



Jettison San Francisco's Ethics Commission

San Francisco needs to consider jettisoning its dysfunctional Ethics Commission, whose annual budgets since its inception have cost taxpayers a total of \$45 million in General Fund support (\$19 million to operate the Ethics Commission and another \$25.9 million in Election Campaign Funds that is part of Ethics' budget).

Sheriff Ross Mirkarimi's trial before the Ethics Commission will be more about why San Francisco's Ethics Commission needs to be eliminated, rather than about whether Mirkarimi is fit to serve as Sheriff.

San Francisco's Ethics Commission is indeed now on trial. After operating for 18 years and costing just under \$19 million in tax dollars over the years (excluding the \$25.9 million Campaign Election Fund that Ethics has administered since Fiscal Year '02-'03), the Ethics Commission has never even held a misconduct trial for an elected official, City Department head, or manager. The Commission has no trial guidelines and tried to develop trial procedures for Sheriff Ross Mirkarimi's case.

In 2007, the Commission started preparing a trial for Supervisor Ed Jew, but Jew resigned before the Ethics Commission could develop procedures.

Attorney Stephen Gruel, Jew's attorney, was quoted in the *San Francisco Examiner*, "The Ethics Commission was unclear what process to follow and rules regarding removal were murky. A number of questions were raised, including what kind of evidence could be used, how witnesses could be called and examined, and if there really could be 'due process' since the commissioners are all appointed by the elected officials who brought the charges. It was a kangaroo court at best."

The obvious problem with the Ethics Commission is its inherent conflict of interest. The Mayor, Board of Supervisors, City Attorney, District Attorney, and the Controller each get to appoint an Ethics Commissioner. These are the same City officials who determine the Ethics Commission's budget. Only friends of the powerful need apply for appointment to the Commission.

How did an Ethics Commission established by the voters to serve citizen interests become an agency that serves the interests of politicians and the politically influential? It's a textbook example that power and influence corrupts absolutely.

Here are some examples of potential ethics violations that were sent to the Ethics Commission and then quietly disappeared:

- Allegations of rigged bidding on a multimillion-dollar Parking Authority contract.
- Morgan Stanley giving then-mayor Willie Brown advance IPO options and then winning multi-million dollar contracts at the Airport.

- The Department of Public Works contract to SLUG, the nonprofit urban gardening organization, paying for work on Newsom's 2003 mayoral campaign.
- Unregistered lobbyists such as the unions, the Chamber of Commerce, Rose Pak, the Association of Realtors, and Willie Brown freely roaming City Hall.

Mike Garcia, a former Ethics Commissioner and current candidate for District 7 Supervisor states, "I maintain that given its budgetary restraints, the staff at the Ethics Commission does an exemplary job. As to charges that Commissioners are unduly influenced by their appointing authorities, I was never once called by any member of the Board of Supervisors (my appointing authority) about anything that we were dealing with. I feel reasonably certain that during my tenure none of the other Commissioners were contacted either."

In 2007, Ethics charges hindered Tony Hall from running for mayor. Hall's subsequent Ethics trial revealed that his violations were based on anonymous complaints, perjured testimony, and tampered evidence. Ethics took over three years before issuing any subpoenas.

Hall ended up settling his case for \$6,000 — just two-and-a-half percent of the \$240,000 the Commission had initially proposed to fine Hall. The Commission concluded that Hall had mistakenly given his daughter a campaign credit card to purchase a purse, and Hall had used a campaign credit card to purchase gas that was non-campaign related.

This is what former Supervisor Hall has to say about the Ethics Commission: "The Ethics Commission should really be renamed the 'Unethical Commission,' since they are nothing more than a group of second-rate political hacks who are appointed by those in power, and whose mission is to destroy the reputation of anyone who dares question the policies of the current administration. They are an administrative body with no judicial power whatsoever. They engage in the most deceptive, corrupt of undertakings as the lackeys for those who exploit people in politics. As a Supervisor, one of my regrets was not initiating legislation to disband this fraudulent Commission."

Although the Ethics Commission was created under the presumption of serving the public good, it now seems to be serving City Hall politicians who fund its budget.

