



Reminder: Monday, September 12 CHN Annual Meeting & Program

Greetings, and Happy Labor Day Week!

A reminder that our Annual Meeting with prominent speakers will be held at 7:15 pm. Monday September 12, to be enjoyed in the comfort of your home:

- **Supervisor Rafael Mandelman**, District 8. <https://sfbos.org/supervisor-mandelman-district-8>
- **District Attorney Brooke Jenkins**, www.sfdistrictattorney.org/about-us/
- **Mike Ege**, senior political reporter for the *San Francisco Standard* sfstandard.com/author/mike-ege/

Before then, we remind CHN members paid-up as of June 14 to return their electronic ballot as soon as possible.

By clicking below, you will be re-directed to the CHN Home Page where you will see the Zoom link as well as information for telephonic access.

[CHN Home Page](#)

Or you can click on the button directly below, which will take you to the Zoom meeting beginning at 7:15 p.m. on Monday September 12.

[Zoom Link for Annual Meeting](#)

Neighborhood News

Castro Merchants' Demands

As perhaps you know, on August 8 the Castro Merchants Association emailed numerous city officials including the Mayor, the SFPD Police Chief, the Health Department, the City Attorney, and Supervisor Mandelman decrying the "the rising problem of people with behavioral health/substance abuse use disorders taking up residence on our sidewalks, dramatically impacting the quality of life in our neighborhood and the ability to run a successful business." They noted, as well, that "...even after constant requests to City agencies, including criminal charges and restraining order requests, they remain on our streets week after week harassing residents, tourists, and business owner/employees." Rather than merely pleading for help, the Association had three demands, i.e the development of a comprehensive city plan to deal with the issue, monthly metrics, and the designation of 35 beds for those in the Castro with mental health or substance abuse disorders. Hearing of the Merchants' plea, CHN contacted the Merchants group for a copy of the letter that was then provided to CHN by Merchants vice president Dave Karraker, a

neighborhood resident and the owner of *mx3fitness* on Market Street. As a consequence, the Merchants group is now seeking to form a broader coalition, including adjoining neighborhood associations such as CHN, to support its cause. The CHN Board will take up the matter at its next Board meeting on September 14. In the meantime, in electronic ballots that were emailed September 2 to CHN members paid-up as of June 14, CHN is asking its members to weigh-in with a "yes" or "no" vote on the Merchants' request. This is not the first time CHN has addressed this issue: with prior membership endorsement, it passed a resolution in August 2020 imploring city officials to act with more urgency on matters of homelessness and aberrant street behavior. (See that resolution under "Governance/General" on the CHN website.) Since then, we suspect most of us think the situation, at least in our neighborhood, has worsened.

Dangerous 17th/Ord Intersection

Even before a pedestrian was struck at this intersection Saturday night, August 20, a CHN Board member (thank you Casey) had been persistently raising this issue and communicating with city officials about it, including Supervisor Mandelman's office. As neighbors know, this intersection is perilous -- no stop sign on 17th, cars speeding down that hill, and frequent pedestrian crossings to Ord park. We are informed that the Supervisor's office has a monthly meeting with the MTA street safety team in mid September and that several options will be discussed at that time. We will keep you posted.

Coyote Sightings

We hear from neighbors of an increasing number of coyote sightings, most recently at the Ord Triangle Park, Corbett St, 17th, the Saturn Stairs, and of course at Corona Heights Park (the latter, once a quarry and brick factory with a murderous history, but that's another story). As to the Park, urban hikers will know that its summit was closed this Spring because a den with pups was found there. It might still be; we haven't looked. Now, none of us on the CHN Newsletter team is a wildlife biologist but we suspect these sightings have something to do with a population increase, scarce food, and habituation to humans. Sightings are most frequent from dusk to dawn, although they sometimes occur during the day as well. The reaction of one of our friends who turned and sprinted away upon spotting a coyote in the gloam near Douglas Street was ill-advised. Instead, "yelling, clapping, or waving your arms" is the recommended response. <https://www.sfromp.org/coyotes-in-san-francisco/> And, from this website we also learned that under California law coyotes cannot be relocated. With that, we do not intend to get any closer to the slipper slope of the pros and cons of coyotes in Corona Heights.

