

# FOGCUTTER

Greater West Portal Neighborhood Association Newsletter – Since 1974

## A Note from GWPNA's President

Dear Neighbors:

In past months, the *Greater West Portal Neighborhood Association (GWPNA)* has joined 15 other single-family neighborhood associations from over half the City to demand that the San Francisco Planning Department examine the significant and possibly negative environmental effects of major changes to housing policy currently before the Board of Supervisors. The proposed Housing Element portion of San Francisco's General Plan is a policy document that will drive development in the city for the next five to ten years. State law requires that all zoning and development must be consistent with the policies in the Housing Element. Thus, the Housing Element is not a superfluous exercise, but will have a major effect upon the character and livability of city, and our neighborhood, for years to come.

Specifically, the proposed Housing Element calls for the legalization of secondary (in-law) units, reduced or eliminated parking requirements for all new housing development, and the provision of high density housing, especially in and around transit lines and in our case *West Portal Avenue*. All these major policy changes were made without consultation of the neighborhoods or consideration of the potential and likely negative environmental effects. For example, under these new housing policies, developers can seek to change the two-story limit zoning of West Portal Avenue to permit high-rise, high density housing. On top of that, the new policies will permit the elimination of the current 1:1 (one parking space for each unit built) parking requirements to encourage even denser housing. No doubt most residents of such type of housing will have automobiles which will add to the congestion and traffic problems we are already experiencing and will also use our streets for parking, since none would be provided under the proposed plan.

Presently, the new Housing Element is now before the Board of Supervisors for adoption and our neighborhood coalition is preparing for a worst case scenario. In the event the housing policies are adopted, we will have very

little time to decide whether or not to pursue legal remedies through the court system. GWPNA has voted to join a lawsuit should that become necessary, and will contribute \$1,000 to the fund.

And now we are asking you to contribute as well. Your contribution of \$100 or more is a small price to pay to support the efforts of the neighborhoods to maintain the quality of life we now enjoy. Please make your donation by **September 1, 2004**. Complete the form enclosed in this newsletter and make your check payable to *Appeal Legal Fund, PHRS* (Pacific Heights Residents Association is acting as our depository) and send it to 2443 Fillmore Street, # 192, San Francisco, CA 94115. In the event a lawsuit is not brought, your donation will be returned.

For more information about the proposed housing policies, what neighborhoods are involved and the specifics of what the coalition of the neighborhoods is challenging, please go to [www.saveourneighborhoods.org](http://www.saveourneighborhoods.org).

I encourage you to get involved and stand up for our neighborhood in this most important matter. Please come to our September 7<sup>th</sup> meeting to get an update on this and other vital matters affecting your neighborhood

*Mary F. Burns*

Mary F. Burns, President



### GWPNA Meetings for Fall 2004

First TUESDAY each month\*\*

7:30 pm to 8:45 pm

Sept. 7 - Oct. 5 - Nov. 9 - Dec. 7

Meetings held at St. Brendan's Hall, 200 Ulloa

(\*\* except when it's a 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday!)



**GWPNA  
Steering Committee - June Meeting Minutes**

**Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 7:30 PM on Tuesday, June 8, 2004, by President Mary Burns.

The minutes from the May meeting were approved.

The following people were elected to the Steering Committee: Mary Burns, President; Bruce Engle, VP; Helen Johnson, VP; Chris Radich, Treasurer; Avrum Shepard, Secretary; Mary McDermott, Membership

**General Steering Committee Members:**

- Marilyn Amini     Emeric Kalman
- Joe Basuino     Ken Kruszka
- Sheila Bost     Carolyn Klemeyer
- Charles Browne     Marilou Lascari
- Tim Colen     Helen Naish
- Peggy daSilva     Doris Neumann
- Rae Doyle     Howard Strassner
- Don Enochson     Steve Suacci
- Eileen Fanelli     Bud Wilson

*Note: Fred Martin's name was inadvertently left off the list of Steering Committee nominees. The Steering Committee will formally "elect" Fred at its next meeting on September 7<sup>th</sup>.*

**President's Report**

Mary made a statement to the Planning Department protesting the fee increases for changes to Residential Guidelines. The Department proposed increasing the fees from \$3,500 to \$22,000.