District 7 Supervisor Sean Elsbernd quietly states: "They do as good a job as can be expected with the resources they have in hand." Elsbernd's aide, Olivia Scanlon, was a star witness in the Tony Hall ethics trial. Scanlon later pleaded the Fifth Amendment against self-incrimination after she was accused of tampering with evidence.

Executive Committee Report

June 27

Interim chair Judy Berkowitz called the meeting to order at 5:50PM. Present were Berkowitz, Rose Hillson, Dick Millet, George Wooding, and Evelyn Wilson. Penelope Clark, Charles Head, and Lorraine Lucas were excused. There was a quorum.

Officers' Reports

President Judy Berkowitz announced that Edith McMillan has died. Ms McMillan never aligned herself with any group, but spoke in hearings as a one-woman watchdog for the entire city.

With the early withdrawal of Lorraine Lucas and Angelique Mahan from their positions on the Executive Committee, Berkowitz will appoint delegates to fill out their terms as 1st VP and ExComm member-at-large. Volunteers welcome!

CSFN committees need members! This is a really interesting way to get involved and learn about the inner workings of the City and its departments.

President Berkowitz distributed details of the ExComm meeting dates and times for the upcoming year, as well as the schedule of each month's General Assembly program as was laid out in the June 2010 *Neighborhood Views*' ExComm Report.

The Community Forum: *The Future of Public Transportation in San Francisco* is coming up soon: August 18. As of now it looks as if it will be really well-attended. We are co-sponsors along with the Sierra Club, SFT, and SaveMuni SF. An announcement is on page 4 in the June newsletter.

1601 Larkin is on the Planning Commission agenda for tomorrow, Thursday.

1st VP Rose Hillson reported on two presentations of a reconfigured Geary BRT. The plan is much different than its original form. • An article by the Richmond police captain in the *Richmond Review* singles out PAR for neighborhood activism.

CorrSec Dick Millet thanks RecSec Penny Clark for her diligence in locating another post office box location, but he reports that the Lakeview Plaza Post Office is very convenient. It's open on Saturday and Sunday and parking is easy any time of day. Because there are a lot of other shops there he can easily do his shopping and other errands at the same time, so he is able to make it a multi-purpose trip. Also, a lot of mail is lost when changing POBoxes, and we don't want that.

Treasurer Dick Millet will research switching the CSFN bank accounts from Bank of America to a Credit Union.

Parliamentarian Evelyn Wilson announced that the Bylaws Committee will meet in July.

Having no further business the meeting was adjourned at 7:15PM.

...Judith Berkowitz (EMIA)

How to Reach Us

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Land Use & Housing Committee

July 9

The Regular Meeting of the CSFN Land Use & Housing Committee was convened by Hiroshi Fukuda on Monday, July 9, 2012 at 5:51 P.M. in the Community Room of the Northern Police Station at Turk and Fillmore Streets.

The Committee considered the following items

1. Efficiency unit: EIR NOP (Notice of Preparation) PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

The proposed Ordinance to reduce the square footage requirements for Efficiency Dwelling Units to match California Health and Safety Code. Under the proposal, the total area of the unit could be no less than 220 square feet and the living area to be no less than 150 square feet. No more than two people could occupy the efficiency. The Ordinance would maintain existing requirements for kitchen appliances and workspace as well as a separate bathroom. *Supervisor Wiener has indicated that when the Ordinance returns to the Land Use Committee in July, he will further amend it so the proposed smaller unit requirements will apply to new construction only and not to renovations of existing buildings.*

The project is being studied by the Planning Department's Environmental Planning (formerly MEA) Division to determine its potential environmental effects. No environmental documents have been issued for this project. Public comments concerning the potential environmental effects of this project are welcomed. In order for your concerns to be fully considered or to ensure your receipt of future environmental review documents for this project, **please contact staff by July 17.**

Concerns: removal of density limits in some transit corridors could significantly increase density in those areas and overwhelm transit services. The efficiency units might be built instead of family housing to meet RHNA goals. Open space requirements must be maintained.

2. CPMC Update: Financial leak of scenario to deliberately decrease income to allow closure of St Luke's prematurely is major problem. CPMC's actions in other parts of the State cannot be overlooked or ignored

3. Student Housing update: Supervisor Kim's amendments to convert SRO and vacant buildings removed. Supervisor Wiener added Art Institute request to his amendment.

