

**NORTH PARK HISTORICAL SOCIETY
MARCH 2012 MEETING NOTES**

DATE: MARCH 15, 2012

TIME: 6:30 PM

The first part of this meeting was a Business Meeting of the North Park Historical Society (NPHS) Board of Directors, and the second part was the activities discussion for the organization. These notes include updates as of March 25, 2012.

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The following members of the NPHS Board of Directors were present:

Robert Bauer
George Franck
Steve Hon
Katherine Hon
Ed Orozco
Vince Rivera
Jody Surowiec
Michael Thornhill
Sharon Turner
Hilda Yoder

The following members of the NPHS Board of Directors were absent:

Patrick Edwards
Louise Russell
Randy Sappenfield
Bill Vivian

Members Paul, Ginni, Rhea and Valerie joined us. Thank you Rhea and Valerie for becoming members at this meeting!

2. AGENDA REVIEW AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Steve announced that Anne Cooper, a historian with the County of San Diego who works at the Sikes Adobe historical site, became a member of NPHS at the Congress of History conference. Her presentation at the conference was very interesting. We agreed we would like to invite her to speak at one of our meetings.

3. MINUTES ACCEPTANCE

The draft minutes from the January 19, 2012 NPHS meeting were accepted and have been posted on the website.

BUSINESS PORTION OF MEETING

4. TREASURER'S REPORT

The financials were sent to the Board in advance of the meeting. Sharon reported that we received \$80 in donations, \$40 from two memberships, sales revenue from 2 Burlingame books and 2 North Park history books, and payment from The Grove for their sales of our books. Expenses arose from printing 202 more perfect bound North Park history books, which are now recorded in our inventory.

Update: Our printer, Wholesale Reprographics, also repaired at no charge 1 perfect bound and 9 coil-bound North Park history books that had irregularities. These are now available for sale or donation. We donated one of these coil-bound books to the North Park Library.

ACTIVITIES PORTION OF MEETING

5. PLAZA DE PANAMA LETTER

Due to the deadline to submit letters of comment on the Balboa Park Plaza de Panama Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR), the Board reviewed the letter Katherine wrote and approved it via email in advance of the meeting. The letter states that the North Park Historical Society opposes the Plaza de Panama bridge/underground parking structure and the environmental process that is being conducted for the project by the City of San Diego. Based on our review of the Draft EIR, we found that the document is not sufficient for decision makers and the public as required by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). We also determined that the City has not conducted its duties as Lead Agency in accordance with the spirit and the letter of environmental law. The letter discusses in detail the following issues:

- Multiple specific requirements of CEQA have been violated by the City's approval of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the project proponent.
- By approving the MOU, the City has illegally delegated its responsibilities as Lead Agency to the project proponent.
- The EIR is completely missing a specific recreation section that addresses impacts to special events such as December Nights and Earth Fair during the two years of project construction, and impacts on Morley Field recreational facilities due to disposal of 142,000 cubic yards of soil excavated for construction of the underground parking structure.
- The EIR's own analysis shows that an employee parking management plan would be more effective (and much less expensive!) than the proposed underground parking structure in enhancing visitor parking, but a plan is not proposed.
- The proposed underground parking structure will not be self-sustaining with the assumed \$5 parking rate, and excess operational costs will have to be paid from the General Fund.
- Potential noise impacts due to the transport and disposal of soil in the Morley Field area are not analyzed, even though the extended haul route is within 200 feet of homes along 28th Street at the intersection of Pershing Drive and Redwood Street, and closer than 1,000 feet to homes along 28th and Upas streets at Jacaranda Place.
- There is no discussion of impacts from construction damage to local roadways, including truck hauling along the route between the Central Mesa and East Mesa. Most of the roadways identified as the haul route have been repaved recently, including Zoo Place, Florida Drive, and Pershing Drive.
- The selection of the Half-Plaza Alternative in the EIR as the environmentally superior alternative is not accurate. Four other feasible alternatives analyzed in the EIR would do a better job at preventing environmental damage caused by the project as proposed; all

four alternatives eliminate the underground parking structure and two would eliminate vehicles from the entire length of Cabrillo Bridge.

- It is unimaginable that any perceived benefits of the proposed Centennial Bridge and Central Mesa underground parking structure components of the Plaza de Panama project could outweigh their unavoidable environmental damage to the Balboa Park National Historic Landmark District, which is the City's historic site #1 and our crown jewel of parks.

The group suggested the letter also be sent to local newspapers. **Update:** Katherine coordinated with the editor of Uptown News, who suggested a summary be submitted as a letter to the Editor. Katherine sent the issues listed above and noted that the letter is on our website, NorthParkHistory.org.

The letter was distributed via email to NPHS members and friends. Some comments we received are:

- Very impressive. Thank you for all the work you put into this document. I only skimmed it, but I read enough to see the work you did.
- Great job on the letter.
- Great letter and great comments, you guys rock.

6. CAR SHOW

We continue to plan with the Balboa Tennis Club, who will host the car show in the parking lot along the tennis courts at Morley Field. Steve presented the concept to the North Park Planning Committee and got a letter of support. He is coordinating with Todd Gloria's office to get a letter of support, and we need a letter from the Balboa Tennis Club. Bob drafted a site plan marking out about 85 spaces where we could park the cars without taking any ADA spaces (which would otherwise have to be designated somewhere else in the lot on the day of the event). The general area of our event will be the parking lot west of where Texas Street extends to the swimming pool, and east of the tennis club registration building. Exhibition canopies could be set up under the trees to the north of the parking lot. The Balboa Tennis Club may have exhibitors on their leasehold area south of the parking lot (between the lot and the tennis courts). The next step is to refine the map with the Balboa Tennis Club and prepare the permit application to discuss with City staff.

