

## Annual CSFN Dinner A Full House



CSFN's 32nd Annual Awards Dinner

October 19, 2004

Golden Gate Yacht Club



### Sue Cauthen, Michael Antonini Honored

Our Awards Dinner at the Golden Gate Yacht Club was a successful turnout of neighborhood activists and sympathetic political and cultural friends.

Our keynote speaker, Jack Davis, pictured above with President Barbara Meskunas, gave an insiders view of the elections and electoral process of the City.

The annual neighborhood achievement awards concluded the celebration. This year's recipients were Commissioner Micheal Antonini from the Planning Commission, and Sue Cauthen, longtime and tireless advocate for neighborhood libraries.

### CSFN Flexes Political Clout at Ballot box

Our recommendations carry weight with the voters and many apparently consider our recommendations when they cast their ballots. November 2004 was no exception. Most notable was our opposition to Prop A, the Housing Bond, which in spite of its (reported) \$120,000 to Stearns Consulting, failed at the ballot box without any organized opposition. Our ballot handbook argument joined two Republican arguments, SPEAK and Good Government Alliance on a single page of opponent arguments.

### Richard Hongisto 1936 - 2004

Memorial services for our friend, advocate and a regular fixture at CSFN events, "Dick" Hongisto, will be held at the rotunda of City Hall on November 29th at 6PM.

Dick attended our Annual Dinner, as well as our Holiday Pot Luck, occasions he never missed. He will be greatly missed by of our members.

As a supervisor, Dick was the "neighborhood" supervisor, always interested and helpful to neighborhood concerns and always an outspoken advocate for our causes, often standing alone.

During his career as Police Officer, Sheriff, Supervisor, Police Chief and Assessor, Hongisto was an independent and available public official. Many communities, including our LGBT, Asian and African American communities lost a valuable friend and resource.



# Land Use Issues Guaranteed to Consume Us in 2005



Let me first recognize the heroic efforts of Eileen Boken and Judy Berkowitz who, together with myself, provided information to neighborhood and community groups across the city in opposition to Prop A. Even though the deck was clearly stacked against us, and we had no funded opposition campaign, we managed to convince San Francisco taxpayers that Prop A was another property tax sinkhole that deserved to be defeated. Thanks also to the neighborhood Presidents who disseminated No on A information to their members, and thanks to all of the candidates for office who opposed not only A, but also the onerous business tax proposals that were also wisely rejected by the voters.

Unfortunately, Prop A will not be the last time that affordable housing special interest groups will attempt to pick our pockets. Let's hope that Mayor Newsom will see the wisdom of proposing a separate, specific and accountable plan for funding permanent supportive housing for the chronically homeless on the next ballot, and not encumber it with payoffs to the same publicly-subsidized hacks who have been aggressively panhandling the taxpayers for decades.

San Francisco has long been faulted for its lack of a long range planning strategy for land use. In fact, San Francisco is usually faulted, when observed from a national perspective, as having no long range planning strategy for *anything*. It is little wonder, therefore, that our Housing Element was written years late, was grossly inadequate, and had to undergo many tedious hearings, and resulting amendments, before it was rendered so unimportant as to no longer be worth our time to continue to appeal.

In the meantime, and in the absence of relevant planning guidelines, developers have been forced to find loopholes in the laws in order to build, and neighbors have been forced to play a reactive roll in opposition to just about everything. At the same time, non-profit developers have joined in opposition to market rate development, failing to have even a basic understanding of market forces, and usually hoping to cash in by being paid off to go away.

The Downtown groups who brought us the poorly written Prop J last year have recently been added to this chaotic mix. Downtown's goal of producing new home ownership opportunities for working people is admirable, but it is clear that Downtown must seek the advice of affected communities, (not just the City Hall apologists at SPUR), before venturing into decision-making propositions that will affect our quality of life for the next century. CSFN shares many of Downtown's goals, e.g. affordable home ownership, built appropriately and responsibly for working San

Franciscans and their families, with adequate parking and infrastructure improvements. New homeowners contribute to the tax base, funding critical services and lessening the burden on the rest of us.

