

PRESIDIO TRUST PUBLIC BOARD MEETING – October 20, 2005

NOTE: The following is the best transcript available of the public Board meeting of the Presidio Trust Board of Directors held on October 20, 2005. It is based upon an audio recording of the meeting.

Bill Wilson: Good evening. My name is Bill Wilson. I'm the Vice Chair of the Presidio Trust. Dave Grubb, who is the Chairman, is not going to be with us this evening.

We're going to call the meeting to order and note the time, which I think is about 6:35. And I'd like to introduce the other members here. To my very left is Bob Burke. He's a new member of the Presidio Trust. And Nancy Conner is a new member of the Presidio Trust. We're really fortunate to have them. They're both people I've known for a long time. And unfortunately, Curtis Feeny could not be here, but they both bring a lot of expertise in a variety of things and I think that they're going to serve the Presidio Trust very well. And Joe Yew is right here, Lydia Beebe, and Craig Middleton, who's the Executive Director.

I don't know whether Nancy or Bob would like to say something but if they'd like to I think you'd probably enjoy hearing from them.

Nancy Conner: I guess we would! I'm Nancy Conner. And it's really a privilege to be asked to join the Board of the Presidio Trust. I am very admiring of the work that's been done. I'm very admiring of the project. I think the future looks hopeful that we will meet our deadline and preserve this open space. I'm very interested in the park part of the project and look forward to hearing from you all. Thank you.

Bob Burke: I'm Bob Burke and, just to be polite, I suggested Nancy go first but of course she's said all the things I was going to say. But I would echo her comments. I welcome this opportunity. I've had an interest in the Presidio for some years and I'd like very much to be able to contribute to making it a terrific park and an asset for our community. I'm still in the very early stages of getting on top of the issues, but I've been studying the plan and I think I'm getting a feel for what's going on and hope that we'll be able to move forward with all the good work that has already been done. Thank you.

Bill Wilson: I'd like to recognize Craig Middleton. He's the Executive Director, and he's going to talk for ten or 15 minutes about where we are and give us the state of the Presidio Trust.

Craig Middleton: Thanks, Bill. Hello, everybody. It's nice to see you all. Thanks for coming out on a blustery night. I'm sure there were other things you might have been able to do tonight, but we're happy to have you and as usual I'd like to welcome you to the Presidio.

I wanted to tell you a little bit about what we're up to this fiscal year. Our fiscal year starts in October and goes through September, so this is right at the beginning of our fiscal year. And I thought I'd take the next ten or 15 minutes - we're small, so we'll make it kind of informal - and talk about some of our projects. But what I really want to try to get to is the balance; how do we balance the various priorities that we have to balance in order to achieve the Presidio Trust's mission?

I may refer to some documents that you've either heard of and haven't read or haven't heard of. Any documents that I talk about tonight are on our Web site, www.presidio.com, or in the Trust library. So take a look at them if you'd like.

I wanted to talk about some of the projects and the plans that are happening in fiscal year '06, which is the fiscal year we're in now. They're either projects that are underway, projects that are commencing this year, or projects that are being planned this year. But having said all that, projects really don't fall into nice fiscal year categories. They tend to be multiyear projects. And a fiscal year really, October 1 to September 30, is just an arbitrary slice in time. So what I'd like to do, to the extent that I can tonight, is talk about these projects in the context of the broader Presidio and of the broader timeframe that we're working within.

The Presidio Trust works within a five-year strategic plan. We have a framework that is a strategic plan. It's available. You can look at it. And it lays out a set of goals and objectives that we're going to try to meet over the next five years. Our strategic plan that is currently in force goes from 2005 to 2009, and everything we do relates to our mission. And the mission - I'll just quote it, is, "To preserve and enhance the natural, cultural, scenic, and recreational resources of the Presidio for public use in perpetuity and to achieve long-term financial self-sufficiency and sustainability."

Now, that's kind of a mouthful and it's a pretty broad mission, so what we try to do in our strategic plan is to define it further into four

strategic goals and then try to accomplish those. And I'll just mention them briefly. Number one: preserve the rich natural historic and cultural resources of the Presidio. Number two: generate revenue and philanthropy to support the preservation, enhancement and operation of the Presidio. Number three: operate and upgrade the Presidio's facility in a sustainable manner. And number four: encourage public use and understanding of the Presidio.

Now of course the key is to make progress towards accomplishing each of these objectives and to balance our work among them. So as we start to put together our budgets and we start to think about what kinds of projects we need to do to accomplish these five-year objectives, we're always looking for things that will preferably accomplish more than one objective.

Let me make a personal observation, if I might. I think the most wonderful aspect of our work, and I think the Board would probably agree, is to have the opportunity to take care of and enhance and bring back to life really one of America's iconic places - the oldest military post in the nation, a magnificently beautiful and scenic place and a set of resources that is really unique among urban areas. You don't find this kind of thing in most urban areas. I think that's the most wonderful part of it. The most interesting part of it I think is trying to find the right balance. It's all about balance and how we balance these priorities. Now, that's not something that's unique to this public institution - all public institutions and private institutions have to deal with that issue. What is unique for us, though, in the public context is to do so under a Congressional mandate that require us to think about

how we invest our very limited capital and resources wisely in order to be sure that the park is taken care of financially in perpetuity.

We know there's limited time. We know there are limited resources. We know there's limited square footage with which to generate the funds to care for the park. And there's the security of the park, the public programming and maintenance of the park. And so particularly during our early years the Trust really focused on generating a base of revenue, a financial base. And we did that with housing and Lucasfilm. I believe that if we're prudent and we're aggressive, we'll make the finances work. And when that happens the accomplishments will be measured by successes in resource preservation, the quality of the Presidio's public improvements, and the quality of the visitor experience, whether it be a recreational visitor or a history buff or a returning veteran - we had several veterans here last Friday, including the General who was the Commander of Letterman Hospital - or children and teachers who are using the Presidio as an educational tool.

