



DISTRICT 1 QUALITY OF LIFE DEBATE WITH SUPERVISOR CANDIDATES

Minutes

September 22nd, 2008 6:30 PM – 8:30 PM

Richmond Police Station 461 6th Avenue b/w Geary and Anza

I. Opening Statements: *Isabel Wade, NPC*

- **Some statistics**
 - District 1 is home to 15 parks and 14 play areas
 - Overall, the District has 1128 acres of parks, open space, and natural areas (28 acres without Golden Gate Park)
 - Average grade for play areas is a B

II. Explanation of Format: *Moderator Burnell Holland, SF Usual Suspects*

III. Opening Statements: *All candidates*

- Sue Lee:
 - Emphasized her nearly four decades of public service (has worked for a supervisor and three mayors)
 - Was part of grass roots movement to start the Richmond District Neighborhood Center
 - Wants to bring common sense back to the Board of Supervisors and stop the bickering
 - Has focused on business and economic development
- Jason Jungreis:
 - Platform is based on three principles: fiscal responsibility, quality of life, environmental responsibility
 - Is not accepting campaign contributions, and emphasized his independence
- Nicholas Belloni:
 - Believes parks are an integral part of the community, and D1 is lucky to have so many
 - Recently volunteered at Lincoln Playground, and found it very rewarding
- Alicia Wang:
 - Create a greenbelt between our three most important natural areas: Golden Gate Park, Presidio, Ocean Beach
 - Running to keep middle class families in San Francisco
- George Flamik:
 - Believes that the built and natural environments must work together (for example, the new Academy of Sciences building)
 - Believes that RPD should have a “punch list” of volunteer tasks that can be done at each park so that community members can take these on as they have time
- Eric Mar:
 - Has lived in the Richmond district for 24 years
 - On the school board for 8 years, and has taught at SFSU for 16 years
 - 2008 Parks Bond, Proposition A supporter
 - Supported by many organizations (labor, housing, environmental)

- Part of the grassroots organization that helped fix Rossi Park
- Fidel Gakuba:
 - Was born in the Soviet Union, and has lived in San Francisco for 13 years
 - Has been frustrated by what he has seen in City Hall recently (gridlock, bickering)
- Brian Larkin:
 - Resident of the Richmond district since 1985
 - Engineer by education and work experience (worked with BART)
 - Make the system we have work (no big new proposals)
 - Member of CA State Parks for 10 years
- Sherman D'Silva
 - Is running because he saw a friend get hit by a car and was frustrated by lack of basic services like transit safety
 - Wants to see more tax revenue coming back to the Richmond

III. Questions from Friends of the Urban Forest and Neighborhood Parks Council: *Burnell Holland, 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?
 - D'Silva: would like to see more street trees, and perhaps more grassy green areas on sidewalks for pedestrians
 - Larkin: more volunteer hours are needed
 - Gakuba: would like to give the experts (like NPC and FUF) the resources to do the job
 - Mar: green schoolyards, green school buildings, and community gardens are all excellent resources (like the Oregon Community Garden)
 - Flamik: believes we must make sure our recreation areas are clean, close, and useable; integrate built and natural environment (with technologies like stormwater capture)
 - Wang: believes we must integrate the planning process (parks, housing, transit) – more pedestrian pathways for children and seniors
 - Belloni: supports tax credits for property owners who put up trees or other greenery in front of their homes
 - Jungreis: believes we must: maintain existing parks with fiscal responsibility, prevent abuse of parks (encampments at Golden Gate park), encourage volunteerism at our parks
 - Lee: would like more incentives for property owners to plant trees
- 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?

- Lee: would make green space a priority through park improvement districts (PIDs) – be more creative with funding sources and more generous from ourselves
- Jungreis: would like to maintain existing parks and maintain access for Richmond residents to places like the Presidio – is concerned about the Presidio Trusts' plans
- Belloni: would go to fundraisers to raise more funds for parks
- Wang: would create partnerships with other city agencies (e.g. use library gardens)

- Flamik: disagrees with the premise of the question and believes there are plenty of hiking trails and soccer fields available
- Mar: would like to explore using surplus SFUSD properties for open space use, and be more rigorous in appropriating community benefit agreement funds for open space use
- Gakuba: would not focus on more fee generation from the public, but rather would set priorities and advocate for more little “nugget” neighborhood parks
- Larkin: would focus primarily on maintaining existing parks and playgrounds at a safe and useable level
- D’Silva: would focus on “quality over quantity” and make sure that funds are set aside for RPD to perform adequate maintenance and repair on existing facilities

