

# BETTER NEIGHBORHOODS PLAN AND PROCESS EXPLAINED

## Not a Puzzle Any Longer

The Better Neighborhoods Planning and Implementation Process legislation (aka "Better Neighborhoods Plus") is a proposed ordinance designed to streamline the planning process for new development by rezoning a given area and providing a process for funding the planning process for that area — a "Better Neighborhoods Plan."

Initially the Planning Department set up "Better Neighborhood Plans" in three areas: Market-Octavia, Central Waterfront, and Balboa Park. These areas were under intense pressure by developers wanting to drastically change their density, use and character. "Better Neighborhoods Plans" were a way for the Department to be able to manage the transition in an orderly manner and get input from the neighbors at the outset of the process. Supervisor Jake McGoldrick has now put forward legislation which would permit these Better Neighborhoods to be declared anywhere in the City. His proposed ordinance is before the Planning Commission which will hold hearings September 1, 8 and 15. Neighborhoods all across the city must sit up and pay attention.

### Setting Aside the Current Code

When such a "Better Neighborhood" is set up through the process, it would no longer be subject to the current City Planning Code, except as agreed to in its specific "Better Neighborhood Plan." It should come as no surprise to find, in examining the ordinance, that much of the streamlining of the process is achieved by limiting the ability of residents of the area to challenge the size and scope of any new development at the Planning Commission by filing for Discretionary Review.

*In fact, the "Better" in the Better Neighborhood Plans is "planner-speak" for "Increased-density-through-rezoning" Neighborhood Plans. One wonders if it would be thought of as "better" by current residents of already fully-developed neighborhoods who might find themselves living in a so-designated area. The legislation would make it possible to set up a "Better Neighborhood" of at least 40 acres (about four blocks by five blocks) or smaller, if deemed necessary. A special area would thus be demarcated, with a Needs Analysis pointing toward an imperative for redevelopment.*

### Octavia-Market Plan as a Model

As witnessed by the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for one of the current areas, the Market and Octavia Neighborhood Plan, the rezoning there includes increased height limits along the major streets (including the introduction of minimum height limits) and the mandatory reduction of parking requirements for some new residential construction. The assumption is that many residents of



Dean Macris, Director, Planning Department and Betty Chan, Supervisor's Aide

these new developments will rely on public transportation, or perhaps bicycles, and will not own cars, even though studies show that people living near major public transit lines own just as many vehicles as those who do not live near public transit. People who already live in the area and rely on street parking will just have to compete with the new residents for the same amount of parking since there is no "non-car ownership" requirement for occupancy of these new residential units.

### Limit on Discretionary Review

One of the most disturbing elements in the ordinance is the arbitrary limitation placed on Discretionary Review. One reason Discretionary Review is part of the Planning Code is there was a realization that the Code could not possibly anticipate all the individual circumstances that might occur because older — including now non-complying — structures might be negatively (Cont'd on p 3)

### CSFN MEETING WITH THE MAYOR

Tuesday August 16<sup>th</sup> City Hall Room 201 11:00AM

Members of CSFN — both CSFN delegates and individual neighborhood group members — may contact Judith Berkowitz if you wish to attend. Those who have agenda items for this meeting must get them to Judy beforehand. Everyone is welcome to attend, even if you do not have an item to discuss, however. Please contact Judy at 824-0617 or sfjberk@mac.com

## WHAT IS BETTER NEIGHBORHOODS PLANNING & IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS, AND WHERE DID IT COME FROM??

The attorneys for the Housing Element lawsuit have found a document that explains the origin and genesis of the BNP&IP.

It seems that Supervisor McGoldrick asked the SF BOS Legislative Analyst for a study on ways to develop housing, and that the study, issued in June 2003 (called "Housing Development" which can be found on the SF BOS Legislative Analysts website under SFGov.org) triggered McGoldrick's Better Neighborhood Planning & Implementation Process legislation now pending at the Board.

One member of the CSFN Land Use Committee has termed the BNP&IP the "Transit Corridor Redevelopment Plan" and this is true to the extent that BNP&IP is a new "redevelopment" mechanism which can be used to override all other neighborhood plans.

The Executive Summary and Conclusion of the Legislative Analyst is published below. Please note that the endnotes of the 37-page study reflect the participation by many who served on the steering committee underway since April 2004 which resulted in McGoldrick's bill, Better Neighborhood Planning & Implementation Process.

