

Minutes of the Marina Bay Neighborhood Council

The September 12, 2012 meeting of the Marina Bay Neighborhood Council was called to order by MBNC President Stan Anderson at 7:40 p.m. Round-robin self-introductions were made.

Stan made a series of announcements/reports including efforts to expand the existing quiet zone at the railroad crossing; he is working with local officials to find a solution for the “private crossing” at All Aboard Storage. He reported on efforts to have a crosswalk installed on Marina Bay Parkway, located near the north entrance to The Shores and crossing over to Marina Bay Condos. This was in response to a resident’s request at a previous MBNC meeting for the City to consider this. The city will not consider this project because there is no sidewalk on the east side of Marina Bay Parkway. Crosswalks must connect to a sidewalk to be considered by the Dept of Public Works. Responsibility for sidewalk construction is up to the private property owner...thus, The Breakers, Sunset Pointe, Marina Bay Condos...all of which are on the side of the street opposite the public sidewalks, would all be responsible for building sidewalks for the City to consider creating crosswalks that would connect to them from opposite sides of the street.

Stan also reported that the community has sent over 400 letters to Assemblymember Nancy Skinner and State Senator Loni Hancock regarding the need for the State to return our funding for the Moody Memorial Underpass. He suggested that there may still be a chance that the funding would be restored so that the underpass project can move forward; on a happier note, the Meade Street Bypass is still under construction, pictures are on our website and the project is expected to be completed by the end of 2012.

Beat Copy Report: Officer David Longacre, our “Beat 1” Beat Officer, reported that in the last two months, there have been 8 reported crimes in our area: three auto burglaries, two identity theft incidents, one criminal threat at the Harbor Master’s Building, one vandalism incident at The Shores and one residential burglary. He also described the police response to some peeping Tom/prowler reports and emphasized that residents should call the non-emergency number to report any unusual or suspicious activity. The RPD knows who the prowler is (and the man has a substantial criminal record) but cannot arrest him unless they catch him in the act. Officer Longacre reminded residents that it is strongly suggested that window treatments be used at night for privacy so that potential criminals will not be able to see inside their homes. A homeowner from Promontory described an incident in which her car window had been hit by a rock thrown from a highway soundwall as she exited 580 and the ensuing difficulty she had communicating with the police in reporting the incident.

Tom Leatherman, National Parks Superintendent – Rosie the Riveter World War II Home Front

National Historical Park: Tom presented an overview of our local National Historical Park (as well as three other national park facilities in the area: Port Chicago, and two others). He described how the Rosie Memorial provides the focal point for the broader story of how the Home Front effort changed the entire Richmond community during World War II. He presented a PowerPoint showing a number of historical locations in Richmond which represent other elements including health care facilities, housing and day care. He invited everyone to visit the new Visitor’s Center in the former Oil House and to watch for the new video presentation which includes many examples of oral history recordings.

Joe Lorenz, Public Affairs Officer at Chevron: Mr. Lorenz spoke about the August 6 refinery fire. He presented Chevron’s 30 day report on the incident and described their efforts to understand what happened and why the Community Warning system did not function as well as expected. As described in the report, the incident began with a small leak and escalated into a major fire when a section of pipe failed.

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Lorenz noted that Chevron had made a series of notifications to emergency responders and reminded everyone that the company is not the entity which operates the community warning system. He said, "The siren system is lumpy, at best." He also stated that the shelter in place and phone call systems were both inconsistent. He indicated that Chevron is working with Contra Costa County to improve the communications system as well as enhance the monitoring system to provide real time information, including particulate levels. The air monitoring that was conducted was also inconsistent or "spotty." He described the ongoing investigations by both the company and federal regulators (Chemical Safety Board) to identify the cause(s) of the pipe's severe thinning and ultimately, its failure, and suggested that Chevron may be issuing a bulletin to other parts of the industry if its investigation indicates that this type of failure might be expected at other refineries. Gasoline prices have gone up largely due to speculative pricing by marketers. It was a "double hit" but he said we can expect some moderation in prices. Finally, the investigation is ongoing and the area in question is not in use now as it is still considered a forensic site.

There were a number of questions asked about security concerns (the entire refinery is considered a "designated homeland security" location; there is 24/7 high level security at the plant), impact of the fire on the production levels, anticipated time to restart the unit, negative health effects, relationship between the fire and the planned upgrade of the refinery, sulfur content, refining heavier dirtier crude, effects of the explosion on plant capacity, why flares are used at the plant and what they mean, etc.

Eric Donnelly, a Marina Bay resident who is a chemical engineer at Chevron, has been designated as a community liaison for Chevron. His phone number is 510-242-1403 and his email is: ericdonnelly@chevron.com.

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The next Marina Bay Neighborhood Council Meeting is October 10, 2012, and will be a "Meet the Candidates Night" providing an opportunity to meet and hear from candidates running for openings on the City Council. There will also be some discussion both pro and con on the proposed Sugar Tax.

Please check the home page of our website for additional agenda information, news, past minutes, calendar items, articles, etc. See also <http://ca-richmond2.civicplus.com/index.aspx?NID=2013> for general information about Richmond.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Bob Carr, Secretary
Marina Bay Neighborhood Council