



Fall 2011 Newsletter

Westwood Highlands Association
www.westwoodhighlands.org

Housing Element Threatens Westwood Highlands

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Dave Bisho

Westwood Highlands' unique single-family nature, protected since the neighborhood's beginnings by our "Covenants, Controls, and Restrictions (CCRs)," is threatened by the new "Housing Element" recently passed by San Francisco Supervisors. Here's how our CCRs came to be and why they are now under attack, leaving our neighborhood vulnerable.

Baldwin and Howell were the original realtors for Westwood Highlands. They, with builder Hans Nelson and architect Charles Strothoff, developed Westwood Highlands as one of the first residential neighborhoods in the United States to agree to a set of Covenants and Restrictions.

The planning of Westwood Highlands was unique. Strothoff designed each house using a modular system. He treated items such as the front window, front entryway, garage, and number of bedrooms as interchangeable components that could be switched around so that each house would

conform to the size and grade of the lot, while still maintaining that certain "Westwood Highlands" look and feel.

And, unlike many of the other western neighborhoods being

ing covenants and restrictions would protect the subdivision's single-family aspect.

However, ever since the Gold Rush, housing needs and developers' desires to cash in

*With the new Housing Element, as
in the neighborhood, the number of
families in it is subject to change.*

developed at the same time, such as Monterey Heights, St. Francis Wood, and Forest Hill, Westwood Highlands property was sold as packages: lots with houses already built on them. Thanks to A. Bloomfield, R. Brandi, and C. Loeb for sharing much of the this history.

With San Francisco's population still increasing in the late teens and early 1920s, there was a huge need for family housing in all price ranges. Westwood Highlands would provide a relatively "affordable" range for the middle class and fit into the city's single-family zoning, and the neighborhood's govern-

on those needs hasn't changed. What *has* changed in the last ten or twenty years is the type of housing being built. Now it's mostly apartments, live-work units, and condo complexes with few or no parking places, and very few single-family homes. Just look at what's been built in the South of Market Area and what's planned for Park Merced. Or, drive by the big complex currently being developed on Ocean Avenue in front of City College. Rentable, livable, and—for developers—more profitable, but this type of housing is neither suitable nor desirable for most families.

Here's the worst part. The San Francisco supervisors just passed the 2009 Housing Element (HE) that sets up the framework for new construction and rezoning San Francisco for the next ten years. This HE not only plans and encourages more of this type of multiple-unit, reduced-parking development, but discourages and seriously compromises the *existing* single family homes and neighborhoods in San Francisco.

Here's an example of this is in the Environmental Impact Report covering this HE on page 3, Policy 1.6: "*Density limits*" (single-family, etc.) has been crossed out and replaced with "*height and bulk*." In other words, as long as the house still looks like it fits in the neighborhood, the number of families in it is subject to change.

Here's another item from the HE, page 6, Policy 11.2, second paragraph: "*Area plans*" is substituted for "*Covenants, Controls, and Restrictions (CC&Rs)*." Also, the Planning department is no longer instructed

Mayoral Forum, October 1: Share your views about the Housing Element with mayoral candidates. See next page for details.

continued, next page

Housing Element Threatens Westwood Highlands; President's Message continued from page 1

to "build on" CC&Rs, but to just "be aware" of them.

Here's one more, from page 2, Policy 1.4: "Neighborhood-supported" has been replaced by "community-based." This greatly lessens the ability of Westwood Highlands and other established neighborhoods to manage and control our own neighborhoods. The "community" now includes any entity, any stakeholder, any potential stakeholder, any developer, anybody. Neighborhoods like Westwood Highlands would merely get a seat at the table.

Here's the sad part. Because of the above,

it's looking like Westwood Highlands will once again have to go to court to defend our right to keep our single-family designation. A few years ago, Westwood Highlands, along with 15 other neighborhoods, sued the city over the same issue. It took four years but we won, and we got our money back. Now it's looking like we all have to do it again.

Or maybe we won't have to sue, since there's a mayoral election coming up (see sidebar at right).

Dave Bisho is President of the Westwood Highlands Association.

Thank You for Paying Dues for Your Homeowner's Association

Thanks to all residents who have paid their dues already. Please note that no director on the WHA Board of Directors takes a salary except a small amount paid for secretarial services. All money is used only to maintain and enhance



Westwood Highlands according to the by-laws and the Covenants, Controls and Restrictions (CCRs) that guide our homeowners' association. Thanks especially to the directors for their continued help.

Westwood Highlands Association Board of Directors

Dave Bisho – President
Charley Leach – Vice President
Jane Vincent Corbett – Secretary
Anya LeGault – Treasurer
Blue Mudbhary

Mayoral Forum: A Chance to Hear Candidates and Share Concerns

Here's your opportunity to hear directly from candidates for San Francisco's upcoming mayoral election. The West of Twin Peaks Central Council (WTPCC) will host a Mayoral Forum, Saturday, October 1, 2011 from 9:30 a.m. to 12 p.m. at St. Stephens Church Parish Hall, 473 Eucalyptus Way. Refreshments will be served from 9:30 to 10 a.m.