### ***Executive Summary***

*San Francisco consistently falls short of its housing production goals. Over the past decade, housing production has not kept pace with employment and population growth. As a result, housing has become unaffordable for many of the City's residents, commuting to jobs in the City has increased, and many of the City's households are becoming overcrowded. These trends threaten the health of the City's economy, citizens, and natural environment. If the City does not take new steps to stimulate housing production, these trends are expected to continue.*

*"There are several strategies the City can pursue to meet housing production goals. These strategies involve reducing the direct costs of construction and the uncertainty costs of the development process. By reducing these costs, the City can encourage housing production and create more competition in the development market. This report details the following strategies for stimulating housing production:*

- *Rezone land use;*
- *Relax floor-to-area restrictions for housing development downtown;*
- *Increase height and density allowances along major transit corridors;*
- *Provide direct subsidies to affordable housing developers;*
- *Alter parking requirements;*
- *Maintain consistency of development fees;*
- *Pursue program environmental impact reports;*
- *Revise conditional use requirements; and*



Dennis Antenore eagerly awaits CSFN questions about BNP&IP

- *Minimize time delays associated with discretionary review.*

*"Many of these policy changes will create significant cost savings to housing developers. The City benefits from these cost savings because more profitable development opportunities draw new developers into the market and increase the overall housing supply. The City can also benefit by making regulatory changes designed to increase affordable housing production or increases in developer fees that can be used to fund City services.*

*"Many of these strategies can be packaged to create comprehensive approaches to neighborhood development. Comprehensive approaches involve one community-wide planning process that allows for substantial community input and requires significant upfront investments from the planning department. Developers are willing to fund such programs, however, in exchange for the cost-savings they create in the long-run. The City also benefits in the long-run from increased*

*housing development, well-planned communities, and happy residents."*

### ***Conclusion***

*This study suggests that the Board of Supervisors may use its legislative powers to increase housing development in San Francisco by taking any of the following actions: rezoning land use for residential purposes, relaxing the floor-to-area restrictions for housing downtown, increasing density allowances along transit corridors, providing direct subsidies for affordable housing development, allowing flexibility in parking requirements, pursuing program environmental impact reports, revising conditional use requirements, and minimizing time delays caused by*

*discretionary review. Each of these recommendations may stand alone, or any number of them may be combined into a package to effectively promote housing development. Some of these changes have already been proposed in various forms at the Board of Supervisors.*

*"An expanded neighborhood planning program such as the one described above allows planning to be tailored to individual neighborhoods, and thus has the potential to successfully combine many of the enumerated alternatives, as appropriate. Implementation of area planning could simultaneously add certainty to the development process, increase community participation, and create additional revenue for city government.*

*"Different packages of policy changes will have different magnitudes of effect on housing production, and will do so over different lengths of time. For example, zoning changes have the potential to greatly increase housing construction, but the majority of this increase will occur over the long term. Other changes, such as relaxing parking requirements, may have smaller total impacts, but do more to increase affordable housing production. Any of these changes must be evaluated against the City's short term and long term housing goals.*

*"Whether or not the City should take measures to spur housing development is a policy matter for the Board of Supervisors."*

*...Charles Marsteller Van Ness Neighbors*

## **Not A Puzzle** (Cont'd from p 1)

impacted by new, code-complying developments. Consequently, the Planning Commission is given the “discretion” to “review” and take action on these cases. This is one of the most important functions of the Commission and is vital to keep our neighborhoods livable. Perhaps, through increased scrutiny during the “Better Neighborhoods” process, such problems will be solved early on, though this is not known or assured. *The proposed ordinance specifically limits the amount a new development could be reduced by Discretionary Review to 5% of its volume, no matter what its impact might be on either its neighbors or the neighborhood.*

### **Plan Implementation Committees**

The ordinance also establishes an advisory committee of 9 to 15 members to monitor the progress of planning during the set-up of a given “Better Neighborhoods Plan.” The Planning Commission would select this Plan Implementation Committee, or PIC, presumably from a list of people drawn up by the Planning Department. *The ordinance states that the PIC “shall include representatives of resident tenants and owners, commercial tenants and owners, community and neighborhood-based organizations, and local developers.”* The selection of this group could be very easily manipulated by a pro-density, pro-development Department to be a rubber-stamp committee for the Department. Some of its members would not need to either live or work in the Plan neighborhood. A group who may have a vested interest in a particular plan’s success is a poor substitute for the Planning Commission, which deals with planning on a Citywide basis.

