

**FOREST HILL ASSOCIATION  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING  
January 9, 2012**

**Board Members present:** Diane Wara, Kathe Farrell, Sally Kipper, Katie Balestreri, Dan McHugh, Paul Cooper.

**Others in Attendance:** Harold Wright, Steve Halpern, Barney Deasy, Eric Buonassisi, Rigo Cabezas, Darlene Hartman, John Balestreri.

**Diane Wara called the meeting to order.** The meeting began at 7:10 pm.

**Minutes:** The draft minutes of the November Board Meeting were approved. The next Board Meeting is planned for Monday, February 6, 2012.

Diane Wara officially thanked the Boy Scouts, their leader, and the neighborhood parents involved, for their latest community project: the Scouts cleaned up all public stairs in the Forest Hill neighborhood on January 8.

**Treasurer's Report:**

Sally Kipper explained that this Treasurer's Report covers both the months of November and December 2011. Regarding the revenues, Sally reported that Clubhouse rental income is exactly on track with the budget – with 75% of the Fiscal Year elapsed, Clubhouse rental income has reached 73% of the budgeted amount. Regarding FHA assessments, as of end of December 2011, \$ 95,600 has been received; out of this amount, \$ 485 came from completion of permitted installment payments. The remaining total amounts to 36% of invoices for member households. While not contained in the Treasurer's Report for December, it is interesting to note that until the day of the Board Meeting, January 9, an additional \$32,300 in assessments had been received, bringing the collection up to close to 50%. Sally reported the recording of one new lien, bringing the total up to 12 currently liened households. One of these liens will be paid off in the course of refinancing procedures.

On the expenditure side, the following items are noteworthy. Personnel costs appear higher than usual both in November – one October payroll check was delayed until the next month, causing 3 instead of the usual payments – and in December – with three monthly pay periods, as occurs twice a year. Overall, personnel expenses are well within budget, with 25 hours per week budgeted and an average of 24 hours per week actually paid out. The weekly work hours for the Office Manager will likely increase before and during the upcoming Board Election period. Utilities cost is on track as budgeted; however, due to unusually dry weather conditions, additional irrigation may be necessary, which could make water costs higher than budgeted. Landscape Enhancement cost reflects the ongoing New Tree Planting program; the overall cost might still come out below budget since the planting project on lower Alton Avenue will likely not take place for lack of interest of the adjacent homeowners. The tree care bill for December results from one of two big annual pruning bills. It has to be noted that the "Enhancement" category contains one negative amount - \$ 205. This payment reflects a reimbursement from homeowners to FHA for having a bigger than budgeted tree planted (with the homeowners reimbursing FHA for the additional cost payable to Valley Crest).

For Professional Services, unforeseen expenses of \$950 had to be paid to the tax accountant. Due to changes in IRS procedures – the threshold for Form 990 E-Z preparation was lowered so that FHA does no longer qualify but is obliged to have the more expensive regular Form 990 preparation done – this tax work got unexpectedly expensive. The Board had already approved this additional expense per email with 6 affirmative votes (email correspondence attached).

Architectural Services: the total payment of \$ 8,895 consisted of payments for the first and second bills of Carey & Co. and of \$ 1,085 fees to the Department of Public Health to cover pre-permitting meeting fees and the fee for the architect attending this meeting. Overall, the cost for these pre-permitting meetings amounts to an additional \$ 3,864 over budget. This expense had been unanimously approved by the Board via email vote (see attached). The Board unanimously moved to amend the budget by this amount.

Community and Communication: in the month of December, in addition to the regular \$ 1,200 monthly fee for Computer Services and Support, Yen Bachmeier/Insight Consulting received a one-time payment of \$ 3,600 for her work on the New Tree Database, as approved in the November Board Meeting.

It was noted that although we've requested itemized billings from Carey & Co., we've paid their first two invoices without that detail. Board Member Paul Cooper will ask Carey & Co. for itemized bills before payment is submitted. [note: We approved the amendment at the Nov. meeting. It is one of the footnotes on the Rev/Exp report, and should be in the November minutes.]

Harold Wright brought up the issue of dual database use (Access and Quickbooks) for the production of the annual assessment letters, a practice he considers impractical and overly time-consuming. Sally Kipper and Eric Buonassisi weighed in. The issue will be explored in more depth by Eric Buonassisi, Chairman of the Finance Committee.

Harold Wright further commented on his observation that the overall cost for Landscaping in 2011 is approximately \$ 4,000 lower than in 2010. Diane Wara explained that these irregularities are probably due to a recent change in personnel responsible for the Forest Hill account at Valley Crest.

