



## DISTRICT 11 QUALITY OF LIFE DEBATE WITH SUPERVISOR CANDIDATES

### Minutes

October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2008 6:30 PM – 8:30 PM

Minnie & Lovie Ward Rec Center, Capitol and Montana

*\*Please note, due to limited staffing, parts of these notes may be incomplete; however, we have tried to capture as best we can the overall nature of the forum.*

#### **I. Opening Statements:** *Isabel Wade, NPC*

- **Some statistics**

- District 11 is home to 16 parks and 10 play areas
- Overall, the District has 112.6 acres of parks, open space, and natural areas
- Average grade for play areas is a D

#### **II. Explanation of Format:** *Moderator Alex Clemens, SF Usual Suspects*

#### **III. Opening Statements:** (John Avalos, Myrna Lim, Eli Horn, Julio Ramos, Randall Knox, Mary Goodnature, Ahsha Safaí)

#### **III. Questions from Friends of the Urban Forest and Neighborhood Parks Council:** *Alex Clemens, SF Usual Suspects*

- Question 1: It has been shown that greening urban areas greatly reduces crime, lowers levels of fear and even increases students' attention spans. What green space projects do you propose to cultivate healthier, safer communities?
  - Goodnature: community gardens linked to kitchens so children can make the link between food grown and food on their plates
  - Knox: more street trees and additional recreational programming
  - Ramos: conduct better community outreach, use development fees for park/recreation projects
  - Horn: create safe havens at rec centers and provide better programs
  - Lim: have enough parks/playgrounds for now, need to make sure they are well-maintained and safe
  - Avalos: D11 needs to take inventory of open space so that it can use land efficiently i.e. take advantage of empty lots perhaps by planting more community gardens
- Question 2: A 2004 Recreation Assessment conducted by a national consultant for the Rec & Park Department indicated that there are many recreation needs going unmet, in many cases due to lack of facilities. For example, hiking trails, soccer fields, community gardens all are top priority for city residents but there is a shortage of acreage or availability for these recreation features. In addition, the Neighborhood Park Council's research finds that a number of our neighborhoods lack safe and accessible playgrounds for their children.

What can and will you do as a member of the Board to address these systemic shortcomings that are so critical to the quality of life and public health in San Francisco?

- Lim: lobby to get adequate funding for D11

- Horn: parks must be safe, community policing would help with this, also need to get kids into the parks via fieldtrips, sports, and other activities so they understand that the park is theirs to use
- Ramos: would look at golf land and other space that could become multi-use rec space
- Knox: would focus on improving existing parks
- Goodnature: would look for private donors to give land as well as other alternative sources of open space
- Safaí: increase the number of playgrounds, attract private funders, look at golf land
- Avalos: reevaluate budget process to find alternative sources of revenue because parks are great assets

#### **IV. Questions from the Audience**

- Question 1: Access to programs that provide greater quality of life requires (a) program development and (b) broad communication of services to occur. If elected, what will you do to increase the number of programs offered by the Rec and Park Dept.?
  - Goodnature: partner with community groups to get interesting programs
  - Knox: create public/private partnerships and coordinate with schools
  - Ramos: conduct outreach in multiple languages to reach all of community
  - Horn: need to create safe havens that are open until 9pm, need more multi-language staff
  - Lim: make parks safe and then children and families will use them
  - Avalos: work with community based organizations, like Rec Connect, to offer programming that matches the community's interests
  - Safaí: Use experience raising money for Balboa Playground to gain funds for more/better programming, also work with community organizations and nonprofits
- Question 2: Will you promise to put forth funding to replace missing play structures, gardeners and police protection as well as repair picnic areas and trails that have been neglected for decades?
  - Horn: Yes, also supports community policing
  - Ramos: Yes, would perform audit of current spending to find areas to cut back spending
  - Knox: Yes
  - Goodnature: Yes, will look at all funding sources (public, private, community, etc.)
  - Safaí: Yes, will continue past work raising funds for parks, RPD is too top heavy, needs more ground staff
  - Avalos: Yes, would work with Mayor immediately upon election to create plan together and would want to be on the budget committee so could be more influential with City monies
  - Lim: Yes
- Question 3: McLaren Park is a regional park for the South East communities of Districts 9, 10, and 11. How would you go about getting extra funding for our City's second biggest park?
  - Safaí: would make sure McLaren and GG Park are included in a bond measure
  - Goodnature: work to get McLaren community member on committee to elect the General Manager of RPD so the needs of McLaren are listened to
  - Knox: will give McLaren more PR and look at alternative revenue sources
  - Ramos: Gleneagle Golf Course could make more money and fund the park
  - Horn: would look to private donors for extra money
  - Lim: would use money from Prop C
  - Avalos: create a regional park improvement district, reduce number of high-level city staff who have 3-figure salaries, use money from real estate transfer tax
- Question 4: What is your plan to address traffic congestion & pedestrian safety by Geneva and San Jose Ave. near Balboa Park? Should that area be greened?

