



TELEGRAPH HILL SEMAPHORE

Publication of the Telegraph Hill Dwellers

NUMBER THIRTY FOUR

JANUARY 1969

START THE NEW YEAR RIGHT

SAVE THE DATE

JANUARY 29th 1969



DINNER MEETING
MONTCLAIR RESTAURANT
550 GREEN STREET

Cocktails 6:30

DINNER 7:30

HEAR OUR PLANS FOR THE NEW YEAR

\$4.00

(price includes tax and tip)

For tickets call Anne Fibush 771-4816 or Mary Cara 392-9167 home
781-0383 office

THE EARLY DAYS OF THE TELEGRAPH HILL DWELLERS * *WHAT WERE THEY LIKE ?

To those of you who have recently joined the Telegraph Hill Dwellers, our Historian Bernie Bour, has compiled a history of our activities. In this bulletin, you will find a history of the first few years. In future bulletins we will publish our further activities.

"We're not Blighted - we're just Picturesque." That was the slogan of the hardy band of Dwellers who founded this organization in the spring of 1954 and elected Fred Meyer (ably assisted by Clarice Meyer) President, Campaigns against trash, garbage and litter on the streets, and the conspicuous lack of paint on some dwellings concerned the Dwellers from the start. So did the move to curtail bus service to the Hill, problems of traffic, parking and unsightly poles and wires. Positive campaigns called for beautifying Washington Square, placing Christmas Lights atop Coit Tower each December, and greatly increasing the planting of trees.

Things were not all grim, however. There were lots of parties, Beachcombers Ball, and the yearly Telegraph Hill-arities in the patio of what was then the Rudolph Schaefer School of Design at 350 Union Street. There was even a move to produce a Telegraph Hill Dwellers Cookbook - - the early Telegraph Hill Bulletins, that began in May 1956, carried what must clearly have been delicious recipes for Sweet and Sour Cabbage, Beef Teriyaki, Roast Loin of Pork, etc.



OPEN HOUSE

MOONEYS IRISH PUB AND RESTAURANT

1525 GRANT AVENUE

FOR THE TELEGRAPH HILL DWELLERS

COME AND BRING A PROSPECTIVE MEMBER

REFRESHMENTS

SUNDAY February 9th.

3 to 6 P. M.

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THE NORTHERN WATER FRONT*****IS THE BOLLES REPORT TO BE SCUTTLED ?

Not one of us can afford to ignore the current goings-on in the Northern Waterfront of San Francisco. Bob Katz's letter excerpted here and printed in The Chronicle on December 31, puts it eloquently:

"When he ran for Mayor, Mr. Alioto issued a fine position paper, from which I quote:

"I will use every program at our command to insure (that) community structures reflect a beauty of living that will endure....I want to make this city a joy for generations to come. This means not only building with imagination, but preserving with discretion. The architectural integrity and distinctions of our neighborhoods must be sustained."

In a letter to the Telegraph Hill Dwellers of November 2, 1967, Mr. Alioto enthused:

"The 40-foot height limitation--which, by the way, Harold Dobbs opposed when he was on the Board of Supervisors--is an essential guardian of the majestic views of Telegraph Hill."

Once elected, Mayor Alioto changed his tune.

At a private meeting with officers of the city's largest corporations, he advised would-be developers not to consider themselves restricted by the Bolles Plan on the Northern Waterfront:

"I don't want the city to be frozen by the 40-foot height limit along the waterfront," he declared, as reported in The Chronicle December 2, 1968.

Simultaneously, the Mayor is promoting a disastrous plan to cover the bulk of Fort Mason with unneeded luxury housing.

As a special Christmas gift to San Francisco, he has sanctioned the destruction of the Seawall Warehouse, our most historic and irreplaceable building on the waterfront."