Castro Theatre Plans

There has been a lot of interest in the planned renovation and repurposing of the Castro Theatre, so we wanted to bring you up to date.

As you may know, several months ago the Nasser family, the owners of the 100+ year old, iconic, Timothy Pflueger-designed Castro Theatre (<https://www.castrotheatre.com>), contracted with Another Planet Entertainment (<https://apeconcerts.com>) to renovate the theatre and to substantially modify its traditional movie-centric suite of offerings. As neighbors and visitors to the theatre, we know that the theatre has particularly struggled during the pandemic, with collateral damage to the Castro. And, this on the heels of the challenges of theaters generally in the age of streaming services. But APE's announced plans have been controversial for two inter-related reasons: first, their intent to move away from movies, although screening some, to concerts and other forms of entertainment; and, second, removal of the orchestral seating to be replaced by 3 levels of platforms that would accommodate standing-only patrons, tables, or — for movies — the use of stackable chairs. According to one of the attending APE execs, their target market is 20-35 year concert-goers who prefer to stand.

On Thursday August 11 from 6-9:45 the theatre and APE held a community meeting at the Castro to present their plans and to take community feedback. CHN attended. The meeting began with APE's

short presentation of its plans; their reasons for replacing the orchestra seating with platforms and stackable chairs (for concerts and banquets); pre-arranged statements of opposition from a select number of organized opponents, such as the LGBTQ Cultural District and the Castro Theater Conservancy; and then 2 minute statements by the public. We estimate there were perhaps 50 speakers, most opposed to the plans. CHN has not taken a position on the matter; the Board has not addressed it. Opponents requested additional meetings and outreach but neither were announced.

In May, Supervisor Mandelman initiated an expansion of the building's landmark status in a resolution that called upon the Historic Preservation Commission to update the landmarking to include "the full historical, architectural, aesthetic and cultural interest and value of the Castro Theatre," including the theater's interior which is not part of the current landmarking. The Planning Commission has assigned an expert to draft a report detailing the features of the Theatre that are essential to those many enumerated interests. That report will go to the Historic Preservation Commission. The Supervisor's office advises us that he has repeatedly advised APE that they need to reach some sort of compromise with community leaders who are presently opposed to the plans.

As of the date of this newsletter, October 5 is the tentative day of the Historic Preservation Commission hearing on the Landmark Designation update and Certificate of Appropriateness for the proposed APE alterations; and October 6 is the tentative date for the Planning Commission hearing on the proposed nighttime entertainment use and permissions for the proposed alterations.

Because the Castro Theatre is perhaps THE physical, historical, and cultural pillar of our neighborhood (we suppose some readers might nominate Cliff's) we encourage you to learn more and to voice your opinion should you have a mind to do so. The proponents' websites, above, provide some information. For a contrary view, go to the website of the Castro Theater Conservancy (<https://www.savethecastrotheatre.org>) where you can learn more and sign up for their newsletter at the "Take Action" tab.



Castro Theatre Grand Opening, June 1922.

Credit: OpenSFHistory/wnp27.4923



Original Castro Theatre, July 12, 1915

Credit: OpenSFHistory/wnp67.0034

This view is from the southwest corner of 18th and Castro looking NE at the old Castro Theatre in the center, which opened in 1910. The gracious building itself was converted to retail in 1923 after the new and current theatre opened, just up the block. Cliff's Variety, which has been at 4 different locations in the Castro, moved to this particular spot from 515 Castro in 1960. We don't know when the pictured building was demolished.

Thank you for your support and interest in enhancing the character of our neighborhood.

In the meantime, you can contact us at:
info@corbettneighbors.com

Paul Allen, Secretary
September 7, 2022

This email was sent to {{ contact.EMAIL }}
You received this email because you are registered with Corbett Heights Neighbors (CHN)

[Unsubscribe here](#)



© 2022 Corbett Heights Neighbors (CHN)