



San Francisco Tomorrow

Working to Protect the Urban Environment

*Issue 365
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Will you want to live in San Francisco – Tomorrow?

Everybody had a good time

San Francisco Tomorrow's Annual Awards Dinner was a lot of fun, good food, fine people and a beautiful new venue. The dinner was held in a room with a view at Delancey Street restaurant, a view of our splendid Waterfront bordered by palm trees. Aren't you glad you came? We toasted the victory-to-be on June 3 when the voters of the city would acclaim the YES on B which mandates a popular vote before height limits can be changed on the waterfront.

Former Mayor Art Agnos gave a speech that touched on all the reasons we are determined to keep our waterfront from money-laced decision-making at City Hall. Tommi Avicolti-Mecca and Sara Shortt, this year's Unsung Heroes, talked about their efforts to create and conserve affordable housing. Becky Evans, Longtime Sierra Club activist was awarded SFT's Jack Morrison Lifetime Achievement Award, based on her achievements to save the bay and the waterfront, re-imagine the Presidio and protect the urban environment, and she left us with three maxims: never give up, keep your friends informed and follow your deepest interests.

Protect Golden Gate Park Ballot Initiative Makes its way toward the November Ballot

The Protect Golden Gate Park Ballot Initiative is well underway gathering signatures on petitions and receiving funds to supplement volunteer petition gathering with paid signature gatherers. We thank those of you who have stood for years against the construction of artificial turf fields with stadium lighting all year long at the Beach Chalet in the far western end of Golden Gate Park. We must turn in signatures on petitions in the number that will qualify the measure for the November ballot. Then Department of Elections checks a sample of the signatures to see that they are valid; proponents may have to wait several weeks to learn if their efforts have been successful because there are five number of ballot measures seeking to be validated for the ballot this fall.

Rec and Park is holding fast to its original proposal to dig up the grass playing fields currently in use for soccer and other sports at the Beach Chalet. The site is across the Great Highway from Ocean Beach, next to historic Murphy Windmill and near Queen Wilhelmina Windmill and garden. Proponents have put forward a ballot measure which would require renovation of the fields to be carried out with natural grass only and would prohibit artificial stadium-height lighting. The proponents are the Coalition to Protect Golden Gate Park and their intention is to make a last stand on this ill-conceived project. They see this project as the worst example of another of Rec and Park's plan for converting our parks into money-making enterprises that draw big

crowds to our tranquil open spaces. They've tried the official Commissions, the Board of Supervisors, the Mayor and Phil Ginsburg and now the matter will be decided by the voters.

SFT is backing these citizen efforts to get the Beach Chalet fields renovated with natural grass just like the Polo Fields renovation several years ago, without stadium lighting. In their determination to create a tournament-level soccer stadium, Rec and Park are proposing lights that would be turned on 365 days a year until 10 p.m., whether or not a game is being played!

Rec and Park have already converted other grass fields in the City to artificial turf and are determined to do the same in Golden Gate Park. But the fields that have been converted *are now wearing out* and it will cost millions to *(continued on page two)*

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replace and cart the materials away to a toxic dump. Even worse, the plastic grass

Here's an UPDATE on the Parkmerced case now at the COURT OF APPEALS

Late this spring, the Court of Appeals heard oral arguments regarding the case of Parkmerced vs. the City and County of San Francisco. Attorney Stuart Flashman represented San Francisco Tomorrow and Parkmerced Action Coalition, basing his argument on the first article of the Planning Code, known as Prop M because of its passage by the voters in their efforts to curb development that does not serve and conserve the qualities of a neighborhood. Flashman argued that the will of voters trumps the authority of the Board of Supervisors (BOS) and the Planning Commission, regarding development policy. Flashman stated that Proposition M building restriction would apply to new construction and demolition of low-rise affordable housing at Parkmerced.

Deputy City Attorney Brian Crossman represented the City and County of San Francisco as well as the project's sponsor, Parkmerced Investment Partners. The judges were Justice J. Anthony Kilne, Associate Justice James Richman and by special

and rubber tire crumb are **toxic to players** breathing in chemical dust containing carcinogens, neurotoxins, endocrine disrupters and lung irritants. Not only is this material toxic and harmful to kids and adult players but it spreads into the real dirt and grass and plants and wildlife surrounding the fields and is tracked into people's homes. On a hot day, the artificial surface magnifies the heat and it smells like a rubber tire factory, not a sports field.

If you'd like to see Golden Gate Park remain the naturalistic wonder that it is now, you will want to vote yes on the measure put forward by Coalition to Protect Golden Gate Park. It's not November yet, but you may be ready to volunteer for the campaign or donate some money for the cause. Please contact: Coalition to Protect Golden Gate Park at www.protectggp.wordpress.com

assignment, Alameda County Superior Court Judge Steven Brick.

The most convincing argument made by Stuart Flashman referenced Proposition M, passed by the voters in 1986, effectively limiting the amount of development in San Francisco. Flashman argued that ParkMerced should be recognized as an historic resource which should receive protection under the historic preservation ordinance of the San Francisco Planning Code. Stuart Flashman called Parkmerced the largest affordable housing development in San Francisco and that both neighborhood character and housing affordability are protected by proposition M. Just as Telegraph Hill, North Beach, Coit Tower, Chinatown and San Francisco's Victorian housing near Alamo Square need protection, so, too, is Parkmerced a unique place that needs protection. Parkmerced is considered a shining example of the modern design movement. Designed by Thomas Church, the "father" of landscape architecture in the Bay Area, Parkmerced is one of

Church's largest projects and easily accessible to the public. A number of organizations involved with the preservation of historic places have endorsed the protection of Parkmerced.

