

TELEGRAPH HILL SEMAPHORE

Publication of the Telegraph Hill Dwellers

NUMBER FORTY FOUR

SEPTEMBER 1971

BOB KATZ REPORTS

EMBARCADERO FREEWAY RAMPS

The same people who supported the traffic-generating Transamerica Pyramid (now rising in all its ugliness) and who are still lobbying for a 500 plus car garage in Washington Square are advocating an extension of the Embarcadero Freeway by 1,000 foot ramps along the Embarcadero, under the pretext of reducing traffic in the Broadway-North Beach-Telegraph Hill area.

On June 24, the Supervisors' Street and Transportation Committee held a hearing on this matter. The testimony ran overwhelmingly against the proposed "feasibility study". The Planning Department, SPUR, San Francisco Tomorrow, the Sierra Club, the Democratic Women's Club, the Marina, the Telegraph Hill Dwellers, former Planning Commission President Gardner Mein, Friedel Klussmann, the Citizens Waterfront Committee, Giacomo Patri and many other citizens opposed the ramps.

Supervisor Francois expressed support for a suggestion by San Francisco Tomorrow to close the existing Broadway exit and entrance to the Freeway altogether. This suggestion has considerable merit since it could be tested very easily for a three-month period with hardly any expense to the City, syphoning off traffic through the Clay-Washington ramps and channeling heavy truck traffic around Telegraph Hill by way of Sansome and Battery Streets. Should such a test be successful, it would then become possible to ask the State for the removal of the elevated Embarcadero Freeway from Washington Street to Broadway (1600 feet!) as a first step towards implementing the official City policy for the total removal of the Embarcadero Freeway.

After a lengthy hearing, the Supervisors' Committee decided against a feasibility study for the extension of the Embarcadero Freeway by additional ramps. Instead, it requested a thorough "origin and destination" traffic study of the area.

The THD feel that local traffic in the entire Broadway-North Beach-Telegraph Hill area should also be studied in order to revise the present crazy-quilt local traffic pattern which was greatly disturbed when Columbus Avenue was converted into a major traffic arterial.

IMPORTANT WATERFRONT STUDY TO BE RELEASED IN SEPTEMBER

The eagerly awaited Waterfront Study, prepared by Livingston & Blayney and sponsored by the Citizens Waterfront Committee, will be officially released towards the end of September. It promises to be an exceptionally imaginative and practical document which should exert great influence towards developing a citizen-oriented waterfront of great scope, variety and beauty.

NOTICE

CITIZENS WATERFRONT COMMITTEE invites you to a preview of its study:

"WHAT TO DO ABOUT THE WATERFRONT ? ?"

Thursday

SEPT. 23

8 P. M.

Palace Fine Arts Theatre

Lyon and Bay Sts.

PARKING ON TELEGRAPH HILL

The intolerable parking situation on the East side of Telegraph Hill is being made even more difficult by the parking attendant service provided by the Shadows Restaurant.

In 1959, the restaurant was granted permission to expand its capacity from 50 to 125 patrons with the provision that they provide parking out of the area for its customers. This, the restaurant has failed to do. Parking attendants use every available parking space at the curb.

Protests by the neighborhood residents have brought negative results. After a meeting of neighborhood residents with Chief Nelder, Shadows owner Elsie Jonck has agreed to keep a minimum of five attendants and she also promises that the attendants would avoid illegal parking and racing the cars through the neighborhood streets.

THIS IS NOT ENOUGH—Julius Castle, the Shadows competing restaurant, has established a parking lot at Pier 7 with a shuttle service to the restaurant. This has kept many cars off the "Hill". The Shadows has made no effort to participate in such a program.

They should be forced to comply with the stipulation made in 1959.

PROVIDE PARKING OUT OF THE AREA

The Shadows is a colorful landmark and a tourist attraction, but if they are to keep their use permit, the stipulations that they are to provide parking off the Hill must be strictly enforced.

REGISTER YOUR PROTESTS WITH CHIEF NELDER.

