Metheny, Nick Pigott, Matt Corvi
2019 to Present:	Johnny Metheny

c. Describe any circumstances that required the business to cease operations in San Francisco for any significant length of time.

The only period that the Blue Light closed at all was during the COVID pandemic in 2020 and 2021. This was due to government orders, and the business was open every legal opportunity during this time.

CRITERION 2: The business has contributed to the neighborhood's history and/or the identity of a particular neighborhood or community

a. Describe the business' contribution to the history and/or identity of the neighborhood, community, business sector, or San Francisco as a whole.

The Blue Light was the first live music venue on Union Street with bar founder rock star Boz Skaggs performing regularly. Continuing to this day, The Blue Light hosts some of the Bay Area's top live musicians performing at the venue. On November 16, 2020, The Blue Light obtained a Just Add Music (JAM) permit to host outdoor acoustic shows, which has been highly popular with neighbors, locals, and visitors.

In addition to the local live music, The Blue Light hosts many sporting events. It's 21 televisions allows The Blue Light to host many different teams and different sports at the same time.

College alumni groups, NFL, NBA, baseball, soccer, and many others will congregate at The Blue Light and enjoy the comradery with their friends and fellow fans.

b. Is the business associated with significant people or events, either now or in the past?

The Blue Light is mostly known for being founded by rock star Boz Skaggs and later co-owned by bartenders Jeff Jordan, Lance Cossey, and Johnny Love Metheny from the nightclub chain called Johnny Love's. It has also been frequented by San Francisco Mayor Frank Jordan, who toasted the reopening in 1991, as well as sports stars Joe Montana, Ronnie Lott, and Will Clark.

c. How does the business demonstrate its commitment to the community?

The Blue Light is extremely active in the community, and the ownership partners have volunteered for many charitable and local organizations over the years. These include The Make-A-Wish Foundation, the local chapter of the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society, The Spinsters of San Francisco, The Guardsmen, Junior League of San Francisco, Habitat for Humanity, One Warm Coat, Glide Foundation, National Breast Cancer Foundation, San Francisco-Marin Food Bank, and many local school events and charities.

d. Has the business ever been referenced in the media, business trade publication, and/or historical documents?

The Blue Light has been featured many times in local news publications, including the San Francisco Chronicle, San Francisco Examiner, 7x7, and other trade articles; on local television and radio news like KTVU, KCBS, KRON, and KGO; and in a national news story on MSNBC. The Blue Light was a source for stories on the local music, social, and political scenes during the recent COVID-19 pandemic. Many different news outlets featured The Blue Light in stories on the struggles that restaurants were challenged with during those tough times.

e. Has the business ever received any awards, recognition, or political commendations?

Mayor London Breed declared April 1, 2022, to be "Johnny Love Day" in San Francisco in recognition of the significant and remarkable contributions that John Metheny (AKA "Johnny Love") has made to the vitality of the city.

Over the years, The Blue Light has been named best local tavern and best pub food in the Best Of's sections of SF Weekly and San Francisco Bay Guardian.

f. How would the community be diminished if the business were to be sold, relocated, shut down, etc.?

If The Blue Light ceased to exist, the Cow Hollow neighborhood would lose a local treasure – a meeting spot for many. Sports fans would lose a traditional location where they have been meeting up with other fans for years. Those looking for a quick, delicious, inexpensive bite to eat would miss their favorite restaurant. San Francisco would lose a vital part of its live music

scene. And musicians would lose a valuable performance venue that helps contribute to their livelihoods.

CRITERION 3: The business is committed to maintaining the physical features or traditions that define the business

a. Is the business associated with a culturally significant building, structure, object, signage, mural, architectural detail, neon sign, or any other special physical feature that defines the business?

The Blue Light is located right on Union Street in the heart of the Cow Hollow business district. The two blocks that include The Blue Light are the premier retail blocks in San Francisco. The Blue Light has a famous blue awning over the front door that instantly allows locals to recognize its entrance.

b. In a few words, describe the main business activity you commit to maintaining.