4. Parkmerced update: Trial to begin August 3rd in Superior Court, Judge Jackson.

5. 1601 Larkin report: Planning Commissioners voted 6-1 (Antonini) to deny the project. Enforcement to keep the site intact from deliberate destruction is still a problem.

6. #8 Washington update: petition distributed. Encourage others to sign. All LU&H Cmte members signed.

7. Central Subway: the California Transit Commission approved \$61 million for subway's connectivity to high speed rail but there is no connection in SF. Federal funding of Central Subway was denied by House, but could be approved during "reconciliation" or addback process in Senate.

8. SB375. EIR comments due in mid-August. Note SB375 allows regional CEQA to trump local CEQA laws.

The next regular meeting of the Committee will be held on Monday, August 13 at 5:30 p.m. in the Community Room of the Northern Police Station located at Turk and Fillmore.

Adjourned: 7:38 PM

...Hiroshi Fukuda (RCA)

CSFN Draft Minutes: General Assembly Meeting June 19

1. **Call to Order.** President Judith Berkowitz brought the June 19 meeting to order at 7:02PM at Northern Police Station.
 - a. *Quorum declared.* Delegates and alternates represented 18 CSFN member organizations. 12 guests signed in.
 - b. *Agenda approved.*
 - c. *Introductions/Short Announcements.* Delegates and guests introduced themselves. Host **Paula Romanovsky**, Francisco Heights Civic Assoc. (FHCA) described her organization's objectives, history, and current issues. Middle Polk Neighborhood Assoc. (MPNA) was the co-host, but was unable to send a representative because of a scheduling conflict with a meeting with Planning Director **John Rahaim** concerning 1601 Larkin. • In the short announcements period President Berkowitz reported that her organization, East Mission Improvement Assoc. had joined the group "ENUF" which is fighting the installation of thousands of parking meters in the residential areas south of Market. She pointed out that this group, under a different name, was successful in resisting the parking meters earlier this year. If the group evolves to include other issues regarding parking, it could be successful in attracting members citywide. • She also noted that EMIA + other Mission merchants and residents are concerned about **Supe Wiener's** proposed changes to the Mission Special Use District (SUD) which would lift the moratorium on alcohol sales. • Mary Anne Miller (SPEAK) distributed info about proposed changes to Neighborhood Commercial Districts (NCD) citywide.(see attached.)
 2. **Minutes.** The May General Assembly draft minutes were approved as printed on p 3 of the June newsletter.
 3. **Officers' Reports.**
 - a. **President Berkowitz** (EMIA) reminded delegates that they should be sure to enter their groups into the neighborhood group registry "Citidex."
<http://citidex.sfgov.org/profile>
This is the list that in the future will be used by the Planning Department to notify neighbors of construction projects in their neighborhoods. *If your group has not registered, you won't get a Notice of impending construction and development!* • SaveMuni SF noted that there will be no connecting stop on the planned high-speed rail with the Central Subway. A communication has been sent outlining how the lack of connectivity would disqualify SF Central Subway from a \$61 million allotment for "connectivity." • She reported that whispers of plans for a helipad on the roof of SF General Hospital had resurfaced. This would qualify the hospital as a Regional Medical Center and would allow them to benefit from the highly-lucrative full-paying, fully-insured patient business to the detriment of SF's local residents. • She announced that she had a written treasurer's report from Jim Lew available for the delegates' viewing. (see attached) Dick Millet has now assumed the treasurer's office. • She spoke at the hearing of the Beach Chalet Soccer Fields EIR. • She reminded delegates of the Saturday August 18 community forum which CSFN is co-sponsoring along with the Sierra Club, SFT, and SaveMuni SF: *The Future of Public Transportation in San Francisco*. • She distributed sign up pages for CSFN committees. Please sign up for at least one committee! They are vital to the health and operation of CSFN!
 4. **Committee Reports**
 - a. *Bylaws:* Chair **Evelyn Wilson (SPEAK)** said the committee has not been able to meet yet to act on the issue of CSFN's ability to join an existing lawsuit.
 - b. *Government & Elections:* Chair **Charles Head (SHARP)** (see Report June NL p.4)
 - c. *Land Use & Housing:* Chair **Hiroshi Fukuda (RCA)**. **Rose Hillson (JPIA)** referred delegates to the report in the June newsletter of the Land Use Committee, page 2.
 - d. *Open Space:* **Kathy Howard (SPEAK)** replied to a question on the proposed GGP soccer fields saying that seven acres of field would be converted to artificial turf and that high-powered lights would remain on until 10:00 PM every night. An appeal to this project's EIR was filed with the assistance of **Richard Drury**, a noted environmental attorney, and there will be a hearing before the Board of Supervisors on July 10. She urged everyone to call and email members of the board and the Mayor to support the appeal, and to please donate money to *SF Ocean Edge* making the appeal.
 - e. *Transportation:* Chair **Gary Noguera (MPIC)**
 - f. *Water Task Force:* Chair **Joan Girardot (MCIPOA)**
 5. **Unfinished Business.**
 6. **New Business.**
 7. **Program:** Election Wrap-up: Reveiw & Analysis. Roundtable discussion + Q&A with **Chris Bowman** on general analysis and review of the June Primary Election; **Tony Kelly (PBNA)** on Prop. A: Competitive bidding for recycling, trash pickup; **Jon Golinger (THD)** on Prop. B: Coit Tower preservation policy. Why B won; why A lost. • Really interesting format and program!
- Adjournment.** The June CSFN General Assembly meeting was adjourned at 9:05 PM.
...Penelope Clark (RHIA) Recording Secretary

