

WESTWOOD HIGHLANDS

Neighborhood Association Newsletter

February 2006

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WHA Meetings

All Westwood Highlands residents are invited to attend and participate in our bi-monthly meetings. WHA directors continue to volunteer their time in helping maintain the unique beauty and livability of our neighborhood. The meetings last about an hour and a half. They are now held on Tuesdays at 7:30 at 120 Brentwood on the following dates: March 21, May 16, July 18, Sept 12, Nov 21.

WHA Officers

David Bisho,
President

Charley Leach,
Vice President

Jane Vincent Corbett,
SECRETARY

Anya LeGault,
Treasurer

Vince Scardina,
Parliamentarian

Jennifer Dees,
Webmaster

Housing Element Update

As we've reported in the last several newsletters, Westwood Highlands Association and 14 citywide neighborhood organizations have filed a lawsuit against the City and County of San Francisco in an effort to stop the Planning Department's Housing Element (www.sfgov.org/site/planning) from going forward without an Environmental Impact Report (EIR). Background: This HE is a citywide policy document effective for ten years, that calls for the legalization of in-law units, increased density and height on and around transit corridors like Ocean Avenue and West Portal, and would allow for the reduction or elimination of the traditional requirement that developers construct at least 'one inside parking place for every unit' built in San Francisco. An EIR, as you might know, is an extensive study and a kind of tool that is used when large building projects are proposed since they help identify potential environmental impacts on items such as safety, noise, congestion, sewage, parking, traffic, and

soil. Regretfully, on November 23rd, Westwood Highlands and the other appellants lost the first round when Judge Quidachay sided with the City by ruling that an EIR is unnecessary for this Housing Element plan to go forward. The good news is that our attorneys advise we have a very good chance of prevailing in an appeal. The bad news is that there is another somewhat similar proposal, this time authored by Jake McGoldrick (jake.mcgoldrick@sfgov.org), and this time called 'The Better Neighborhoods Plan' (www.sfgov.org/site/planning) that also seeks citywide densification. As of the time of this writing, the Board of Supervisors moved to amend the plan so it has been sent back to committee for review. Upshot: San Francisco is a very expensive place to live. Every square inch of it is valuable. There is constant pressure from developers, housing activists, non-profits, SPUR, and some politicians to lessen or remove zoning restrictions.

Noise

Periodically, the Board of Directors of Westwood Highlands receives complaints about noise; recently two concerning wind chimes and every so often and

incessantly barking dog. As far as complaints go, not bad, but still worth mentioning in this newsletter.

The Central Council Report

Westwood Highlands is a charter member and one of 17 neighborhoods that belong to the West of Twin Peaks Central Council. Established in 1936, this council is a kind of umbrella organization that addresses issues that are common to its members. Current issues include:

Laguna Honda Hospital: The Council endorsed a voter initiative slated for the June 2006 ballot which will create a special zoning district for the 62 acres at Laguna Honda so that the property and building can continue to be used only for the City's most vulnerable; that is, for frail, elderly, and disabled (including AIDS) San Francisco residents. www.SF4LagunaHonda.org

Better Neighborhoods Plus Plan: The Council voted to request that the Board of Supervisors take the unanimous advise of the Planning Commission and not approve of this plan (www.sfgov.org/site/planning).

Aptos Middle School Playground: The Council voted to support the efforts of the Friends of Aptos

Middle School in their ongoing renovation of the Aptos Playground.

Mortgage Guaranty Location on West Portal: The Council requested the Board of Supervisors overturn the Planning Commission's decision to allow the Mortgage Guaranty Co. to lease ground floor space on the first block of West Portal historically reserved for retail use. (The Board overturned the Planning Commission's decision).

Lakeshore Plaza: The Council supported Lakeshore Acres Improvement Club's request that the driveway opening from the plaza onto Everglade Dr. be closed and that the owners of the property provide an on-site full-time manager.

Medical Marijuana: Citing citywide crime and security issues, the Council voted to request that medical marijuana be provided only by city-operated medical facilities.

Pumpkin Patch/Christmas Tree Lot/ 19th & Sloat Boulevard: The

Council sided with neighboring Pinelake Park Association in their request that the proprietor of these enterprises operate only after having obtained the proper permits and that the lot should be kept free of trash and debris and otherwise maintained during the rest of the year.

Full Staffing for the Police Department: The Council supported member Miraloma Improvement Club in their request that the Police Department should maintain full staffing using the formula that was determined by a citywide proposition a few years ago.

Brotherhood Way Building Project: The Council sided with neighbors in requesting that a full Environmental Impact Report be prepared for the project, which would consist of 121 two and three-story buildings on the north side of Brotherhood Way, between 19th Ave. and Lake Merced Blvd. (The Board of Supervisors turned down our request). A lawsuit brought by neighbors is pending.