**GUEST SPEAKERS**

**Keith Sanford, Captain Taraval Police Station.** There are Community Meetings at the Taraval Station the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of each month. Captain Sanford has been at Taraval Station for approximately 14 months. There are 13 patrol supervisors and 68 officers. The station has the largest area to cover of any City precinct. Captain Sanford is trying to get more staff and supervisors, as he feels they are somewhat understaffed. There has been a marked increase in gang activity in the area since the police crack down in BayView and Hunters Point. The police have distributed leaflets letting people know of increased burglaries along the border near Ingleside and Taraval Precincts. The police are beginning to enforce violators of the recent prohibition of panhandling on street medians.

**Peggy da Silva, Walk San Francisco**

Her organization advocates for walkers in San Francisco. They are pressing for a pedestrian master plan to be developed for the City. October 6<sup>th</sup> will be International Walk To School Day. Peggy stated that the police will set up plain clothes "stings" in the Sunset to watch for pedestrian right-of-way violations. Walk SF has been

asking the SFUSD to avoid out-of-neighborhood school assignments so that children can walk to school.

**John Farrell, SF Assessors Office**

John said that the Assessors Office has been doing neighborhood outreach recently to inform citizens of services his office performs for neighborhood residents. He encouraged people to visit their web site regularly. They are currently upgrading the web site to provide more facility to citizens. *Visit: www.sfgov.org/assessor*

**Fred Martin, member Mayor's Homeless Council**

Fred reported that the committee is in the process of preparing a report to the Mayor, to be delivered by June 30<sup>th</sup>. They are developing a ten-year plan to end chronic homelessness. Fred is the co-chair of the budget and finance committee. They are responsible to formulate cost proposals and find funding resources. There are about 15,000 homeless in the City; 3,000 of them are chronic and use 50% of the resources. Most chronic homeless are from San Francisco, as opposed to coming here from other places. A large percentage of the homeless are mentally ill and need medication therapy, although responsibility for handling the homeless rests with law enforcement. It is far more expensive to treat these people in jail than it would be in medical facilities.

**SPECIAL REPORTS**

**Howard Strassner:** Friends of the Urban Forest is providing trees to be planted in the neighborhood. Contact Howard if you want one.

**REPORTS OF COMMITTEES**

**Friends of West Portal Playground**

Mary said we hope to have GWPNA meetings in the community room at the West Portal Playground when the facility is completed.

**The Muni Tunnel Landscape Committee**

The Landscape Committee will address landscape esthetics around the Muni Tunnel Station entrance over the next two years, while it is being renovated. Muni will be upgrading the tracks in front of the tunnel entrance for about two months beginning in January, although the trains will continue to provide service during the week. Muni expects to close the tunnel and provide alternative bus services for only two weekends during that time while they upgrade the tracks for the K, L, and M lines. Further information about detours and disruption of street traffic on Ulloa and in the first block of West Portal will be available at GWPNA's September 7<sup>th</sup> meeting.

**Membership:** Marilou reported that 38 members paid their dues. There were 25 new members and 13 renewals.

*Submitted by Avrum Shepard*

*(Note: Minutes are edited to fit the space; for full report, visit www.gwpna.org)*





**HELP STOP NEW HIGH-DENSITY  
"HOUSING ELEMENT" PLAN**

**HELP INSIST ON AN ENVIRONMENTAL  
IMPACT REPORT**

In the past months, GWPNA has joined 15 single-family and other low-density neighborhood associations from over half the City to demand that the San Francisco Planning Department prepare an environmental impact report ("EIR") to examine the significant, adverse environmental effects of the newly proposed high-density housing policies currently before the Board of Supervisors. These policies are set forth in the proposed Housing Element, a portion of San Francisco's General Plan that will drive future development in the City. A Housing Element sets the City's supreme land use policy and becomes the blueprint for future growth.

