



Marina

March 10, 2009 ~ 6-8 pm ~ George R. Moscone Rec. Center

Hosted by: Marina Community Association

Approximate number of attendees: 7

AGENDA

INTRODUCTION

- Brad Andersen, Marina Community Association

Opening up the workshop, Brad Andersen of the Marina Community Association (MCA) greeted the participants and thanked the Neighborhood Parks Council and the Department of City Planning for putting on the community workshop.

WELCOME & OVERVIEW OF OPEN SPACE IN SAN FRANCISCO: Why it Matters

- Isabel Wade, Neighborhood Parks Council (NPC)

Next, Isabel Wade of the Neighborhood Parks Council introduced the NPC staff, and thanked everyone for coming. She then mentioned that while there is an abundance of parks and recreation opportunities in San Francisco, they are not always spread evenly throughout the City. As an example, she noted that while the Marina area has an abundant supply of parks, it is actually lacking in the number of playgrounds required to ensure that each resident has access to one within a 10-minute walk. In addition, she also noted that maintenance issues are an ongoing problem and that this is only getting worse given that the Recreation and Parks Department recently had to lay off 72 staff due to budget cutbacks. She noted that in order to keep public pressure up on behalf of parks, it is important to have a good geographic representation of people participating in the workshop series given the different open space needs of various communities. She elaborated on this by mentioning that the Neighborhood Parks Council has been actively engaging a variety of neighborhood groups in order to ensure comprehensive representation in the ongoing workshop series.

After this brief overview, Isabel reviewed the City's effort to address the challenges of Open Space in San Francisco through the Mayor's Open Space Task Force launched in 2007. She described the key outcomes of this current outreach phase of the task force:

- 1) Garnering public ideas and vision to incorporate in a long-term (100 year) Vision Plan for Open Space in San Francisco;
- 2) Creating a ranked priority list of the public's views on what open space issues are most important to tackle and in what order;
- 3) Publishing an Action Plan for the next 5-10 years with all the best ideas from our workshops and from online participation.

POLICY FRAMEWORK: ROSE

- Sue Exline, S.F. Planning Department

Sue Exline of the San Francisco Planning Department next spoke about the Department's revision of the Recreation & Open Space Element (ROSE) of the City's General Plan. The ROSE, written in 1986, is comprised of over-arching objectives related to open space that have a set of associated policies for each objective. The newest version aims to have actionable and specific implementation steps linked to each policy that are universal across agencies. During her presentation, Sue noted that the reason for initiating the update is that the current version is out of date and consequently lacks the status it should have as a strong, guiding policy document for the City. Community input on the revised policies and implementation steps of the ROSE is strongly desired, and the comments recording during the workshop will influence the update directly. She summarized her presentation by mentioning the City's goal of establishing a 5-10 Year Action Plan along with a 100-year Vision Plan for Open Space; both of these documents will utilize the information gathered in the community workshop series. The City aims to have the final draft of the ROSE revision ready for review by late spring of 2009.

Following Sue's presentation, a participant asked how the City plans on maintaining the existing parks and open spaces with all of the recent cutbacks. In response, Sue remarked that it was an excellent question and that addressing those types of issues was the point of the community workshop series. She asked that the participants try to come up with some creative ideas for dealing with the lack of funding issue, and noted that a few ideas had come up in the past including increased volunteerism, and the establishment of park improvement districts (similar to Community Benefit Districts already established in 10 SF neighborhoods for street cleaning).

BREAK-OUT SESSION: Process & Outcomes

- Dee Dee Workman, Host

Following the Policy Framework presentation, Host Dee Dee Workman briefly provided instructions for the workshop's breakout session and reminded the group about the value of their input. She requested that the participants fill out the feedback materials and then prompted group discussion by having each table explore the following central questions:

- "What are the most successful parks and open spaces in your neighborhood?"
- "What are some ways that people can help improve parks and open spaces in your neighborhood?"

Additionally, Dee Dee requested that each table reserve roughly 20 minutes at the end of their conversation in order to distill their top five priorities for open space as a group, both in their neighborhood *and* in the City, from a list of options that had been provided.

COMMUNITY CONVERSATION: Challenges & Opportunities vis a vis Open Space in San Francisco

Break-out Session

During this time, each table engaged in a dynamic, free-flowing discussion that responded to the two central questions, while also raising other issues about open space in the neighborhood and the city. The major concepts/ideas that emerged from the discussion were selected by each table to discuss with the larger group.