Illegal Inlaw Units

An illegal or secondary unit is generally described as a second living space in a single-family home, usually in the basement, having a kitchen and a separate entrance. One of the main reasons that folks continue to move here is that Westwood Highlands is zoned for single-

family use only. As residents watch their property values go up, they are reminded that it is increasingly rare in San Francisco to be able to live in peace and quiet and to actually be able to park in front of their own houses. In addition to the other restrictions, the WHA

directors will continue to enforce Article IV of the Easements, Restrictions, Conditions, Covenants, Charges, and Agreements, first established for Westwood Highlands in 1924, that restrict the use of each lot in Westwood Highlands to one family.

Park Bench Planned

At the urging of WHA directors, the Department of Public works has cleaned up and cleared off the small plot of land that lies between the street and the sidewalk on Yerba Buena at Monterey Blvd. Since this lot is

really the only 'parkway' in Westwood Highlands, and, since the view overlooking the southern part of the city there is actually rather nice, the directors have decided to install a nice cement bench there near

the tree. Continuing maintenance and landscaping is being considered. Thanks to the adjoining homeowners on Yerba Buena for keeping this parcel up over the years.

Tree Report

Director Anya LeGault reports that a total of four trees were removed and 12 planted during 2005. Westwood Highlands Association continues to plant trees for its residents free of charge as long as they are

planted on fronts or sides of the houses that face the sidewalk. Westwood Highlands directors will continue to lobby our supervisor and appropriate city departments to finish the Monterey Blvd. median strip tree

planting project. Trees are needed between Ridgewood and Yerba Buena.

Neighborhood Emergency Response Training

ARE YOU A NERT? As those of us who have become NERTs (not nerds) know, NERT stands for Neighborhood Emergency Response Team. We became a NERT by taking the 6 weeks FREE course sponsored by the SF Fire Department. All of us are acutely aware now of the need for each community to have lots of volunteers to help our officials in case of a major disaster. In order to help organize in case of an emergency WWH would like to know how many NERTs we have in WWH. If you are a NERT

please contact our secretary Jane Vincent Corbett by web www.corbett@usfca.edu or phone (415) 333-6775.

If you are not yet a NERT you can find a schedule of classes at www.sfgov.org/sffdnert or by calling the NERT Coordinator Lt. Erica Arteseros at (415)-970-2022. If you are not interested in classes now but would like information on some basic supplies for your home WWH can help Hurricane Katrina reminded us that we couldn't count on others to fulfill basic needs. We all need a few

supplies such as (1) water, minimum of 1 gallon per person per day for a minimum of 3 days (2) food that is ready to eat (3) flashlights and (4) trash bags to use as a toilet to maintain hygiene. Our WWH Board member, Jane Vincent Corbett, a RN, is working on an outreach program so she would be interested in giving literature to anyone interested in examples of emergency supplies and a checklist for your home. Contact her by web or phone as noted above.

Dues

Although WHA dues of \$25.00 per year are so low they are considered a joke in most other incorporated neighborhoods, they are both necessary and mandatory. No director receives any pay of any

kind for his or her services. Every penny is used to maintain our neighborhood and property values, control in-law units, and enforce our bi-laws. Also, these funds go towards maintaining our non-profit

status with the state of California, dues to the West of Twin Peaks Central Council, and also for the planting of new trees and the removal of old ones.

Common Referrals/Phone Numbers

Assessor's Office 554-5525

Board of (Permit) Appeals 575-6880

Business License 554-6208

Health Department 554-2500

Toxic Division, Health Department 554-2780

Police Permit Bureau 553-1115

Community Boards 920-3820

Subdivisions, encroachment permits DPW 554-5810

Street Addresses (assigning street numbers) 558-6502

Curbs, Parking designations (DPT) 554-2300

Condominiums DPW 554-5827

Redevelopment Agency 749-2400

3R Reports (Report of Residential Record) 558-6081

Parking violations (DPT Enforcement) 553-1200

Damaged sidewalks (Cynthia Chono, DPW) 554-6196

Scaffolding obstructions (Harry Gulbengay, DPW) 554-5860

Problems with newsracks (Dan Brugman, DPW) 554-6917

Street emergencies, e.g. sewer repair, tree limbs down, potholes, 695-2000

Police (non-emergency): 553-0123

Noise Complaints (Police) 553-1012



REQUEST OF HOMEOWNERS:

Please contact the board if we are not addressing our mailings properly or misspelling names. Also, if you wish, please advise your phone number and/or email address if you want us to contact you in those ways.