So the work plan that I'm going to talk about a little bit is about preserving and revitalizing buildings, enhancing landscapes, building programmatic capacity, improving habitat and achieving the revenue targets that make everything else possible.

Now, the FY '06 Trust budget provides funding for 93 operating and capital projects. In addition, there are several multiyear projects that were funded in other years previous to this one but the projects are continuing and so you'll see the work going on this year as well. I'm

not going to go through 93 projects - I think the Board would kill me - but what I'd like to do is highlight a few just to give you a sense of how we're calibrating this balance issue.

In the area of historic building reuse and preservation we hope by 2009 to rehabilitate 1,000,000 square feet. Now, to put that in some sort of context the Presidio has about 6,000,000 square feet. Our plan calls for ultimately taking down some of that square footage to arrive at a number of about 5.6 million square feet. We've accomplished roughly 3.1 to 3.2 million square feet and now we want to add to that another 1,000,000 square feet. So it takes us quite a ways toward our goal by 2009.

Currently we're focusing on three geographical areas, the Main Post, the Public Health Service Hospital in the southwest portion of the park, and the westernmost part of Crissy Field. We're also going to be doing planning this year for the Thornburgh area, which is just west of Letterman Digital Arts Complex and north of the Thoreau Center. It's the area right here.

At the Main Post we're actually going to be spending a lot of time this year on the Civil War. And by that I mean I'm sure you've noticed the rehabilitation going on of the Civil War Barracks down at the base of the Main Post near the Fire Station; two wooden barracks. They're actually the oldest buildings on the Main Post, with the exception of the Officers' Club foundations, which are actually, we think, the oldest foundations in the City of San Francisco.

In addition to finishing those buildings and leasing them, we will be looking at finishing up the Queen Annes on Funston Avenue. Funston Avenue is the Civil War streetscape right here on the eastern side of the Main Post and the Queen Annes are those beautiful homes that you see when you come up Presidio and you turn on Funston.

In addition to completing renovation of the Queen Annes, we'll be doing preservation work on those little houses that march up the street towards the Officers' Club on Funston. And as we do the preservation work on those, we are also going to be doing some exploration under the buildings and in the backyards of those buildings where we have found the eastern wall of the original El Presidio built in the 1700s. So it's going to be a very interesting year for archeology and for some of our older buildings, which really need some work.

We'll also be continuing discussions about the Main Post with the Disney Family Foundation, the National Park Service, the Family Violence Prevention Fund, and others to reuse some of the iconic red brick buildings on the western side of the Main Parade Ground as well as the Post Theater. And concurrent with that work we will be continuing the design work on the Main Parade, which ultimately will result in a dramatic transformation of that parking lot into a center of Presidio life. We've had five public meetings on the Main Parade. I imagine we will have more, so I encourage you to get involved. It's a very interesting project.

Switching over to the Public Health Service Hospital in the southern part of the park, we hope to land on an appropriate reuse alternative in

the next several months. I think everyone wants to see something happen down there to revitalize that site. I don't think there's anyone probably anywhere that doesn't want to see that site revitalized. We're currently in discussions with Forest City and we are hoping to come up with a project that is feasible, economically sensible, and one that protects the resources of the area - which are many - and addresses, hopefully very satisfactorily, the neighborhood concerns. That is not an easy project. It hasn't been easy. It's a complex site. But I'm very optimistic and I think we all are very optimistic that, come the beginning of 2006, we'll be ready to go out to the neighborhoods and start talking about a project that we think will work there.

Jumping over to Crissy Field, the western end of Crissy Field, the historic hangars and the associated airfield support buildings are really challenging as well. And it's interesting to note how challenging all these remaining buildings are. There is virtually no utility backbone down there, there are very significant seismic issues for these buildings, and we have a recognition, of course, of the very public nature of the site and the importance of having reuses down there that are compatible with what's going on across the street in the transformed Crissy Field area. We're in negotiations with several organizations right now and we expect to be able to bring forward some very interesting new recreational uses down there in the early part of 2006.

Also associated with Crissy Field and the airfield are the Pilots' Row houses just up the hill towards the Golden Gate Bridge. There are 13 pilots' cottages. There were built in the 1920s for airmen and for their

Commander, and they're currently being rehabilitated completely and completely re-landscaped. I don't know if any of you were able to go on the house tours but many of you - Diane and Gary, I know - participated in putting them on. We had about 1,500 people walk through those houses in September and it was really a great experience to see what had been, what can be, and then learn about the history along the way. Those will be renovated completely by the middle of November and leased out to the public.

Our connecting Pilots' Row to the historic Main Post via the Cavalry Stables, the historic Cavalry Stables, and adjacent to the National Cemetery is the Presidio Promenade. The Presidio Promenade is a trail that will ultimately connect, it's really more of a walkway actually, but it will ultimately connect the Lombard Gate to the Golden Gate. And that trail - you've seen the beginnings of it from the Lombard Gate to the Thoreau Center past Letterman - will continue to grow toward the Golden Gate and will be completed by the end of spring 2006.

We'll also see improvements to the Ridge Trail at the top of the crest and we'll see a new picnic area down by Immigrant Point thanks to the generosity of George and Sejong Sarlo, who paid for Immigrant Point that opened last May and is a beautiful site. Particularly if you want to have a glass of wine at sunset, it's a great spot.

