

MEASURE DD COMMUNITY COALITION MEETING  
MAY 16, 2005  
LAKESIDE GARDEN CENTER

Agenda Committee: Naomi Schiff, Jennie Gerard and Simon Waddington  
Minutes by Kathy Raymond, Executive Director, Friends of Oakland Parks and Recreation

In Attendance:

Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Committee – Ron Bishop  
Chabot Park Highlands Homeowners – Ken Benson  
East Bay Bicycle Coalition – Rick Rickard  
East Bay Regional Parks District – John Sutter  
Friends of the Cleveland Cascade – Jim Ratliff, Barbara Newcombe  
Friends of Studio One – Patrick Daughton  
Coalition of Advocates for Lake Merritt – James Vann  
Friends of Oakland Parks and Recreation – Kathryn Raymond, Judy Johnson, Judith Ming, David Stein  
Lake Merritt Institute – Stana Hearne  
Oakland East Bay Garden Center – Susan Veit, Bruce Cobbledick  
Oakland Heritage Alliance – Naomi Schiff  
Oakland Parks Coalition – Jennie Gerard  
Signature Properties – Mike Ghielmetti

From the City of Oakland:

CEDA – Kerry Jo Ricketts-Ferris  
City Auditor – Michael Kilian  
Council Member – Jane Brunner  
Council Member Reid's Office – Pat Mossburg  
Council Member Quan's Office – Sue Piper

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 P.M. by chair Naomi Schiff. The attendees introduced themselves.

OAK TO NINTH DISCUSSION:

A Draft position that John Sutter had worked on was emailed to the members prior to the meeting. A possible edited version of that draft done by Don Walls was handed out at the meeting. They are currently in the EIR (environmental review) process. Naomi and Kerri Jo had text of the DD Bond language to answer questions about allocation of funds for the Oakland Estuary waterfront trail (up to \$22 million is designated for the Oak to Ninth area). The Ordinance approved by City Council for Measure DD funding includes \$53 million for specific improvements to the waterfront; with \$9.5 million to be spent on water quality and HAZMAT clean up issues. \$22 million was allocated for acquisition and improvements of four parks along the Estuary including Estuary Park, Union Point Park, Meadows Park and an unnamed park somewhere around the Ninth Ave. Terminal. Of this, \$4 million has been allocated in Series A for Union Point Park. Signature Properties, the developers of the Oak to Ninth property, have indicated they do not require any bond money to construct the development project they are proposing. Given the specificity of the ordinance specific to funding for these parks, a reallocation of funds designated for the parks that is not allocated or expended would have to go back to the voters for approval, or the amount of funding tied to this area would not be issued. Kerry Jo,

did point out that there may be other opportunities associated with these parks sites should the developer choose not to utilize use Measure DD funds designated for this area for capital improvements that would support these areas such as possibly creating a pedestrian overpass or something that could possibly enhance access to Estuary Park. This would need to be reviewed by attorney's for a final opinion.

John Sutter, once again reviewed the basics of the Estuary Policy Plan and what open space was called for in this plan. It was also mentioned that this plan has been adopted as part of the City's General Plan. He expressed concern that the current development does not provide enough open space and that the design will block access and visibility to the waterfront. For example, in the Estuary Policy Plan the roads were all straight leading to the water so the water was visible, while in the developers plan the roads curve and block visibility. The crux of John Sutter's draft statement that he would like the Coalition to come to a consensus on is the following:

*"The Measure DD Community Coalition urges that the City adhere to the EPP vision and create "the major recreational destination in the City." In particular, the Coalition urges that (1) the public open space in the development be no less than that called for by the EPP, and (2) that project should be designed to provide maximum visibility of the Estuary."*

It was pointed out this is public access land and it needs to be done right because once it has been developed you can't go back.

Mike Ghielmetti from Signature Properties pointed out a number of items that they are working with. The Port, after a competitive bidding process, chose them to do the development design. The site is toxic and requires a significant amount of clean-up, and though City property the Port does have an obligation to its shareholders to make a profit and not just sit on unused land. The developers are willing to do all the clean up and develop the land, without needing the DD funds that were allocated. They are also willing to maintain the open space after development. He pointed out that the City is unlikely ever to find the funds to develop this space themselves and it will just get harder to do so in the future.