Update: Katherine updated our "Save the Date" flyers for Bill to take to the Automobile Museum meeting in April (see next page) to encourage car exhibitors.

7. WATER TOWER DESIGNATION PROJECT

Alex Bevil continues to prepare the designation application for federal and state historic landmark status. We have found out from City staff that once something is approved on the federal register of historic places, it automatically qualifies for the local City listing, and we may also be able to get the fee waived. City staff is pursuing a way to do that at the request of City Council for another project, so our timing may be very good. Then we can use the \$1,000 donation from our dear departed member Bob Hoy for a plaque at the water tower.

SAVE THE DATE!
3rd Annual
North Park Historical Society Car Show
Hosted by the Balboa Tennis Club

Saturday, Sept. 8, 2012
10 AM to 2 PM

Pre-registration required for exhibitors
\$10 for one car, \$20 for two or three

Parking Lot
at the Balboa Tennis Club courts
Morley Field
San Diego, CA 92104



Check our website NorthParkHistory.org for updates

8. LIBRARY PRESENTATION PROJECT

The 5th graders from McKinley were engaged and attentive at the February 23 presentation. We set the date of March 22 at 10 am at the North Park Library to do an encore at the request of the other 5th grade class at McKinley. The students want to do essays for the Georgia Street Bridge, which is being studied now for its seismic condition. An NPHS friend who read last month's meeting notes about the presentation wrote: *"I loved reading about the outreach to the 5th graders at McKinley, and about their enthusiastic response. Years from now they will remember this project and their essays and will take their children to see the water tower and the bridge that they helped to preserve. Those are your future board members and preservationists. Congratulations to Pat Taylor for making it all happen!"*



McKinley 5th graders were eager to answer at the March 22 "North Park Now and Then" presentation

Update: We sincerely appreciate NPHS member Pat Taylor facilitating this outreach effort. She invited Councilmember Todd Gloria to hear the encore presentation and he graciously accepted. We gave a coil bound North Park history book to the class for their school library, and a copy of the book to Todd Gloria for his Council office.



NPHS Board Members Randy and Jody, a library patron, and Councilmember Todd Gloria enjoy watching the students learn about North Park's history



NPHS Secretary Katherine (teacher of the moment) explains the "homework" assignment to write about the Georgia Street Bridge

9. KLUCKA SCHOLARSHIP

Louise is managing the scholarship coordination effort, which is a \$2,000 scholarship for a graduating high school senior residing in the Greater North Park Community Planning area (or zip code 92104). Louise has distributed 30 flyers throughout North Park, and emailed counselors at San Diego High School, Hoover High School, St. Augustine, our Lady of Peace and the Creative and Performing Arts school, which are all the schools with prior student applications. She has a review schedule set with Jody and Hilda. Councilmember Todd Gloria has agreed to present the scholarship to the selected student at the North Park Festival of the Arts. The Klicka family may attend again.

10. WALKING TOUR PLANNING

We are planning a Dryden District Walking Tour for April 14. Michael and George will be tour guides. Jody, Ed, Katherine, Steve, Rhea and Valerie will assist. We will have a check-in table at the portal at the end of 28th Street at Upas. The owner of the house on the west side of 28th Street has volunteered her driveway for us to set up. The registration flyer is on the website.

We are planning a Burlingame Walking Tour on May 19. Our walking tour will be exteriors only, like the tour we did last year. George, Michael, and NPHS member Steve Fobes, an architect who attended last year's walking tour, will be tour guides. Randy will bring his car. Hilda, Ed, Sharon, Katherine, and Steve will assist. The registration flyer is on the website.

Update: The planning group met on March 20 with Ernie Smith of Burlingame. Ernie brought a map we can use for a one-page handout. We will conduct a practice tour on Wednesday, April 4 at 5:00 pm, starting at 32nd and Kalmia. Helpers are welcome.

On June 2, the Burlingame Club and homeowner's organization are conducting a Home Tour of six homes built in 1912, the first year of the tract. The Burlingame event in June will allow participants inside the featured homes. We will have a table at their event and sell the North Park and Burlingame books.

11. BOOK PROJECT

The group has not met due to other planning efforts, but topics are being considered.

12. OTHER BUSINESS

The May 17 meeting will be devoted to presentations of history projects by attendees. Katherine will show the "North Park Now and Then" PowerPoint presentation she has made to the 5th graders, and will have the laptop/projector available for others. Paul Spears will show before and after photos of his restoration of his beautiful Craftsman home. Ed and Steve also plan to present.

Rhea asked if we could incorporate Twitter into our website update effort. She and Valerie can advise us as we proceed.

Michael noted that Washington Elementary will be celebrating their centennial in 2014 and is planning a visual arts fundraiser on May 17, 2012 from 6pm to 9pm at Saigon on Fifth.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be **THURSDAY** April 19, 2012 at 6:30 pm in the second floor conference room of the Masonic Lodge, corner of Utah Street and North Park Way.