



Creating, Enhancing and Protecting the Unique Beauty and Livability of San Francisco

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THE CABLE

SUMMER 2005

RINCON HILL UPDATE

In meetings with individual Planning Commissioners as well as through public testimony before the entire Commission, SFB voiced strong opposition to an exception recently incorporated into the Rincon Hill Plan. This exception provides the Planning Commission with the option to approve development on two properties that will violate the tower separation requirements set forth in the Plan. Despite our efforts, the Planning Commission voted 5-2 to allow this exception to remain in the Plan. Fortunately, this decision can still be overturned before the Board of Supervisors this summer.

The Rincon Hill Plan calls for a dense but livable community that intersperses tall, slender towers with townhouses, offers neighborhood-serving retail and incorporates linear parks (called living streets) into the neighborhood's pedestrian network. For nearly two years, SFB has actively participated in the public process in order to refine the Plan. In fact, SFB's

suggestion that the Plan include pocket parks has been incorporated into the current draft with potential park sites being identified.

Tower spacing is a key urban design component of the Rincon Hill Plan and is meant to protect views as well as ensure that adequate amounts of light and air reach the streets below. Unfortunately, the exception violates the Plan's own requirement that towers be built at least 115 feet apart. While the near-term impacts to Rincon Hill are a concern, so are the long-term repercussions: the continuation of the City's long-standing practice of "planning by exception." Developers will continue to expect that their non-conforming projects will be approved and project-by-project development will continue to be the norm.

The Rincon Hill Plan provides a timely opportunity for the City to stop "planning by exception." Please contact your supervisor and request that the exception be removed from the Plan.



SEEKING CABLE CAR SOLUTIONS

This year's MUNI budget calls for a \$2.00 increase in the fares for our city's beloved cable cars. While service cuts are not planned for these moving historic landmarks, inadequate service along cable car routes has raised concerns as has the current altered appearance of some of these classic San Francisco symbols. Reaching back to our roots in founder Friedel Klussmann's successful campaign to save the cable cars, San Francisco Beautiful has formed a working group to address these issues. Its chair Carmen Clark indicated that "San Francisco Beautiful will gather information to better understand cable car operations and then explore initiatives for improving service reliability and productivity."

OLD EMPORIUM Citizens Win Lawsuit

When San Francisco Beautiful learned that the historic façade and office portion of the Old Emporium had been demolished in violation of permits, we contacted Mayor Gavin Newsom and recommended that the City require the developer to implement substantial mitigation measures that will have a clear public benefit and support historic preservation efforts in San Francisco. After several months of deliberations, preservationists have won an out of court settlement. SFB was asked to nominate a representative for the panel that will determine how the cash award from the developer will be spent. SFB nominated board member and preservationist Mark Ryser. Here is his summary of the case.

By Mark Ryser, SFB Board Member

A citizen's lawsuit in response to violations of permits approved for the shopping mall and multi-screen theater complex being built on the Market Street site of the former Emporium department store has been settled. Under terms of the settlement, the City will receive a \$2.5 million payment for historic preservation from the developer. In addition, the Redevelopment Agency adopted changes in how it will treat historic architectural resources on an ongoing basis; and the Mayor has committed to improve how the City deals with historic architectural resources in a number of important ways.

Late last summer, developers of the site occupied by the former Emporium

department store had demolished the Market Street portion of the building and retained only its façade. This was in apparent violation of the permits granted in 2000. The Redevelopment Agency, the local government body with responsibility to oversee the project, called the act "a serious violation of the developer's obligations." The developer, Forest City/Westfield, denied any violation and refused calls for mitigation measures.

San Francisco Beautiful and a handful of other local groups publicly urged the Mayor and the Board of Supervisors to uphold the law. Two citizen groups, San Franciscans Upholding the Downtown Plan and San Franciscans for Preservation Planning, filed a lawsuit. In May, the case was settled and a panel was formed to determine how to spend the cash award.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT



**GILBERT H.
CASTLE, III**

“EYE OF THE BEHOLDER”

Several members of SFB's Board of Directors and staff recently held a 90 minute meeting with San Francisco's Planning Director, Dean Macris, and two of his senior managers. After highly productive discussions focusing on several of SFB's salient civic issues, Mr. Macris raised a new topic. He asked us to think about how SFB could help bring about better architecture in San Francisco. Other cities achieve superb urban design (i.e., Chicago), so why not our great city?

We are now giving careful thought to how, indeed, SFB could promote superior architecture, landscape architecture, and other components of the urban environment, either on our own or jointly with other organizations. Mr.

Macris has issued us a worthy challenge, certainly one entirely within our mission and tradition. Stay tuned!

