



CITY COUNCIL/REDEVELOPMENT/GVMID

MINUTES

January 26, 2009

BRISBANE COMMUNITY MEETING ROOM, CITY HALL, 50 PARK PLACE, BRISBANE

CALL TO ORDER/FLAG SALUTE

Mayor Richardson called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. and led the flag salute.

ROLL CALL

Councilmembers present: Barnes, Bologoff, Conway, Waldo, and Mayor Richardson
Staff present: City Manager Holstine, Community Development Director Prince, City Clerk Spediacci, Senior Planner Tune

WORKSHOP – PRESENTATION ON PUBLIC SPACE AND RECREATIONAL USES AT THE BAYLANDS

1. Introduction

Mayor Richardson said she and CM Conway, as members of the Council's Baylands Open Space Subcommittee, heard an impressive panel discussion about open space planning a few months ago and thought the entire Council and members of the public would benefit from a similar session.

Community Development Director Prince noted that this workshop and subsequent planning workshops are built on feedback from citizens regarding options for open space uses at the Baylands. He introduced Peter Dangermond, of the Dangermond Group, who was hired by the City to help develop a master open space plan for the Baylands. He said Mr. Dangermond would be moderating the panel discussion.

2. Panel Discussion

Peter Dangermond, Dangermond Group, described his background and experience as a park planner and open space planner. He noted that open space and focal points are important amenities for people living in a community, and careful planning is essential to ensure their

success.

Mr. Dangermond introduced Michael Tymoff, Project Manager, San Francisco Mayor's Office of Economic and Workforce Development, and invited him to discuss the planning process for the development on Treasure Island.

Mr. Tymoff explained that the development on Treasure Island consists of 6,000 new homes, 500 hotel rooms, 270,000 square feet of retail space, and 300 acres of open space, and creative re-use of certain historic buildings. He said the primary goals of the development are sustainability, transportation, housing and community benefits, and parks and open space. He noted these goals are implemented through clustering of development around intermodal transportation facilities, creating a complete and self-contained community with a mix of residential and retail uses, and providing open space and parks to attract visitors to Treasure Island. Mr. Tymoff showed a diagram of the Treasure Island development and pointed out some of its key features.

Mr. Tymoff stated that the three guiding principles of the open space planning were creating a distinct identity for a new regional destination through a mix of programs, cultural facilities, and recreational activities; providing diversity by establishing an open space framework that allows for a variety of uses and evolution over time; and fostering sustainability by connecting residents and visitors with opportunities to learn about and participate in food production, natural systems, and green infrastructure. Mr. Tymoff discussed critical design and programming issues, including the mix of private and public realms; regional and resident-serving programs; activating the public realm; phasing of development; integrating sustainability; design, governance, and funding; and viability of operations.

Mr. Tymoff displayed a map of the open space at Treasure Island and identified the locations of small neighborhood parks, a large park, a regional sports facility, places for shoreline activities, environmental art, a 20-acre organic farm area, and a marina. He showed slides depicting views of these areas.

Mr. Tymoff described governance and funding possibilities, including hiring a managing agency, entering into partnerships with other public agencies, and public-private partnerships.

Mr. Dangermond introduced Dave Gould, Diablo Vista District Superintendent, California State Parks.

Mr. Gould said he currently serves as district superintendent for the state parks in the Bay Area. He noted that the first step in planning for parks and open space is defining the community's vision and mission for the site, and he emphasized the need to create a distinct sense of place. He encouraged Brisbane to think about ways of attracting children to the open space at the

Baylands.

Mr. Gould advised that a common mistake in park planning is overlooking the people responsible for maintaining the grounds and facilities. He strongly recommended involving those people in the early stages of the planning process to ensure that their input is considered.

Mr. Dangermond introduced Michael Boland, landscape architect and Chief Planning, Projects and Program Officer for the Presidio Trust.

Mr. Boland stated that the Presidio Trust manages about 80 percent of the property in the Presidio of San Francisco and has guided its transformation from a military base to a national park. He described the history of the Presidio and explained how the area became a national park. He noted that the Presidio has a unique system of governance, the Presidio Trust, an entity created specially by Congress. Unlike other national parks, he added, the Presidio is mandated to become financially self-sufficient by 2013.

