



West of Twin Peaks Central Council

A Resource for Neighborhood Organizations West of Twin Peaks in San Francisco since 1936

PO Box 27112
San Francisco, CA 94127

<http://www.westoftwinpeaks.org/>

Meeting Minutes

DRAFT

Date: Monday June 27, 2016

Time: 7:30pm – 9:00pm

Location: **Forest Hill Clubhouse**
381 Magellan Avenue
San Francisco, CA 94127

Associations:	Those Present shown in bold		
Balboa Terrace	Roger Ritter	Monterey Heights	Marco Magallon Susan Zurinaga Paul Anderson Steve Roditti
Forest Hill	Dena Aslanian William Gus Guibert	Mount Sutro Homeowners	
Forest Knolls	Herbert Dunmeyer Kristine Zaback	Pine Lake Park	David Golden David Hirtzel
Ingleside Terrace	Paul Conroy Carolyn + Bob Karis Mark Scardina	Saint Francis Woods	Carolyn Squeri, Paul Hill
Golden Gate Heights	Sally Stephens	Sherwood Forest	
Greater West Portal	Avrum Shepard Matt Chamberlain Lee Hsu	Sunnyside	Lisa Spinali Estelle Smith
Lakeshore Acres	Barbara Chionsini Bill Chionsini,	The Woods	Judy Clarke
Lakeside Property Owners	Joyce Richardson	Twin Peaks	Denise LaPoint
Merced Manor	Mike Garcia	Westwood Highlands	Bhushan Mudbhary Dave Bisho
Midtown Terrace	George Wooding		
Miraloma Park	Karen Breslin		
Officers Present:	President – Roger Ritter Vice President- Sally Stephens	Treasurer- Carolyn Squeri Secretary – David Golden Parliamentarian - Lee Hsu	
Guests Present:	Daniel Brown Herbert Denmerer Steve Roelto Dave Ccele Vadelavi Jen Low	E Jolish David Hertzell Carl Wendorf Joel Engardio Brigitte Churnin	

Roll Call and Minutes Review:

Meeting called to order: 7:35PM

Roll Call: 14 associations present, we have a quorum

Previous Meeting Minutes: Motion to approve by Karen Breslin, Mark Scardina seconds. All in favor. Motion passes.

Officer Reports:

President / Roger Ritter: None

Vice President / Sally Stephens: None

Secretary / David Golden: None

Treasurer / Carolyn Squeri: None

Parliamentarian / Lee Hsu: None

Committee Reports: None

Planning and Land Use / Estelle Smith: None

Technology / Avrum Shepard: None

Public Health / George Wooding: None

Open Space & Parks / Sally Stephens: None

Transportation / Avrum Shepard: None

Public Safety / Barbara Chionsini: None

Featured Speaker

District Attorney George Gascon: Knows we are interested in property crime and will provide information. Will focus on WoTP neighborhoods. Will provide historical data and comparative with other city.

Taraval burglaries: 15 month period, 2090 burglaries, lead to 80 arrests. 16 cases were presented to district attorney, we took action on 15 of those 16 case. 5032 property crimes reported, 173 led to arrests, about 3% led to arrests, we took action on 70%. We are taking actions on a high percentage of the cases that are presented to us. This is true about both Taraval and Ingleside precincts. We are responsible for only the prosecution of cases, not the arrest and investigations. There are a few cases, such as environmental spills, which we can investigate ourselves. What are our conviction rates? Our conviction rates are steadily going up. They are the highest rate they have been in 10 years. Felony Conviction rates for "trials" (excludes plea bargaining), last 2 years it has been 93%. This year is trending well too. Nationally 95% of cases are plead, due to high demand for US courts. On the misdemeanor side, we have at 82% conviction rate this year, and try 50-60 cases a year. The numbers have gone up significantly. We are spending a great deal more time training our attorneys, both when we on board, and throughout their careers. We have a lot more active mentorship in our offices. We used to have multiple different units, separating early stages to trial attorneys. We now have attorneys work through a case from beginning to end. This new system requires the attorneys to take more ownership over the entire case. He believes these changes have led to the significant improvement in trial convictions.

