



# *San Francisco Tomorrow*

## *Working to Protect the Urban Environment*

*Issue 341*

*Will you want to live in San Francisco – Tomorrow?*

*January 2011*

## **ELECTION ROUNDUP . . . and the WATER CONNECTION**

The election of Jerry Brown as governor will hopefully bode well for the environment. The huge looming issue for Brown is whether he will protect the San Francisco Bay Delta estuary and its native salmon populations or side with large corporate farms and real estate developers in southern California who continue to demand more water. The test will come for Brown as he deals with the so-called peripheral canal, which was rejected by voters the last time Brown was governor in 1980. The canal is back, perhaps this time as a huge underground pipeline, but still intended to take more water out of the San Francisco Bay delta.

The State water bond, originally slated for the 2010 ballot, was delayed to 2012 because of poor polling numbers. This \$11 billion boondoggle would provide over \$2 billion for setup costs for the canal. Brown should scrap this bond and instead focus on promoting urban and agricultural conservation, local water catchment systems, and rebuilding our existing aging water and sewer systems.

### **Problems for State parks**

The failure of Proposition 21 means more problems for our state parks. With California facing a \$25 billion budget deficit, environmentalists will need to fight to ensure adequate funding of our beleaguered parks and other environmental initiatives. Public investment in our parks could create jobs.

### **Prop 23**

Dirty energy producers from out of state spent millions to place Proposition 23 on the November ballot and gut California's climate change law -but they were soundly defeated, as voters defeated the measure handily (61% no, 39% yes)

### **Props 25, 26**

The electorate delivered a mixed message on taxation, approving Proposition 25, which will allow budgets to be adopted by a simple majority vote instead of the 2/3 requirement that has produced delayed budgets for most of the past two decades. On the other hand, Prop 26 has expanded the definition of taxes, which

essentially places a 2/3 requirement on most revenue sources on which a budget can be made. Not only will this limit the state's ability to implement polluter-pays programs or restructure taxes, the measure also applies to local fees and taxes. The Board of Supervisors will now need a supermajority to approve many potential revenue enhancements

### **New faces in familiar places**

Now that the question is settled of who will be appointed interim Mayor, we can be glad that new Mayor Ed Lee is a supporter of good environmental practice. He has declared that he has no use for Gavin Newsom's huge SUV and that he will buy electric and use a smaller car for his mayoral comings and goings. With the ascent of Chinese American mayors in both San Francisco and Oakland, and the swearing-in of newly elected San Francisco Supervisors Scott Wiener, Jane Kim, Malia Cohen, and Mark Farrell, there will be a period of settling in, whether or not there will be a major political shift on the Board of Supervisors being a matter of wait-and-see. San Francisco Tomorrow will introduce ourselves all around, so that our faces are once again familiar around City Hall.

## **Golden Gate Park should be designated as a City Historic District**

The San Francisco Historic Preservation Commission has started discussions on designating Golden Gate Park a local Historic District. Right now, the Park is recognized nationally on the official National Register of Historic Places. One would think that honor would be enough to assure the Park a little respect. But recent decisions of the Recreation and Parks Commission and staff make one wonder whether, in fact, the Park is more highly valued as an Industrial Park, a massive entertainment attraction or a regional Recreation Complex. It comes at a good time that the Historic Preservation Commission will hold its first meeting discussing the pro's and con's of designation

**February 16, 2011 at 12:30 p.m. in City Hall Room 400**

(cont'd next page)

The Department of Recreation and Park has stated that they support the nomination of Golden Gate Park to be an historic district. Planning and RecPark Departments are together exploring the extent of this nomination and the possible legislation necessary to achieve it. There will be many variations before this is complete, **and the public should take this opportunity to weigh in on what they value about Golden Gate Park.**

Contrary to misleading information published recently in the press, a Historic District designation does not "freeze all its historical features". The most basic result would be that major changes to the Park's

character would undergo more extensive review than what is required now. The Recreation and Parks Commission seems to have its eye only on the bottom line; what is hoped is that an historic resource designation would make another level of approval necessary for major decisions regarding the development of Golden Gate Park. The budget crises of recent years are forcing a short-term survival mentality and ill-conceived decisions which may ultimately result in the long-term loss of the characteristics of Golden Gate Park that San Franciscans love most. Commercialization and privatization would change it forever. Note date: **February 16, 2011 at 12:30 p.m. in City Hall Room 400.**

## GAS

There is an ignored 30" gas pipeline running underground the length of Franklin Street with a potential for notoriety. Why not move the Central Subway to operate within the pipeline on Franklin? Using the technology of ancient department stores which would send messages through vacuum tubes, subway passengers would be pulled by City Hall's vacuum as the only destination for their transit. Such a multi-focused solution is worthy of trial.