Throughout the No on A campaign, I was always questioned as to how I would propose creating new housing opportunities if Prop A failed. I always responded by saying that first, the market needs to be corrected, i.e. we need to stop restricting the supply of housing, because doing so only drives up costs on the existing stock.

Supervisor Daly's pending legislation to make 2-unit buildings subject to the condo conversion cap does just the opposite. Save for a very limited number of city-subsidized condominiums (like the one Supervisor Daly bought), tenancies-in-common (TICs) are now the only way young families can afford to buy a home in this city. Our new Supervisor Ross Mirkarimi has a TIC.

TIC owners normally apply for condo conversion, so that they are not saddled forever with shared ownership of their homes. Supervisor Daly's legislation would deny hundreds of San Franciscans the opportunity to become tax-paying homeowners. While CSFN usually does not take positions on tenant-landlord issues, every survey I've ever read concludes that at least 2/3 of renters want to become homeowners. So we must ask, who does it serve to continue to restrict supply? Assuming that long-term protected tenants are properly protected or compensated in such transactions, the only people who benefit are real estate speculators who enjoy endless and predictable increases in property values, and the non-profit entities that make their comfortable livings advocating for renters. For that reason, I believe this matter falls under the category of "good government," for which CSFN has always advocated.

Another more controversial example is the PDR spot-zoning legislation being pushed by Supervisor Sophie Maxwell to benefit the wealthy owner of a beer production and distribution company on Potrero Hill. While I can understand the loyalty of some residents and the Supervisor to a very generous corporate neighbor, what is at risk in this instance is *millions of dollars in property taxes that the city will forfeit* in what amounts to a seizing of land, purchased in good faith by a developer who will build hundreds of units of new housing in an area that has *asked* for housing in a public planning process. The similarities of this case to the 701 Lombard land grab, strongly opposed by CSFN, which also would have provided new housing that would have contributed to the property tax base, cannot be ignored.

I think that CSFN could make a valuable

(Cont. Page 7)

## SEPTEMBER EXCOM REPORT

The CSFN ExComm was called to order at 7:10PM at its regularly scheduled meeting on September 29 at Northern Police Station. Present were: Barbara Meskunas, Judith Berkowitz, Eileen Boken, Doug Comstock, Dick Millet, Bud Wilson, George Zaback, Sharon Eberhart, Evelyn Wilson. Unexcused absence: Steve Gruel.

**President's Report:** Barbara Meskunas reported that she participated in the Comcast debate taking the opposition stance to Prop A.

**1<sup>st</sup> Vice President's Report:** Judith Berkowitz reported that Mike Antonini's reappointment to the Planning Commission will be voted on at the Board of Supervisors on Oct 19. A CSFN letter in his support was delivered to each Supervisor. AB2702, statewide secondary units, is still on the Governor's desk; there is a lot of controversy surrounding it there.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President's Report:** Eileen Boken will have a table at the Sunset Festival in CSFN's name. She will provide "No on A" and "Yes on E" campaign literature. The ExComm voted unanimously to reimburse her for the expense. Surplus property at 2350-19<sup>th</sup> Ave (the Julie Lee rental) would make a good natural gas refueling station.

**New Business:** Dick Millet will get the audit papers and Evelyn Wilson will find the incorporation papers.

**Awards:** Discussion of nominees for the annual CSFN awards dinner. Sue Cauthen and Mike Antonini were unanimously chosen as recipients.

**October Dinner:** Sponsor letters have been sent to 130 people. Invitations will go out the week of Oct 4. Dinner will be \$75/person with a no-host bar. The caterer had to be hired separately which is why the price is higher than in the past.

**Meeting with Mayor Newsom:** October 20 from 3:00-4:00PM. Fixed agenda: no more than two persons per neighborhood group with an agenda item given in advance which is a position taken and supported by CSFN. Topics can include City Services problems or suggestions for the neighborhood. Steve Gruel will again take names and topics for this meeting.

The next ExComm meeting will be November 24; there will be no ExComm meeting in October.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:15PM.

