

Pacific Heights News

Vol. XVI No. 3

Autumn 2008

PHRA, Supervisors Act To Restore Streetsweeping

Mohammed Nuru, Deputy Director of the Department of Public Works, is trying to sell the idea that the city will save money by reducing street sweeping from weekly to twice a month.

Pacific Heights residents aren't buying.

Nuru said the cut, and the failure to give any warning or accept any neighborhood input, was the result of significant budget cuts imposed on his department. Residents pointed out the net saving would be small, considering the corresponding reduction in parking ticket income.

Nuru told PHRA's board at its September meeting that national studies show San Francisco is "overcleaning." The city hired a consultant that looked at 17 cities; of those, only San Francisco and Alameda sweep their streets weekly.

However, in determining whether a street is clean, the consultant counted only paper wrappers, cigarette butts and the like. Leaves were not counted and on many streets in Pacific Heights leaves are a considerable problem.

Directors and residents bombarded Nuru with reasons the decision was a mistake. The Directors contacted District 2 Supervisor Michela Alioto-Pier and District 5 Supervisor Ross Mirkarimi to seek a delay in the change. Alioto-Pier toured some leaf-laden streets and

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Newspaper Article Spotlights Residence Used for Business

YBR Advisors has been so successful in helping clients achieve their financial goals that it was listed by the San Francisco Business Times this spring as one of the Bay Area's top 75 wealth advisors.

The Business Times article documents what neighbors have long suspected and complained about: a full-fledged business is operating from Suite 1 at 2221 Pacific Avenue, a residential property. It has a steady stream of clients in and out.

The Business Times quoted president John Ohmer as saying that he "starts every new client relationship

with an intensive discovery interview phase totaling 40 to 50 hours spread over multiple meetings."

Ohmer is assisted by a staff of six, according to the article.

The article states that YBR has 184 clients who visit "annually, quarterly or as often as they'd like to drop by YBR's Pacific Heights office to discuss their financial lives."

The fact that there are six employees disqualifies YBR (which stands for Yellow Brick Road) from any legitimacy as a "home office." In fact, neighbors doubt that the unit is used as a residence at all. They have noted the license numbers of vehicles that park there and in Bromley Alley from about 8:30 a.m. to about 6 p.m. Monday through Friday, but lights are turned off during the evenings and weekends.

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Come to the Annual Meeting

San Francisco Planning Director John Rahaim will be the featured speaker Oct. 22 at the annual meeting of the Pacific Heights Residents Association. District 2 Supervisor Michela Alioto-Pier will also attend. Most of the PHRA area is within District 2.

The gathering will take place at the Schools of the Sacred Heart, 2222 Broadway, starting with a wine-and-hors d'oeuvres reception at 6 p.m.

Director Rahaim's remarks will be his own, but PHRA has suggested he comment on the new Housing Element, what the Planning Department is doing to rebuild a relationship with the neighborhoods and two hot-button topics: lax enforcement of the city's ordinances and codes and dwelling unit mergers.

PHRA President Greg Scott will provide a quick summary of the association's activities and accomplishments during the past year. The meeting will include a brief session to transact PHRA's "housekeeping" matters.

Vino, at 2425 California Street, has generously arranged for the wine. PHRA is also grateful to the Schools of the Sacred Heart for providing the venue.

Cost is \$35 per member prior to October 15 and \$40 per member after that and at the door. Guests are an additional \$10 on those rates.

PHRA Continues Effort to Keep Business Out of a Residence

Owners of the home at 1969 California Street have apparently succeeded in getting the building designated as a San Francisco landmark.

With that designation, and the claim that business income is necessary in order to maintain the property, the owners are seeking a Conditional Use Permit (CU) under a little-known city ordinance that would legalize the art gallery that has long been operating in the residence zoned RH-2. The business is known as Anthony Meier Fine Arts.

A petition opposing any permit is being drafted for circulation.

It states, in part,

“Home offices are not intrusive in residential zones but businesses that require loading and unloading of merchandise: valet parking for customers; after hours (evening) events; and multiple employees are inappropriate and change the character of the neighborhood as well as impact property and rental values. . . . The art gallery at 1969 California regularly and constantly adds and removes major pieces of merchandise on a weekly basis.”