Mr. Boland said the values driving the transformation process include heritage preservation; environmental leadership and stewardship, and public service. He noted that the Presidio has numerous cultural, historical, and natural resources that must be protected and enhanced. He discussed how sustainability has been incorporated in management practices and park design.

Mr. Boland described some of the Presidio Trust's key accomplishments in terms of building projects and new public programs. He said asphalt was removed from the main post area and replaced with plants, existing ball fields were refurbished, new educational programs for youth were introduced, and public amenities such as a campground, new trails and scenic overlooks, and shoreline enhancements were added.

Mr. Boland noted that the Presidio faces both challenges and opportunities. He emphasized the need to achieve a balance between creating a vibrant public place and satisfying the desires of the community.

Mr. Dangermond encouraged the community to define its vision for what it wants to achieve at the Baylands. He said some of the key values identified at past workshops and community meetings were sustainability and green building, a mix of active uses, and extensive open space. He reviewed the guiding principles for the development at the Baylands: a large amount of open space and recreation south of Visitacion Creek, sustainability as a foundation for open space, wetlands restoration, community amenities and regional attractions, views to the Bay, and connections for pedestrians, bicycles, and vehicles.

Mr. Dangermond noted that the primary features and opportunities at the Baylands are the

lagoon, Visitacion Creek, Icehouse hill, the historic buildings, and the Bay Trail. He said constraints include freeway noise, wind, contamination, separation from the rest of the community and the hills, and the lagoon shoreline.

Mr. Dangermond noted that the planning process for the open space at the Baylands entails several steps, the first being gathering information about technical issues, environmental issues, aesthetics, social issues, and financial issues. After that, he said, the City will need to obtain input from the Council, advisory groups, and the public. Mr. Dangermond indicated that he would be meeting separately with the Parks, Beaches and Recreation Commission, the Planning Commission, and the Open Space and Ecology Committee during the next two weeks.

Mr. Dangermond reviewed a list of ideas and suggestions made at previous meetings and workshops. He noted that developing a master concept plan for the Baylands will take into account the site's primary features and constraints, the desires expressed by the community, potential uses, connectivity, habitat preservation, economic enhancement potentials, internal and external compatibilities, and creation of destination sites and community focal points.

3. Councilmember Questions and Comments

Mr. Dangermond invited comments and questions from Councilmembers.

Mayor Richardson thanked Mr. Dangermond and the guest panelists. She encouraged members of the public to attend and participate in the meetings with the City's advisory groups.

CM Barnes asked what proportion of the Treasure Island project was open space. Mr. Tymoff responded that approximately 350 acres of the total 450 acres would be open space. CM Barnes asked how the development could generate enough revenues to support so much open area. Mr. Tymoff explained that Treasure Island is subject to the Tidelands Trust, which prohibits certain uses. Because most of the land is protected from development, he said, an agreement was negotiated with the State Lands Commission to exempt about 100 acres on Treasure Island from the Tidelands Trust in exchange for protection of an equivalent amount of land on Yerba Buena Island. Mr. Tymoff stated that generating sufficient revenues will be a major challenge, and the planners hope that creation of a regional destination and other public amenities will attract people. He said there will be ongoing fundraising activities to support the park system and promote stewardship.

CM Barnes asked how the development will adapt to rises in sea levels. Mr. Tymoff replied that a number of different measures will be taken to address sea level rises and geotechnical conditions. He said the elevation of the developed parcels will be 3 feet higher than grade, and the perimeter of the island will also be raised. He noted that the development engineers are

looking at adaptive management strategies, such as building a seawall or a levee, if changes happen sooner than anticipated.

CM Barnes said he was aware that some contaminated portions of the island were being remediated. He asked about the locations of the contamination and how the problem was being addressed. Mr. Tymoff responded that most of the site is fairly clean, but there is a large solid waste disposal area in the northwest corner where the existing residences are located. He said the U.S. Navy is cleaning up contamination, and the areas where future houses are constructed will be cleaned up to make them safe for residential use by removing soil and using bioremediation.