...Submitted by Judith Berkowitz, 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President



**Dec. 21 • 6PM • 381 Magellan St.**

## Editorial (Cont. from page 2)

contribution to the home ownership arguments being formulated in our absence across the city. We must *demand* that the city finish its neighborhood planning process – I find it hard to believe that doing so would not be cost effective by saving the endless appeals that will continue to result from *not* finishing the neighborhood plans. We must make every effort to network with business, civic, and even academic groups that share our interests. We must begin writing about and publicizing our informed opinions. And most importantly, we must seek out and support, or formulate, proactive proposals and initiatives for producing more home ownership opportunities for San Franciscans, in order to guarantee the future viability, vitality, and quality of our neighborhoods. City Hall may not know where they're going or how to get there, but we certainly do.

...Submitted by Barbara Meskunas, CSFN President

## Music Concourse Landmark Application Hearing

An application to landmark the Music Concourse in Golden Gate Park has been submitted to the Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board by SPEAK. Friends of the Music Concourse, the new park advocacy group, is preparing materials to support, in particular, the landmarking of the historic pol-larded trees.

The first landmarking hearing is tentatively scheduled for December 1, 2004. We will be looking for letters of support and also for people to attend that hearing. Please contact Kathy Howard if you are interested or would like more information: 710-2402 or musicconcourse@earthlink.net. Or you can go to our website: <http://www.musicconcourse.org>

...Submitted by Ramona Albright, TPOSC

### How To Reach Us

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## POT LUCK AT FOREST HILL CLUBHOUSE

The Coalition’s Annual Pot Luck will be at Forest Hill Clubhouse on Tuesday, December 21st through the generosity of John Farrell, who, as a member, is willing to sponsor our event, making the rent affordable. Special thanks also to Ramona Albright for tirelessly phone work.

The Forest Hill Clubhouse at 381 Magellan St., a registered national historic landmark, was designed by Bernard Maybeck and it was built in 1919 by the residents of the neighborhood themselves.

“Here Today, San Francisco’s Architectural Heritage” by the Junior League of San Francisco published in 1968 observes, “The facade is more restrained than Maybeck’s other works, but the interior is Maybeck at his best. The high ceiling with its massive beam work is one of the architect’s most inspiring.”

The event is free —please bring a dish or a small donation, \$15 to 20 is suggested.



### Committee Meetings

**Land Use & Housing** • Monday, 7:00, Oct. 4th at Northern Police Stn. • Judith Berkowitz 824-0617 • sfjberk@mac.com

**Bylaws Committee** Chair: Evelyn Wilson: evelynwilsregparl@earthlink.net 566-7826

**Government and Elections Committee** Chair: Rebecca Silverberg: sfrebecca@aol.com 584-0535

**Newsletter Comm.** Chair: Ramona Albright 621-9621

**Open Space Task Force** Chair: Tys Sniffen: tys@ideamountain.com 929-7746

**Transportation Committee** Chair: John Barry: jackbarry99@earthlink.net 564-0225

**Water Task Force** Chair: Joan Girardot: 346-5525

## NOVEMBER LAND USE & HOUSING COMMITTEE REPORT

The CSFN Land Use & Housing Committee held its regular meeting in the Community Room of the Northern Police Station on Monday November 1.

Hiroshi Fukuda will ask the Planning Department if the info on the webpage is current: it appears that it is very old and reflects what the PD wanted to do rather than what the Commission actually voted to do.

Jim Lew was thanked for his written comments on the Office of the Legislative Analysis information regarding secondary units. Chair Berkowitz gave copies of this paper to the LU&H and ExComm committees and asked for their comments on it.

Discussion of Second Means of Egress. Equivalencies: fire alarms, multiple egresses, stairs and firewall.

We determined to write to the Planning Commission with CSFN concerns regarding the search for a Planning Director.

It appears that the Planning Commission’s Public Comment may be moved back to the beginning of the meetings. It will be heard on Nov 18. LU&H will write to support this as well as offer suggestions as to time and placement of the Public Comment on the Agenda.

...Submitted by Judith Berkowitz, Chair LU&H Committee

## OCTOBER LAND USE & HOUSING COMMITTEE REPORT

The CSFN Land Use & Housing Committee held its regular meeting in the Community Room of the Northern Police Station on Monday October 4.