Neighbors previously described instances in which large cranes parked in the street to hoist large pieces in or out of the building and grounds.

PHRA’s position is that this case is precedent-setting. Because virtually every block in Pacific Heights has landmark-worthy homes, approval of the CU would open the entire area to businesses in residences.

According to the web site of Anthony Meier Fine Arts (www.anthonymeierfinearts.com), there is a steady stream of exhibits, each lasting about four to six weeks. The most current, for example, was scheduled September 9-October 3, preceded by a reception with the artist on September 5 from 6-8 p.m.

Neighbors say that the gallery, to show its wares, has frequent disruptive events characterized by

Meier as fund-raisers for various non-profit organizations.

. In addition to openings of its shows, the gallery is the venue for many large gatherings that Meier has said are fund-raisers for various non-profit organizations.

Residents Want Streets Swept

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agreed with residents. She agreed to write a resolution for the Board of Supervisors. District 1 Supervisor Jake McGoldrick has also introduced a resolution asking for reconsideration.

Among the points PHRA directors made:

- Pacific Heights is a tourist area; unswept streets will create a bad impression that will eventually cut into tourist revenue.
- Litter isn’t restricted to commercial streets; it spills over into adjacent blocks
- Flat tires from nails in the streets around construction sites is a continual problem.
- The high level of construction throughout the area results in literal dirt as well as debris, which contractors are cleaning insufficiently.
- When sweeping does occur, it will be less effective because there will be more cars on the streets; people won’t remember when sweeping is due. n Holidays will mean some blocks will be swept only once a month, a particular problem for streets swept on Monday.

Landmarks Open for Tour

Glorious buildings in Pacific Heights and Presidio Heights, including the Petit Trianon, a variety of classically-styled townhomes, and a renowned Bernard Maybeck residence which is still the home of its original family, will be open for view October 19 during the Victorian Alliance Home Tour.

Proceeds of the self-guided tour will benefit restoration of Maybeck’s masterpiece, the Palace of Fine Arts. The tour is scheduled 1-5 p.m..

Tickets may be ordered in advance for \$40 through October 11, if ordering by mail, or through October 17, if ordering by Internet (www.victorianalliance.org) with PayPal. A discount is available for groups of ten or more. Tickets will be mailed out for mail orders only. Internet orders will be confirmed by a PayPal receipt to be used for entry to the tour. Tickets may be purchased for \$50 on the day of the tour at 3240 Jackson Street. (Advance ticket holders are given a different starting point.)

PHRA Directors

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Pacific Heights News

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New Tenant for 'Newcomer'

The Chinese Education Center is the new occupant of the Pacific Heights School (aka Newcomer) at Jackson and Webster Street and PHRA is attempting to enlist a cadre of volunteers to help.

The CEC needs a home while its Chinatown campus is being retrofitted. The elementary school students are all recent arrivals in this country, studying English as a second language. They are also being taught American customs. Typically they enroll at CEC for only one year before being placed in a regular elementary school. Alice Piccus, who is spearheading PHRA's efforts for the school, said the school was top last year in the increase in test scores.

Part of the American customs curriculum will be a big Thanksgiving party for the kids and their parents and that's one of the efforts for which volunteers are sought. The kids, Piccus said, end up helping the parents with translation and so forth. The kids are eligible for the breakfast and lunch programs."

Other activities for volunteers:

- Reading on Read Aloud Day (Volunteers choose a grade appropriate book and read for 30 minutes in each classroom)
- Individual or small group tutorial on reading: helping English language learners, basic math; or chaperoning field trips
- Recess yard supervision-11:50 am to 12:50 pm daily (A staff member will always be there. It would be good to have another adult to help out in case a student gets hurt from the uneven yard surface.)

Potential volunteers may call the PHRA hotline, 922-3572, or email info@phra-sf.org.

