



June 2023 Neighborhood News

June 12 Member Meeting Report

Thank you to the many CHN members, and others on our newsletter distribution list, who joined us on June 12 at 7:00 pm for a terrific session with D8 Supervisor Rafael Mandelman and Capt. Jack Hart, Commanding Officer of our neighborhood Park Station. As you might know, both men are engaging, articulate, and well informed speakers. It was civics at its best! If you did not attend, this is some of what you missed:

SFPD and Public Safety. Capt. Hart noted that as recently as a few years ago Park Station had twice the number of officers assigned to it — our neighborhood — as it does today. (Now, fewer than 50.) Necessarily, this increases response times, particularly for lower priority calls. Still, as the crime data reveals, our neighborhood is relatively “safe” compared to other areas. Graduation numbers from the Police Academy — the last class had 9 when we need about 50 per class — are far below what is needed to maintain current force levels, to say nothing of returning the City to adequate staffing. The Supervisor noted that we are on track to lose, net, another 120 officers. Still, neighbors are encouraged to call 911 for emergency matters; as the Capt. said, “don’t be shy.” Both speakers agreed that although an increased public safety response is necessary to eliminate the open air drug markets downtown, a better public health response is just as essential; all agree that we can’t “arrest our way out of this.” It was also noted that the responsibility for public safety is diffused in the City, as the appointed Police Commission plays a prominent role by setting the “rules and regulations” for SFPD.

Homelessness and Street Behavior. Both speakers noted the severe constraints imposed on the City by the injunction entered in December, now on appeal, that prevents the City from enforcing its “sit or lie” law, removing tents except in defined circumstances such as blocking a sidewalk, and enforcing some other codes. (See our March newsletter here for a full discussion of that: <https://www.corbettneighbors.com/uploads/1/2/7/5/127586326/march2023news.pdf>). Still, both men urged that reports be made to SFPD or to Supervisor Mandelman’s assistant for public safety, Dave Burke (dave.burke@sfgov.org) for tents that block sidewalks or other questionable homelessness related situations. Incidentally, it appears that the camper currently ensconced in front of the old Pottery Barn building at the corner of Market and Castro is one of the named plaintiffs in the Coalition of Homelessness’ case that brought about the current injunction; he probably knows his rights. Nonetheless, Supervisor Mandelman noted that progress has been made in the Castro, pointing for example to the improved situation at the corner of Market and 16th. And, returning full circle, the nexus between homelessness and the easy access to drugs was also noted.

Downtown, People, and Money. There was a discussion of the well publicized closing of a score of retailers, the most recent Westfield Mall news (the owner will turn over the keys to the lenders), and the languid return of workers to office towers. Agreement was universal that this is (a) significant and serious, and (b) not amenable to obvious or imminent resolution. More ominously, Supervisor Mandelman noted that the City is “uniquely vulnerable” because our commercial gross receipts tax is a significant source of revenue.

Housing. There was some discussion of the “Housing Element,” which is a state-prescribed requirement that San Francisco add 82,000 housing units within eight years. Although the City’s general plan for that has been approved by the State, the details of precisely how that will be done -- what sort of zoning changes made, density requirements, height and set back requirements, etc. -- is unknown and, as the Supervisor reminded us, now the subject of on-going community outreach

forums held by the Planning Department. If you have an opinion to voice, do it now; don't wait for Planning to send its recommendations to the Board of Supervisors. The next community event is in a few days, this Thursday, June 22 at the LGBT Center at 1800 Market Street between 5:30-7:30 pm. Another is in July. Check Planning's website here for a list: "Expanding Housing Choice: Zoning Program." <https://sfplanning.org/hearings-events>

SF Politics 101

Some of you know that for a couple of years or more, Supervisor Engardio has offered a 40 minute course (and 20 minutes for Q&A) entitled SF Politics 101. One of your correspondents recently saw it (again) and can highly recommend it. There is some fascinating history of "how we got here," which one supposes is another way of saying why change is incremental. While a material omission is the power of the 100+ City commissions, this is still as worthwhile a lecture and Q&A as you might have had in college. They are held Thursdays at 5:30 at TogetherSF's meeting room, 2505 Mariposa Street. You can read more and signup here: https://www.mobilize.us/togethersf/event/545045/?utm_source=website&utm_medium=home-page&utm_campaign=gallery

Sundown Cinema - SF Parks Alliance

Our partner, The San Francisco Parks Alliance, announced its schedule of 7 free outdoor films at City Parks. The next one is June 30 at the Presidio for Top Gun-Maverick. Go here to see the schedule and details: <https://sanfranciscoparksalliance.org/projects/sundown-cinema/>

CHN

Finally, please don't forget that CHN would welcome more participation from our members. Let us know if you are interested in running for a board of directors slot — you have until August 14 to let us know! Also, we have teams, sometimes a team of one — who look after all of our neighborhood parks; we'd be thrilled to have you help us with that, too!

As always, thank you for your support!

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

Paul Allen, Secretary
June 18, 2023

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