As indicated in Katz's letter, the proper development of the waterfront is threatened by a new danger, illustrated by a revealing quote from SAN FRANCISCO BUSINESS, the organ of the S.F. Chamber of Commerce. We quote from a May, 1968 article about the International Market Center:

"After a series of behind-the-scenes briefings to key city officials and members of the business community, the....(Market Center) proposal was made public."

Such behind-the-scenes tactics signify a marked tendency on the part of this City Administration and the Port Authority to discard vital planning controls in a fervent attempt to encourage private promoters. If not checked, such policies will spell disaster for sensitive areas like Fort Mason and the Northern Waterfront.

Another, more rational development approach, begins with the Bolles Report, a \$112,000 city financed (and just published) study of the entire waterfront. This report, which was more than two years in coming, contains many desirable features, as well as a number which should be changed. It deserves full scrutiny before the Planning Commission, the Board of Supervisors and the public. The Mayor's apparent attempt to scuttle it almost before the ink was dry, must not be allowed to succeed.

Here is what State Assemblyman John Burton, who started the whole thing by authorizing Propositions B and C, said in December about the current situation: "The voters of San Francisco in approving Propositions B and C restored San Francisco's Port to the City: I have been rather distressed by certain public statements concerning the development of the northern part of our waterfront. It was not my intention, when passing the "Burton Act", that the City would then proceed to turn the northern waterfront over to large, commercial enterprises not related to shipping and maritime activity. I plan to look into this matter in great depth in the coming months."

It is the policy of the Telegraph Hill Dwellers that any non-maritime development of the waterfront be in general consort with an acceptable master plan and, even more importantly, that it be done in a way that it will utilize fully the unique resources of this magnificent urban Bay frontage for the benefit of all San Franciscans.

We urge each member to write Mayor Alioto immediately on this vital matter. The future physical form of the northern waterfront, and of San Francisco itself, could well depend upon the intensity and direction of public response in the next few weeks.

ANTI - LITTER - CAMPAIGN

Litter of all kinds and descriptions is an ever increasing problem. The Telegraph Hill Dwellers have decided to do something about it. Under the chairmanship of Allen Lathrop, our Anti-Litter Committee has accomplished much.

The Telegraph Hill Dwellers have donated to the City a dozen specially designed litter cans which have been placed at various intersections in the neighborhood. If each of us would be a committee of one to inform neighbors that we would like to see our neighborhood kept free of litter, and to refrain, ourself, from throwing papers about the streets, things will improve.

The Telegraph Hill Dwellers are taking additional steps to keep our neighborhood clean.

1. We are sponsoring a poster contest at the Garfield School.
2. We are asking newspaper circulation managers and other distributors of advertising matter to request their carriers not to litter the streets.
3. We are enlisting the cooperation of local businesses.
4. We are planning a festive Sunday afternoon cleanup--soon to be announced.

KEY HIGHWAY PROCEDURES

At last the long suffering public may have an opportunity to participate in discussions of highway routes.

The U.S. Department of Transportation has proposed some tough new procedures to guarantee effective public participation in key highway decisions. Included will be public hearings to discuss the really basic question of whether or not a particular freeway or roadway should be built at all.

The Department is soliciting public response to its proposal. Letters should be addressed to:

U.S. Department of Transportation
Washington, D. C.
Attention Mr. Lowell T. Bridwell
Federal Highway Administrator

The Telegraph Hill Dwellers have already sent a letter to Mr. Bridwell, strongly supporting the idea. However, letters from individuals are extremely effective.

YOU ARE URGED TO WRITE TO MR. BRIDWELL ENDORSING THE IDEA.

Due to the resignations of Morton Rader, because of business pressures, and Dolores Waaland, who has moved to Santa Rosa, President Gerald Cauthen has appointed John Harman and Toby Bloxum to fill their unexpired terms as Directors.

Our thanks to Morton Rader and Dolores Waaland for a job well done.

To John Harman and Toby Bloxum, we say that President Cauthen could not have made a wiser choice, and we look forward to meeting with you during the New Year.