Could it be that the “City Hall Family” thinks wasting \$19 million on the Ethics Commission is just the right amount of insurance premium “resources” to buy themselves protection from a not-too-strong Ethics Commission? No elected official seems to want to want a truly well-funded, effective Ethics Commission.

In stark contrast to the Ethics Commission’s 16-member staff, its \$2.3 million fiscal year 2011–2012 budget, and its pathetic enforcement record, the Sunshine Ordinance Task Force (SOTF), which has no staff and no separate budget — although it receives \$110,288 in staff support from the Clerk of the Board’s budget — has provided much more needed transparency and accountability of City government, and has probably saved the City hundreds of millions in preventable lawsuits. The Sunshine Task Force has provided the San Francisco public a much better cost-benefit return on investment than the Ethics Commission.

On September 27, 2011, the (SOTF) found Supervisors David Chiu, Scott Wiener, Malia Cohen and Eric Mar in violation of Sunshine meeting laws. All four Supervisors were found guilty of willful failure and official misconduct and the matter was referred to the District Attorney’s office. The Supervisors were found guilty of withholding public information and violating public meeting laws at a Land Use Committee meeting that pertained to the Parkmerced development.

Wiener is angry about the SOTF determination against him and has been using the Board of Supervisors to remove incumbent SOTF board members and replace them with new members who will respond to Wiener’s bidding. As Wiener stacks the SOTF board, he is destroying one of the last independent governmental bodies responsive to the public and not the government. San Francisco does not need both an Ethics Commissions and the Sunshine Task Force, or Scott Wiener’s harmful temper tantrums. We’d be better off with just the Sunshine Task Force, which actually takes citizens’ complaints concerning violations of open government seriously.

The Ethics Commission was created in 1993 by the passage of Proposition K when 52% of San Francisco’s voters and seven of the 11 Board of Supervisors were fooled into thinking that by creating a new government department that dealt with City ethics, unethical conduct in San Francisco would be reduced or mitigated.

Although the City Controller’s “official” statement in the 1993 Voter Guide indicated that if Proposition K was “adopted and implemented it would increase the cost of government in relatively minor amounts which may be offset by related fees” [and fines], the Ethics Commission’s current annual budget is now \$2.3 million. Clearly, the then City Controller proposed a new definition of the phrase “minor amounts.” That annual \$2.3 million cost might be better spent fixing pot holes, or our parks, or allocated towards public education, or fixing Muni, since clearly the costs of the Ethics Commission has not been “offset” by the paltry \$5,226 in fees and fines collected in 2010.

Ross Mirkarimi — as a private citizen long before he was elected to the Board of Supervisors — was one of 53 people who signed a paid Voter Guide argument in favor of Proposition K. The same ballot argument Mirkarimi signed was also signed by then City Attorney Louise Renne, the Alice B. Toklas Lesbian/Gay Democratic Club [which Supervisor Wiener has co-chaired], then

Supervisors Angela Alioto and Terence Hallinan, Congresswoman Nancy Pelosi, and David Pilpel [the latter of whom was just appointed to serve on the Sunshine Ordinance Task Force by Supervisor Wiener]. Ironically, Mirkarimi will now be tried under the ineffective ethics system that he encouraged be created. Be careful what you ask for.