### **Keep Planning Commission’s Role**

It is hoped that the Commission will not give up this power to safeguard all members of the community from arbitrary DR limits or from a PIC, which could become just another unnecessary, bureaucratic hurdle for residents trying to maintain the character of their neighborhood and their quality of life. The Commission should, at the very least, recommend amending the ordinance to keep its DR powers intact. After all, should the Better Neighborhoods Planning & Implementation Process be as good as its proponents say, there should be no need to alter the DR process, since fewer, if any, DRs will be filed.

Ultimately, it should be questioned whether pulling small areas out one at a time and subjecting them to *what amounts to a separate planning code such as “Better Neighborhoods”* is really in the best interest of City Planning as a whole. An ordinance which promotes and codifies such piecemeal planning and is so easy to manipulate is ill-advised and should not be passed.

...Penelope Clark (RHN)

## **PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE**

One of the most interesting parts of the CSFN year is here: when we consider the measures that will appear on the November ballot. At the two meetings of the autumn, August and September, we always look forward to a spirited presentation and discussion from the various camps who come to the CSFN General Assembly meetings to convince us of the strength of their positions.

Although we do not have the complete list of what will appear on the ballot yet — the deadline at the Department of Elections won’t be until after this newsletter goes to press — to date we do have eight qualified local measures to hear about at the August 16 meeting. Elsewhere in this newsletter you will read what the Government & Elections Committee recommends to the General Assembly on these measures.

**Daniel Homsey**, Director of the Mayor’s Office of Neighborhood Services, and I have met to discuss details of our August 16<sup>th</sup> meeting with **Mayor Newsom**. I look forward to working with Daniel and to putting ideas to work which came up in our discussion.

This month we have been kept very busy by the Better Neighborhoods Planning & Implementation Process legislation introduced by Supervisor McGoldrick and currently before the Planning Commission. Since there are two articles appearing in this newsletter on BNP&IP, I shall not further elaborate on the substance of the ordinance, except to say that it will be heard at the Planning Commission on **September 1, 8, and 15**. It then goes to the BOS Land Use Committee. It can be amended in both bodies, so our own Land Use & Housing Committee is exploring possible suggestions for amendments.

CSFN passed a resolution last month calling for an extension of the time for the Planning Commission to consider BNP&IP. Hiroshi Fukuda, Penelope Clark, Ellen Kernaghan, Marilyn Amini and I spoke before the BOS, asking for the 90-day extension the time for consideration. Supervisor McGoldrick extended it until September 15, so we were partially successful in our quest. We wish to thank **Supervisor McGoldrick** for generously granting this extension.

On August 4<sup>th</sup>, BNPI&P was heard before the Planning Commission. Again, stalwart members of the CSFN Land Use & Housing Committee — **Hiroshi Fukuda, Penelope Clark, Ellen Kernaghan, Marilyn Amini, Mary Ann Miller** and I — attended and spoke. **President Sue Lee** voiced concerns over that part of the legislation in which the Plan Implementation Committee (PIC) is discussed. We have had our concerns about this item also. We are concerned that the Planning Commission will abrogate their power by having such a committee. President Lee wants to know if and when the Planning Commission has had a committee such as this and what the consequences were. But, again, **Penelope Clark** covers this in detail elsewhere in this newsletter.

Leading up to this Planning Commission hearing, some interesting things happened, which Marilyn Amini (ever on top of things!) discovered: the last page of the Planning Commission Agenda for the August 4<sup>th</sup> meeting, which contained the BNP&IP agenda, item was left off the mailed Notice! Marilyn discovered it when she went to the Planning office, and saw the Notice on the kiosk. After she reported the error, the staff had to open all the envelopes and had to insert the last page with the BNP&IP agenda item. Fishy business? Who’s to say?

So, in closing, this coming month promises to be exciting: we meet with Mayor Newsom the morning of the General Assembly meeting, that evening we hear from all the pros and cons of the November Ballot Measures, and of course the BNP&IP saga continues...