The City Attorney disagreed, stating that while Prop M represents the will of the people it has no greater standing than laws originating with the BOS. This view was challenged by Justice Cline, and yet he conceded that perhaps Proposition M might not be able to meet *all* of its objectives because several priorities could be in conflict with each other. He asked attorney Flashman to comment and Flashman responded that the voters intended that if a project couldn't meet all the policies, it should be turned down, even if the project was essential to meet one of the policies. He said the voters intended maximum possible compliance, not merely that the project "generally comply," as the City argued.

City Attorney Brian Crossman stated that housing development in the city would be seriously hampered if San Francisco accepted the position set forth by Stuart Flashman. In agreement with The City Attorney, Judge Kline volunteered the belief that "chaos" would occur if Proposition M was strictly adhered to. Judge Brick volunteered his fear that the City would be frozen in amber with the strict interpretation of Prop M. Flashman countered that a strict interpretation of Prop M would not stop other development, if the public was in agreement with that project. *(continued on page three)*

TURN OFF YOUR ENGINE

We are all concerned about global warming partly caused by our automobile use. However, it is not easy to stop driving when our infrastructure does not allow us to get around without a car. There is one thing we do have control over. It is idling. Most drivers unconsciously idle their cars when picking someone up or waiting on a jammed road or freeway. New York City offers an example and a solution to this problem.

New York now has an anti-idling law. The law has fines ranging from \$100 to \$2000. These fines take effect for people who idle their vehicles for more than 1 minute adjacent to schools and 3 minutes for the rest of NYC. Not only is fuel being wasted (calculated to be \$28 million per year) but also children's health is especially compromised including those of fetuses. The health outcomes range from asthma and other lung problems as well developmental delays for exposed children.

(continued from page two) Flashman also noted that the FAR (floor to area ratio) and the I-27 and I-2 tables of the Housing element provide little guidance from the Planning Department regarding development guidelines. Suggestions for reasonable or recommended density levels, population density, building intensity, transportation effectiveness and other requirements for successful development are not included or inadequately treated in the Housing Element. The chief judge, Tony Kline, noted that the case was complex. At the close of argument, the court

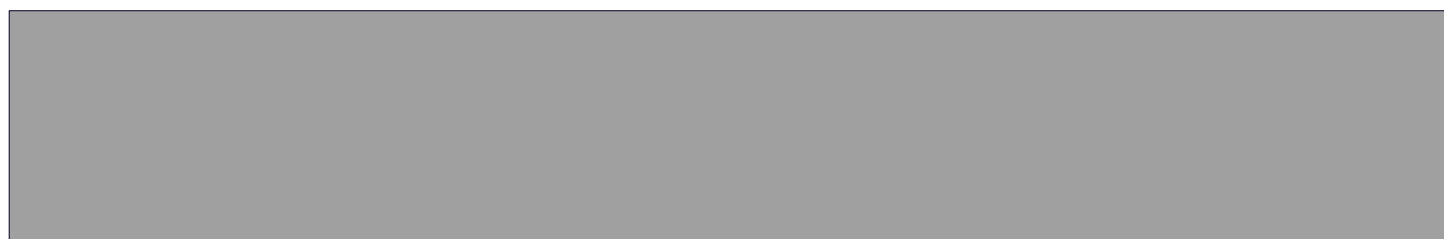
took the case under submission or consideration. A written decision will be issued this summer.

It is notable that a court case that will dramatically affect the lives of all San Franciscans was not covered by the corporate media: 19th Avenue, would become a construction zone for years into the future, while a troubled MUNI attempts to transport an additional 17,000 riders daily and that's not news? This case comes at a critical time for San Francisco, when pressure for development is at its greatest and working class families can't afford to live here anymore.

San Francisco has no laws



associated with idling and it should. One SFT Board member has come up with a temporary solution. She developed a card that encourages drivers to turn off their engines. She is passing out this card to van drivers, especially those of health services (!), because they spend considerable minutes idling their vans waiting for passengers to board and exit their vehicles. Air conditioning is another polluting and fuel consumption problem that is not needed in cool San Francisco.(It could be all about keeping the air conditioning on; but it's a rare day in San Francisco that passengers need air conditioning.)



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HELL BENT TO KILL a 239-year old INSTITUTION: THE POST OFFICE

On July 26, 1775 Congress established the U.S. Post office. Benjamin Franklin was the first United States postmaster general. One mission of the new post office was to promote an informed citizenry. To that end Congress allowed newspaper printers to send each other newspapers for free, facilitating the flow of information from national and international sources to rural villages.

Today the Postal Service is well on its way to privatize itself. In our city and at many of their franchise locations, Staples office supply stores have a new service; the U.S. Postal Service has set up satellite counters and mail is collected right there. Outsourcing mail to Staples Corporation an office supply store? That's right. The U.S. government is claiming that the Post Office is not viable because of its considerable debt. This is a debt manufactured by Congress by requiring the Post Office to pre-pay by 75 years its pension obligations to postal workers. From the beginning the Post Office was not meant to provide a profit. No more than we expect the military, the Coast Guard, the Fire Department and other vital government services both national and local.

The drive to privatize the postal service has many negative consequences. There will be no FBI background checks for employees handling the mail. No training. No oversight and no familiar postal delivery employees. Will the mail carriers be next? That would be really inconvenient for a vast number of people to access their mail. We need to keep their eyes in our neighborhood looking out for unusual, maybe criminal activity. Please call and email your member of Congress to stop closing post offices. Many post office buildings are national treasures in architecture and artworks dating back to the 1930's.