The proposed 2004 Housing Element declares that the Planning Department will initiate rezoning and develop other proposals to implement its high-density policies. Its aim is to add at least 20,000 new residential units throughout the City. Thus, the Housing Element will have a major impact upon the character and livability of the City, and our neighborhood, for years to come. This Housing Element differs from long-standing land use policies by proposing, for the first time, to eliminate on-site parking spaces from newly constructed residential units and to strongly encourage developers to expand housing projects to maximum density.

The Housing Element also proposes zoning changes to neighborhood commercial areas and along "transit corridors" such as West Portal Avenue, Lakeshore Village, Ocean Avenue, Taraval Street and 19th Avenue. A citywide zoning ordinance has already been drafted which would increase height limits to 50 feet in neighborhood commercial districts and along "transit corridors" throughout the City and permit construction of high density housing over ground-level commercial uses in such areas without requiring off-street parking spaces for the new residential units. Within 1,250 feet on either side of these "transit corridors," the Housing Element encourages construction of new secondary (in-law)

units without parking and calls for legalization of existing illegal secondary units.

The Housing Element states that future proposed projects that are consistent with the General Plan can be exempt from environmental review, that is, no EIR would be prepared regardless of the size of the project.

The Housing Element is grounded on the unrealistic notion that people will give up their cars. It is more likely that most residents of such high-density housing will keep their automobiles, but will be forced to use our streets for parking, since none would be provided. Such policies will only exacerbate the parking and traffic congestion we are already experiencing.

**The Planning Department ignored State law and devised these major policy changes without consulting with the neighborhoods or considering the potential and likely negative environmental effects.**

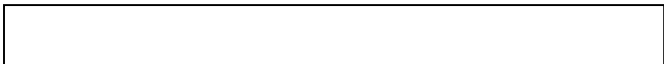
**WE NEED YOUR HELP AND  
FINANCIAL SUPPORT!**

The proposed new Housing Element is now before the Board of Supervisors. We expect them to adopt it by early September. Our neighborhood alliance is raising funds to commence a lawsuit to require an EIR before the City can finalize or implement these new housing policies. The alliance of neighborhoods has retained a noted environmental law specialist to prepare the record and represent us in our suit. The lawyer will handle the lawsuit for a flat fee, which we must raise quickly.

The following organizations appealed the decision of the Planning Department not to prepare an EIR for the proposed Housing Element, and are forming the plaintiffs' group for this lawsuit:

*Cow Hollow Association, Francisco Heights Civic Association, Golden Gate Valley Neighborhood Association, Greater West Portal Neighborhood Association, Inner Sunset Action Committee, Jordan Park Improvement Association, Lakeshore Acres Improvement Club, Laurel Heights Improvement*





Association, Marina-Cow Hollow Neighbors and Merchants, Miraloma Park Improvement Club, Pacific Heights Residents Association, Presidio Heights Association of Neighbors, Russian Hill Neighbors, Sunset Parkside Education & Action Committee, St. Francis Homes Association, Westwood Highlands Association.

EIRs were prepared for the 1983 and 1990 housing elements, which maintained existing density in our low-density neighborhoods, so our demand for an EIR now is certainly meritorious. In fact, we have a very strong case, and the likelihood of success, while not assured, is good. An EIR would give us a chance to reshape the plan, since EIRs must consider alternatives and measures to mitigate adverse effects.

Our lawsuit must be filed within 30 days of the Board of Supervisors' approval of the Housing Element. This is likely to occur sometime in the next few weeks. GWPNA's Steering Committee has voted to become a plaintiff in the lawsuit, and will be contributing \$1,000 toward this effort. Obviously, we think it is very important to support the cause financially and **urge you to contribute now**. We ask for your major contribution now to help maintain neighborhood quality of life.

**Please make your donation by September 1, 2004** (although checks will be accepted after that date). In the event a lawsuit is not brought, your donation will be returned.

We *urgently* need your support and contributions for this effort!

Visit the Save Our Neighborhoods web site to see the SF Planning Department 2003 transit corridors map and more detailed information about the issues at: [www.saveourneighborhoods.org](http://www.saveourneighborhoods.org).