In 2010, we were arresting about 10% of “par 1” crimes. At the end of 2015, we are at 9%. For a total of 64,870 crimes. Number of crimes have gone up, but the number of arrests have gone down.

Question: You mentioned that the number of cases presented to the DA’s office, is small compared to national averages, what can be done to improve that? Police units are adding new divisions to prosecute specific crimes such as car theft. Police are hiring more. Police are using “crime strategies units” looking for patterns, of crimes, connecting events into serial offenders. Helps with conviction rates. We recently convicted a car burglary resulting in a 3 year sentence.

Question: Those analysis are based on arrests, not reported crimes? I live off of twin peaks blvd, we have seen a number of crimes increase, including robbery, muggings, etc. Our police dept. believes these are gang related? Yes, we are working with the police, and do believe that some of these crimes are organized efforts. We are looking to get “down stream” including the “entire supply line” which we believe that will have a greater impact. We have seen “retail theft” where people are hired to steal specific items, sometimes worth \$2000 or \$3000. We are looking at these crimes as we used to look at drug related crimes. Street drug prices have dropped so property crime is more profitable. We are also seeing human trafficking of young boys and girls. The profit is enormous, some of these individuals make \$500K \$600K a year. We are also seeing organized crimes of specific items. **Do you coordinate with the police?** Yes, we have a crime strategies unit that works to pick up these individuals.

Question: Have you used decoy automobiles? Why not? I used to use them when I was in police work, you need to ask the police about their current strategies.

Question: Don’t we need to look at this as entire system? Is there a symbiosis between the police and the DA’s office that leads to the lower arrest rate? Our conviction rate is higher than it was before. However, the arrest rate has dropped dramatically. I don’t know why the arrest rates are so low. It’s not because we are not getting convictions when the police are presenting us with arrests.

Question: There used to be joke in the public defender’s office that the DA’s office was doing our job. Is that true? The DA’s office has to handle 100% of the trials, but the public defender’s office handles only 60% of the crimes. We have a high recidivism rate. We are looking to get much smarter about how we prosecute crimes.

Question: it used to be 10% of the criminals commit 90% of the crimes? The problem is more nuanced than that. For example, we have mental illness and homeless. It takes longer to schedule the mental health support than the conviction for a minor crime. This can become a vicious cycle. We are looking to create a four tier system from Most Dangerous, to least Dangerous. We would have a different approach to working with the least dangerous to intervene and break the cycle.

Questions: That’s not the issue we have, we have an issue with organized crime? It’s all part of a feeling of insecurity. We are making a lot of changes that will make improvements on the organized crime too. I am confidence in a year from now if we meet again, the situation will be improved we are making a lot of progress.

Question: Are jurors allowed to know if the accused is part of gang? We can only introduce the status of the accused if we can show a “nexus” of its relationship to the crime. **A friend was on a jury that was declared a mistrial when one of the jurors recognized a tattoo of the accused?** Yes, that could cause a case to result in a mistrial. It’s important that jurors don’t insert

additional facts to a case. This can cause a significant problem, when cases are overturned after the accused has served jail time we may be forced to pay settlements, to a person who really did the crime but gets off due to a mistrial.

Question: How do you respond to comments that these crimes are not prosecuted harshly enough, and that criminals are in a revolving door? How difficult is it? It's true that 70% of the people we arrest do come back and commit additional crimes. It's a big problem for us the people who commit the low level crimes.

Question: Do you have any opinions of decriminalization of drug use? I believe that the decriminalization of drug use has created a situation where we are dealing with a lot of stuff that would be better handled for medical treatment. We are focused on stopping the sale of drugs. In other countries they are dealing with the drug use as a medical issue, often allowing the user to obtain drugs from the government. This helps make the sale of drugs less profitable.