CM Barnes asked about the phasing of the residential and open space components of the development. Mr. Tymoff indicated that the first phase of construction will be in the center of the island near the ferry terminal, with the mixed-use and residential areas, and the subsequent phases will radiate out from that core. He noted that the great park and the wetlands are likely to be built in phases as well. He added that the open space will generally be built in tandem with the residential neighborhoods.

CM Barnes asked how members of the public would be able to access the open space and what numbers of visitors are envisioned to activate the public spaces. Mr. Tymoff responded that creating a diversity of uses will be the main way to attract visitors. He noted that people can come to the island via ferry, buses, and cars.

Mr. Dangermond advised that there are studies showing how many people are needed to support uses without overcrowding. CM Barnes said having this information will be useful to planning public spaces on the Baylands.

CM Barnes observed that the Presidio embraces a very large area, and he asked Mr. Boland what steps were being taken to make the area safe for visitors. Mr. Boland stated that the Presidio has its own police force to patrol the 1,490 acres, and the site's history as a military base also helps keep it secure. He noted there are about 6 million square feet of built space, over 800 structures. CM Barnes pointed out that the Presidio is roughly three times the size of the Baylands, and if the Baylands are built to the density of The Presidio, the Baylands would contain 2 million square feet of buildings.

CM Barnes asked how the Presidio Trust plans to become financially self-sufficient and what uses generate the most revenue. Mr. Boland responded that one of the Trust's first priorities was rehabilitating the existing 1,100 housing units to produce a stable revenue source. In addition, filmmaker George Lucas funded a successful digital arts complex, and a handful of non-residential cultural and educational projects have contributed additional funds.

CM Bologoff noted that about 70 percent of the Treasure Island development will be open space, and he asked why more of the land was not being developed. Mr. Tymoff said the Tidelands Trust prohibits residential and commercial uses. He noted that Yerba Buena Island is not subject to those restrictions, so future development there will include retail uses, a historic district, and about 200 residential units. Mr. Tymoff added that the U.S. Coast Guard owns 36 acres on Yerba Buena Island and the U.S. Department of Labor owns a 35-acre job training campus on Treasure Island, and those sites will be left undisturbed.

CM Bologoff asked about transportation services to and from Treasure Island. Mr. Tymoff stated that the development will pay for three ferries that will transport people between the island and San Francisco.

CM Conway confirmed that Mr. Dangermond had read Brisbane's Open Space Plan.

Mayor Richardson said an audience member spoke with her before the meeting about the importance of not destroying wildlife and habitat in order to create parks and open space. She asked how these factors were balanced in the Treasure Island and Presidio developments.

Mr. Tymoff stated that Treasure Island is a completely flat, manmade island with little or no habitat value. He noted that the Treasure Island project will create new habitat for wildlife as well as a wetlands area that will help treat storm runoff before it reaches the Bay.

Mr. Gould acknowledged that there are often tradeoffs between protecting natural and cultural resources when developing parks and open space. He emphasized the need for balance between preservation and serving the needs of the public.

Mr. Boland said all activities in the Presidio are guided by specific documents, and the vegetation management plan is the most important document pertaining to wildlife. He noted that the planners have worked hard to create wildlife corridors to reconnect habitat fragments that will result in a more sustainable wildlife population. He encouraged people in Brisbane to think about ways of connecting habitat at the Baylands.

Mayor Richardson thanked the presenters. She proposed extending the meeting beyond 9:30 p.m. to allow more time for public comments.

4. Public Comments

Mayor Richardson invited comments from audience members. She asked speakers to limit their remarks to three minutes.

Fran Martin, Visitacion Valley Greenway Project, noted that her group has worked with Michael Boland and the Trust for Public Land. She said the Greenway Project has become a model for developing urban infill open space. She encouraged the consultants and people of Brisbane to think regionally when planning the Baylands. She observed that this area has a wealth of natural resources that should be connected. She expressed support for providing plenty of open space for residents of Visitacion Valley and the Schlage Lock site to enjoy.

Anja Miller, Brisbane resident, said she served on the Candlestick Park Planning Committee in the 1970's, and the principles established at that time still apply. She noted that remaining true to that vision will be challenging when coping with changes in the future. She observed that the City of Brisbane has a golden opportunity to choose uses for the Baylands that will meet the needs of future generations. She urged the Council and consultants to think about what would be the highest and best uses for the open space, and she suggested considering food production and renewable energy in addition to recreation.