IV. Questions from the Audience

- Question 1: What ideas would you have to fight graffiti? Also, the problem of homelessness (especially in Golden Gate Park).
 - Flamik: supports mandatory sentencing – a fine and community service (have the perpetrator clean it up)
 - Mar: would work with the Anti-Graffiti task force and organizations like Precita Eyes (for mural projects). On homelessness, Mar favors more sanitary shelters and a more coordinated (less “whack-a-mole”) approach to the issue.
 - Gakuba: believes in more accountability for perpetrators of graffiti, and also more facilities for homeless individuals
 - Larkin: would have the perpetrator clean up the graffiti, and would establish a fund to help with clean up costs where the perpetrator was not apprehended. On homelessness, Larkin favors services for homeless individuals in the city, but not those from outside.
 - D’Silva: favors getting the graffiti removed within 24-48 hours to take away incentive of tagging
 - Lee: would focus on abatement (not penalize the victim – businesses), and would convene DPW, the City and businesses to come up with a common sense approach. On homelessness, Lee believes in a holistic approach to the issue and supports the work of the Community Justice Center
 - Jungreis: would enforce existing quality of life crimes, increase graffiti penalties, install crime prevention cameras, require a proof of residence for homeless services, coordinate city services for homeless individuals to track usage and prevent abuses, and does not believe the Community Justice Center model will work
 - Belloni: favors more programs at schools to teach would-be taggers about “community”, and supports a Delancey Street approach to homelessness (more job training and skill development)
 - Wang: supports more mural projects, and focusing on the small number of individuals who actually tag graffiti
- Question 2: What is your position on the closure of JFK Drive to cars on Saturdays?
 - Wang: is not supportive of the closure
 - Belloni: does not support the closure. He disagrees with how the process handled, specifically that the voters had voted down this measure twice and it was still enacted.
 - Jungreis: believes the will of the voters should have been respected. He is personally ambivalent about the issue, but understands that with the DeYoung and the new Academy of Sciences building on site, the area need to have car access. Jungreis would like to explore using UCSF shuttles as a means of transportation as well.
 - Lee: opposed this measure twice. Lee would like to find a solution that respects both drivers attempting to access the museums, and pedestrians wanting a safe place to walk.
 - D’Silva: does not believe the closure is a good idea. He would like to see an underground expressway going to the park.

- Larkin: is generally in favor of closing streets, but would accede to the will of the voters on this issue.
- Gakuba: is personally in favor of closing the street, but understands the need to have it be open.
- Mar: strongly supports Health Saturdays, and believes that connecting open spaces is a great idea and ultimately good for businesses as well.
- Flamik: likes having the park streets closed, but would ultimately accede to voters on the issue. In the meantime, he encourages folks to use the park on Saturdays, and then make up their mind about the closure.
- BRT is a big issue, one that could put merchants out of business. What would you do to help the merchants of Geary Boulevard?
 - Larkin: believes this is a core issue for him. He would like to see near-term BRT-lite service followed by eventually extension of the MUNI metro into the Richmond.
 - Gakuba: is still weighing this issue. He intends to speak to merchants to get their feedback, and also consider unintended consequences of this action.
 - Mar: believes in taking a balanced approach: phasing the project would limit unintended consequences. Mar also believes that the benefits of BRT would far outweigh the drawbacks (increase ridership and shorten commute times)
 - Flamik: supports a phased approach. He would like to take measures to improve current transit operations like installing ticket vending machines.
 - Wang: believes people want more buses and want existing buses to be on time. They do not necessarily want BRT. She would support measures like adding more buses, installing signal light overrides, and limiting parking on parts of Geary to open up space for buses.
 - Belloni: is against BRT unequivocally. He believes it would destroy Geary Boulevard and tear apart the neighborhood.
 - Jungreis: notes that BRT would cost \$300-million: the same as the City's current debt. He is in favor of improving the current 38 line and has a ten-point plan on his website that outlines his position (which is similar to a published PAR white paper). Jungreis also believes that the Transit Effectiveness Project (TEP) is already making some improvements to the 38 line.
 - Lee: believes that BRT is inevitable in 25-30, but in the meantime TEP can be used as a mechanism for testing certain transit improvements. She is in favor of coordinating delivery times and double parking with merchants so that the corridor is available for bus traffic at heavy commuting times throughout the day.
 - D'Silva: supports having a center lane on Geary for buses primarily. This would free up the current bus stop lanes for parking.

V. Closing Remarks

- Gakuba: has experience in the private sector, believes in fiscal responsibility and accountability, and wants to work to keep middle class families in San Francisco.
- Mar: has lived in the Richmond for 24 years, is endorsed by many leading organizations, and would like to see a greener, healthier, and more vibrant community.
- Flamik: emphasized his readiness to do work. He also reiterated his belief in mobilizing more volunteer support at our parks and recreation areas.
- Wang: believes that the possibility of having a new manager at the Recreation and Parks Department is a great opportunity, and would like to see someone with a more community-oriented approach.
- Belloni: would make himself accessible and available as Supervisor.
- Jungreis: stated that he has good judgment, a good agenda, and integrity. He also emphasized that he is not beholden to special interests, and is an independent voice.

- Lee: emphasized her four decades of experience as a community organizer, planning commissioner, and in other roles as well.
- D’Silva: would like to refocus on the basics: roads, traffic, lights, parks, sidewalks.
- Larkin: would like to work towards maintain the resources we currently have.

VI. Conclude

Additional Unanswered Questions

1. What do you think are the tree most important “quality of life” issues in our district? Please give one suggestion for addressing each of these issues.
2. You have an ageing population of homeowners who have large trees in their backyards. They can’t afford to have them removed or trimmed yet they are responsible for the tree or fined if they remove it. Now what?
3. What is your view of more open space for walking your pets?
4. What do you think is the greatest challenge facing District 1?
5. What are your opinions of the tenure of Jack McGoldrick?
6. If you weren’t running for office, who would you vote for?
7. Why do you want to be a supervisor?
8. What do you think about the public schools in District 1?