The Presidio's topography offers a wonderful educational opportunity. It offers many, but I want to talk about one in that it provides a complete watershed from springs to bay, in an urban area, all within a

mile of each other. Tennessee Hollow - we're looking for the best way to create a natural and recreational corridor there that will enable people to experience a watershed, from the beginning of the watershed to its conclusion at the marsh and the Bay, but will also enable them to play ball and maybe have a glass of wine or dinner in one of the Tennessee Hollow houses with friends. The area is right here. If you look at the whole watershed it's probably about a fifth of the whole Presidio. And it's complex - there's the watershed, there are springs, there are three creeks, there are archeological remains - we've found foundations of Spanish settlements in the watershed along one of the creeks. There are landfills in the Hollow that need to be remediated. There are popular ball fields. And there are scores of residences.

Now, there's a natural tendency to view that kind of complexity as a set of competing uses and there's a natural tendency for everybody to line up behind their competing use, whichever one they feel most strongly about, and then fight it out. But I would ask you to consider doing something quite different. This is really a wonderful opportunity, for all the reasons I just mentioned, and I hope as we start talking publicly about Tennessee Hollow during the winter and spring of 2006 that people will come to it with a sense that these uses can be complementary. I believe they can and I think the only way that project moves forward is if we start to come to some conclusions that, yes, they can be complementary, yes, we can do a lot in the Hollow, and we can make it a beautiful place for a lot of people.

I mentioned landfills. The Environmental Remediation Program is continuing. The Trust took it over in 1999 from the Army and the

Army paid the Trust to take on the environmental remediation. We're about a third of the way through and we've spent almost a third of the money, or about a third of the money. The big issue - as, Doug Kern, I know you know from the RAB - is to get it all done for the amount of money that you've got. So as we move forward with the remaining 65 to 70 percent of the remediation projects, we're going to really have to be looking at cost and making sure we can get it done.

But it already has generated some really wonderful results. Down on the coast side, if you go over to Baker Beach and along the bluffs there, or up near Fort Scott, landfill removals have given way to really wonderful successes in habitat restoration and reforestation of the historic forest. And there are 30,000 cubic yards you've probably noticed have been taken out of a landfill across the street from the YMCA Gym on Lincoln. And if you take the time to go over there and look into that landfill you'll see a meandering creek bed that is, incidentally, part of Tennessee Hollow and will be restored as a riparian corridor this fall. We're waiting for the rains to start and then we'll be putting in native plants. And there will also be landscape there, a trail and benches. And I think it will be a really beautiful addition.

Finally, financially the Trust is roughly on target to meet its 2009 strategic plan goal - revenue goal, we're talking about - of about 57,000,000 dollars. In order to get there we're going to have to move projects quickly. We can't stagnate. We've got to keep the momentum going. And I would remind you that we also need to keep in mind that the budgetary constraints in Washington are very severe.

They threaten to affect our appropriations. And so that makes the earned revenue piece of what we do all the more important.

One of the Trust's strategic objectives is to create opportunities for the public to enjoy the Presidio. In addition to adding physical amenities to the Presidio's landscape, the ground will break on the Transit Center in a few weeks, restrooms, trails, benches, playgrounds, improved ball fields, all of those things; the Trust continues to build on some program partnerships that have really generated some great programs. I'm talking about programs like Memorial Day, Film in the Fog, Shakespeare in the Park, the Aloha Festival, and Teachers' Night, which brings teachers from all over the City of San Francisco to the Presidio to learn about what's here for kids. And that's happening, incidentally, tonight in the Golden Gate Club. You're welcome to go attend after this.

The Cameron event - I don't know how many of you might have seen "From Above - The Photographic Journey of Robert Cameron." That event brought 150,000 people to the Presidio over the course of the show so it's the kind of thing that really does bring people in. And this coming year you will see an exhibition on Presidio insects and plants that will bring together the works of artists, volunteers and naturalists.

And as we design landscapes - the Main Post, Presidio Promenade, other trails, etc. - we're looking for opportunities always to bring out the interpretive themes of the Presidio, the history of the Presidio, through the landscape. And we are now designing a series of, just as an example, waysides and other landscape features that will be

incorporated into that Presidio Promenade, the Lombard Gate to the Golden Gate trail. We're also looking at how we can bring the history out, a very interesting set of layered events over a period of 200-some odd years, in the landscape and particularly at the Main Post, where so much of it was centered. So we're looking at that with our landscape architects, the Olin Partnership. And that will be part of the discussions as we talk more about the Main Parade in the coming year.

I'm going to stop. I've provided you, I think, with some of the highlights of the programs and the projects that we're planning on doing this coming year. I think it's a balanced approach. I'd like to hear from you what you think. And I would also like to add that we have learned a lot, really, a lot, from our interactions with the public this last year on issues such as the Public Health Service Hospital or environmental remediation issues - many, many issues. So I'd like to ask you if you wouldn't mind getting more involved. We're going to add a few more workshops this year. We're going to add four workshops. These would be informal workshops that give us an opportunity to kind of roll up our sleeves with you and talk about issues like open-space improvements or a more detailed look at our budget and finances or any other issue, really, that you're interested in discussing. And we're going to be doing them about once every three months. Our next one will be on December 6th and it will be about the budget. So, Don, I know you'll probably come to that, I hope. So I look forward to seeing you there. I'd like to turn it back over to you, Bill, and the Board for any comments you might want to make.

Bill Wilson: Does anybody have any comments from the Board? Okay. We'll open it for public comment. Just to remind you, everybody gets three minutes. The microphone is in the middle. We'll hold up a sign when there's one minute left and then when there's 30 seconds and then we'll ring a bell when the time has expired.

We would like everybody to speak into the microphone because we want to make sure we capture the comments for the written record. And I guess we'll start with Diane Herman.