I’m looking forward to seeing you all August 16<sup>th</sup> at the Coalition General Assembly meeting!

...Judith Berkowitz (EMIA) President

## **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. 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.

## DRAFT MINUTES: GENERAL MEETING

19 JULY 2005

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER by President Judy Berkowitz at 7:02PM at Northern Police Station. QUORUM ascertained, 22 organizations signed in, 35 total attendees.

INTRODUCTION of Delegates and Guests.

PRESENTATION by HOST ORGANIZATIONS: NEW MISSION TERRACE ASSOCIATION and NORTH BEACH NEIGHBORS

IN SYMPATHY: Barbara Meskunas circulated a card for signatures in sympathy of TESS MANALO-VANTRESCA who died 11 July. \$20 donations were made to Francis Scott Key School PTA in her honor.

OFFICERS' REPORTS:

PRESIDENT'S REPORT, Judy Berkowitz: Temporary Committee chairs were appointed per their sign-up. At each committee's first meeting the permanent chair will be elected.

Land Use & Housing: John Bardis, chair (permanent)

Open Space: Ramona Albright, chair

Gov't & Elections: Barbara Meskunas/D. Comstock, chairs

By-Law: Evelyn Wilson, chair

Media Relations: Eileen Boken, chair

Newsletter Advisory Comm.: Mary Helen Briscoe, chair

Transportation: George Zaback, chair

Water Task Force: Joan Girardot, chair

Thursday, 18th AUGUST, 2:30-3:30PM: Meeting with MAYOR NEWSOM, Room 201: Participation is 1st come 1st served. Sign up and provide topic with the President.

VICE PREZ, Steve Gruel: Next ExComm meeting is 6:00pm Wednesday, July 27th at the Northern Police Stn..

Bring, make program suggestions by e-mail/phone, OK. Suggestions:

\* Mayor's Office present new "311 Customer Service".

2nd VICE PREZ, Richard Shadoian: No Report.

RECORDING SECRETARY, Dick Millet: 21 June '05 Minutes approved as published in July '05 newsletter.

TREASURER, Barbara Meskunas: 19 July '05 Cash Activity Report attached. Secretary has copy for distribution for CSFN members.

CORRESPONDING SEC'Y, Lionel Brazil: No Report.

COMMITTEE REPORTS (pages 4 & 5 of July Nwsltr).

COMMITTEE ACTION ITEMS, (Committee Reports in JULY '05 Newsletter)

LAND USE & HOUSING COMMITTEE:

TWO Resolutions re: "Better Neighborhoods Planning & Implementation Process" legislation: "RESOLVED, that the CSFN respectfully urges the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors to request immediately the Board of Supervisors to extend 60 days or until September 28, 2005 the prescribed time within which the Planning Commission may render its decision on the proposed "Better Neighborhoods Planning" ordinance. Moved, 2nd, PASSED.

NEWSLETTER ADVISORY COMMITTEE:

MOTION that the Newsletter Advisory Committee volunteer list (Mary Helen Briscoe, Judith Berkowitz, John Bardis, Mary Ann Miller) be ratified for election to Cmte, see N'ltr page 4. Ramona Albright withdrew from NA Cmte. 2nd'd and PASSED.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

MOTION to change name of OPEN SPACE COMMITTEE was DEFEATED.

NEW BUSINESS:

MOTION: Resolved: that CSFN, in support of the Tuolumne

River Trust and Clean Water Action, urge Mayor Gavin Newsom and the San Francisco Board of Supervisors to direct the PUC to make San Francisco and its customers a model of water conservation, efficiency, and recycling by:

- abandoning its 30-year-old plan to construct a new pipeline and reservoir which would divert waters from the endangered Tuolumne River in a flawed attempt to insure water quality and reliability, and instead exercise model stewardship of the River and its ecosystem by funding restoration projects along the River, and by
- substituting development and implementation of additional water conservation, efficient use, and recycling methods in its plans to upgrade the Hetch Hetchy water system in collaboration with other Bay Area water districts, in recognition of revised lower water use projections and the urgent need for reversing river destruction, preserving ecosystem balance, and restoring riverine habitat, and by
- providing quarterly reports to the public reflecting the amounts expended each quarter in aggregate on each water system restoration project financed by the PUC bonds approved by the voters and repaid by the water ratepayers, and posting these reports on a PUC website and in written form available at all libraries (for quarters ending Sept 30, Dec 31, March 31 and June 30).