Join your neighbors to meet San Francisco's mayoral candidates and question them on their views on issues of concern to our neighborhood and others in the West of Twin Peaks area, such as the Housing Element referred to in Dave Bisho's President's Message (left). The Westwood Highlands Association and 18 other neighborhood associations are members of the WTPCC, which is sponsoring the event.

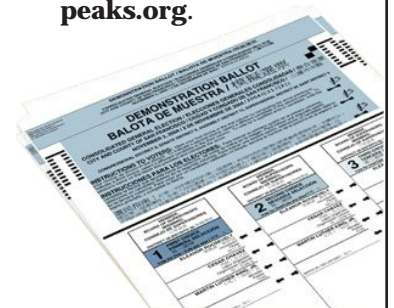
For the first time in San Francisco history, our mayor will be elected by ranked choice voting. (See www.sfelections.org/demo for an explanation of and animated demo about ranked choice

voting.) This change makes your attendance and participation more important than ever.

The candidates included in the Mayoral Forum are: Jeff Adachi, Michela Alioto-Pier, John Avalos, David Chiu, Bevan Dufty, Tony Hall, Dennis Herrera, Ed Lee, Joanna Rees, Phil Ting, and Leland Yee.

The WTPCC was originally organized in 1936 to protect the residential character of the neighborhoods west of Twin Peaks. From heading off the anticipated onslaught of gas stations and hot dog stands in the wake of the completion of the Golden Gate Bridge, to taking more recent positions to protect property owners and ratepayers, the Council has acted as an advocate for quality-of-life issues for 75 years.

For more about the Mayoral Forum, see www.westoftwinpeaks.org.



Volunteers Needed!

Do you like to socialize? Westwood Highlands needs you! Can you lead a social event for us?

We especially need volunteers to plan a block party. It takes quite a few of us working together. And we can always use your help choosing the right date!

Also, even if you can't volunteer, please let us know your feedback on the dinners we have been setting up in the past, so we can get a better response in the

future. Do you think the dinners are too expensive? Should we use a restaurant that is walking distance from our neighborhood instead of the one we have been using? Should we not invite speakers or guests and just have the dinner for the residents of Westwood Highlands? Email info@westwoodhighlands.org for more information or to volunteer!

— *Blue Mudbhary*

Leaking Cars a Major Source of Bay and Ocean Pollution

Time for an oil change? If your car is leaking oil onto the street, it may be time for an oil change at a shop where they can also fix the leak. Oil leaking from cars onto our streets is a major source of pollution in the Bay and in the Pacific Ocean. Imagine—more oil reaches the oceans each year as a result of leaking automobiles and other non-point sources than was spilled by the Exxon Valdez or even in the Gulf of Mexico during the Deepwater Horizon/BP oil spill [ref., multiple sources]. If your car is leaking, please take it in for repair!

If there is oil on the street in front of your house, you can remove much of it by covering the oil stain with a layer

of a clay-based cat litter or sawdust. Let the cat litter soak up the oil for a couple or a few days. Sweep the street free of the litter or sawdust and dispose of it a bag in the regular garbage (black bin). If the stain is still present, you can scrub it with a solution of water and detergent, soaking up the solution with paper towels or rags that you discard in the black bin.



Westwood Highlands Web Site

Check out our Web site at westwoodhighlands.org. It has a collection of our newsletters, historical photos, and other important neighborhood information, as well as updates on events.

Annual Garage Sale Sept. 10-11

The Westwood Highlands Annual Neighborhood Garage Sale is set for Saturday and Sunday, September 10 and 11, 2011. We will place ads on Craigslist and elsewhere that will draw customers to our neighborhood on those days.

Tips for the Garage Sale:

- i Folding tables are the easiest to set up—make them colorful, with eye-catching tablecloths if the card table is not attractive.
- i Put a price on everything. Buyers then know what you want.
- i Display eye-catching products in a prominent place that can be seen from the street. This is a good way to get people to come into your sale location.
- i Group like things, e.g., kitchen utensils, CDs, magazines and books, clothing, etc.
- i Dust and wash everything. If people know you took care of your sale items they'll be more likely to buy them.

- i Promote pricier items (like artwork and cameras); include manuals or Amazon descriptions.
- i Make sure you have enough change (both paper money and coins). Also have paper and plastic bags for people to carry away the items they purchase.

— *Charley Leach*

CALENDAR

Westwood Highlands Association Meetings
120 Brentwood Ave.,
7:30 p.m., on **Sept. 20,**
and **Nov. 15, 2011** —
anyone is welcome to attend.

Westwood Highlands
Annual Neighborhood
Garage Sale

Sept. 10 & 11, 2011

Please see our tips for a successful sale at left.

Most people put their items out to sell from 9 to 10 a.m. and close up shop around 4 or 5 p.m., but it's up to you what time to start and end.

Keep Garage Door Openers Out of Sight

Please remember to put your garage openers out of sight in your cars. Since we are fortunate enough (usually) to be able to park right in front of our houses, it would be obvious to a car thief that they could use the remote—then or later—to get into your garage.

— *Blue Mudbhary*