Diane Herman: Good evening. My name is Diane Herman. I'm President of the Fort Point and Presidio Historical Association. About two months ago, on behalf of the board of directors of our association, I wrote a welcoming letter to the new members of the Board and sent copies to the other members of the Board. And in that letter we explained why history is an essential element of the Presidio as a national park and why there has been an apparent stalemate in developing a history program - a comprehensive history program, educational program - at the Presidio and why it's particularly appropriate for the Trust to address this issue now. I hope all of you received the letter, and if you haven't I'll be glad to send additional copies out.

In that letter, the Association suggested a number of actions that we thought the Trust might want to consider now. I'd like to focus on two of those this evening. The first is with respect to what was called an interpretation plan that was to be a joint plan developed by the Presidio Trust and the National Park Service. It's been in the works since 2000, and we recommended if that plan has not been actually produced

by October 31st of this year that the Trust consider retaining appropriate consultants to complete that plan, an action plan for comprehensive interpretation, historic interpretation program, at the Trust. It's possible that the joint plan that's been in the works for five years could be done by October 31st but it's unlikely, and we have no reason to believe that it would even be completed by October 31st of 2006. So we'd like the Trust to consider an alternative to having its own consultants prepare a plan for Area B of the Presidio.

The second one I'd like to focus on tonight is that the Trust consider an independent nonprofit organization, the mission of which would be to plan, raise money and develop historic programs at the Presidio. Such an organization could fill the public education needs that are not met by the Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy and those two organizations could work together on mutually-beneficial fundraising activities.

I'd like to know if any of the Board members would like to comment on these proposals or any other aspects of our letter and, as we indicated in our letter, we hope to have a chance to work with you on meeting those objectives. Thank you.

Craig Middleton: Diane, we've read the letter. There's a lot of merit to it. I think everybody is pretty frustrated with the fact that there's no interpretive plan at this point. I will just tell you that this morning I had a very interesting meeting with the Olin Partnership and there were many, many interpretive ideas that came through that I would really very much like to share with you. Things like, on the Main Post, where we

could tell different stories. I know this has been an issue that, Red, you've raised for probably many years now - where we could tell the seminal historic stories in the Presidio. So there's a lot there and I think that we may be onto something. And I'd love to talk to you about it.

Bill Wilson: Warren Perry? I have your name down here.

Male voice: Do you want to speak?

Bill Wilson: Well, maybe you filled out a card because it was just designating that you were here. But these are the cards that are for the speakers. Gary Widman?

Gary Widman: Thank you. I'm Gary Widman, President of the California Heritage Council. And I would really like to second the comments that you just heard from Diane Herman. I'm encouraged by Craig's comments just a few minutes ago and I'm encouraged by a few other things. I'm encouraged that you're engaging in a questioning for balance. And I think it's clear that with all the many millions of dollars that have been spent on environmental and habitat restoration - and you have programs, I think you said, on insects and plants - consider how little has been spent on interpretation of the heritage and the history that you are charged in your mission to present and preserve. The issue of balance is one that we think will lead you to greatly support an expanded program on interpretation of the history of the area. We're encouraged by the walk through time or walk through history that's been tentatively planned for the Main Post, but that's really only one

small step. There's a lot more to do and I'm encouraged that perhaps with Craig's comments there's beginning to be recognition there.

We do think that the historic side, interpreting it, has been greatly neglected up to this point, unfortunately. It is clear that it is in the mission. It's part of the mission that Craig read earlier in the evening. The Congressional hearings, the NAPA report, all sort of set out the need for more action there. And the California Heritage Council, along with the Fort Point and Presidio Historical Association, would like to work with you to help make some of these things happen. So we encourage you also to respond to the letter that Diane just mentioned, and also to read the letter that was left with you at your last hearing when we talked about the needs for more than just a walk through history but the need for a museum as well, and some of the interpretation opportunities that are available to you.

Bill Wilson: Judy Roos?

Judy Roos: My name is Judy Roos. I just moved in June to Baker Beach. I sold my house in East Bay. And I was a community activist in an unincorporated area of Alameda County for almost 20 years and president of my homeowners association. I guess I'm suffering some withdrawal symptoms at this point! Wednesdays I'm out there pulling weeds and things like that. But my concern at this point is being very involved in my area, and being within spitting distance of the Hayward Fault I've now suddenly changed faults. And I'm concerned about the disaster preparedness plan. I know there's the NERT, and I've been in touch and they're supposed to call me when the next one comes up.

But I counted 64 wall furnaces and 32 stoves within spitting distance of my current apartment, and I think about gas line breaks and what happened in the marina. And I know you fared well during the Loma Prieta, but it's one of the things that does worry me. And I'm actually going to have a wrench available for the gas lines in our own little section there, but it's something I want to get involved with. I want to get over my withdrawal symptoms and get back into the fray again, and I would be very happy. Budget - forget it. But some of the other things I would hold up my hand and say, "Call on me." Thank you.

Bill Wilson: So we've got someone that can work with FEMA! Warren Klinger?

Warren Klinger: Good evening. I'm Warren Klinger. I've been a resident of the park now for five years. We just signed our sixth lease. Some of you Board members heard my wife earlier this year at a previous meeting talk about the school across the way, and that's part of the reason I'm here tonight.

Back in August, PresidioGo, which my wife and I were very big supporters of and have ridden every chance we get, made changes to their program and they stopped running in our neighborhood. They stopped running near the school. The changes were unannounced until three weeks after the changes were in place. We found out about them the day before we left for vacation from one of the drivers. There were no letters, no notifications, nothing put out about the changes. There were no open comments about the changes.

And our concerns, from some of the teachers and my wife and kids included, is we're about to enter the rainy season, and it's going to be dark when they come home. And they used to ride that every night. And we're really concerned. We would have liked to have had a right to comment on the changes and have our neighborhood back on the route. It doesn't have to run every hour on the hour to our neighborhood but we would like to have alternatives, like where we could still have some runs into the neighborhood so we have transportation to and from for them. And that's my main concern tonight.