Deputy City Attorney Peter Keith who is representing Mayor Lee in Ethics’ “kangaroo trial” of Mirkarimi wrote a letter to the Ethics Commissioners delineating what their legal role will be in the Mirkarimi case. “The commission does not participate in the investigation conducted by the Mayor and the City Attorney. The commission is an adjudicator, and does not make prosecutorial decisions.” In stark contrast, Ethics is supposed to *not* re-adjudicate cases previously heard by the Sunshine Task Force, but is supposed to simply enforce Sunshine Task Force referrals involving official misconduct

Keith continues, “The commission must hold a hearing on the charges, make a recommendation as to whether they should be sustained, and transmit that recommendation and full record of the hearing to the Board of Supervisors.”

Yawn. Regardless of how you feel about Ross Mirkarimi, the Ethics Commission’s real job is to cosmetically make Mayor Lee’s decision to fire Mirkarimi look justified, and then make Mirkarimi look bad enough to have the Board of Supervisors vote to uphold the firing.

There is no Perry Mason drama here. The Mayor wants Mirkarimi gone and the Ethics Commission’s role is to help the Mayor get rid of him. If the Mayor had wanted to keep Mirkarimi around, there wouldn’t even be an ethics trial.

Does anyone remember the ethics trial after Gavin Newsom admitted to having substance abuse problems, and sleeping with his best friend’s wife while she was working for him in the Mayor’s office? Selectively, there was no ethics trial of Newsom.

Voters were told in the Board of Supervisors proponent argument in the 1993 Voter Information Pamphlet: “We recognize that the people of San Francisco are in danger of losing faith in our city government. Every few weeks another scandal arises and public confidence sinks to new lows.” A separate paid argument in the voter guide noted above further said: “Proposition K will put teeth into San Francisco’s Ethics laws, ensuring that they are some of the toughest in the country.”

News flash: The people of San Francisco are still in danger or losing faith in our City government after two decades of the Ethics Commission’s squalid track record.

Supervisor Kevin Shelley wrote in 1993, “San Francisco is long overdue for serious ethics reform. That’s why I wrote Proposition K. The city must get tough on politicians who break the rules.”

Is this the same Kevin Shelley who became Secretary of State in 2002 and was then accused by former staffers and associates of “abusive behavior toward his underlings,” the same Shelley later accused in 2004 of allegedly receiving \$125,000 in laundered state grant funds for his Secretary of State Campaign?

State Attorney General Bill Lockyear publicly exonerated Shelley, saying he was innocent of any wrongdoing. San Francisco

Dismiss Ethics Comm

community activist Julie Lee, who made donations to Shelley was designated to be the “fall guy”: She was convicted of five counts of mail fraud and three counts of witness tampering.

Then State Senator Quentin Kopp stated in a paid argument against Proposition K that creating an Ethics Department would “create a useless layer of bureaucracy.” Now almost 20 years later, former Senator Kopp has been proven right after San Francisco has wasted over a \$19 million on this useless bureaucracy across the years.

Prior to the creation of the Ethics Commission, the District Attorney and the City Attorney were responsible for enforcing laws regulating campaign contributions, conflicts of interest, and lobbyists. The Mayor’s Office was responsible for investigating complaints of improper activities by City officials and employees (whistleblowing). The Registrar’s Office was responsible for keeping campaign finance reports. The Board of Supervisors held ethics trials.

All of these agencies could have kept their respective responsibilities without the creation of the Ethics Commission. San Francisco would have been better off.

It’s time to put the Ethics Commission itself on trial.

The San Francisco Grand Jury released a report on June 20, 2011 titled, “*San Francisco’s Ethics Commission: The Sleeping Watchdog.*” This report focuses on Ethics Commission issues related to investigations performed by the Commission. These include fines and enforcement irregularities, the arbitrary method by which fines are determined, the failure to provide adequate transparency, and the excessive influence of its Executive Director, John St. Croix, over commission members leading to the commission members abdicating their responsibilities to serve as our independent watchdog, and investigations performed by Ethics Commission staff.