Thomas Cara, Ltd.

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CHARLES E. WARD
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WOMEN MAKE VALIANT EFFORT TO SAVE THE SEA WALL WAREHOUSE!!!

On Friday, the 27th day of December, 1968, wreckers moved in to tear down the historic, 115 year old, Sea Wall Warehouse. Over the weekend, a group of determined women hastily organized a campaign to save the historic old structure.

When the bulldozers arrived on Monday morning, they found that a vanguard of protestants were occupying the building. Work came to a halt. Representatives of the North Waterfront Associates called the action "trespassing."

The developers, the North Waterfront Associates, held a hurried meeting with the Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board, and the developers agreed to salvage and store bricks, shutters and other materials from the Sea Wall Sansome Street facade. The Landmarks Preservation Board will consider what steps to take to re-use the facade material now being salvaged.

The following ladies defended "Fort Sea Wall": Mrs. Michael Patterson, Mrs. Valetta Heslett, Mrs. Toby Bloxum, Mrs. Nancy Katz, Mrs. Trudy Washburn, Jo Ann Washburn, Mrs. Cora Meek, Mrs. Tova Wiley, Mrs. Marian Hinman and Mrs. Jean Kortum.

Several of the defenders of "Fort Sea Wall" were Telegraph Hill Dwellers. However, some of the defenders do not live on the "Hill", but are interested in preserving our old landmarks, which are rapidly disappearing under the blows of the wreckers' steel ball.

BOARD OF PERMIT APPEALS

The Board of Permit Appeals has upheld another serious violation of the City of San Francisco Zoning Code.

In the course of altering a building at 200 Lombard Street, the owner has exceeded the 40 ft. height limit by 3 feet. Nearby neighbors became suspicious, so a City representative was sent to the site and verified that the structure did indeed violate the height restriction. The Planning Department acted to halt construction and to revoke the permit, thus requiring removal of the offending projection above the established height limit. The owner promptly took the matter to the Board of Permit Appeals, who proceeded to reward the owner and architect for what was a deliberate deviation from the plans approved by the City, by ruling that the structure could remain as is.

At this point, certain questions must be asked.

Why did the building not conform with the plans filed at City Hall?

Why, if the building did not conform with the plans on file, did the inspector permit the job to continue?

Why should the Board of Permit Appeals have the power to allow definite violations of the City Building Code?

The Board of Permit Appeals is extremely permissive. If obvious violations of the Building Code are to be permitted and condoned by this very arbitrary Board, the safeguards set down by the code to protect the public are useless.

This Board must become more responsive to the residents of San Francisco and less so to those who seem bent on erecting structures of ever greater height and density, usually in total disregard of some neighborhood amenity.

The Telegraph Hill Dwellers will continue to strongly oppose all variances which overcrowd the Hill, increase our parking problems, or in any other way violate the code, unless the applicant can prove extreme hardship. Perhaps some day we will have a less permissive Board of Permit Appeals than is now in office.

MORE AND MORE VARIANCES BEING SOUGHT

A variance to build on a lot, possibly the smallest in San Francisco, was recently denied by the Zoning Administrator - so, the owner is taking the case to the Board of Permit Appeals. The site is on the west line of Kearny Street 78 feet north of Lombard, has a frontage of eight (that is correct, 8) feet and a depth of 68.75 feet.

The proposed building occupies 1/2 of the width of La Ferrera Terrace, which is 16 feet wide. This easement provides access to nine other sites, two of which have no other means of ingress and egress.

Hearing is scheduled for January 20th at 2 P.M., Room 282, City Hall.

Another variance has been requested by The Cannery to alter their building at 2801 Leavenworth Street. The Cannery wants to build a restaurant on the top of the existing building. This additional height would be in violation of the existing height limit. The hearing is scheduled for January 27th at 2 P.M., Room 282, City Hall.