PROGRAM: "Better Neighborhoods Planning & Implementation Process" AKA "BETTER NEIGHBORHOODS +" AKA "BNP&IP"

Presentation by: Betty Chan, Legislative Aide to Supervisor Jake McGoldrick.

Dr Amit Ghosh, Director of Long-Range Planning, Planning Department

Dean Macris, Director, Planning Department

Dennis Antenore, author of BNP&IP

Fernando Marti, Mission Anti-displacement Coalition, author of BNP&IP

Sarah A. Dennis, Lead Planner on BNP&IP

This presentation is at the request of the CSFN for the authors and creators of this BNP&IP legislation to explain the "how and why" of the legislation and why is the legislation going through the process with such speed without public notification and why it is being heard by the Planning Commission without first being distributed to the public (neighborhoods).

Timing: The legislation was introduced by Supervisor McGoldrick on 5 April '05, starting the 90 day clock for the Planning Commission to review and comment, if not done within those 90 days it goes before the Board, without Planning Commission input.

Betty Chan with an overview:

The "BN+" legislation is intended to be a community based "process legislation" that establishes the methodology for a Planning Process for project areas of 40+ acres (for comparison that is an area of about the size of Chinatown) and defines the process for community participation by the formation of a Plan Implementation Committee or PIC. It provides, includes funding, creating a community input group, studies of neighborhood conditions and needs.

Historically it seems that the idea emanates by activist groups (affordable housing groups specifically, since this statement comes from Marti, a housing activist) reacting to the loss of Proposition J, the Workforce Housing Initiative, by going to Jake McGoldrick and asking him to create a process that would address these housing issues.

As it stands now, there is no established citywide effort or

process it is "project by project" with no established procedure for community participation, analysis of existing conditions and needs, i.e., condition of infrastructure, transportation, open space, etc., their funding or how to make the city, or city departments accountable.

From now on everybody jumps in, the panel and the Coalition membership. Everything goes on from challenges to questions.

1) Why haven't the neighborhood organizations been notified and provided with copies of the legislation by Planning or the Board of Supervisors?

ADJOURNMENT: 10:27PM.

...Submitted by Dick Millet (PBNA) Recording Secretary

## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPORT FOR JULY 27, 2005

The CSFN ExComm was called to order at 6:05 p.m. at its regularly scheduled meeting on July 27, 2005 at Northern Police Station by Chair Steven Gruel. Present were: Judith Berkowitz, Barbara Meskunas, Doug Comstock, Evelyn Wilson, Lionel Brazil, Bud Wilson, Richard Shadoian. Excused were: Eileen Boken and Dick Millet. Guests: John Bardis, Ramona Albright and Babette Drefke.

**President's Report:** President Judith Berkowitz reported the Better Neighborhood Planning and Implementation Process legislation Special Meeting of the Planning Commission the next day, July 28. President Berkowitz also reported that on July 25, 2005 she and John Bardis walked a letter around to all Supervisors, but especially to Supervisor McGoldrick who introduced BNP&IP regarding the extension of time the Planning Commission and citizens have to review the BNP&IP legislation and attached a copy of the CSFN resolution adopted by the General Assembly on June 19, 2005.

Berkowitz also reported that the CSFN Annual dinner is scheduled for October 18, 2005. The ExComm discussed that about 100 guests are expected with tickets priced at around \$50. There will be 3 choices of meals. Berkowitz has investigated Patio Español at the Spanish Cultural Center and Delancey Street Restaurant as possible locations for the CSFN dinner. A dinner speaker has not been selected. More research regarding possible speakers will be done. Ramona Albright volunteered to contact See's Candies for a contribution. There was discussion about providing awards at the dinner.

1st Vice President's Report: No report.

2nd Vice President's Report: No report

Corresponding Secretary: No report.

**Treasurer:** B. Meskunas provided a written report of the CSFN account balance as of July 27, 2005. Outer Mission Residents Association has renewed their membership.