Bill Wilson: Thank you. Doug Kern?

Doug Kern: Good evening. My name is Doug Kern. I'm Executive Director of the Urban Watershed Project. We're a partner with the Presidio Trust here at the Presidio and we provide educational programs, advocacy for the Tennessee Hollow Project, and we work on issues around the remediation.

I think I'd like to start with an invitation, to say that after 11 years of working here it's hard to express in three minutes everything that I might want to share with you. There are many of my colleagues and I now consider the folks within the cultural resources my colleagues. I share their concerns about telling the cultural stories about this place. Many of us have lived out here for a number of years and want to take you on walks through the watershed. We want to show you what matters to us. So if there could be some sort of open invitation to take you out there and show you the secret places, show you the amazing

aspects of what this place could be, there are many of us who would want to join you and take you out there, notwithstanding the fantastic staff that the Trust has, of course. I'm sure you have those resources.

I'd like to encourage the completion of some kind of an environmental document around Tennessee Hollow that would also include a maximum restoration alternative; something that we could compare with what we might lose in the way of environment. So if that document could have that kind of alternative in it that would be great.

I was also encouraged by Craig's opening remarks. He touched on a lot of things that are near and dear to many of us. If we could engage early and often on the Tennessee Hollow Project in an open, roll-up-the-shirtsleeves, sit down at the table, sketch a lot of drawings, and have those kinds of workshops with you to really get out a lot of ideas that would be fantastic. So I'd really encourage that kind of interaction.

Thanks for your time, and I'll just conclude again with saying there's an invitation out there - if we can show you around, we'd be happy to do that. Thank you.

Bill Wilson: Thank you. Margaret Zegart?

Margaret Zegart: I'm Margaret Kitman Zegart and I live in Southern Marin and am interested in the GGNRA always and the Presidio. When I came in I said, "What are we going to hear about today?" because I can't make a comment unless I know. And she said, "Well, we don't know. Here's

the agenda.” But it was quite general. I said, “Well, Thornburgh - I’m always wondering about Thornburgh.” And fortunately, you mentioned that we’re going to be hearing about Thornburgh but you didn’t really say what might come of those wonderful meetings that we did have on Thornburgh and those many suggestions. So I’m pleased about that.

I wonder too what is happening with Doyle Drive and the relationship for the circulation in the Presidio. I think that’s an important thing. The Presidio has always been a haven for me. I come in on Sundays and sometimes the traffic is so hideous that I find some place in the Presidio. And I’ve always enjoyed the wonderful museum shows. I think the artwork that’s been shown has been stupendous and the print facility is very excellent too. And I think you’re really having very high-quality shows but no one really knows about them. I think there is a lack of organized publicity and relationship with the exhibiting museums. So I hope that can improve, because they’re wonderful shows.

And finally, in terms of circulation, I wonder if you are ever going to have a staging area for people here where they can get some kind of a pass and can go over to GGNRA as well as incorporating an experience in the Presidio for the tourists, the people from far away. Thank you.

Bill Wilson:

Thank you. Stephen Krefting?

Stephen Krefting: Good evening, Board members and Director Middleton. Thank you for the opportunity to address you this evening. And to the newest directors particularly, welcome and congratulations on your appointments. We look forward to working with you in the years to come.

I have to say I passed by Pilots' Row recently and it's looking very nice indeed and I hope you are able to rent them for lots of money. They're looking lovely. I want to mention -

Craig Middleton: There may still be one for you, Stephen!

Stephen Krefting: Not on my salary! I want to echo the comments just made about Doyle Drive in particular, a concern of people - I'm the Director of the Presidio Sustainability Project and I also convene the Presidio Environmental Council, which is a group of about ten or 11 environmental groups that meet on a regular basis to discuss environmental issues in the Presidio.

One of our concerns has been a progress report on the studies underway on the Crissy Marsh expansion, which ties into the Doyle Drive reconstruction, I know, but I'm very interested in if at some point in the future we could hear an update on where those studies stand.

I'm also thrilled that you have scheduled a second budget workshop and look forward to attending and hearing about progress on the budget. I've seen good news in the paper and hope that continues.

And I also want to thank you, Director Middleton, for your presentation on Tennessee Hollow. And I just want to say for the environmental community that really right now we're asking for just one simple thing, and that is that the Environmental Document - as Doug alluded to - contain an alternative, one alternative, that shows what Tennessee Hollow could be if most or all of the non-historic elements were removed and what open land that remained is restored to the most natural condition possible. Just one alternative - it is not a commitment. It is just a bare exploration of what's possible.

We believe that there are many potential funding sources for pursuing the work of Tennessee Hollow once a plan is in place, not just foundations and individuals but government sources as well. This project is a tremendous educational opportunity for people from around the world, in addition to people in the Bay Area, about what watersheds mean and what watersheds can do. I think the recent flooding in New Orleans, frankly, is in part an example of what happens when a watershed isn't treated correctly. So it's also a huge draw for volunteerism, as has been exhibited at Crissy Field. And Tennessee Hollow contains not only natural beauty and the potential for great biological integrity, there's also an extremely important historic story to be told there. And we urge you to move forward, and also look forward to working with you on this great opportunity. Thank you.

Bill Wilson:

Thank you. Jan Blum?

Jan Blum: My name is Jan Blum. I'm a long-term volunteer here at the Presidio. I've been working in habitat restoration since about 1999. And I would like to invite all of the Board members to come and help plant Fill Site 6A. We've just spent millions of dollars digging out all kinds of toxic materials and I think this would be a wonderful way to get you hands-on in our park, which we're all extremely interested in.