Meanwhile, I've been thinking about the corollary question of who decides whether proposed structures are beautiful or not. Designs that transcend “same-old same-old” run the risk of being too different or too strange for some people's taste. The new de Young Museum, scheduled to open in October, is already a case in point of a major new structure that engenders love-it-or-hate-it responses. Existing structures of often debated merit include the Vaillancourt Fountain, the Marriott Hotel at Fourth and Mission Streets (a.k.a. “The Jukebox Marriott”), “Cupid's Span” by Claes Oldenburg and Coosje van Bruggen, and “Sea Change” by Mark di Suvero.

I'm wondering what we can learn about civic beauty by studying structures that many people consider ugly? One way to start would be to assemble a list of controversial buildings, public art works, etc. Let's hear from you, SFB members! What civic features in San Francisco would you nominate for an “Anti-Beautification Award”? Please send your nominations to sfb@sfbeautiful.org or in writing with any comments you care to make, and I'll report back the results in a future newsletter.



**MICHAEL
DOWLING**
New Board
Member

Like many people my age (56) I grew up during the activist period of the sixties, graduating from the University of Arkansas with a BSE in 1971. Unfortunately, I had the misfortune to “win” the draft lottery and immediately upon graduation, was enrolled in Naval Officer Candidate School. As a commissioned officer, I spent three years on active duty, mostly defending the east coast from foreign invasion.

Upon my return to civilian life, I was employed in several capacities, the most significant being my 25-year career with Bank of America. My current role with the bank brought me

to San Francisco in August 2002. I manage the bank's Trust business for the Western region, with offices in 11 cities and 6 states. United Airlines loves me!

I joined the board of San Francisco Beautiful after hearing from two very good friends and fellow members, George Fleharty and Peter Fortune, about all of the good deeds that the organization has accomplished. Having spent most of my adult life serving on various civic and community boards, SFB sounded exactly like the kind of group for me. And so far, I've seen nothing to dissuade this view.

In addition to SFB, I am currently on the boards of the San Francisco General Hospital Foundation and the Koret Family House. I am also a member of the San Francisco Estate Planning Council and the Olympic Club.

My wife Liz and I live in the Marina district with our two rescued greyhounds, Gus and Sadie. Liz and I love the city, especially the diversity of cultures, neighborhoods and people.



2005 San Francisco Prize Octavia Boulevard Housing Design Competition awarded \$10,000 to each First Place winner's Envelope A+D (top) and Amit C. Price Patel (bottom). See www.sfprize.org for details. San Francisco Beautiful has been on the planning committee and has acted as fiscal agent for all four SF Prize competitions.



SAN FRANCISCO BEAUTIFUL

564 MARKET STREET, SUITE 709
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA 94104
telephone: 415-421-2608
fax: 415-421-4037
E-mail: sfb@sfbeautiful.org
Web site: www.sfbeautiful.org

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San Francisco Beautiful, founded in 1947 by Friedel Klussmann, is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to creating, enhancing and protecting the unique beauty and livability of San Francisco.

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FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

**DEE DEE
WORKMAN**



In the Spring 2005 issue of *The Cable*, I lamented the loss of the City's Neighborhood Beautification Fund (NBF) which was no longer funding community groups to carry out improvement projects; it was being used instead to plug holes in the Department of Public Works' budget. I am now happy to report that San Francisco Beautiful and others have been successful in getting a portion of the money returned to the Fund.

Hundreds of thousands of dollars are designated to the Fund by local business owners each year. But since 1990, when the Fund was created by a charter amendment put on the ballot by San Francisco Beautiful, the Sierra Club and the Chamber of Commerce, fewer and fewer of those dollars have been put towards community grants as was originally intended. This year we were alarmed to learn that the entire Fund had been used to shore up DPW's budget, leaving nothing for neighborhood groups.

San Francisco Beautiful joined other concerned organizations and community leaders to advocate for the money's return. Mayor Gavin Newsom heard us and directed \$250,000 back into the

Fund. Those dollars have been distributed to two dozen neighborhood beautification and clean-up projects across the City. We are particularly pleased that several projects SFB has supported through our Friedel Klussmann Grants Program, including the 16th Avenue Tile Steps Project, the Visitacion Valley Greenway and the Japantown Task Force, have received NBF funding.

We applaud the mayor's directive and consider the return of the funding as a good start in replenishing the Neighborhood Beautification Fund. We hope, however, that we will not need to fight this battle every year, and that the Fund will be restored in full and remain so in perpetuity, as the people of San Francisco who created it with their vote intended.

WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY



SFB board member Linda Muir works our booth with Channing Sargent of the SF Parks Trust at World Environment Day: Green City Expo. The Neighborhood Parks Council and Friends of the Urban Forest also shared our booth.

