

CORBETT HEIGHTS NEIGHBORS - Summary of Meeting - January 27, 2011

Over 60 people showed up for Thursday night's meeting!

First, I'd like to thank everyone who helped distribute fliers - Ted Teipel, Kevin Dunn, Cindy Valdes, Barbara Presta, Pat Hufford, Kazumi Matsuyama, Janice Low, Kathy Flanders, Leslie Koelsch and Monica McCrary. *Much appreciated!!!*

Captain Denis O'Leary, our new Captain of Park Station spoke first. According to their records, despite occasional break-ins, we are very fortunate that crime is relatively minimal in Corbett Heights. He said the 2 most recent break-ins had an unlocked door or window. I requested that they make an effort to drive down our streets to show a police presence in the area more regularly.

136 Ord - still fighting. Without detailing all of the history, our neighborhood opposed construction of a home on the front of lot surrounded by historic homes all built in the rear. After last year's unfortunate Planning Commission loss, we all considered the fight to be over. But the neighbors to the north - Sarah and Jason - decided to appeal the decision based on the fact that the initial required historic review was done on the existing rear house, not on the effect the new one would have on the block. They have hired 2 exceptional historic preservation attorneys. We're hopeful.

AT&T Utility Boxes: This became the only contentious part of the meeting. After receiving nearly 100% support for opposing these installations - during the last year, there appeared a contingent at the meeting who favored increased internet speed over any drawbacks the new boxes would have. Also mentioned was the desire for Comcast to have competition. Whereas U-Verse would definitely compare to if not exceed Comcast's current speed, what are the tradeoffs? The 2 companies are equally evil. They will never stop trying to outdo the other at any cost.

There are other ways to provide this service. Other providers have accomplished it. I've been talking with San Francisco Beautiful for the last several months. They are mounting another campaign to try and prevent the boxes from going in. While they have had meetings with the same AT&T reps I've met with, they have also met with reps from Comcast. **Comcast has stated that they intend to try and install similar boxes of their own all over the city.** Next, I imagine all of the other companies will want to join in. They all have access to "sidewalk utility easements".

2 things to consider: If AT&T is prevented - for the 2nd time - from using this approach to improving service, do you think they will abandon the San Francisco market? Or could there be a more costly, more people-friendly alternative in the wings?

And 2nd: In 2 or 3 years, when this technology is obsolete the boxes will remain.

Our newly elected Supervisor Scott Wiener attended our meeting, spoke for quite some time and answered a whole slew of questions. His recent statements on historic preservation that have alarmed some of us avid preservationists were clarified. He opposes landmarking or granting historic status to parks as a whole - or in the case of the mid-century North Beach library, and fears that in some cases being a historic district can work to prevent any type of

affordable housing from going in. But as far as working to enforce current laws, and not relaxing codes that protect historic properties, I feel he is on board.

He discussed the Safeway Recycling Center. Large grocery stores are supposed to provide a place where people can redeem bottle and can deposits. Safeway understandably prefers not having people standing in line with their cans in the checkout lanes. Scott is working on finding a way to mitigate the problems the current system has created. One possibility is to offer vouchers for food instead of cash.

We also discussed the worrisome fact that a neighborhood business/property owner owes more than \$223,000 in back property taxes. And another business/property owner in the Castro owes well over \$20,000 in fines for not abiding by conditions of use. Since San Francisco is struggling with historic budget deficits, the question is how can this be tolerated? Since our wonderful new supervisor is not only on the Land Use and Economic Committee but on the Budget and Finance Committee as well, this and much more will be addressed.

For all of us, I want to congratulate Scott on his winning the election to become our new voice. I'm really looking forward to working together.

Traffic Calming: Please don't lose faith! It will happen. Our traffic island has been approved. It, and the Speed Radar Sign will be installed within 2 - 3 months - depending on work crews' availability. The island will be situated entirely in the downhill lane, just above the Corbin Steps. It will be 10' long by 6' wide by ~6" high. The Speed Radar Sign will be installed just west of 4353 17th Street.

Red Zones on Danvers/Potential New Crosswalk: Last week a slew of new red zones appeared at the intersection of Corbett and Danvers. Apparently the paint crew got a little ambitious. I'll be meeting with the person at MTA in charge of the red zones. We'll also discuss the possibility of adding a crosswalk across Corbett at Mars. It's always a run-for-your-life experience getting from one side of the street to the other.

Trader Joe's: Not much movement, but there is a miniscule possibility that Trader Joe's could overcome some pretty hefty obstacles. The biggest are the results of the recent Traffic Study. Some of the areas where they failed were - pedestrian safety, dealing with parking demand and supply, queuing of cars waiting to get into the 39 space parking lot, and many others. The Planning Department apparently came up with 25 ways to mitigate the major problems. Trader Joe's rejected 22 of them.

Cala/Delano's/Mollie Stones? Nothing definite yet. The building owner has not approved anything. Mollie Stones may not be much beyond considering it at this point.

Whole Foods: After their successful hearing before the Planning Commission on December 17, they're good to go. Unlike many other stalled projects in the Market Street Corridor, they not only have the funding but a committed anchor tenant. They had some difficulties with parking also, but they agreed to return a year after the store has opened to address any problems that may exist regarding traffic and parking. This concession sounds great on paper, but the fact is that once the business has been approved and is up and running, there is little that can be done to mitigate any possible problems.

Medical Cannabis Dispensaries (MCDs): Late last year 2 separate parties attempted to open an MCD in the Castro - unsuccessfully since they were within 1000 feet of a school. A third has applied to go into a vacant storefront on Market, on that little stretch between Church and 14th, on the south side across from the Safeway parking lot. It would be called the Apothecary. It's looking as though they may succeed. At least they stand the best chance so far.

Parklets: These are the "green" seating areas that have popped up around the city replacing, in most cases, single parking spaces. Here are the costs and requirements:

- * Design, pay for and have built a platform and tables, chairs and planters and have the plan approved by a committee.

- * Pay a \$287 application fee - refundable if not successful

- * Pay \$1800 the first year

- * Pay \$245 in subsequent years.

Squat and Gobble on 16th and Market has applied. The positives are that there can be additional outdoor seating and green spaces, and a much livelier street scene. The negatives include the fact that for a relatively minimal cost, the cafe or restaurant can considerably increase their square footage, and in this case 2 parking spaces would be lost.

Flower Baskets on Castro: A private group of flower basket enthusiasts are trying to raise \$10,000 to install 11 of them on Castro between Market and 19th Street.

AND LAST, BUT NOT LEAST:

Corbett Heights Pocket Parks: As Spring approaches we would love to have some park cleanup days. Please let me know whether you'd enjoy helping out.

Thanks for your interest in the neighborhood!!

- Gary