The Blue Light strives to maintain its place as a local's lounge, sports bar, and live music venue.

c. What challenges is the business facing today?

These post-COVID pandemic times have brought quite a few challenges to many restaurants across the country, including The Blue Light – not only the financial challenge of having been forced closed or partially closed for nearly two years, but also the continuing social aspects of dealing with the effects and stresses of COVID. The bar and restaurant business has always been a very competitive business with few places lasting a few years let alone over 30. The current owner and employees are confident that The Blue Light will be here another 30 years and longer helping to bring locals and neighbors together.

Legacy Business Program staff will add the following details:

a. Features or traditions that define the business and should be maintained for the business to remain on the Legacy Business Registry.

Food, music, and sports bar.

b. Other special features of the business location, such as if the property associated with the business is listed on a local, state, or federal historic resources registry.

The Planning Department Historic Resource Status of the building at 1969 - 1979 Union Street is "B - Unknown / Age Eligible."















https://www.sfexaminer.com/archives/what-s-johnny-love-been-up-to-just-ask-him/article_2e630349-4600-5216-b5b5-65188fa723fb.html

What's Johnny Love been up to? Just ask him

By Al Saracevic
Apr 1, 2022



Barry Bonds and Johnny "Love" Metheny behind the bar at one of Metheny's restaurants in the 1990s. (Johnny Metheny)

JohnnyLove turning 60? Say it ain't so.

As San Francisco's favorite restaurateur and bartender put it, "Holy smokes. How did that happen?"

For anyone who spent the '90s boozin' and schmoozin' at the man's eponymous club on Polk Street, that may be a sobering thought. But here's the good news. He's still going strong. And he's still having more fun than you.

We caught up with Johnny ahead of his April Fools Day birthday bash, for which he planned a party at the **Blue Light**, the place he bought from **Boz Scaggs** back in the day. Looking back on his career, it's been quite a ride.

Before he became Johnny Love, he was just **John Metheny**, a rugby player at Cal who played on the great **Jack Clark**'s first national championship side. (One night, one of his frat brothers saw him chatting up a young lady at a bar and coined the nickname. It stuck. "My mom called me Johnny Love," he said with a chuckle.)

Love bartended his way through college and Clark helped him get a job after graduation at the famous fern bar, Henry Africa's. (Mr. Africa was actually named **Norman Hobday**, but chose a *nom de consume* for his watering hole.) He tried his hand as a stock broker, but that didn't work out. "My third day was the crash," said Love, referring to Black Monday, in October of 1987. "I just knew it wasn't good timing to be there. I stayed two years, but I kept bartending."

It was around that time that Love met **Harry Denton**, another legendary San Francisco clubkeeper, and he was off on his true path.

Denton helped him open his first joint, the **Fillmore Grill**, on the corner of Clay, and they remained lifelong friends.

“He was the first guy to say you’ve got to open up your own bar. He was very helpful,” said Love. “A lot of people thought we were partners. Just because he was so helpful. It was one of these odd couples. He was an older gay man and I was a younger heterosexual. But we had the same sense of humor. I loved the guy to death.”

(Denton passed away in August of 2021 in Seattle. Anyone who ever heard his voice will never forget it.)

So, yeah, Love bought the **Blue Light**. Opened up Johnny Love’s on Polk Street. Opened two more, in San Diego and Walnut Creek, and became one of San Francisco’s celebrity nightlife characters. His clubs were the place to be back in the day.

“That went on for many years,” Love told me. “It was unbelievable. I have pictures of **Michael Jordan, Barry Bonds, Pelé, Mark McGwire...**”

He forgot to mention **Gregg Allman, Herb Caen, Chris Isaak and Richard Branson**, to name a few more celebs. But I’ve seen the pictures.