## Native Plants for Your Garden: Put them in NOW!

January is the perfect time to plant care-free California native plants so that roots can get established during rainy season. Have you been wondering where you can purchase local San Francisco native plants? You've decided to conserve water and create backyard habitat for native flora and fauna, yet you can't find any plants to buy. **Head on over to the HANC Native Plant Nursery at the southeast corner of Golden Gate Park!** **Greg Gaar**, local ecological activist extraordinaire, is propagating and promulgating native plants, sown from locally collected seed. Greg has **40 - 50 species of native plants**, for which he and HANC ask a donation on a per plant basis. The Recreation and Park Commission recently decided to close the HANC Recycling Center which was a pioneer in the collection of recyclables before Sunset Scavenger and the three-bin system of house collection came into being. But the Recycling Center has seen its day and the idea to create a place where gardeners could go to learn about the local environment and create a garden that would thrive in San Francisco's very distinct micro-climates gave rise to the idea of a Community Garden Center. Here there will be 40 or more garden plots available to individuals and teams/groups. Here gardeners will be able to use a tool "lending library", learn how to make compost and other soil amendments and get support from other gardeners. Until, then, the Native Plant Nursery is open.

### **Native Plant Nursery is OPEN:**

Monday thru Saturday **9 a.m. - 4 p.m.**

Sunday **12 - 4 p.m.**

### **LOCATION:**

Golden Gate Park

@ **Frederick & Arguello** (inside the recycling center)

**THROW IT AWAY** Laid end-to-end, 100 billion pieces of plastic disposable cutlery which are produced in the USA by the prime producers such as Dart, Solo, Sweetheart, Dixie, Tyco, Dispoz, etc., would fit around the globe 300 times. This estimate does not include imported cutlery from China, Korea, and Thailand, also primary sources. Of course, this huge amount of production is what allows the price for plastic cutlery to be very low. So everybody buys it without further thought. Enjoy!

# Main Post at the Presidio: hitting a stone wall

Community groups such as the Presidio Historical Association have been questioning the Presidio Trust staff for three years about their ill conceived development plans for the Main Post as described in the Final Environmental Impact Statement Update (EIS). Groups that have waited patiently for the Trust to bring about a sensitive restoration of the historic heart of the Presidio, the Main Post, while adding attractive new uses judiciously, have just about given up the civil dialogue. The suggestions of dozens of organizations that have been following this saga and raising concerns about overdevelopment and the loss of historic values, have gone unanswered in the newest Trust documents. The Trust refuses to move the proposed 14-building hotel out of the most historic area, despite the degrading effect that such a use will have on the historic resource. Instead, they have apparently given top priority to leasing and revenue opportunities even in the most historically important sites. Leasing existing buildings is a task they have done well in some areas of the Presidio, but when it comes to new construction and development, they have a clumsy hand. See the Lucas Letterman overbuilding scheme that has oversaturated the need for office space in the Presidio and soaked up all the open space that was freed by the demolition of Letterman Hospital and research facility.

Now with a proposal for a new 100,000-square-foot hotel complex they will be trying to fill up the best part of the historic Parade Ground. That and the expansion of the movie theater nearby are envisioned by the staff to “enliven” the oh-so-deadly-boring Main Post with its austere enlisted men’s barracks. Why is staff still seeking to make more money? **The operation of the Presidio Trust enterprise in this national park (remember, this is a National Park) has already assured its ability to maintain the facilities after the year 2013, when the Trust no longer receives public money and must be self-sufficient.** Why must there always be more money coming across the till? Bloated staff salaries and additional staff cannot be the answer. It’s a kind of hubris, perhaps, that we see in the “habit” of real estate, when “enough” is never really enough. This is a National Park; the Trust was created by Congress to protect the park, not to promote it to the highest levels of financial return. In short, they don’t need the money.

They are accused of exceeding the scope of their power vested in the Presidio Trust Act and of failure to satisfy basic National Environmental Policy Act requirements, failure to avoid easily avoidable adverse impacts on the NHLD by moving the hotel out of the most historic area, are only a few. In a recent letter, the Presidio Historical Association urges the Trust to implement straight-forward readings of the policies and restrictions expressed in the Presidio Trust Act and to exercise managerial balance. If it approves the revisionary documents before it at its next meeting which change the mission of their management from custodial to preemptive, the Presidio Trust will be making it necessary for the public to seek appropriate means of redress.

The Presidio Trust must support the historic treasures of the National Park and respect the National Historic Landmark District within the Golden Gate National Recreation Area, not demean it with hotels and entertainment centers. Next meeting of the Presidio Trust is February 7.

## **Presidio Trust**

### **Public Board of Directors Meeting**

**Monday, February 7, 2011**

**6:30 pm**

**Golden Gate Club, [135 Fisher Loop](#)**

Agenda will be posted prior to meeting.



If you have questions, please call the Presidio Trust Public Affairs Office at (415) 561-5418.

*You could BE THERE.*

# At the border of city and sea: new public landscapes for coastal cities

Lunchtime forum at SPUR, 654 Mission Street near Third Street  
Wednesday, February 2, 2011 at 12:30 pm



The coast near Ocean Beach

Photo credit: David Furon

Designing public landscapes in coastal settings presents unique challenges and spectacular opportunities. Alma DuSolier and James Haig Streeter, consultants for SPUR on the **Ocean Beach Master Plan**, will present innovative recent work in Los Angeles and Blackpool, England. Hear how landscape designers engage the overlapping layers of ecology, climate, history and urbanism at the border of city and sea — and what lessons their recent projects in other cities hold for our own effort to reclaim Ocean Beach as San Francisco's great coastal public open space. Free to SPUR members or \$5 fee for non-members

## THANKS TO SFT'S 2010 HOLIDAY PARTY PATRONS

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