

NATURE IN THE CITY AND NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS COUNCIL MEETING

MEETING NOTES

Lake Merced Watershed Plan: Conservation Implications

August 13, 2008 6:00 PM – 8:00 PM
455 Golden Gate Avenue, State Building, San Diego Room

I. Welcome & Introductions

Meredith Thomas, Neighborhood Parks Council
Peter Brastow, Nature in the City

II. GoSolarSF – Solar Power Incentive Program

Alissa Pines, Policy Director, Office of Assessor-Recorder Phil Ting
www.sfwater.org/gosolarsf

III. Solar City

Rick Grisel, Solar City

Explained how you can install solar in your home at no cost and help playgrounds in the process.
Direct: 650.963.5176 | Cell: 415.378.5463 | rgrisel@solarcity.com | www.solarcity.com

IV. PUC Lake Merced Watershed Plan Presentation of Land Use Alternatives

David Behar, Public Utilities Commission

Presentation on the land use alternatives.

Preliminary Plan Direction

- Preserve the park-like character—don't overbuild
- Optimize upland use
- Promote habitat restoration of disturbed land areas
- Designate a portion for a nature preserve
- Educate the public about the natural value of the lake and promote watershed stewardship through a nature center or other medium

Different alternatives were presented that include varying locations of a nature center, closing or maintaining the Pacific Rod and Gun Club on site, renovating the existing boat house or moving the location, creating a nature preserve and other variations. TO view the complete scenarios please visit www.sfnpc.org/lakemercedplanning

V. Q&A on Presentation

Suzanne Gautier, Public Utilities Commission (PUC)

Q. Public: Why are the Harding and Fleming golf courses not being looked at?

A. PUC: The management of the golf courses are under long leases and they are outside of the scope of the project.

Q. Public: Is there still lead in the area from the gun club when lead was still used?

A. PUC: There is an estimated 1300 tons of lead still in the lake water and park land that we are working on striking an agreement for cleanup.

Comments from the Public

- Off leash dog areas should be included in the plan.
- Storm water should be allowed to percolate into the ground water basin.
- The PUC should look at the USGS map at 6060 Mission street to ensure that the area is not a landslide prone area, and if it is proper precautions should be taken.

VI. Panel Presentation

Moderators: Suzanne Gautier, PUC

Steve Hammond, PUC & WRT Design

Panelists: Meredith Thomas, Neighborhood Parks Council

Fred Tautenhahn, Pacific Rod & Gun Club

Representative from the Rowing Community

Peter Brastow, Nature in the City

Each panelist had 5 minutes to respond to the Land Use Alternatives presentation and choose the scenario that best meets their vision for Lake Merced.

Peter Brastow, Nature in the City, Alternative #3

The PUC should step up to restore the local ecology of Lake Merced and maintain appropriate use for the area.

Meredith Thomas, Neighborhood Parks Council, Alternative #3

Would like to see both active and passive recreation, including lake dependent recreation without constructing large buildings that would change the character of the site.

Fred Tautenhahn, Pacific Rod & Gun Club, Alternative #2

Keep the Pacific Rod & Gun Club on site.

The club is a historic place that has enabled many to participate in the Olympics.

The existing boathouse should be remodeled.

The Police shooting range will still remain open even if the Pacific Rod and Gun Club is closed.

13 acres are leased to the PR&GC (9 acres are actually used)

VII. Public Comments and Questions

Suzanne Gautier, PUC

Steve Hammond, PUC & WRT Design

Comments and discussion centered on thinking boldly about conservation.

Public Comments

- Connect the lake to the coastal area of the GGNRA
- There is a high algae count and low oxygen count
- This is one of San Francisco's few freshwater lakes left.

- Many expressed concern about the birds that need this environment and the importance of focusing on restoring and preserving a thriving habitat for them. This habitat affects the entire region's birds.
- Some expressed the desire of preserving active recreation.
- Ecological function should be preserved.
 - 1) Remove the trees on the West Mesa to increase wind and movement on the water to preserve ecological function.
 - 2) The Mesa is a compressed ecosystem and an increase in habitat would make a difference in the small ecosystem.
- Lake Merced is the last place in San Francisco to see a wild duck-- "Save the last of the least and the best of the rest."
- Connectivity should be included in decision making—looking beyond the lake.
- Many encouraged looking at the experience at the lake and the passive activities.
- When considering the location of the boat house a concession should be considered
- The nature Center should be at Sunset Circle at Lake Merced because it is the most nature rich site. The location of the Nature Center should be based on a set of criteria.
- Many expressed support for scenario #3 of removing the gun club and restoring the land.

Public Questions and Answers

Q. Public: Can the path be moved closer to the lake and away from the road?

A. PUC: That is possible. Michael Painter conducted a trail feasibility study on how to improve the existing trails and make social trails less attractive while improving connectivity among areas.

Q. Public: Would changing the launching location for the boats adversely affect the boaters?

A. No according to the boaters.

Q. Public: What has been done to mitigate pesticide runoff from the golf course?

A. PUC: We are not sure of the exact precautions being taken

Q. Public: Will the SFPD shooting range remain if the Pacific Rod and Gun Club is removed?

A. PUC: The SFRPD shooting range owns the land and is out of the scope of this project.

Q. Public: Will the nature preserve be off limits to the public?

A. PUC: Parts of the preserve will be accessible to the public. There are many different types of preserve and the purpose of such a designation is not to keep humans out.

VIII. Announcements and Thank You

Meredith Thomas, NPC

Park Group Updates

Announcements

Joe DiMaggio/North Beach Playground Work Day, Saturday, August 16th, 9am - Noon

Located at Columbus and Greenwich Streets

Merced Heights Playground Work Day, Saturday, August 23rd, 9am - Noon

Located at Sheilds and Byxbee Streets

In NPC's 2008 Playground Report Card both Joe DiMaggio Playground and Merced Heights Playground received a failing grade of "D." One of the most immediate concerns at both sites is dirty, unsafe sand. To address this issue, volunteers at each workday will be replacing existing sand with new sand provided by NPC's Playground Initiative. Refreshments will be provided.

NPC Annual Gala at Duboce Park, Wednesday, September 17th, 6-9pm

Located at Duboce and Steiner

Join us for great food, wine and music under the stars in one of our prized parks! If you would like to volunteer please contact Jennifer Bing at jennifer@cbcsanfrancisco.com or 415.821.9693.

For more information on the gala or to buy tickets please visit www.sfnpc.org.

Meeting Ground Rules

- We treat each other with respect, even when we disagree.
- We stay on topic.
- We intend to develop personal relationships to enhance trust and open communication.
- We value constructive feedback. We will avoid being defensive and give feedback in a constructive manner.
- We emphasize open and honest communication - there are no hidden agendas.
- We de-personalize discussion of issues - no attacks on people.
- One person talks at a time; there are no side discussions
- We turn off cell phones
- We arrive on time
- We end on time