Business Finds a Home

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As one neighbor complained to PHRA, "My concerns are primarily around the number of cars parked there and the amount of traffic created as employees are coming and going during the day. They are constantly shuffling cars in and out and it's not appropriate for a residential neighborhood. It's the very reason we have commercial vs. residential zoning!"

Another neighbor said, "If we do not address issues of this nature, it will result in the deterioration of our community. In addition, the City of San Francisco should take issues of this nature very seriously, since it is taking San Francisco rental inventory off the market."

Thanks to the details provided by the Business Times, PHRA is now able to take action against what appears to be a strictly business operation where it doesn't belong.

Wanted: PHRA Directors

Are you concerned about the many pressures that affect our quality of life in Pacific Heights? Are you passionate about issues such as uncontrolled contractors totally disrupting some blocks for an extended period, or businesses operating illegally in homes? Are you bothered by lack of enforcement of city codes, including zoning?

If you said yes to any of the questions above, you may be a candidate for a seat on PHRA's Board of Directors.

Due to the huge amount of current neighborhood issues (CPMC, The housing element, building permits, Presidio, CAMP and many more) PHRA needs people who are willing to get involved and give back to their neighborhood.

If that prospect interests you, please contact us, telling us your primary interests and something about what experience you may bring to the Board.

You may send write to PHRA at 2585 Pacific Avenue, San Francisco 94115, or send an email to PHRA President Greg Scott at info@phra-sf.org.

Comment Period Extended On Presidio Expansion

The Presidio Trust has extended the comment period for its expansion plans until October 20, 2008, to give more people time to express their opinions on the proposed development at the Presidio's historic Main Post.

At issue are construction of a 100,000-square-foot contemporary art museum (CAMP), construction of a 125-room hotel, and expansion of the historic theater into a three-screen complex.

Before the close of the comment period there will be a second public meeting of the Presidio Board to hear all those who could not get into the first hearing on July 14. This meeting is scheduled Tuesday, October 14 at 6:30 p.m. in the Palace of Fine Arts Theater, 3301 Lyon Street.

It is the position of the neighborhood associations surrounding the Presidio that the design and scope of the new construction is totally inappropriate for the historic Main Post and will create traffic and parking problems that will extend out of the Presidio. CAMP in particular expects to draw thousands of people to the site daily.

Further, all the construction and activity will impinge upon the open space and all of the recreational potential of the Presidio.

District-Wide Forum to Cover Many Issues; Supervisor Will Attend

2gether, the organization formed to deal with issues concerning all of District 2, will hold its Autumn General Meeting Oct 16 at 6:30 p.m. in Calvary Presbyterian Church at the corner of Fillmore and Jackson streets. Everybody is welcome.

District 2 Supervisor Michela Alioto-Pier has confirmed that she will attend and speak.

The Contemporary Art Museum in the Presidio (CAMP), the Fisher family project to house their art collection, was the number one concern at 2gether's June meeting and will be discussed again in October, along with the new hot topic, cutbacks in street sweeping.

Lynne Newhouse Segal, a PHRA director who founded 2gether along the lines of a similar operation in District 5, said she expected residential safety and traffic and parking issues will probably be heard.

Segal emphasized that the forum is for all individuals and merchants in District 2, as well as the area's neighborhood associations, such as PHRA. "There is no hierarchy of membership," she said. "The program is unstructured. It's a way for all of us to

come together and to be with our supervisor, who will be listening as well as speaking.

Alioto-Pier earlier welcomed the formation of 2gether as a means of hearing what the constituents' interests and concerns are.

#3 Jackson Bus Still in Limbo

A decision on the fate of the #3 Jackson trolley was expected at a meeting of the Municipal Transportation Agency directors on September 30. Muni has planned to eliminate the route, but is taking one more look because of public protest.

The future of the #24 Divisadero line, however, is clearer. After proposing to extend the route down Scott Street to the Marina, the MTA has decided to keep the status quo. PHRA had asked that if the line was to go to the Marina, it should get there via the existing wires down Fillmore and Steiner streets. That would avoid turns at Jackson and Scott streets, site of the Town School.

Residents opposed to the elimination of the #3 Jackson bus may appeal to the Board of Supervisors.