Charlie Marsteller and Molly Hopp presented 724 Van Ness Ave. In 2002, it had been approved for 140 rental units below market-rate with a parking waiver. It has been changed to 104 condo units market-rate w/ 89 stacked parking spaces. The envelope has not changed; the Zoning Administrator has determined that it does not need a new Conditional Use or Review. Looks Like a “bait and switch.” A DR was accepted and then killed. They are arguing it as a “process” issue: it sets dangerous precedent. This is an entirely different project.

...Submitted by Judith Berkowitz, Chair LU&H Committee

**The Water Task Force** Requests that you bring your last water/sewer bill to the next meeting. For privacy, you may remove your personal information. Help us fight the new fee increases!

# RETURN PUBLIC COMMENT

NOV 18th • 1:30PM Rm 400 City Hall

On November 18 the Planning Commission will consider amending its Rules to RETURN PUBLIC COMMENT TO THE START OF ITS MEETING. It is important that people attend -- or send letters -- to support this Rule Change.

## HISTORY OF PUBLIC COMMENT AT THE PLANNING COMMISSION

When state law was changed to require Public Comment (back when Feinstein was Mayor) at all Commission meetings, the Planning Commission VERY CONSCIOUSLY decided to respect the public and put Public Comment at the very start of the meeting -- after Continuances, but before Commissioners Comments and Matters. This allowed the public to bring to the Commission's attention matters that needed their attention. Commissioners would often do follow-up on an issue under "Commissioner's matters" which followed immediately. Because Public Comment was at the beginning of the meeting, members of the public could show up at 1:30 and know that they would be heard very shortly. There tended to be 2 or 3 members of the public at each meeting. Sometimes none. If an issue was of particular concern, there would occasionally be a string of people showing up on a single issue. This happened maybe once every month or two. Technically, the rule has always been that 15 minutes of public comment was allowed, and if it went beyond that the Commission could continue it to the end of the meeting. But it generally did not roll over. Up until 2000 Planning Commission Presidents were effective chairs and handled Public Comment so that it did not become a problem. In 2000, the Mission district and people concerned about live/work used Public Comment at various times to raise issues of out of control development in the Mission. Other comments, from other citizens, kept on as usual. That testimony rarely took more than 20-30 minutes and was necessitated by the failure of the Department to start a PLANNING PROCESS to deal with out of control dot.com and live/work development. At one meeting in the fall of 2000, where there were about 4 Mission speakers, the Commission President called the Sheriff when a speaker ran over the 3 minute limit by less than 10 seconds. The speaker, Jonathan Youtt, was body-slammed to the floor and detained because the President had pushed the "security alert" buzzer. JUST FOR GOING SLIGHTLY OVER THE TIME LIMIT. The following week two Mission residents did a silent protest of that action during Public Comment. The following week the Planning Commission President introduced a rule change that Public Com-

**!!CALL TO ACTION!!**



ment would be at the end of the Planning Commission meeting. Since the change in time, Public Comment has virtually disappeared. A Commission meeting can end at any time from 4:00 to midnight. People don't have the time to wait for hours until the end of the calendar. (Also, the Department no longer posts the calendar under various time slots -- e.g., 1:30, 3:30, 5:30) but sets the ENTIRE calendar for 1:30.) The last time I checked, the most frequent person using Public Comment was Joe O'Donoghue, when he was there for a D.R. hearing. I stayed late about 3 times over the past two years to ask the Commission to return Public Comment to the start of the hearing. After 2 unsuccessful attempts, Christina Olague was able to get a hearing set for this Rule change. WHY YOUR SUPPORT IS NEEDED None of the current Planning Commissioners has experience with Public Comment at the start of the hearing. Several Planning Commissioners have stated that their meetings go on too long and that they would rather keep things the way they are. Which really means, in reality, virtually no public comment. Because Public Comment has virtually been abandoned, there will probably be a lot of pent up energy/comment if it is returned to the start. That is not a BAD thing. BUT the Commission is only being asked to allow 15 minutes of Public Comment at the start of the meeting and should be reminded that it has the power to roll anything over 15 minutes to the end of the meeting. Let the Commission know that it is disrespectful to members of the public to force the public to wait for hours when what they have to say may actually be valuable to the Commission. That Public Comment was at the start of the meeting for about 15 years with no problem. That the public should not be punished for the poor meeting management skills of a former Planning Commission President who so violated her public trust that she had a member of the public body-slammed and detained for going a tiny bit over the 3 minute limit. It is an abomination that Public Comment has been virtually wiped out at the Planning Commission for over 4 years. PLEASE TELL THE PLANNING COMMISSION YOU WANT PUBLIC COMMENT (15 MINUTES OF IT) RESTORED TO THE START OF THE MEETING.