I asked him if he ever settled down, after the party died down. “I never did get married. Had some close calls. I’ve lived with girls,” said Johnny. “And no, never had kids. But I’m the best uncle in the world.”

All these years later, Love remains in the business, owning four S.F. restaurants and planning to launch a fifth. You can find him at the **Toy Soldier and Vida Cantina SF**, both on lovely Belden Place. Like for most restaurant owners, the pandemic was no fun for Love.

“The parklets have been brilliant. They saved our lives,” he said. “We did it. We survived. ... It was just a roller coaster.”

Cheers Johnny. San Francisco still loves ya.

♦

Couple of leftovers from the **Charlotte Mailliard Shultz** memorial at Grace Cathedral this week. Willie Brown stole the show, as he is wont to do. He told us Charlotte had arranged her own funeral. And his. He joked that the lord now has a chief of protocol. And like any great politician, he was counting on the support of his friends.

During Charlotte’s new tenure in heaven, Brown hopes she will act as a diplomat, “because some of us will not have earned the right to enter. Charlotte will tell Him why Willie should be there.”

On another note, when they piped in **Henry Kissinger**’s voice into the grand cathedral to give a eulogy, it sure felt like the voice of God raining down on all of us. Who knew God had a German accent?

♦

Let’s end this week’s journey on Hippie Hill. Reefer madness will return to what used to be Golden Gate Park’s Sharon Meadow April 20, where thousands should gather to celebrate cannabis.

There shall be tributes to **Robin Williams and Bob Saget. Mike Tyson** will be there, hyping his Tyson 2.0 pot brand. **Jeff Ross** will be roasting people and blunts.

Sure sounds like San Francisco is getting back to normal. But commercializing 420? You asked for legalization, people. It comes with a price.

Editor’s note: The Arena, a column from The Examiner’s Al Saracevic, explores San Francisco’s playing field, from politics and technology to sports and culture. Send your tips, quips and quotes to asaracevic@sfexaminer.com.

Proclamation

City and County of San Francisco

WHEREAS, the City and County of San Francisco traditionally recognizes individuals who have made significant and remarkable contributions to the vitality of our City, and the dedicated and remarkable work of John Stephen Metheny truly represents San Francisco values at their best; and

WHEREAS, John Stephen Metheny, known to all as "Johnny Love" was born on April 1, 1962 in San Francisco to Dr. John and Susan (Ulrich) Metheny and he grew up in a loving and boisterous home in Piedmont, alongside his siblings Alan, Molly and Anne; and

WHEREAS, Johnny Love's prowess in academics and athletics was developed at Piedmont High School Class of 1980, and he matriculated to the University of California Berkeley as a star rugby player, where his beloved team won the national champion title in 1981, 1982, 1983 and 1985 and he was an active member of the Alpha Delta Phi Fraternity, the Skull and Keys Honor Society and spent years playing and supporting the Old Blues Rugby team; and

WHEREAS, post-college, Johnny Love developed a devoted and faithful following of friends and associates, particularly the late night crowd, and he established himself as a mainstay at Henry Africa's and worked alongside the great Harry Denton for decades, including Harry's on Fillmore; and

WHEREAS, as one of San Francisco's best known bartenders and a seasoned expert on the night life scene, he became one of the most well-known pub owners and bartenders in the city, and remains a fixture at his establishments that ranged from the Fillmore Grill, Johnny Love's, The Toy Soldier, Tin Cactus, the Blue Light Café, among others; and

WHEREAS, Johnny Love has always contributed back to the community, including being named San Francisco Leukemia Society's Man of the Year; and

WHEREAS, Johnny Love has brought joy, merriment and laughter to thousands of San Franciscans and countless visitors to our great city as one of the most famous, iconic and beloved barkeeps in city history; and

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that I, **London N. Breed**, Mayor of the City and County of San Francisco, on the occasion of Johnny Love's 60th birthday, do hereby proclaim April 1, 2022 as...

