

High Rises in Arden Wood

In April 2006, Arden Wood Inc. announced that 4.6 acres of its 12-acre campus was for sale. The sale was necessary to absorb the \$26,000,000 renovation price and the escalating operating costs of the Arden Wood facility. The neighbors surrounding the Arden Wood Christian Science Nursing facility on Wawona and 15th Avenue in West Portal have been presented two options for the proposed development.

Former City Supervisor Bob Mendelsohn, President of Republic Urban Properties West Coast Division, the developer of the site, has been pushing a plan to neighbors to build two high-rise towers. Republic Urban Properties plans to file for a Planned Unit Development (PUD) to increase the allowable 40-foot height needed to build the towers. The Neighbors of Arden Wood (NOA) do not accept this as a viable option, as the historically quiet, green and low-density area should remain so. Mr. Mendelsohn has stated that if the towers are not built, and low-rise buildings in keeping with current zoning restrictions are built, the green space will be cut down and site maxed out with condominium units.

On November 1, a Town Hall meeting was held at St. Cecilia's Church in West Portal; the meeting was organized by NOA and West of Twin Peaks Central Council in order to educate the greater neighborhood — many people had heard nothing of the site's development proposal. Mr. Mendelsohn presented plans for the condominium complex reflecting the two tower plan, despite neighbors opposition. NOA rebutted Mr. Mendelsohn's plan and itemized their concerns.

The plans for the two towers have been presented at neighborhood association meetings since early 2007 and the response has been negative, but Republic Urban Properties has not revised their plans despite their claim to be open to community input. At a neighborhood meeting on September 24 2007, Mr. Mendelsohn stated he would be filing plans in a matter of days for Environmental Assessment. Since that time, Mendelsohn has stated that plans will not be filed for approximately 90 days, stating that they hope to incorporate community concerns.

During the question and answer period, concern about the additional traffic flowing onto 19th Avenue was raised. One neighbor also questioned if the State would permit access from the site onto 19th Avenue (State Highway 1) since the state prohibited traffic accessing 19th Avenue from the housing project built on the Shriner Hospital site.

An alternative to developing this site for housing was also raised which was that the land be purchased by the City for open space. San Francisco voters renewed the open space fund in 2000 and are still contributing to the fund in a percentage of their property taxes. Both Supervisor Sean Elsbernd and Carmen Chu indicated that the City would not be in a position to purchase the property.

District 7 Supervisor Sean Elsbernd, District 4 Supervisor Carmen Chu, and former Planning Department Zoning Administrator Bob Passmore attended the Town Hall to answer political and planning questions. Supervisor Elsbernd has been asked to represent neighborhood views and act in behalf of the neighborhood at City Hall.

...Rae Doyle (GWPNA) with Eric Castongia

Land Use and Housing Reports

November 12, 2007 Meeting

The Regular Meeting of the CSFN Land Use & Housing Committee was convened by Chair Hiroshi Fukuda on Monday, November 12, 2007 at 5:39 p.m. in the Community Room of the Northern Police Station on Turk and Fillmore Streets.

The Committee considered the following:

1. 125 Crown Terrace: no action. R. Albright was unable to attend and asked to remove the item from the agenda. Project sponsor made a short presentation. The CSFN already passed a resolution and will wait for the soundness report. Item will remain in LU&H Committee.
2. D. Stroh, Dolores Heights Improvement Club (DHIC): CSFN Land Use & Housing Committee voted to request that the Department of Parking & Traffic be required to use a *current* list of residents and property owners to petition for Residential Permit Parking. DPT is apparently using a 20-year-old list when sending notification to residents re permit parking changes.
3. D. LaPointe, Greater West Portal Neighborhood Association requested to agendaize the massive Arden Wood project for January or February in 2008.
4. C. Marsteller reported Supervisor Alioto-Pier sees the need for city-wide NERT training for all managers of buildings with more than 25 units. She is working to professionalize and fund NERT, and to move it into the Office of Emergency Services.
5. C. Marsteller reports that the city plans to adopt the International seismic codes for seismic safety for San Francisco, which reduce appropriateness for area. San Francisco needs seismic safety codes necessary for a seismically-active area.
6. P. Clark, Russian Hill Neighbors: Pre-application meeting was held by project sponsor on a ten-story (100-foot) building being proposed in a 65-foot zoned area. Need to follow this project, application is not yet filed.
7. C. Marsteller/M. Amini: SPUR tax exempt revenue bonds: the CSFN Land Use & Housing Committee voted to ask the Board of Supervisors to continue the item for a full public hearing with standard notification at the BOS Budget & Finance Committee. Additionally, the SPUR's Political Reform Act (PRA) status requires careful examination.
8. H. Fukuda, RCA: Japantown Better Neighborhood Area Plan community meeting was held on October 18, 2007. Survey of attendees was long and important issues i.e. heights, density, and parking was buried within 39 options. Heights, density, and parking have not been seriously discussed in the first four meetings of the steering committee, over Fukuda's objection.
9. J. Berkowitz, EMIA: Pipeline Projects: online on the Planning page: http://www.sfgov.org/site/planning_index.asp?id=58508 Problem is that there is no indication as to *where* in the pipeline the projects are.
10. J. Berkowitz, EMIA: Supervisor Mirkarimi is holding meetings on and considering suggested amendments to the Market-Octavia Area Plan 4:30PM every Friday in the BOS Conference Room, City Hall 2nd Floor.

The next regular meeting of the Committee will be held on Monday, December 10, 2007 at 5:30 p.m. in the Community Room of the Northern Police Station located at Turk and Fillmore Streets.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:52 P.M.

...Hiroshi Fukuda (RCA) Chairman