The Board then moved to approve the Treasurer's Report covering the months of November and December 2011.

#### **President's Comments:**

Due to an apparent mistake, the date for the April Board Meeting was published as April 9, 2012 which would be not the first Monday of the month (as regulated in the Bylaws) but the second Monday. The online calendar will be corrected accordingly to list the April Board Meeting for Monday, April 2, 2012.

#### **Advisory Committees:**

##### **Architectural Review Committee**

Steve Halpern reported on the issue of planned new construction at 273 Magellan Avenue.

Homeowner Jim Feeney had submitted preliminary plans to the Architectural Review Committee. Based on the submitted material, the Committee had serious concerns and decided not to recommend these plans to the Board. Together with their architect, Dan Phipps, Mr. and Mrs. Feeney had presented detailed plans and material samples to the Board at the November Board Meeting. Meanwhile, a revised design has been developed and was presented to the Board by Steve Halpern: the front elevation, roof line, and the driveway paving have been revised to a much more pleasing appearance, and even after construction of an additional driveway, ca. 60% of the street front will still be available for landscaping. The Architectural Review Committee had voted to suggest to the Board approval of this new, revised construction plan.

The Board approved, and Steve Halpern will notify the homeowners in writing of this decision.

Steve Halpern further reported on a planned construction project at 2 Castenada Avenue.

The homeowner plans to replace a "solarium," actually a back room with a glass roof but with solid walls, by a regular room, without changing the measurements or the layout and appearance of the existing windows. He had already received a permit from the SF Building Department in 2001 for nearly the same project – he had then planned to extend the alteration over two stories, but subsequently withdrawn the permit. Now he seeks approval for the same project only covering one story. Since at the time of the first permit approval in 2001 all relevant measurements, e.g. setbacks, must have been reviewed by the Building Department, the Architectural Review Committee had voted to suggest to the Board the approval of the current construction plan.

The Board approved, and Steve Halpern will notify the homeowners in writing of this decision.

Kathe Farrell then brought to the attention of the Architectural Review Committee and of the Board a current construction project at 22 Taraval Street. The homeowners are in the process of replacing their front lawn by concrete to create a parking space in their front yard. The legal situation of such an alteration was discussed at length; Steve Halpern will examine the situation and report back at the February Board Meeting

**Clubhouse Committee:**

Paul Cooper repeated a summary of the additional cost for pre-permitting meetings with various SF City Departments, as discussed in the context of the Treasurer's Report.

Carey&Co. have just submitted their Master Plan Draft. Paul Cooper and Diane Wara will both review this draft; then the results of the above mentioned meetings with City Departments will be included, followed by a discussion in the Clubhouse Committee and presentation at the February Board Meeting. Given that the last of the City Department meetings is scheduled for 1/19/12, the revision of the Master Plan may well be completed in time for the next Board Meeting. The final version of the Master Plan should be ready for approval at the March 2012 Board Meeting.

Paul Cooper pointed out that while seismic improvements are not mandated by the Historic Building Code, FHA will include them in the overall project for safety reasons. Harold Wright suggested a meeting of the Clubhouse Committee with the structural engineer on the Carey&Co team to explore the options and scope of planned seismic upgrades. Regarding financing options, Diane Wara reported that she, Sally Kipper, Katie and John Balestreri, and Jutta Lammerts all attended a meeting with representatives of First Republic Bank who offered to finance the Clubhouse Remodel project. Further banks will be interviewed. This first meeting led to the insight that a Home Equity Line of Credit (backed by a mortgage) is preferable to a loan since it allows to use funds step by step as they are required during the building process, as opposed to taking out one large sum of money at the beginning. In this context, Sally Kipper and Harold Wright explained that the amount of expected donations toward the remodel project is limited as FHA as a "501 C4" corporation cannot accept tax-deductible donations.

A Clubhouse Finance Committee will be convened later this month to explore in depth the various financing options.

**Activities Committee:**

Board liaison and Chairperson Katie Balestreri reported that the Children's Holiday Party was a great success with ca. 100 guests attending. Attractions included an appearance of Mrs. Claus, cookie decorating, a snow fairy, story telling and face painting. The overall cost was below the budgeted \$ 650. Thanks to tireless organizer Mira Foster!

The next Community Events in planning are the Easter Egg Hunt and the Lunar New Year Celebration (Sunday, February 26).

Since at last year's Easter Egg Hunt more than double the expected number of guests attended and refreshments ran out quickly, this year's planning will take into account up to 250 guests. The expected cost is ca. \$500; the organizer again is Mira Foster.