Babette Drefke reported that the CSFN received a letter from attorney Kathryn Devincenzi (LHIA) requesting copies of financial receipts from the Housing Element litigation. A motion made by President Berkowitz and seconded by Evelyn Wilson permitting previous treasurer Babette Drefke to allow copies of these financial records as requested along with receipts for reimbursement for expenses. The ExComm passed the resolution unanimously.

**Program:** The Government and Elections Committee will provide the August program: ballot measures in the upcoming November election.

**Unfinished Business:** None.

**New Business:** B Meskunas made a motion duly seconded

by Bud Wilson to have the CSFN support by ballot argument the firefighters' proposition regarding firefighter service levels and station "brown outs" brought to the attention of the CSFN via resolution by Tony Sacco. The ExComm unanimously passed the resolution.

**Announcements:** J Berkowitz reported that the CSFN Land Use & Housing Committee supported the construction of the Home Depot in its modified plan at the Bayshore Blvd location. It will be heard the next day, July 28.

The next ExComm meeting will be Wednesday August 31, 2005 at 6:00PM.

**Adjournment at 7:16PM.**

...Submitted by Steven Gruel (GGHNA) Chair and Richard Shadoian (CVIA) 2<sup>nd</sup> VP

## LAND USE & HOUSING COMMITTEE REPORTS Regular Meeting of August 1, 2005.

*The Regular Meeting of the CSFN Land Use & Housing Committee was convened on August 1, 2005 at 6:00 p.m. in the Community Room of the Northern Police Station.*

*The Committee heard progress reports on and/or considered the following matters:*

- Proposed Better Neighborhoods Planning & Implementation Process legislation; review of July 28 Planning Commission Special Meeting for BNP&IP.
- Acting Chair Berkowitz will send an email note to Planning Commission President Sue Lee asking if her direction of a letter to be sent to BOS requesting an extension of time for BNP&IP review, and what was the response.
- Market and Octavia Neighborhood Plan Draft Environmental Impact Report;
- Guests from Cathedral Hill briefed us on CPMC's plans to tear down existing structures and build to 300% of the current height limit. The borders are: Van Ness, Franklin, Geary, and Post.
- Three alternate days of the month were tentatively identified should the Committee vote to change its Regular Monthly Meeting Date.
- Guidelines for the Committee, as per ExComm direction, were discussed:
- Minimum of 1 meeting/month
- 1 vote/person vs 1 vote/group
- # meetings necessary to attend before eligible to vote; consecutive meetings or not.
- **Resolved:** that the CSFN respectfully urges the Planning Commission and any future reviewers to require an alternative vehicular access to be provided by the Crestmont Hills developer i.e.: cars would be accommodated exclusively from the southern end of 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue on existing City streets. George Zaback (TPIA)
- Attorney Mary Miles has filed a lawsuit over the Bicycle Plan. She is looking for support.

The committee agreed to convene a special meeting on August 8, 2005.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

## Special Meeting of August 8, 2005.

*A Special Meeting of the CSFN Land Use & Housing Committee was convened on August 8, 2005 at 6:10 p.m. in the Community Room of the Northern Police Station.*

*The Committee heard progress reports on and/or considered the following matters:*

- No one offered take notes for the Committee Report in Chair John Bardis' absence.

(Cont'd p.6)

## NATURAL AREAS PROGRAM: AN UPDATE

We last reported that meetings were scheduled for the public to be informed of the revised plans for the Natural Areas Program and to comment on those plans to restore one-third of City-owned parkland in San Francisco and Pacifica, over 1,100 acres. About 300 people attended those meetings at the end of June and were initially given one month to comment on the plans.

The 20-year plan for the designated "natural areas" in parks and open spaces were summarized in the meeting as follows:

- 3,400 trees will be removed in parklands in San Francisco
- 15,000 trees will be removed in Sharp Park in Pacifica
- 10 miles of trails will be closed, about 25% of 40 miles of trails in "natural areas"
- 43% of "natural area" acreage has been designated as low-priority, in which trees will not be destroyed and sensitive species of plants and animals requiring special protections will not be introduced.

Park advocates who have been asking for years for more information about the Natural Areas Program were gratified to finally have this level of detail about the plans. However, those who attended the public meetings were frustrated by a very short Q&A period. The staff seemed unable or unwilling to answer questions about the cost of "restoring" parklands to pre-European conditions.