JOHNNY LOVE DAY

...in San Francisco!



IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Seal of the City and County of San Francisco to be affixed.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "London Breed".

London N. Breed
Mayor



**THEY SAY YOU CAN'T FIND
HAPPINESS AT THE BOTTOM OF A
BEER.**

**NO KIDDING, WHO'S HAPPY WHEN
THEIR BEER IS OVER?**



LEGACY BUSINESS REGISTRY EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

HEARING DATE: February 15, 2023

Filing Date: January 18, 2023
Case No.: 2023-000663LBR
Business Name: The Blue Light
Business Address: 1979 Union Street
Zoning: NCD (UNION STREET NEIGHBORHOOD COMMERCIAL) Zoning District
40-X Height and Bulk District
Block/Lot: 0542/038
Applicant: Johnny Metheny
1979 Union Street
San Francisco, CA 94123
Nominated By: Supervisor Catherine Stefani
Located In: District 2
Staff Contact: Branden Gunn – (628) 652-7367
Branden.Gunn@sfgov.org

Recommendation: Adopt a Resolution to Recommend Approval

Business Description

The Blue Light, located at 1979 Union Street in San Francisco's Cow Hollow neighborhood, was first opened in 1978 by Boz Scaggs, a local rock star. Upon its opening, the venue became an institution for live music, with Boz Scaggs often himself performing on premise.

In 1991, the Blue Light was purchased by a group of bartenders that included John (Johnny) Metheny, Jeff Jordan, Lance Cossey, Peter Snyderman, Terry Brown, Jeff Ames, and Eddie Petrillo. Mayor Frank Jordan himself toasted to the opening night atop the bar, and the new ownership group turned The Blue Light into a destination for locals, neighbors, and visitors who wanted to enjoy a cocktail or beer, food, and live music.

In 1995, Johnny Metheny left the partnership to open a chain of successful nightclubs called Johnny Love's, but maintained contact with some of his past partners who continued to run The Blue Light.

Peter Snyderman, Terry Brown, and Eddie Petrillo all left The Blue Light when Metheny departed, but in 2015, Metheny put together an investment group to repurchase The Blue Light. Upon requiring the business, The Blue Light again became a busy meeting spot for neighbors and locals. In 2019, Metheny purchased the shares from his investment group and has been the sole owner since, continuing to run The Blue Light in its same location where it was founded in 1978.

Staff Analysis

Review Criteria

1. *When was business founded?*

The business was founded in 1978.

2. *Does the business qualify for listing on the Legacy Business Registry? If so, how?*

Yes. The Blue Light qualifies for listing on the Legacy Business Registry because it meets all of the eligibility Criteria:

- a. The Blue Light has operated continuously in San Francisco for 45 years.
- b. The Blue Light has contributed to the history and identity of the Cow Hollow neighborhood and San Francisco.
- c. The Blue Light is committed to maintaining the physical features and traditions that define the organization.

3. *Is the business associated with a culturally significant art/craft/cuisine/tradition?*

No.

4. *Is the business or its building associated with significant events, persons, and/or architecture?*

Yes. The Blue Light was the first live music venue on Union Street and has hosted many of the Bay Area's best musicians, including Boz Scaggs. The business was later co-owned by John Stephen Metheny, also known as "Johnny Love", who was a famous San Franciscan bartender and championship rugby player.

5. *Is the property associated with the business listed on a local, state, or federal historic resource registry?*

No.

6. *Is the business mentioned in a local historic context statement?*

No, not as of the date of this Executive Summary.

7. *Has the business been cited in published literature, newspapers, journals, etc.?*

Yes. The Blue Light has been featured in local news publications, including the San Francisco Chronicle, San Francisco Examiner, 7x7, and other trade articles; on local television and radio news like KTVU, KCBS, KRON,

and KGO; and in a national news story on MSNBC. The Blue Light was a source for stories on the local music, social, and political scenes during the recent COVID-19 pandemic.