The Community Events budget still contains ca. \$ 3,000 for the current Fiscal Year which leaves \$500 for the Easter Egg Hunt and \$ 2,500 for the Lunar New Year celebration.

Paul Cooper brought up the idea of introducing a game night event at the Clubhouse, possibly with organizational involvement from Garden Club members. Darlene Hartmann and Sally Kipper weighed in on behalf of the Garden Club. Since the Garden Club has completed event planning throughout the year and cannot take on more events, Diane Wara suggested to begin planning for next year, first defining the target audience for these events and then finding volunteer organizers.

Katie Balestreri suggested to offer a Bingo night as fundraising event for the Clubhouse Remodel project, an idea that was enthusiastically welcomed by all.

Will Connolly presented an event suggestion based on the recent publication of the book "Carville," in which the author describes temporary living arrangements in old railroad cars in San Francisco. The book was published as part of a series focusing on the history of single SF neighborhoods and could be presented in this context, with the option of purchase at the event. For this purpose, use of the Clubhouse would be offered to the organizers for free in return for a free Community Event for all of FH neighbors.

Also, Pocket Opera rehearsal dates at the Clubhouse will be coordinated between Will Connolly and Jutta Lammerts.

**Communications Committee:**

Kathe Farrell reported that the next newsletter will be published at the end of January, and that the deadline for article submission is January 15. She has received a good number of articles already, including Musical Days, Clubhouse Remodel update and Architectural Review Committee contributions. The following newsletter will be published at the end of March.

In this context, the suggestion came up to name Dan Kelly – who has been expertly editing newsletter articles submitted for publication for years – as permanent "Newsletter Editor." The Board was supportive of this proposal; however, in

order to establish an editing framework first, Kathe Farrell agreed on drafting editing guidelines and submitting these at the next Board Meeting.

**Infrastructure:**

Board Liaison and Chairman Dan McHugh reported on the planned installation of AT&T boxes. Last summer the Board of Supervisors had voted 6:5 in favor of permitting AT&T to install such boxes without a prior EIR report. The “SF Beautiful” organization, together with a number of neighborhood organizations, has meanwhile filed suit against AT&T. The court has imposed a stay pending its final decision. Consequently, AT&T has halted installation of its boxes. Meanwhile, competing firms have proposed other technical implementations such as an underground fiber optics system to achieve the same goals as AT&T is pursuing by installation of the unsightly boxes. Should the court decide that an EIR is required first, these alternatives would have to be discussed as part of the EIR. Considering the speed of technical innovation, it is possible that by the time a final decision has been reached, the “boxes” technology will have already become totally obsolete.

**Landscape Committee:**

Board Liaison and Chairperson Diane Wara reported on the current tree and shrub replanting program. Two thirds of the projected new street trees have meanwhile been planted, and the respective homeowners have been reminded via email to water their new trees regularly because of the unusually dry weather conditions. The planned 6 median trees will be planted soon. The shrub replanting project on lower Alton Avenue might not be realized at all, because the homeowners involved have not agreed to pay for the proposed shrubs. As a result, the overall cost for Landscaping Improvements is still below budget, but the remaining funds will be used up until the end of this Fiscal Year. It was suggested to have Valley Crest Landscaping Company revise the sprinkler system surrounding the Clubhouse in order to conserve water. The Winter Pruning Schedule has been completed and will be posted within a week.

**WTPCC:**

Due to the current winter break, there were no new activities to report. – Last year, WTPCC had performed a basic census of participating neighborhoods – also of Forest Hill – including map and number of households.

In this context, an oddity in the Forest Hill Tract map was brought up: due to irregularities in the boundary lines of the tract, a few properties that are part of complete Forest Hill blocks are nevertheless excluded from the neighborhood, e.g. one corner property at the intersection of Pacheco Street and Ninth Avenue. Harold Wright explained that it is nearly impossible to have the tract boundaries re-drawn since that would require the unanimous written agreement of all FHA members. Diane Wara announced that she will look into this matter to determine if there is any doable procedure to include the properties in question.

**Garden Club:**

Sally Kipper reported that the Holiday Party was a great success, and that the next Garden Club meeting will feature a “Vintage Fashion Show.” For March 16, she announced a St. Patrick’s Day Dinner in lieu of the annual Spring Party. Admission is \$30, and the event is open to all FHA members irrespective of their affiliation with the Garden Club. It was suggested to get FH parents more involved in the Children’s Holiday Party by inviting them to help with putting up the decorations. Also, Diane Wara clarified that FHA budget allows for professional cleaning services following every Community Event.

**Adjournment:** There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:45 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Jutta Lammerts