My second comment matches that of Doug Kern's and Stephen Krefting's. We are very interested in the natural world, here specifically the health and expansion of Crissy Marsh, and seeing what we can do to make the Tennessee Hollow watershed a true restoration. Thank you.

Bill Wilson: Thank you. Peter Brastow?

Peter Brastow: Good evening, Board members and Director Middleton. My name is Peter Brastow and I'm the Director of a new organization called Nature in the City. But prior to that I've been involved in the Presidio for over ten years actually and worked here until November of last year as the Presidio's stewardship coordinator. I was working for the National Park Service and working in close collaboration with the Trust and the Parks Conservancy.

But the new organization that I've started called Nature in the City has been founded by me and my colleagues, recognizing the wonderful nature and natural areas that we have in San Francisco and the need to connect people to nature in urban centers like this City. So the two main goals of my organization are to connect local people with nature

and to catalyze ecological restoration and stewardship in San Francisco, including here in the Presidio.

The Presidio Trust has been involved in a lot of restoration and stewardship over the years, as many of you know, and is part of what is a model of collaboration working with the National Park Service and the Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy on both restoration projects - many of which Craig mentioned, including Fill Site 6A - and some of the other remediation projects, but also in stewarding our wonderful remnant natural lands that have been here since time immemorial. In other words, we have fill sites that have been cleaned up and restored and planted with native plants but we also have some wonderful remnant areas which have been habitat for plants and wildlife and endangered species for as long as we know; for hundreds or thousands or millions of years.

And Tennessee Hollow, the poster for which is over there, is a tremendous opportunity, as my colleagues have mentioned. And I want to mention a few things that are important in terms of the Tennessee Hollow watershed project opportunity. Number one, it is an opportunity to integrate in a holistic way the ongoing stewardship of these remnant natural lands such as the Endangered Species Habitat at Inspiration Point with the cleanup of, for example, the three landfills in Tennessee Hollow - so really integrating these sort of dual processes of both cleaning up sites and restoring them but also managing for biodiversity these wonderful natural lands that we've always had here; as well, to literally fulfill the vision that many have had of the Presidio as a place to demonstrate ecological sustainability to not only the

nation but also the entire world and also to demonstrate that in fact we can have nature in the city, which is one of the main goals of my organization, of course; and finally, to literally connect people with nature where they live. Something to keep in mind, I think, in relation to restoration and stewardship of nature in a city is that many people cannot leave the city necessarily as easily as a lot of us can.

And I just want to say one more thing, and that is to check out this wonderful new book by this guy named Richard Louv. It's called "Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children from Nature Deficit Disorder." And I'll just, if I could, read one quote from the back, "Our children are the first generation to be raised without meaningful contact with the natural world." So check it out.

Bill Wilson: Thank you. Redmond Kernan?

Redmond Kernan: Good evening. I welcome you all here. You're a new Board and we've been working - I'm with the Fort Point and Presidio Historical Association - concerned with interpretation, the historic interpretation of the Presidio. And I feel that for all the good work done that area has not lived up to its expectations. And I look at why, and I think the reason is that the Park Service was charged with interpretation. And the Park Service has Area A, the Visitors Center and Interpretation. And that has left the Trust to not have to worry about it.

But interpretation must be included in the reuse of buildings. The buildings are themselves historic. And I think it was a mistake in the original legislation to say the Park Service alone could do that.

Looking at that, Congress asked that the National Association of Public Administration evaluate the progress of the Trust to date, and one of the areas was interpretation. And they suggested that it be done with the Trust, and if it's not done with the Trust that it in fact be taken away from the Park Service and given solely to the Trust; that the Trust be responsible for interpretation of the Presidio.

The Presidio is not only a national park but it is a national landmark. And it requires that the heart and soul of the Presidio, explaining why the buildings were preserved, be presented to the public. And that responsibility will come to you through Congress through the NAPA report. And therefore, we would suggest, I would suggest, that the Park Service and the Trust sit down together and work out a memorandum of understanding between them. The Park Service unfortunately has limited resources, and more limited every day. Therefore, I would urge that you sit down with them and come up with a memorandum of understanding between you as to who would do what as to how interpretation would be carried out. Somebody on your Board - a committee, some portion of your Board, an individual - should overview this and report back to your Board. And I would urge that you do that.

I would urge also that you meet with the public who's interested - myself, my organization, and others - and have public input to the process to come up with an interpretive plan. The Park Service had a symposium six years ago and has not come up with an interpretive plan. Therefore, that still needs to be done so I would urge you to look at how that might be done and your role in that. I think it devolves to

you to carry it out. Therefore, I see people talking and conversing but please look at how interpretation will be done in the Presidio. It ends up, by default, being your responsibility.

I would suggest also that you consider the Officers' Club as a visitors center in lieu of 102. If you have to carry out 102, do that, but evaluate the Officers' Club. It is your default visitors center. I would like an opportunity to discuss further with you these ideas and I would suggest that you establish through Craig some forum for that to occur. Thank you.

Bill Wilson: Thank you.

Bob Burke: Bill, there have been several references to historic interpretation. And privately, I asked Nancy if she'd seen the letter that was originally referred to. And at least the two of us don't recall seeing the letter, and this is an issue.

The new directors were given a terrific orientation early on but it's an awful lot to learn in a short time. And I have to confess the concept of interpretation is one I'm not totally on top of. So I welcome the opportunity. Maybe, Craig, we can spend some time just understanding what the issues are because I'm afraid I don't quite understand even what the controversy would be. Since this is a historic place, I'm just assuming we all want to do historic interpretation. I guess it's just a question of who does it and how. Is that -?

Craig Middleton: We'll do that. We'll get together and maybe make an opportunity for some others too. [Inaudible off-microphone comments]

Bill Wilson: Don Green?