It was asked for clarification on who owns the land. It was stated that after many years of legal battles the land is owned publicly. However, the Port has authority over the land, essentially the Port administers the waterfront and is a division of the City. The land was a designated Land Trust, meaning only certain uses could occur on the land, maritime, fisheries, navigation and public use. Commercial properties such as hotels could be built but not residential under the Tidelands Trust. Senator Perata sponsored a bill that got signed by the Governor last year to transfer this Tidelands Trust to other areas of Oakland so this area could be developed and residential housing could be put here. The land that used to be submerged was the Tidelands Trust land and the other island portion was kind of set up as a Trust-Lite.

There was concern over the level of access to the Coastline. Apparently BCDC has control within 100 ft of the coastline, though this line has shifted over time. Jane Brunner pointed out that the access was a huge concern and that she believed the Council would make a requirement that at least 100 ft of access be kept around the coastline area.

(It was noted that in all but one place in the plans the setback from the Coast is over 100 ft.) It was pointed out that this plan has not yet been presented to the Council

that it is still in a fairly early stage of development. The City does have the planning authority over the project. There was also discussion around building heights, the plan calls for mostly 6 to 8 story buildings with 5 towers that could be up to 24 floors. Some had concerns that these towers would block views, but others started to point out that perhaps higher or taller buildings would provide more overall open space as they provide more housing in a smaller area. This is something that was suggested be considered, also some design elements may make it more interesting if have varying sizes of buildings.

Mike Ghielmetti pointed out that he believed it was too early, due to the ongoing changes for this coalition to take a position on the project. However, a number of people, including Jennie Gerard and Ken Benson indicated that a position should be taken early on to be able to get the needed advocacy to make sure that the Open Space is an issue that gets seriously looked at in the plans. Mike, also noted that open space was only one issue that they are facing and he is also getting pressure from groups interested in affordable housing, job training, tax revenues, etc. and that as the developer they have to do their best to weigh all the issues to come up with the most reasonable design.

Members of the Coalition also pointed out that if the developers or City could use the DD money to make a better project that is more in tune with the Estuary Policy Plan they should use the funds and not just say they are not needed. In addition, Naomi Schiff, pointed out that she would feel better if these public funds were used for some of this project as it helps to tie the area to the public and showcase it is public land. There is a worry that the open space that is public will not have a welcoming feeling to the public due to the private development all around.

In the end, as there were two draft statements, the Coalition felt they should wait until the June meeting to decide what to support. James Vann, asked that a more concise statement be created, perhaps bullet points, that then individuals could sign if they wish to support. Rick Rickard did point out that his group, the bicycle coalition, did not feel that this has enough ties to their concern to really take a position. In the end a new committee was formed to create this new statement made up of John Sutter, James Vann, Ken Benson and Don Walls (volunteered by David Stein who will serve as a backup if Don is unavailable.)

#### EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:

It was asked if there was anyone that wanted to hold the position of attending the Executive Committee meetings on an ongoing basis. After some discussion, it was deemed that we should keep doing it as we have been, with two members of the current agenda committee attending, but that Kerry Jo, would also provide minutes of these meetings that Friends will post on the web site.

#### BUDGET ADVOCACY:

Jennie Gerard passed out handouts about a rally that the Oakland Parks Coalition is arranging for Tuesday, May 17<sup>th</sup> to advocate for no cuts in maintenance dollars to the parks. In the current budget they have managed to fund the parks maintenance at the current level for the next year and are looking for continuing sources of money for the 06-07 budget year. However, it is not clear that this includes filling any of the now vacant positions. At 5:30 at City Hall they are meeting on the front steps and then at 6 p.m. will go into the special budget hearing to speak on the importance of parks maintenance, they would like a large contingent to show up and stand when asked to show their support of the parks. Please try and attend.

Unfortunately, Steven Huss was unable to make it to speak on the Public Art at Studio One and will attend a future meeting.

Next Agenda Items that were suggested:

1. Lake Merritt Institute - Fountains
2. Fencing and Gates around Lakeside Park – East Bay Garden Center
3. Review of new Draft position statement on Oak to Ninth.
4. Public Art – July or August meeting (though currently, the next scheduled meeting after June is September.)

OTHER ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Kathy Raymond had been given a petition to help save the Park Rangers before the meeting and passed it around at the meeting for those interested in signing.

It was mentioned that the possible closure of the Kaiser Convention Center could hurt Oakland and perhaps there may be a way to at least keep the theater portion open, as it is a beautiful space. It was suggested that perhaps a draft statement should be made on this and supported by the coalition as well. There are DD funds tied into the parking lot and channel by the convention center.

The next meeting date is June 20th at the Garden Center in the Ebell Room.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 p.m.