The online comment form did not work, except intermittently and only if the comments were limited to just a few words in each box. The fact that the public was told their comments would be incorporated only if the staff considered them "appropriate" certainly added to the public's frustration. The public process was also flawed by the planned delay of Rec & Park Commission involvement until the completion of the EIR in approximately 2 years. At that point, the Commission would be presented with a fait accompli, with few options to influence the final plans.

These experiences set the stage for a heated discussion of the Natural Areas Program at the meeting of the Rec & Park Commission on July 21st. Many neighbors and visitors to the City's parks came to express their concern about the plans and the process that is being used to approve and implement those plans. Several members of the Coalition's Open Space Committee asked that the on-line comment form be scrapped or repaired and the comment period extended. They asked the Commission to take an active role in the process and consider Commission approval prior to the EIR.

Other speakers commented on the devastating effect the plans would have in some parks. Although the plans for tree removal are considered modest by native plant advocates, they are considered draconian by those who prefer trees to grasslands that are essentially brown and barren during the dry half of the year.

The Golden Gate Heights Neighborhood Association spoke about the erosion that results when stabilizing non-native vegetation is removed from the sand hills that surround their homes and replaced by native vegetation that is dormant half the year and therefore incapable of stabilizing the sand, which then inundates their properties.

I am pleased to report that the Rec & Park Commission was responsive to our requests. The comment period was extended one week to July 28th after providing alternative methods of submitting comments. They asked to review the plan after the public's comments are incorporated. One Commissioner said she would look for evidence that the final

document reflects the public's concerns. They requested an opportunity for Commission consideration in the fall, prior to the EIR.

Once again, the CSFN has played an active role in informing the public of a program that will impact our City parks for the foreseeable future. We urge all neighbors and visitors to our parks to participate in their future by monitoring and commenting on the plans as they are revised and implemented.

...Written by Mary McAllister, Submitted by Ramona Albright, CSFN Open Space Committee

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### LU&H Report (Con't from p. 5)

- Molly Hopp presented Van Ness Neighbors' comments on the Market-Octavia Neighborhood Plan EIR. After the Committee reviewed, discussed, and edited these, we voted unanimously to send them to Paul Maltzer, Major Environmental Review. Deadline for comments is August 9.
- Molly Hopp drew our attention to a Legislative Analyst Report from June 2003 which outlines the strategy for future development in SF including the last Housing Element and the BNP&IP; rezoning, reducing parking, expanding bulk and density etc.
- We reviewed an article by Emily Fanher, reporter for the Examiner, about the BNP&IP (8/5). We will send letters to the Editor (letters@examiner.com)
- Another article by Fanher (8/4) on One Rincon Hill was also reviewed
- Hiroshi Fukuda distributed answers to his questions to Betty Chan, Supe McGoldrick's Legislative Aide. As we had heard at the August 4 Planning Commission meeting, the BNP&IP will be heard there on September 1, 8, and 15.
- BNP&IP: further discussion of the difficulties and faults and how to amend the legislation.

The committee agreed to convene a special meeting on August 15, 2005.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

...Submitted by Judith Berkowitz (EMIA) Acting Chair

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## LET THEM EAT CAKE

The Planning Commission has already "bent" the "0.5:1" ratio for parking at Rincon Hill, and Planning staff have come up with a very clever rationale for the new "1:1" "exception" in the Rincon Case Report:

"9. Parking Exception. Pursuant to Planning Code Section, greater than one-to-one parking may be provided as long as it meets the criteria set forth therein. The Planning Commission finds that it meets these criteria in the following manner:

"a. All parking in excess of that allowed by right is stored and accessed by mechanical means, valet or non-independently accessible method that maximizes space efficiency and discourages use of vehicles for commuting or daily errands."

Given the friction between car and non-car advocates in San Francisco, it seems that the Planning Commission has found a way to have its cake and eat it too...

...Charles Marsteller Van Ness Neighbors

# CSFN GOVERNMENT & ELECTIONS COMMITTEE

## MINUTES OF AUGUST 9, 2005 MEETING

The meeting was convened at 7:00 PM at Northern Police Station. Judy Berkowitz, Mary Harris, Joan Girardot, Doug Comstock and Richard Shadoian were present.

Berkowitz moved, Shadoian seconded, and it was approved that Barbara Meskunas chair the committee.