The Commission fines miscreants just two to three percent of the total amounts they could assess. Being fined by the Ethics Commission is financially analogous to having to buy lunch. The Commission’s annual fines for lobbyists and politicians average between \$5,000 and \$6,000 annually. These low fines will hardly inspire honesty in local government, and certainly don’t collect enough to “offset” costs of the Ethics Commission.

The City’s Sunshine Ordinance is not being enforced. Between October 2004 and December 2010 the Sunshine Ordinance Task Force referred 18 cases to the Ethics Commission for enforcement of proven “willful failure and official misconduct” allegations. In all 18 cases the Commission took no action for violations of the Sunshine Ordinance, dismissing all 18 cases. This lack of enforcement neuters the Sunshine Ordinance and is an embarrassment to open and transparent government. All of these Sunshine cases had some degree of merit, but all were dismissed out of hand without any open-to-the-public Ethics hearings.

Ethics isn’t the only entity ignoring the Task Force’s requests for enforcement: Of all the cases the Sunshine Task Force has referred to the Board of Supervisors for action, the Supervisors, too, have never held any hearings on Sunshine violations.

Since December 2010 there have been at least six other official misconduct Sunshine complaints referred to the Ethics Commission for enforcement; Ethics has taken action on only one case. In

my own case, *George Wooding vs. the Recreation and Park Department (RPD)*, I requested documents from the RPD; documents which they denied they had. I was the complainant against four RPD respondents: Phil Ginsburg, Sarah Ballard, Mark Buell, and Olive Gong. The Sunshine Task Force ruled in my favor.

One small problem for RPD: I already had the documents that I had requested, so it was relatively easy, though painfully slow, proving RPD had wrongly withheld public records.

This episode is a case study in the total eclipse of Sunshine enforcement in the City and how one poorly managed and dysfunctional City department — the RPD — tried to stifle public dissent. Not surprisingly, not one RPD employee was fined, suspended, or faced any kind of punishment or disciplinary action.

The Ethics Commission is currently postponing scheduling a hearing date on my case while they are drafting newly-proposed enforcement guidelines for Sunshine Ordinance violations referred for enforcement. My case will be heard as soon as these new regulations have been developed and adopted. This may be a very long wait, since prosecution of Mirkarimi’s so-called Ethics violations has interrupted the Ethics Commission’s current workload.

The complete lack of Sunshine enforcement by the Ethics Commission — just one official misconduct case upheld by Ethics of at least 25 cases over a 20-year period — lets every City Department know they don’t really have to be honest or forthcoming about public transparency or public information. San Francisco’s government has failed its citizenry in very fundamental ways.

The Ethics Commission won’t begin any investigation until the District Attorney and City Attorney have decided not to pursue a given case, even though the Grand Jury noted that Ethics does not have to wait until either agency completes its investigations. Consequently, there are almost no proactive investigations regarding ethics violations, leading to endless, unnecessary delays. The Ethics Commission has become passive.

Ethics commissioners are appointed by elected officials. In turn, Ethics staff and commissioners scrutinize expenditures and activities of those same elected officials. The Civil Grand Jury felt this leads to the appearance of impropriety, or very real impropriety.

The Civil Grand Jury wrote a second report on the Ethics Department in 2011 titled “*Whistling in the Dark: The San Francisco Whistleblower Program.*” The report states: “The existing whistleblower program deals with mostly low-level issues, does not foster transparency, lacks a comprehensive tracking system, angers and confuses whistleblowers, lacks an appeal system, and fails to create effective and independent oversight.”

Most importantly, San Francisco’s whistleblower program has inadequate protections against on-the-job retaliation for whistleblowers. Judging from the experiences of past and current whistleblowers, it is a very bad career move in San Francisco to become a whistleblower.

If you’re a City employee and your boss is stealing, or your Department is cheating, wasting tax dollars, or committing fraud,

Ethics Comm Fail

look the other way or face career suicide. The City will protect your Department and supervisor; they won't protect you.

Whistleblowers "protected" by the Ethics Commission are routinely fired, suspended, laid-off, shunned at work, demoted, or treated as a traitor — regardless of the value they provide to the City as dedicated public servants. Retirement benefits have been taken away and Social Security benefits denied. Many whistleblowers end up suing the city for retaliation, explaining why, in part, the City loses so many lawsuits costing unknown millions of dollars annually to settle.

