

CORBETT HEIGHTS NEIGHBORS - Notes from Meeting April 28, 2011

Dear Neighbors,

We had a really good meeting last Thursday. Just under 30 people attended - (the Dining Out For Life event was taking place throughout the city on the same night).

I'd really like to thank the folks who helped deliver the fliers - to all 1000 households in our neighborhood: Kazumi Matsuyama, Rick Johnson, Kevin Dunn, Cindy Valdes, Nathan Hall, Janice Low, Sheila, Taj and Kira Somers, Kathy and Hank Flanders, Leslie and John Koelsch and Brad Lyman. Greatly appreciated!

New Website: Please check out our new website - www.corbettheights.org. It's not complete yet, but it's a huge improvement, both aesthetically and structurally. Thanks to my neighbor Ian Goldstein for putting the time into this!

Dennis Herrera, our City Attorney, attended the meeting to discuss his Mayoral candidacy. Back in 2004 he and Mayor Newsom made history by declaring - temporarily - that banning same-sex marriage was illegal, and proceeded to allow thousands of couples to get married. Questions that were asked ranged from campaign financing to fixing MUNI to potholes to neighborhood blight sites to the AT&T utility box hearing last Tuesday.

AT&T Utility Box Hearing: Last Fall, AT&T applied to install 726 enormous utility boxes on sidewalks and green spaces throughout the city. The Planning Dept. gave them the go-ahead and awarded them a "categorical exemption" from needing an "environmental impact review". The hearing last Tuesday by the full Board of Supervisors took place because San Francisco Beautiful and the Planning Association for the Richmond joined in an appeal of the decision to exempt AT&T from needing this review.

SF Beautiful had a mock-up of one of the boxes in the hall outside the board chambers. They would be 52" wide, 48" high and 26" deep. They are much larger than any of the existing AT&T boxes currently installed around the city.

Those in favor of the AT&T plan feel that added competition would be a good thing and increased internet speed is important. They also don't really mind having the boxes added to the sidewalks. Those against them see the boxes as a graffiti magnet, don't like the idea that they buzz all day long and feel that the technology that will be used will be obsolete by the time the boxes are installed.

Comcast, about as disliked as AT&T, has spent billions creating their cable network which connects directly to subscribers' homes. The internet speed that Comcast provides has left AT&T in the dust, making them anxious to install their fiber-optic network. This would allow them to catch up to Comcast in the speed competition.

Since there were still many unanswered questions, Supervisor Wiener moved to continue the discussion in 4 weeks - to May 24th.

Gillian Gillett, Supervisor Wiener's legislative aide, attended the meeting to introduce herself, give updates on what the supervisor is working on, and to let us know that she is available to anyone to help with any questions or issues. Her email address is: gillian.gillett@sfgov.org.

Corbett Slope: George Groh and Chris McGuire of the San Francisco Permaculture Guild and Booka Alon of KitchenGardenSF spoke at the meeting of their plans/hopes for the Corbett Slope. These 2 groups have worked for months on plans to clean, weed and trim the Slope, and also to landscape the site with paths, retaining walls, vegetables, flowers and fruit trees. We will want lots of input from the neighborhood regarding the plans, access and plant selections so if you're interested in participating - whether you're an expert or just want to help out - please just let me know and I'll add you to the list. Eventually we'll have a meeting. A couple of important points we need to address are access to water and liability insurance. We're working on both.

17th Street Median and Speed Radar Sign: After waiting for several years - after it was approved - I think the best approach is to never expect this to ever happen, and then maybe it will.

In case you're not up on what we're expecting, and has been approved, there will be a median island built on 17th Street, just above the Corbin Steps. It will force traffic around the island, hopefully causing the cars to slow down as they descend 17th. The island will be 10' long X 6' wide X 6" high. The speed radar sign will be just west of 4353 17th.

Every 3 months I try and find out when MTA expects they can break ground with our project. So here's the latest from the Sustainable Streets Division: "Unfortunately things haven't been moving at the pace I expected. I'm still waiting for the cost estimates from DPW. They told me they have been swamped with work recently, so they haven't gotten around to my request yet. I would push the timeline further down another 2 - 3 months. Sorry for the delays. Philip Louie, Livable Streets Subdivision."

Red Zones: If okayed by the 2 surrounding neighbors, the long red zone on Corbett, just opposite where it intersects with Danvers will be removed. A nearly invisible red zone on Corbett where it meets Mars will be repainted and more clearly defined. 2 red zones on Ord, north of 17th, will be moved around the corner to 17th where they were supposed to be in the first place.

The Corbin Stairs redo has taken quite a bit longer to complete than the crew doing it expected. Rain caused part of the delay. Besides getting new steps, an irrigation line will go across the underside of the steps making it easier to water the east side. Some plants were removed or trampled and will be replaced by the city. The cobblestone retaining walls will also be put back.

Parklets: (esp. Squat & Gobble) The "Pavement to Parks" program has been a hit in several neighborhoods with its Parklet concept. The idea is to create an outdoor space where people could sit and read the newspaper, drink their coffee, etc. In the case of Squat & Gobble, the owners have effectively expanded their real estate to allow many extra tables at a very low cost. It feels like an extension of the restaurant as most people sitting there are eating the food they just purchased. Unfortunately this probably won't be able to be revisited until later this year when they apply to extend their permit.

Mollie Stone's recently opened at the old Cala/Delano's site on 18th Street. Besides having an incredibly improved food quality, they offer free rides home in their van. All you need to do is spend \$30 or more and the van will drop you off at your house. The van leaves every 1/2 hour.

75 Mars: This is a project that was first proposed over a year ago. One of the 2 permits being requested would be for adding a 2nd story to the house (8 additional feet) and a very modern design. It would also have a 2nd unit that would be entered from the Corbett side. The 2nd permit would be for a clearing out of a section of the city-owned green space adjacent, and the building of a stairway that would connect Corbett to Mars. There would be landscaping done around the stairs, and lighting and irrigation would be added. An approximately 90 square foot section that has been fenced off for at least 30 years would be reopened to the public. Some neighbors requested a DR (discretionary review). A hearing should be scheduled for sometime in the next month or 2.

Whole Foods is still good to go at the old S & C Ford site on Market at Dolores. Demolition should begin later this year. There will be approximately 3,000 square feet of store, and 82 units. Visit www.2001marketsf.com for more info.

New Planning Dept. website: Check out www.propertymap.sfplanning.org for information about any address in the city. Sale price, permits, complaints.....

AT&T - new cell phone antennae: 7 will be installed above Kinko's on Market @ Duboce, and 9 will be installed above Pottery Barn at Market @ Castro. I may be able to one day use my iPhone in the Castro!

RC Station at Castro and 17th: This proposed project has been discussed for years, but it may finally get reviewed. The proposal calls for a 65 foot tall building, I believe 24 units, one large ground floor retail space along 17th Street, and the parking entrance along Castro.

Tower Records building will likely be put up for sale. The departure of Trader Joe's as a potential tenant has left the owners hurting.

Corbett Heights Mini-Parks: If you'd like to be added to a list of people interested in participating in a clean-up day, please let me know.

Next meeting will be on Thursday, July 28. Board President David Chiu will attend to discuss his Mayoral candidacy. Hope you can make it!

Membership Dues: No one is ever turned away from meetings, and I will gladly help out if you have a question or an issue, but your \$15 annual household membership is greatly appreciated, and will mean that you will continue to receive any neighborhood updates and email announcements. The money goes into our garden fund - all except for the cost of printing and cookies for the meeting.

Thanks for your involvement in our community!

- Gary