KLUSSMANN GRANTS 18TH YEAR OF GIVING

San Francisco Beautiful's Friedel Klussmann Grants Program has begun its 18th year of funding. Over the years, \$888,000 has been given to 224 community projects. Each undertaking, in some way, has enhanced San Francisco's beauty and livability. Whether a cleanup or planting; a stairway development; a neighborhood survey or plan; a schoolyard planting or educational material, SFB has continuously provided the support needed to make these projects feasible. We start 2005 with grants for the simple items of tools, tiles and paint that makes possible three splendid undertakings.

San Francisco Clean City Coalition, Tool Lending Center received \$5,000 to purchase tools for neighborhood beautification endeavors.

Hillcrest Elementary School, Mosaic Tile Mural Project received \$5,000 for supplies and artist Bob Beuschting's expertise working with students to create the tile artwork.

Tenderloin Neighborhood Development Corporation, Ritz Hotel Façade Improvement Project received \$5,000 to paint the cornice, trim and windows and for detailing the architectural embellishments.

Consider a Klussmann Grant for
your next community
beautification project! Go to
www.sfbeautiful.org; call 421.2608

MEMBERSHIPS / SALES

If you are not a member of San Francisco Beautiful, please become one today. Your contribution is tax-deductible to the extent provided by law.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Friedel Klussmann Circle: \$5,000 | <input type="checkbox"/> Contributor: \$100 |
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San Francisco Beautiful
564 Market Street, #709
San Francisco, CA 94104
415-421-2608; Fax: 415-421-4037
sfb@sfbeautiful.org www.sfbeautiful.org
501(c)(3) Federal Tax ID #: 94-6106011

GREEN SCHOOLYARD ALLIANCE: *Keeping the Momentum*

To ensure that its full potential is realized, the San Francisco Green Schoolyard Alliance (SFGSA) has adopted a streamlined infrastructure and elected a six member Executive Committee. San Francisco Beautiful's Program Director Tamar Cooper was elected vice-chair.

The Executive Committee will:

- ◆ oversee Alliance operations and budget
- ◆ determine how the Alliance will use its resources based on Alliance priorities
- ◆ oversee Alliance task forces which are responsible for completing assigned projects. (Current projects include developing a fundraising strategy and creating a resource directory for those

interested in starting a green schoolyard. Cooper is heading the directory project.)

The Alliance has already benefited from this new infrastructure. One task force recently organized a tour of five of the City's thriving green schoolyards. San Francisco Board of Education Members Jill Wynns, Norman Yee, Eric Mar and Sarah Lipson attended the tour. These guests were guided around each green schoolyard by a cross-section of the schools' communities: students, parents, teachers, principals and garden educators. Between stops, members of the SFGSA discussed the Alliance's efforts to support these outdoor learning environments. The school board members were full of positive feedback and useful suggestions.



Amy Meyer (l) sits with Ann and Richard Lanzerotti who opened their home to San Francisco Beautiful supporters.

SPECIAL MEMBER EVENT

San Francisco Beautiful had a full house when they threw a May party. The event provided an opportunity for SFB to thank its biggest supporters and re-energized their commitment to our good work. Costs were kept down due to the generosity of board members Ann Lanzerotti (and her husband Richard), Marilyn Duffey, Gilbert Castle and Mara Feeny and donations from Trader Joe's and the Jug Shop.

MID-MARKET PLAN: *Preservation an SFB Priority*

For over three years, San Francisco Beautiful has been commenting on the Mid-Market Plan and Special Use District (SUD). The Plan establishes goals, objectives and policies for all future projects taking place in Mid-Market roughly located along the stretch of Market Street between 5th and 10th Streets. The SUD document delineates specific amendments to the City's Planning Code that establish additional land-use controls and standards unique to this area. The Planning Commission is currently reviewing the Plan and SUD. SFB has submitted its comments to the Commissioners.

Since nearly a quarter of the buildings in Mid-Market are architecturally and/or historically significant, SFB's comments stressed the importance historic preservation has in any redevelopment and revitalization of this area as these buildings are the key to ensuring a distinct identity. SFB cautioned against preservation incentives losing their current value and recommended that a thorough assessment of historic resources be conducted.

In addition to historic preservation, SFB also voiced its interest in participating in the collaborative effort to draft the Urban Design Guidelines for Mid-Market once the Plan and SUD documents are adopted by the City.

**SAN FRANCISCO BEAUTIFUL'S
2005 BEAUTIFICATION
AWARDS DINNER
"Environmental Solutions
and Urban Beauty"
THURSDAY, OCTOBER 20TH**

With Executive Director Dee Dee Workman presenting the 2005 Beautification Awards and Henry Tenenbaum host of KRON4's Henry's Garden as Master of Ceremonies

Contact Ron Wong and Associates
415.355.9988

SAN FRANCISCO BEAUTIFUL

564 MARKET STREET, SUITE 709
SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94104

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