Male voice: Let me encourage you also to get the handout that was given out last time concerning interpretation in a museum in addition to this.

Don Green: Good evening. I'm Donald Green from the Laurel Heights Improvement Association, also with the Sierra Club. And I worked with the Neighborhood Association for a number of years. I have a background in budget and also with the Yosemite Restoration Trust on trying to deal with the issues of having enough money to run the park versus allowing the concessionaires to build new things. And that's one of our interests - has been all along - in the Presidio.

I would second all the comments that have been made. I was very pleased with the presentation today. I have seen the fill site work being done. It's terrific and very exciting. The idea of having committees of the Board to meet with some of these interested groups I would certainly second. I would add the environmental community, whether it become a workshop such as Craig has talked about - so you can sit down and talk about some of the various opportunities to work on with environmental project - and the historical interpretation is the second one that if you guys have a committee and meet with these people they're very good. And it certainly has taken a back burner, as the Academy has said.

Also, when the National Academy put out their report some time ago they did call for a strategic plan. I didn't realize you guys had finished it. I will certainly look at it prior to the meeting in December.

Let me make a comment on the Public Health Service Hospital because that's been going now for a couple of years and I guess we're not certain what the outcome is. The big issue there was: should it be 175,000 feet or 275,000 square feet of building space? And the historic portion is about 175,000 and the non-historic wings, which are relatively ugly compared to the historic building, I think most people would agree, are about 100,000, loosely. And the issue was: is it economically feasible to lease the smaller portion or set a ground lease for the smaller portion and get enough income to cover the cost of reconstruction or do you have to build the large project?

And my feeling is that rather than getting a million dollars extra revenue on top of your 58 million now and 62 million coming, even if you got no revenue or even if you put out a million dollars to preserve the building like it was, I think it's within the concept of the Presidio Trust to look at alternative ways of meeting the obligation for historical maintenance and meeting the community's needs of a smaller facility there.

So I look forward to the budget meeting, and I would encourage the lady who spoke before me that said she's not interested in the budget, if you come to a budget meeting that's where decisions are made as to what gets done and what doesn't get done. So anybody that has an interest in getting something done or not being done should really be

there. And I'm delighted that the Trust for the second time is going to hold such a meeting.

By the way, do you guys have a Vice President of Finance yet or a Director of Finance? I know that place was vacant. Is he here? Oh, nice to meet you. I will be happy to meet you. No, it's rather interesting, when the Lucas project was built the estimate of revenues at the time...oh, I'm sorry. My time is up. Okay. Nice to see you.

Bill Wilson: Thank you. Greta Gissel?

Greta Gissel: Ditto.

Bill Wilson: What?

Greta Gissel: I said ditto! My name is Greta Gissel and I moved into the Presidio recently. And I absolutely am delighted and feel blessed to be living in the Presidio and I just wanted to say thanks to the - I don't know how I found it. I'm very lucky. In any event, what I wanted to say is I am currently running the Mayors' meeting for all of the resident Mayors in the Presidio. What that means is each neighborhood has their own Mayor or Associate Mayor or a couple of Associate Mayors and what they do is volunteer their time to watch the neighborhood and take feedback from residents and their concerns. So what we do is we meet once a month and I want to invite everyone to come if you'd like. It's here in the chapel on Moraga. Director Middleton, what's the name of the chapel? I'm sorry.

Craig Middleton: I call it the chapel on Moraga.

Greta Gissel: Thank you! As I did! In any event, it is the first Wednesday of every month. It starts at 7:15. Feel free to come at 7:00 and meet some of the Associate Mayors. It is open. What we do is we just discuss what's happening in each neighborhood. Everybody shares their concerns and their celebrations. So thank you very much. Again, my name is Greta Gissel.

Bill Wilson: Thank you. Arthur Feinstein?

Arthur Feinstein: Hi. I'm Arthur Feinstein. I'm the former Executive Director of the Golden Gate Audubon Society and I've been working on park issues for many years and on the Presidio for 20-odd years.

You know, it's exciting where it's going and yet, let me say I came in late, so I missed the presentation. Ruth Gravanis, who's going to speak to you soon, has filled me in a little bit about what we've heard. One of the main issues for the environmental community is Tennessee Hollow, and I believe you've heard - I'm sure you've heard - about our concern that it be your object of restoration. You do have a national park here. You have one that is a very odd one, with lots of historic elements and lots of buildings. But parks are where people go not only for historical buildings but for nature. I'm also working on a part at Hunters Point and I helped create the Eastshore State Park that's on the East Shore from Berkeley through Richmond, through the Citizens for East Shore State Parks organization.

And the one thing we've learned from all those meetings that I've gone to for many, many years is the one thing that almost everybody will come with no matter what their orientation is, which is: "I want a place for nature." You know, they may be interested in bicycling. They may be interested in culture. They may be interested in something else. But almost everybody will resonate with the thought that when you're talking about creating the park the opportunity to have a little bit of nature close to home is overwhelming. Because we don't have it - over and over again you've probably heard, and that new book that's just come out talks about the fact that this is the most isolated culture we've ever had. Jon Carroll today - if you read his little op piece in the Chronicle it talks about how everybody is so isolated nowadays. Actually, it was somebody else.

You have the opportunity to undertake a major restoration at Tennessee Hollow and bring back a little bit of what used to be here and give people an opportunity to understand that there is a natural world and that we need it.

And so I really urge you - I understand that Craig mentioned a little bit about the recreational fields and needing to balance one with the other. I don't think you need to do that here. There are recreational fields in San Francisco and there are other places to put them. This is the place, and the only place in the Presidio, where you can restore an entire watershed. It's a unique, unheard-of opportunity in an urban city like San Francisco. Don't lose it, whatever you do.