- Safai: Take Better Streets Plan and go get resources to redo that area to improve intersection, also need to increase density around our public transit corridors
- Goodnature: Balboa Implementation Plan needs to be launched, need traffic calming mechanism
- Ramos: Need to look at City College and get state money from Sacramento to address issue
- Horn: encourage increased use of public transit
- Lim: there is a Balboa Street Plan (25 years old), need to fix/add signals at Geneva
- Avalos: Need to coordinate with BART, SamTrans, and other transit leadership to create a universally accepted FastPass between Daly City and San Francisco—this will lessen congestion
- Question 5: What can be done to improve the Minnie & Lovie Ward Rec Center?
  - Safai: Programs at center currently meet needs of staff and not the community, also lack of leadership, need to get community input and create programs that community wants/needs
  - Goodnature: we were promised a safe haven and other programming but this promise was broken, need to work on barriers (linguistic etc.)
  - Knox: Adults are using the center more than kids now and there is no sense of community connection, we need to get kids into the center and create a sense of connectedness
  - Ramos: Need a central location at the center that has all info that users need about what is being offered/what is going on. Also need to market services/classes in multiple languages
  - Horn: would support community-based programming—need safe haven programs and community policing
  - Lim: current programming is good but community is not involved because they don't feel safe, will fight to get D11 resources it deserves
  - Avalos: wants to break down barriers to using the center by using Rec Connect and other nonprofits, have advisory committee to get community input about programming

**V. Closing Remarks** (John Avalos, Myrna Lim, Eli Horn, Julio Ramos, Randall Knox, Mary Goodnature, Ahsha Safai)

## VI. Conclude

### Additional Unanswered Questions

1. Our district has the highest percentage of children enrolled in public school. What is your plan to increase partnership between SF Rec and Park and the SF Unified School District?
2. What will you do to support and increase the quality of small businesses on Mission St. (near Silver)?
3. How will you support ethnic business and stop the encroachment of chains and bars, dollar stores, etc.?
4. How long have you lived in D11 and which neighborhood do you live in?
5. In D11 there is a division between Excelsior and Oceanview Merced Heights, Ingleside. What will you do to create unity in the OMI community?
6. D11 has several alleyways, pathways and stairs on public property. What might be a good use for these mini-areas?
7. Will you get a post office and full service bank on Ocean Ave? (yes or no)
8. How will you work with our community and police to achieve your goals. Please give specifics. For example, will we see you at our community meetings?
9. What will you do about trash and dumping on sidewalks?
10. How would you decide the allocation of funds between the different parks in the district?
11. SF has many trees, shrubs, and stumps on many of its public medians, surplus property which is not being maintained. What is your position in regard to maintaining our public forestry inventory?
12. Are you aware of the new event permitting process & fees? How do you feel about it?

13. What is your position regarding waterfront development?
14. Our district has been neglected for a long time. What is your plan to mobilize our district so working class families are not further marginalized?
15. As a 20+ year resident, one of the greatest sources of frustration is the lack of and change in available parking in the district and city in general. The present D11 supervisor sponsored legislation that allows commercial vehicles up to 10,00 pounds to park in our residential neighborhoods. I compete with school buses, tow trucks, refrigeration trucks, etc. to park when I return home from work. Please share your thoughts on this issue.