It was MSA that the committee should restrict the endorsement process to local measures, and would not consider state measures.

All of the ballot measures turned in by 5:00 PM on August 8 were reviewed. The G & E Committee makes the following recommendations for adoption at the CSFN August 18 regular meeting:

**Prop B – \$208,000,000 Street Resurfacing Bond: OPPOSE and pay for ballot argument. Vote was unanimous.**

**Prop C – Ethics Commission Charter Amendment: ENDORSE and pay for ballot argument. Vote was 5 in favor, 1 opposed.**

**Prop D – Dividing MTA Board Appointments: OPPOSE and pay for ballot argument. Vote was 3 in favor, 1 opposed, 1 abstention (1 member was absent for vote).**

**Prop E – Moving Election Date for Public Defender and Assessor/Recorder: NOT CONSIDERED. Consensus not to recommend a position.**

**Prop H – Prohibiting Handguns: OPPOSE. Vote was 4 in favor, 2 opposed.**

**Prop I – Military Recruiters in Public Schools: NOT CONSIDERED. Consensus not to recommend a position.**

### Other Business:

It was MSA that this committee takes up government matters all year, and not just meet at election time for endorsements.

Girardot moved, Comstock seconded and it was approved to make two recommendations to the Civil Grand Jury for possible investigations this year:

1. Redirection of bond money for the past 15 years for purposes other than intended by the voters; and
2. Outsourcing of public money to non-profits without disclosure or accountability.

A concern about the propriety of a motion introduced at the July regular meeting was briefly discussed and referred to the ExCom for resolution and recommendation.

The committee will meet next on August 30<sup>th</sup> at 6PM to take up any last minute ballot measures for recommendation in September.

...Submitted by Barbara Meskunas (BANG) Chair

## How To Reach Us

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**262-0440**



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Francis Somsel	Patricia Vaughey
New Mission Terrace Improvement Assn.	
Leland Yee, Speaker Pro Tem, Assembly, 12th District	
Hon. Quentin Kopp	



## Committee Meetings

**Land Use & Housing** • Monday Aug 15th 6PM;  
Mon. Aug 29, 6PM at Northern Police Stn.  
Chair: John Bardis • jbardis@xdm.com 776-2014  
**Bylaws** Chair: Evelyn Wilson: evelynwilsregparl@earthlink.net 566-7826

**Government and Elections** • Tuesday, Aug 30th 6PM  
Inquire for location. Chair: Barbara Meskunas  
sfmeskunas@aol.com

**Newsletter** Chair: Mary Helen Briscoe 346-1448

**Open Space** Chair: Ramona Albright 621-9621

**Transportation** Chair: George Zaback 564-5223

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

**Next Meeting**

**TUESDAY**

**Aug  
16<sup>th</sup>**

## Program/Action Items

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## Agenda

### August 16, 2005 General Assembly Meeting

- 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. North of Panhandle Neighborhood Association / NOPNA
    - 2. Oceanview, Merced Heights, Ingleside Neighbors in Action /OMI-NIA
- 7:15 III. Approval of July 2005 Minutes
- 7:20 IV. Officers' Reports
  - A. President
  - B. Vice Presidents
  - C. Secretaries
  - D. Treasurer
- 7:30 V. Committee Action Items – written reports are in Newsletter
  - A. Land Use & Housing
  - B. Media Relations
  - C. Open Space
  - D. Water Task Force
- 7:45 VI. Unfinished Business:
  - A. SPEAK Resolution – Preserving the Tuolumne River
- 8:00 VII. New Business
- 8:15 VII. Program: Gov't & Elections – November Ballot Measures:
  - Prop B – \$208,000,000 Street Resurfacing Bond: OPPOSE and pay for ballot argument.
  - Prop C – Ethics Commission Charter Amendment: ENDORSE and pay for ballot argument.
  - Prop D – Dividing MTA Board Appointments: OPPOSE and pay for ballot argument.
  - Prop H – Prohibiting Handguns: OPPOSE.
- 9:15 VIII. Announcements
- 9:30 IX. Adjournment

*Visitors Please Sign the Visitors Roster*

**Location: Northern Police Station, Fillmore & Turk Streets (Parking in Rear)**

**Public Transit: MUNI #22 Fillmore, 31 Balboa & 38 Geary Lines**