In my last thirty seconds I will mention if you look at the San Francisco Rec & Park Department survey there were a thousand responses and the majority of people said what they want is a place to walk and enjoy nature. All other uses were in the five to 15 percent range. Nature was way high. Recreation, active recreation, was down to three to four percent. In the Eastshore State Park we recognize it needs recreation. We bought 11 acres of land just so people could have ball fields there and so we're going to have nature and ball fields. But the ball fields are not in the park; they're next to it. In San Francisco we can do something similar. In the Presidio you've got Tennessee Hollow. Don't lose it to ball fields. Thank you very much.

Bill Wilson: Thank you. Ruth Gravanis?

Ruth Gravanis: Good evening. I'm Ruth Gravanis and I've been involved with various ecological restoration and nature education programs for the last 30 years, primarily in San Francisco. And my main interest has been creeks and watersheds and wetlands. And through groups like the Mission Creek Conservancy and the Friends of [Isthlus] Creek and the group that Arthur referred to, the partnership working on a watershed plan for Yosemite Creek in the southeast part of the City, we've accomplished some great things in improving the wildlife values of those areas and helping to create a memory of the historic resources that were lost.

But there is no way that we can do watershed restoration anywhere else in San Francisco except in Tennessee Hollow, because everywhere else our watersheds have been turned into sewer sheds.

The creeks haven't just been buried underground the way they have in many places in the East Bay where they're being daylighted and restored, but they've been combined with sewage. In Tennessee Hollow the systems have been kept separate, as they have been on military bases. So that is the unique opportunity that we're trying to grab here. It's the only place we can do true restoration. And when we say restoration we're not talking about going back in time and recreating some previous moment. We're talking about restoring the ecological processes and the connections, putting back the elements to allow the evolution of the watershed to continue, not in some point in time but as it would be right now if we had not degraded it and if our ancestors had not degraded it. So this is a rare opportunity, and as Arthur Feinstein has said there are other places where we can carry on many forms of recreation - in the restored watershed we can also carry on recreation.

I don't know if you had a chance to see the 60 Minutes TV program Sunday night about the Lord God bird, the ivory-billed woodpecker. The point was made that wildlife observation is one of the fastest-growing forms of recreation in this country. And that form of recreation needs to be acknowledged and enhanced by not compromising the very resources that people have come to observe.

Also to reiterate Stephen Krefting's point, we at least have to have an alternative that we can look at as part of our environmental assessment process that is a fair look at what we would have if we really and truly restored this. And part of it is an interpretive program that combines the historic and cultural resources with the natural resources. We need

to stop looking at them as two separate entities. We need one interpretive program that shows people the value of the natural resource for nature's sake but also for the sake of the humans who lived here a long time ago and how the cultural historic assets fit into that. Thank you.

Bill Wilson: Thank you. Steven Fezler?

Steven Fezler: Hello. My name is Steve Fezler and I'm from Denver, Colorado. And I just recently moved here. I'm a new tenant. And it's gorgeous. And I don't have any issues. I feel a little bit inept and incompetent, not having some kind of director or management thing or some kind of environmental issue, but I struggle with my management of my own preservation of myself.

My issue's not quite as bad as FEMA, as you talked about, but I think it might even be worse because it has to do with the Post Office. And it's just a question: is there any way of getting some kind of 24-hour post office box? [Unintelligible] That would be my question. I don't work here and I do work on Saturdays so it's kind of difficult and some of my mail has been going back. It's not a big issue, but I appreciate it. Thank you.

Bill Wilson: Thank you. James Osborn?

James Osborn: Good evening. As you can see, I'm a Park Ranger here at the Presidio. I've been an interpretive ranger here since 1994. And it's very much an honor to be standing here amongst all you supporters, lovers and

interpreters of the Presidio. And those of you who are new to the Board, welcome. Any time you want to know more about the resources of the Presidio there are a lot of people to come to, including us. And we can even tell you a lot about interpretive principles and give you a tour of any length - a half-hour, two hours...whatever you want to hear about, we could probably give you an earful.

There are two things I want to bring up that have been sort of alluded to. One is a Presidio interpretive plan and the other is Building 102. The fact is that the Presidio does not currently have a museum. It once did. It also had a theater and a visitors center with exhibits in development. So we interpretive rangers have not been privy to all the negotiations but we've heard for nigh on two years that both the plan for interpretation and the seismic retrofit of 102 are almost agreed upon. So I just want the agreements to go ahead.

We have some great partnerships between the NPS and the Trust. We would love to work on them. We'd love to meet with you. And we'd love to share that responsibility of maintaining, preserving and interpreting the Presidio because it is a national, if not an international, treasure.

I'm particularly anxious to have the - well, Building 102 really has the space for a true museum. We do have a temporary visitors center in the Officers' Club, which sometimes gets overwhelmed by events that are taking place in front of it. And other than the fact that a lot of visitors come there, it's really got a lot of other things going on. So I

urge you to complete the agreement and get that seismic retrofit underway.

And the Presidio interpretive plan - I understand it's largely agreed upon. It's a lengthy document. But we need something to start from. We can change it any time we want but we first need to come to a basic agreement. Thank you.

Bill Wilson: Thank you. That's the end of the people what wanted to speak.

On behalf of the Trust and the people out here who had some other comments, I think this has been very constructive. We've got a few things to think about. We'll take your remarks seriously and work on those and get back to you at some point. Are there any other comments?

I guess we'll adjourn the meeting. Time is 7:50.

Craig Middleton: We invite you to that workshop on December 6th.

Bill Wilson: Is that a workshop?

Craig Middleton: It's a budget workshop and it's at the Officers' Club.

Bill Wilson: Okay. Thank you.