Distill Priorities

For this portion of the workshop, each table came to consensus on their top priorities for open space and then recorded these on Open Space Priorities form that had been provided.

REPORT BACK: Top 5 ideas/priorities presented from each group

- *Dee Dee Workman, Host*

A representative from each table shared the main ideas and priorities from their group. The comments from each table are listed below:

Table 1

Major concepts from discussion

- Bathrooms are critical to park use. Both the lack of bathrooms in parks and the general difficulty in accessing those that do exist is a major problem that needs to be addressed.
- Parks are a vital component in promoting the health of children.
- School curriculum should promote the value of parks and the environment. We should *improve the relationship between* schools and parks – and develop a curriculum to teach about environmental issues and foster park/earth stewardship among the youth.
- *Increase the amount and type* of programming in parks in order to meet the needs of different age groups – especially focus on providing programming for seniors.

Priorities – Neighborhood

1. General maintenance
2. Safety
3. Open schoolyards for public access
4. More amenities & activities to serve the needs of the community
5. Other: advertise existing programs and spaces

Priorities – Citywide

1. General maintenance
2. Safety
3. Open schoolyards for public access
4. More amenities & activities to serve the needs of the community
5. Acquire new open space in neighborhoods with a deficit

Table 2

Major concepts from discussion

- Moscone Rec. Center/Park is an example of a successful open space – it has a diversity of programming and excellent level of maintenance.
- Focus on reducing garbage and graffiti in parks as these take too much time away from other efforts by both volunteers and Rec. & Park staff to improve the parks.
- Make an effort to address the over usage of existing facilities because this leads to conflicts in the way people use parks – i.e. Marina Green is now used extensively by

people playing soccer, which forces out passive recreational activities and causes maintenance problems.

- Improve safety by turning parks into “drug free zones”.

Priorities – Neighborhood (*specific order not stated*)

- Safety
- General maintenance
- Open schoolyards for public access
- Develop existing public right-of-ways into linear parks
- More amenities & activities to serve the needs of the community

Priorities – Citywide (*specific order not stated*)

- Open schoolyards for public access
- Increase open space or sports fields
- More amenities & activities to serve the needs of the community
- Acquire new open space for recreational facilities

NEXT STEPS & CLOSING

Staying Involved

Isabel Wade from the Neighborhood Parks Council reiterated that budget issues continue to be an ongoing dilemma for the City’s parks, and that as a result the Recreation & Parks Department needs community support. She then went on to mention that the bridges between that evening’s meeting and the implementation of the 100 year Vision Plan for open space in San Francisco are initiating a number of community-driven projects to improve and maintain the parks, plazas, green streets, and open spaces and keeping meeting participants active in sustaining our investment in open space even through times of economic scarcity. She specifically referred to the Community Challenge Grant Program, which provides grants to community groups of up to \$100,000 twice a year; the 2008 Neighborhood Parks Bond, which includes a \$5 million Community Opportunity Fund for neighborhood parks projects; and the Park, Recreation, and Open Space Advisory Committee (PROSAC), which is an additional source for the acquisition of open space. Isabel also mentioned that NPC and other community organizations can act as a fiscal sponsor to neighborhood groups inspired to enhance their local open space; projects could include greening a street median or starting a community garden.

Isabel then reviewed the ‘Meeting in a Box’ - a handout created to have meeting attendees take back to their friends and neighbors to hold a conversation about open space issues in their neighborhood and in San Francisco, and set priorities for limited resources. Input captured by these small group discussions will be integrated with data and ideas gathered at the larger workshops and used to inform the ROSE update and the Action Plan. In addition to the ‘Meeting in a Box’ exercise, workshop participants were asked to visit the Open Space 2100 website and take the online survey. Available at www.openspacesf.org/survey, the survey collects individual priorities and values regarding open space in San Francisco, and is a very valuable source of information for the aforementioned plans. Isabel also noted that participants would be able to access these meeting notes on the Open Space 2100 website.

Closing Remarks

Isabel Wade thanked the workshop participants for coming, and the Neighborhood Parks Council staff for their hard work in putting on the community workshop. She also thanked Brad Andersen of the Marina Community Association for his help in organizing the workshop. In addition, Isabel also expressed thanks to Sue Exline of the Planning Department for attending.