An excerpt from a whistleblower: *"I assure you, the next time I witness somebody dipping their hands into public funds to steal money intended to serve the disabled I will certainly not stick my neck out by blowing the whistle and being left abandoned to suffer the blowback of retaliation and retribution."*

Between 1989 and 1993 the Whistleblower program was introduced by Mayor Art Agnos and administered by then City Administrator Ed Lee, who is now our current Mayor. The Ethics Commission took over between 1993 and 2003, but did such a bad job that a large part of the whistleblower responsibilities were taken over by the Controller's Office in 2003 following passage of Proposition C.

The splitting of the whistleblower program responsibilities between Ethics and the Controller's Office has created such a poor program that the Grand Jury noted, "San Francisco's whistleblower program has failed in its mission to promote the identification of waste, fraud, and abuse."

The Ethics Commission is not worth saving. The Commission's only real defense is that they don't have the money to do a good job (apparently its average annual budget of \$2 million in each of the past five years isn't enough to satisfy them). An in-house analyst indicated last year that the 16-person agency would almost need to double its staff to handle the agency's current workload; the analyst neglected noting that this may add another \$2 million in staff costs on top of the current \$2 million in salaries and benefits in the current fiscal year. Who needs a political bureaucracy costing \$4 million annually that favors politicians over citizens?

It would be much easier — and cheaper — to go back to the pre-1993 days when San Francisco didn't have a politically appointed Ethics Commission. This change would certainly be at least as good as what we have today, may possibly be much less expensive, and perhaps might lead to meaningful enforcement of San Francisco's ethics laws. After all, we could save \$2 million annually by jettisoning the Ethics Commission before we waste another \$36 million over the next 18 years (at the current \$2 million per year average) on top of the \$19 million already wasted between FY '94-'95 and FY '11-'12.

And some of that savings could be better spent on strengthening our Sunshine Ordinance Task Force, our only local agency exposing misconduct of City officials.

...George Wooding (MTHA)

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(And thanks! to Jim & Ella Mae Lew)

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COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Land Use & Housing • Monday 5:30PM August 13 • Northern Police Station • Chair Hiroshi Fukuda • ninersam@aol.com • 386-2212
Open Space • Ongoing Meetings • Chair Nancy Wuerfel • nancenum1@aol.com • 731-6432, Co-chair Ramona Albright • 621-9621
Transportation • Chair Gary Noguera • garynoguera@earthlink.net
Water Task Force • Chair Joan Girardot • 346-5525
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AGENDA	
General Assembly Meeting	
July 17, 2012	
6:30	I. Sign In and Refreshments
7:00	II. Call to Order/Ascertain Quorum A. Introduction of Delegates and Guests / Short Announcements B. Hosts 1. Laurel Heights Improvement Assn — LHIA 2. Liberty Hill Neighborhood Assn — LHNA
7:15	III. Approval of June 2012 Minutes
7:20	IV. Officers' Reports A. President B. Vice Presidents C. Secretaries D. Treasurer
7:25	V. Committee Action Items — written reports in Newsletter A. Bylaws B. Government & Elections C. Land Use & Housing D. Open Space E. Transportation F. Water Task Force
7:45	VII. Program: Geary BRT Presenter: Chester Fung, Principal Transportation Planner
	VIII. Adjournment

CSFN meets the third Tuesday of each month except for December at Northern Police Station Community Room, Corner of Turk & Fillmore Streets (Parking in rear off Turk.) Public Transit: Muni #22 Fillmore, 31 Balboa & 38 Geary Lines

Visitors: Please Sign the Register

NEIGHBORHOOD VIEWS is published monthly, the official voice of the Coalition for SF Neighborhoods, Inc., a 501(c)4 organization.
 To Submit Articles: Email articles by the 5th of the month to sfjberk@mac.com
 Either inline text or an attached document can be used.
 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. We reserve the right to edit where necessary. Member organizations may receive two copies of the newsletter without charge. Subscription: Members/\$10, Nonmembers/\$15.

*Coalition for SF Neighborhoods
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Next Meeting
 Tuesday
 July 17

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