*...Written by Sue Hestor, Submitted by Dick Millet, PHNA*

*Editors Note: the Sunshine Task Force will also address the question at its next meeting on Tuesday November 24th. The meeting begins at 4:PM, consult the website for order. - dc*

# Minutes of the CSFN General Assembly of September 21, 2004

1. **Call to order.** President Barbara Meskunas brought the meeting to order at 7:16 pm at Northern Police Stn.

a. *Quorum declared.* Delegates and alternates represented 20 CSFN member organizations.

b. *Agenda Approved.*

c. *Introductions.*

2. **Presentation by Host Organizations.** Robert Speer / Beidmant Area Neighborhood Group and Francisco Da Costa / Bayview Hunters Point Coordinating Council described their organizations, their objectives, history and issues.

3. **Approval of the August 17, 2004 Minutes.** The minutes as reported on page three in the September, 2004 newsletter were approved.

## 4. **Officers' Reports:**

A. **President:** Barbara Meskunas / BANG reminded the delegates of the CSFN dinner scheduled to take place at the Golden Gate Yacht Club. Jack Davis the guest speaker.

B. **Vice President:** Judith Berkowitz / EMIA announced that the next Excom meeting was scheduled for September 29, 2004 @ 7:00 p.m. She also directed the delegates to page 4 of the September, 2004 newsletter for the Excom report. The Excom report was accepted without objection.

C. **Second Vice President:** No Report.

D. **Recording Secretary:** No Report.

E. **Treasurer:** The treasurer, Doug Comstock / PRO SF filed a report showing a CSFN balance as of September 21, 2004, to be \$3,297.62.

F. **Corresponding Secretary:** No report.

## 5. **Committee Reports:**

A. **Land Use & Housing:** Chairperson Judith Berkowitz / EMIA informed the delegates that there was no meeting last month.

B. **Open Space Task Force:** Ramona Albright / TPC / OSC introduced the following resolution: Be It Resolved, that the CSFN Open Space Task Force be given standing committee status.

C. **Media Relations:** Eileen Boken / SPEAK attended a meeting of "Save the Bay" in order to get ideas on starting and developing the CSFN media committee.

6. **Update on Rincon Park Development**  
David Osgood presented an update on the Rincon Park Development.

## 7. **Endorsement of City Proposition on the November Ballot.**

A presentation by the Government and Elections Committee of the following proposition occurred.

i). **Proposition J -- Sales Tax Increase**

**Vote: 18-2-0 to oppose Proposition J**

## 8. **Unfinished Business:**

Last month, Ramona Albright / TPC / OSC introduced the following resolution for consideration next month:

**Therefore, Be It Resolved,** that the CSFN, Coalition For San Francisco Neighborhoods, supports the position of the LIBRARY USERS ASSOCIATION in unconditionally opposing any funding or implementation of RFID, Radio Frequency Identification technology at the library, and urges that the money spent instead on more important priorities such as more books and open hours, and staffing necessary to support these priorities.

After being duly seconded, the resolution was discussed and passed: 18-1-1.

## 9. **New Business:**

Sue Cauthen / NBN introduced the following two resolutions as emergency resolutions:

1. **Therefore be it resolved** that the Coalition for San Francisco Neighborhoods urges the Board of Supervisors to see that all 11 Library CAC appointments are made as soon as possible.

After being declared an emergency, and duly seconded, the resolution was discussed and passed: 20-0-0.

2. **Therefore, be it resolved** that the Coalition for SF Neighborhoods urges Mayor Newsom to appoint dedicated, informed library patrons to the Library Commission.

After being declared an emergency, and duly seconded, the resolution was discussed and passed: 19-0-1.