Physical Features or Traditions that Define the Business

Location(s) associated with the business:

Current Locations:

- 1979 Union Street (1978 – Present)

Recommended by Applicant

- Food and beverage service
- Occasional live music shows
- Bar and lounge space
- Blue exterior canopy

Additional Recommended by Staff

- None

Basis for Recommendation

The Department recommends the Historic Preservation Commission adopt a resolution recommending the business listed above be adopted by the Small Business Commission to the Legacy Business Registry.

ATTACHMENTS

Draft Resolution

Legacy Business Registry Application:

- Application Review Sheet
- Section 1 – Business / Applicant Information
- Section 2 – Business Location(s)
- Section 3 – Disclosure Statement
- Section 4 – Written Historical Narrative
 - Criterion 1 – History and Description of Business
 - Criterion 2 – Contribution to Local History
 - Criterion 3 – Business Characteristics
- Contextual Photographs and Background Documentation



HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION RESOLUTION NO. 1306

HEARING DATE: February 15, 2023

Case No.: 2023-000663LBR
Business Name: The Blue Light
Business Address: 1979 Union Street
Zoning: NCD (UNION STREET NEIGHBORHOOD COMMERCIAL) Zoning District
40-X Height and Bulk District
Block/Lot: 0542/038
Applicant: Johnny Metheny
1979 Union Street
San Francisco, CA 94123
Nominated By: Supervisor Catherine Stefani
Located In: District 2
Staff Contact: Branden Gunn – (628) 652-7367
Branden.Gunn@sfgov.org

ADOPTING FINDINGS RECOMMENDING TO THE SMALL BUSINESS COMMISSION APPROVAL OF THE LEGACY BUSINESS REGISTRY NOMINATION FOR THE BLUE LIGHT CURRENTLY LOCATED AT 1979 UNION ST BLOCK/LOT 0542/038.

WHEREAS, in accordance with Administrative Code Section 2A.242, the Office of Small Business maintains a registry of Legacy Businesses in San Francisco (the "Registry") to recognize that longstanding, community-serving businesses can be valuable cultural assets of the City and to be a tool for providing educational and promotional assistance to Legacy Businesses to encourage their continued viability and success; and

WHEREAS, the subject business has operated in San Francisco for 30 or more years, with no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years; and

WHEREAS, the subject business has contributed to the City's history and identity; and

WHEREAS, the subject business is committed to maintaining the traditions that define the business; and

WHEREAS, at a duly noticed public hearing held on February 15, 2023, the Historic Preservation Commission reviewed documents, correspondence and heard oral testimony on the Legacy Business Registry nomination. THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the **Historic Preservation Commission hereby recommends** that The Blue Light qualifies for the Legacy Business Registry under Administrative Code Section 2A.242(b)(2) as it has operated for 30 or more years and has continued to contribute to the community.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the **Historic Preservation Commission hereby** recommends safeguarding of the below listed physical features and traditions for The Blue Light.

Location(s):

Current Locations:

- 1979 Union Street (1978 – Present)

Physical Features or Traditions that Define the Business:

- Food and beverage service
- Occasional live music shows
- Bar and lounge space
- Blue exterior canopy

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Historic Preservation Commission's findings and recommendations are made solely for the purpose of evaluating the subject business's eligibility for the Legacy Business Registry, and the Historic Preservation Commission makes no finding that the subject property or any of its features constitutes a historical resource pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5(a).

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the **Historic Preservation Commission hereby directs** its Commission Secretary to transmit this Resolution and other pertinent materials in the case file **2023-000663LBR** to the Office of Small Business on February 15, 2023.



Jonas P. Ionin
Commission Secretary

AYES: Wright, Black, Foley, So, Nageswaran, Matsuda

NOES: None

ABSENT: Johns

ADOPTED: February 15, 2023