Get involved and inform your neighbors. Please complete the form below and return it with your tax-deductible check payable to Appeal Legal Fund, PHRA, 2443 Fillmore Street #192 SF, CA 94115. (Pacific Heights Residents Association is acting as depository.) Thank you for your support!

**Please use this form to send in your check today!**

**Please Print**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Fax \_\_\_\_\_

Neighborhood Organization (if applicable)  
\_\_\_\_\_

Amount \_\_\_\_\_

**Make checks payable to:  
Legal Appeal Fund, PHRA**

**Mail to: 2443 Fillmore Street #192  
San Francisco CA 94115**





### *What's New on the Avenue*

As of this writing, many changes are occurring on our Avenue...

**Sabella's** Italian restaurant, in the first block, has closed – a great loss to our culinary scene! We'll miss them.

Also closing down is **Play it Again Sports** – their building has been purchased by **Barbegelata Real Estate**, who will be moving into the large space in the months to come. No word on anyone set to take over the real estate office's space further down the Avenue.

A small change in **Dake's Interiors and Lite House** – they're cutting their space in half and planning to lease out the other half – at least they'll still be there with their interesting mix of antiques, jewelry and lighting fixtures.

There are more changes coming – as always – but the charm of West Portal Avenue's small shops, restaurants and services will continue to entice neighbors and San Francisco residents to our avenue.

### Come Visit Your Open Space Parks!

**Edgehill Mt.** is an urban jewel hidden in our midst. Over the past eight years, the "Friends of Edgehill Mt." have transformed this tiny park from an ivy- and blackberry-overrun tangle back to a delightful setting of plant communities, winding paths and long views. Join us the second Saturday of every month from 1-3 pm as we work with knowledgeable Rec and Park staff on habitat restoration work, trail maintenance and plant identification exercises. Meet in the park, accessible either from Ulloa or Edgehill Way. Contact Stan Kaufman (sekfmn@pacbell.net) or Randy Zebell (Randy.Zebell@sfgov.org) for more information.



**Mt. Davidson** is the crown of the City not merely because it's the highest point but also because it contains an amazing array of geological features, plant communities and unsurpassed views. Come join the "Friends of Mt Davidson" and learn about San Francisco's natural history as we work with knowledgeable staff from the Rec and Park Department each month on the "first Saturday" 9am to 12noon. Meet at the bus turnaround at the intersection of Myra, Dalewood and Sherwood on the south side of the hill. Contact Stan Kaufman (sekfmn@pacbell.net) or Tom Annese (Tom.Annese@sfgov.org) for more information.

**FRIENDS OF West Portal  
Playground  
GARAGE SALE  
ONE DAY ONLY!**

**SATURDAY, AUGUST 28**

at 2639 block 14<sup>th</sup> Ave. at Wawona.  
Stock up on treasures!

Time to clean cupboards, closets, and garages and get rid of usable items that you no longer want. **We are getting ready for the Grand Opening of the redesigned and improved Clubhouse in December of 2004.**

If you have items to donate you may drop them at Helen Johnson's house (2639 14<sup>th</sup>) or Mary Mc Dermott's (265 Kensington Way). Mary will also pick up items if you cannot drop them at either address (phone 753-8373 or e-mail [mcdsf@comcast.net](mailto:mcdsf@comcast.net)). Please phone ahead to make sure we are home and expecting you!

Greater West Portal Neighborhood Association  
 P.O. Box 27116, San Francisco CA 94127  
 IRS ID: 501(C)(3) EIN #51-0169982  
 www.gwpna.org  
*Families working to improve their neighborhood*

**Non-Profit Organization**  
**U.S. POSTAGE**  
**PAID**  
**San Francisco, California**  
**Permit No. 11688**

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**Join GWPNA! Come to a Meeting!**  
**Get Involved for the Good of your**  
**Neighborhood!**

*The Fogcutter* is the newsletter of the Greater West Portal Neighborhood Association, published bi-monthly and distributed to GWPNA members. Please contact any officer, or the newsletter editor, with your ideas, issues and questions. **DAYTIME calls only please!**

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