3. Eileen Boken / SPEAK introduced the following resolution:

**Therefore, Be It Resolved,** that the Coalition for San Francisco Neighborhoods urges the Mayor and the Board of Supervisors to proceed with a comprehensive management audit of the Redevelopment Agency.

**Therefore, Be It Further Resolved,** that this comprehensive management audit be performed by the Office of the Budget Analyst as soon as possible, but no later than fiscal year 05/06.

4. John Bardis / ISAC introduced the following emergency resolution:

**RESOLVED,** The Coalition for San Francisco Neighborhoods urges the Board of Appeals to reschedule the public hearing on Appeal No. 04-0470 from September 22, 2004 to a date when all 5 members of the Board of Appeals will be present to hear the appeal of the Russian Hill Community Association.

After being declared an emergency, and duly seconded, the resolution was discussed and passed: 19-1-0.

10. **Announcements:** None.

11. **Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 9:10 p.m.

...Steven F. Gruel / GGHNA, Recording Secretary

## SPONSORS FOR 2004

### BENEFACTORS

*San Francisco Apartment Assn.  
Residential Builders Assn.  
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*Rebecca Silverberg, Candidate for Supervisor  
Retired Firemen & Widows Assn. of SFFD  
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OMI Neighbors in Action  
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Dick Millet  
Joan Girardot  
Suzanne D. Cauthen  
New Mission Terrace Improvement Assn  
Judith Berkowitz  
Barbara Meskunas  
Doug Comstock  
John Bardis  
Ed Jew/SWEAP  
Cow Hollow Assn.  
Charles B. Dicke  
Anita Grier  
Greg Corrales  
Jim Siegel  
Francis Somsel  
Kelly Pascal  
David Pascal  
Patricia Vaughey  
Leland Yee, Speaker Pro Tem, Assembly, 12th District.*

## COALITION FOR SAN FRANCISCO NEIGHBORHOODS

Neighborhood Views is published monthly, the official voice of the Coalition for San Francisco Neighborhoods, Inc., a 501(c)4 Organization.

**To Submit Articles:** email articles by the fifth of the month to: dougcoms@aol.com or call 386-4934.

Articles reflect the opinions of the submitter, not necessarily the opinion of the CSFN. We invite material from member organizations as well as rebuttal to articles already printed. Articles are written by the editor unless otherwise designated. We reserve the right to edit where necessary. Member organizations receive the newsletter without charge. Copies: Members/\$10, Non-members/\$15.

## Annual Dinner 2004



Sue Cauthen accepts Neighborhood Activist Award from Judith Berkowitz, Comm. Mike Antonini not shown.



Tony Sacco takes his seat with the Retired Firemen and Widows of the SFFD table.



President Barbara Meskunas chats with Warren Hinckle and Robert Speer after dinner "anyone Jack didn't offend?"

*Agenda*

**General Assembly Meeting  
 November 16, 2004**

**Next Meeting**  
**TUESDAY**  
**November**  
**16<sup>th</sup>**

- 6:30 I. Sign In and Refreshments
- 7:00 II. Call to Order/Ascertain Quorum
  - A. Introduction of Delegates and Guests
  - B. Presentation of Host Organizations:
    - 1. Buena Vista Neighborhood Assn – BVNA
    - 2. Telegraph Hill Dwellers – THD
- 7:15 III. Approval of September Minutes
- 7:20 IV. Officers' Reports
  - A. President
  - B. Vice Presidents
  - C. Secretaries
  - D. Treasurer

**7:30 Program: It's The Binder & Bowman Show!**  
 Chris Bowman and David Binder present and discuss the election aftermath: a postmortem of the City's voting patterns, why and where certain propositions won or lost, interpreting results, what they mean and voting trends.

- 9:00 V. Committee Reports
  - A. Land Use & Housing
  - B. Media Relations
  - C. Open Space Task Force
  - D. Transportation
  - E. Water Task Force
- 9:25 VI. Unfinished Business
  - A. Resolution concerning Redevelopment Agency Audit
- 9:35 VII. New Business
- 9:45 VIII. Announcements
- 10:00 IX. Adjournment

**Inside**

**Special Election Wrap-Up**  
**David Binder & Chris Bowman**

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 Redevelopment Agency Audit
- SPECIAL REQUEST:**  
 Bring your most recent water bill!

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