THE URBAN DESIGN PLAN FOR SAN FRANCISCO

*"The Urban Design study was undertaken in San Francisco because the environment of this City is magnificent and it is threatened."...

"It is the people who will decide what the City is to be like"...

"In order to help meet the problems of growth, deterioration and lost opportunities this report proposes a City-wide structural Urban Design Plan, the first of its kind in an American City."

(*All the above quotes are from the Urban Design Plan for the Comprehensive Plan of San Francisco.)

At their meeting of August 26th, the Planning Commission adopted the Urban Design Study, together with emergency zoning designed to stem the current rash of Hi-Rise applications.

The Planning Commission is interested in neighborhood plans. Your President, Curtis Baldwin, has authorized the formation of a committee to study and complete a list of possibilities for the improvement of our Telegraph Hill Area.

Many possible improvements come to mind. Some of our dead-end streets can be turned into Mini Parks with attractive planting areas, benches for resting and the development of view vantage points. Areas such as Bel Air Alley, the end of Francisco Street East of Grant Avenue, Vallejo Street between Montgomery and Kearny, the Chestnut Street Cliff, Garfield School Cliff and the end of Pfeiffer Street are a few of the areas that come to mind.

We must press forward in achieving our underground wiring program. This is an opportunity to extend our tree planting program. Telegraph Hill can be transformed from shabbiness to beauty. We can be the equal of any residential park.

Your committee will meet with members of the Planning Staff and discuss their ideas. The implementation of this plan is essential to the future of San Francisco.

Any Hill Dwellers who have any ideas or suggestions, please communicate with Kenneth Evers, 255 Chestnut Street, phone 421-2671.

GRANT AVENUE FAIR

The traditional and colorful Grant Avenue Fair was not held this year. At the eleventh hour the Board of Supervisors refused to grant a permit to close off the street and thereby effectively killed it.

In these days of social detachment in a large city, colorful events of a purely local nature should be encouraged, not discouraged. We have many local events in the North Beach Area such as the Columbus Day Parade, the Carnavale and the Chinese New Year parade. We believe this type of affair promotes neighborliness and mutual understanding and appreciation. These affairs have been trouble free, and we hope that in the future the Grant Avenue Fair along with other local events will be allowed to continue.

TELEGRAPH HILL SLIDES

In the Telegraph Hill Semaphore of April 1971, we reported that a letter from the Telegraph Hill Dwellers was sent to the Mayor and the Board of Supervisors expressing our concern over the slide on Lombard Street. We are pleased to report that on August 23rd, the Board of Supervisors voted an emergency appropriation of \$392,000 to "stabilize" the Telegraph Hill slope.

We commend the Supervisors on their action, but we believe that further studies should be made on all areas of the Hill. Slides have taken place on five other locations endangering the lives and homes of the residents.

RUSSIAN HILL APARTMENT

The Planning Commission, in an unprecedented unanimous vote, denied a permit to a Kansas City developer to erect a 33 story hi-rise apartment on the top of Russian Hill. The developers have appealed the matter to the Board of Permit Appeals, who voted to delay consideration of the matter for three weeks.

The adoption of the Urban Design Plan would preclude this type of development. Its early adoption is essential.

GOLDEN GATE RECREATION AREA

A recent congressional hearing heard testimony on the creation of a sweeping National Recreation Area reaching from Fort Mason to Point Reyes. There was overwhelming support for the inclusion of the Presidio. The Telegraph Hill Dwellers joined the massive turnout in support of the proposed legislation.

PORTRAIT PHOTOGRAPHY

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DEATH OF A FREEWAY

On August 26th, the Supervisors' Street and Transportation Committee unanimously approved the deletion of the Panhandle Freeway route from the State Highway system. This action was supported by the State Division of Highways and the San Francisco Department of Public Works! On August 30, the full Board concurred. Although this decision has mainly theoretical significance, it is an important symbol of San Francisco's successful "Freeway Revolt" which had nationwide repercussions.


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