Dana Dillworth, Brisbane, noted that Mr. Tymoff talked about an inland food production area on Treasure Island. She asked if growing shellfish or seaweed for food had been considered as part of a sustainable plan for Treasure Island.

Ms. Dillworth recommended providing some undisturbed open space at the Baylands. She agreed with Ms. Martin that a regional approach should be taken to preserving the watershed and wildlife habitat. She showed a picture of the seasonal wetlands at the Baylands and noted the area is an important resource for migratory birds and other wildlife. She advocated keeping much of the area open and undisturbed.

Ms. Dillworth noted that the Baylands is an ideal location to serve as a hub for moving goods by electric rail instead of by truck, and she urged the City to think about this possibility.

Mr. Tymoff said he did not think any aquaculture uses had been considered for Treasure Island.

Leesa Whitten-Greenlee, chair of the Open Space and Ecology Committee, asked if Treasure Island had so much open space because high-density residential development resulted in a small footprint for the project. Mr. Tymoff stated that the project has a compact footprint of high-density development around the multimodal transportation center at its core. He added that the value of open space increases with its continuity, another benefit of compact development. Ms. Whitten-Greenlee expressed support for the concept of compact development to provide more open space. She encouraged the consultants to provide plenty of natural open space at the Baylands.

Daniel Ames, Brisbane resident, thanked the consultants for their interesting presentations. He recommended considering mycoremediation using oyster mushrooms as an inexpensive and effective way to clean up soil contaminated with hydrocarbons. He said his own experiments have shown that mycoremediation removes 97 percent of hydrocarbons in contaminated soil.

Arnold Pablo, Brisbane, noted that Mr. Boland used the word “preservation” a number of times, and he asked if the Lucas project was consistent with this concept. Mr. Boland commented that not everything at the Presidio contributes to its historical significance. He said the Lucas project, housed on the site of an old hospital building that was removed, was an effort to consolidate development to make the park more sustainable.

Mr. Pablo commented that high density could be achieved by having taller buildings. Mr. Tymoff said vehicular access is a major limiting factor at Treasure Island. He noted that the project will include six tall buildings.

Mr. Pablo asked about ways of making parks more children-oriented. Mr. Dangermond replied that many features can attract children, such as play equipment and exploration areas. He noted that some state parks have natural areas set aside for use of geographic positioning systems that are popular with children.

Dave Cromeau, Brisbane resident, said he was very excited about the prospects presented by the Baylands. He recommended providing connections with the Bay Trail, bicycle paths, and other parts of town.

Mayor Richardson thanked audience members for their input.

MAYOR/COUNCIL MATTERS

A. Communication from Pilarcitos Cyclesports regarding Baylands Recreational Uses

CM Barnes suggested hearing from Tom Simpson, Pilarcitos Cyclesports, about how active recreational bike use might be integrated in the public space and open space areas at the Baylands.

Tom Simpson, Pilarcitos Cyclesports, said his organization creates events for bicycle athletes, including several events in Brisbane since 2003. He noted that it is difficult to find traffic-free locations in the heart of the Bay Area that are suitable for bicycle events. He observed that cycling is an increasingly popular sport for people of all ages, and it would be an excellent use of open space at the Baylands.

CM Conway asked how much acreage would be needed for a bicycle course. Mr. Simpson said there are two types of events, road races and cyclocross races. He estimated that a bicycle race could be held on a site as small as 300 yards by 150 yards. He noted that the last event at the Brisbane Marina was held during the evening hours and attracted about 500 participants.

CM Barnes said bike parks can be used for both active recreation and open space uses. He cited a new bicycle park in Boulder, Colorado, as an example.

CM Conway encouraged interested citizens to attend the subsequent open space planning workshops with the Parks, Beaches and Recreation Commission on February 4, the Planning Commission on February 5, and the Open Space and Ecology Committee on February 11.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, CM Waldo made a motion, seconded by CM Conway, that the meeting be adjourned. The motion was carried unanimously by all present and the meeting was adjourned at 9:30 p.m. with no announcements.

ATTEST:

Sheri Marie Spediacci
City Clerk