Question: You cross reference homelessness and mental illness. You know that Nevada shipped 600 individuals to San Francisco. There was also an issue in Hawaii where they made it illegal to sit on the street, as a result their homeless were given one way tickets to San Francisco. We are very generous to our homeless, making it very attractive. We also have a shift in population and increase in crime? I am not making a connection between homelessness and crime. There are many individuals who are homeless who do not commit crimes. Many of the homeless are addicts and have mental illness. I think it's a myth that most of San Francisco homeless come from other places. Our problem is mostly regional. There is a link between substance abuse and homelessness. NYC leads the country in per capita homeless, SF is second, LA 3rd. But there are increases in many cities in the US. We are beginning to reevaluate the way we deal with homelessness and I am optimistic that if we can improve our intervention that will help a great deal.

The Public Integrity Unit has always existed in the DA's office, I want to thank you for increasing that unit. Will you also be able to catch elected officials who are criminals? We are catching criminals. In 2010 we reduced crime to 1950s level and we can do it again. We are also focusing on criminals within the government too.

Resolution From Balboa Terrace Home Owner Association re: Controlling Coyotes

Discussion:

California Fish and Wildlife: Andrew Hughan Public Information Officer California Department Fish and Wildlife: We will not take action against coyotes if they are attacking pets. We will not take action until it rises to a public safety issue. They have been known to attack people and children. If they do attack a person or child, then we will take action and kill as many animals as it takes to find the offending animal. We believe it is your responsibility to take action to protect your pets. We are not going to get involved in San Francisco City politics. We can ask the city to come up with a Wild Life Action Plan. I personally believe that living with Coyotes, is a mixture of both personal responsibility and taking action to limit population. There is a lot of habitat in this neighborhood where coyotes can make dens and raise pups. They are aggressive breeders. They can carry rabies. But the actual rabies rate is higher among skunks. Outside of the city, you can shoot coyotes. The city would be allowed to take action. There are wild life services that will take action and remove coyotes. They are not protected species and no permits are required to kill coyotes.

How can we have domestic pets added to this list of “protective” people, why can’t we change the law? The legislature is responsible to make laws. There is not the political will to change the law. Unfortunately, it is going to take a tragedy to trigger a change in policy.

How did the agency take action in 2007 when the coyotes bit a dog? I don’t know that’s before my time.

Where can I find the law? I will provide you this information.

If a kid is in the woods, by himself he will be attacked? Yes, its true. Most attacks happen when the animal is disturbed. There were 16 mount lion attacks, most of those occurred when an animal was disturbed. It did not hunt down a human, but it was presented an opportunity so did what coyotes do.

As I read the law, the mandate which creates wildlife and game, it’s your obligation, to protect the safety? A dog owner was scratched when intervening trying to protect their dog, doesn’t that count as an action which can trigger action? I am not familiar with every case. General it has to be a bite, that results in a medical visit.

If the city requested you to come in, would you? No, we would require they contact wild life services. There was a bear attack in LA Friday night. I get hate mail, like you wouldn’t believe, because the animal has attacked a person and we take action. There are many people who do not like us taking action against animals

Is there any law preventing a professional company from euthanize coyotes? No, we encourage that. They are very difficult to trap. Department does not recommend trapping, and neutering as it disturbs the behavior of the pack and can lead to erratic and unpredictable behavior.

What would your position be if someone was hurt? Then we would come in with wildlife agents euthanize it, and euthanize as many animals as necessary.

Little Blue Society, Mary Paglieri

Little blue refers to the blue of the earth as seen from space. If we were on an isolated island, then it would be possible to eradicate coyotes. In San Francisco, it’s not possible. Recommends against targeting the alpha males, because removing the alpha coyotes creates more problems, when the beta males start breeding. I come up with approaches and methodologies, to specifically address the behavior so that we have a positive outcome. I do it without killing animals. The work I did in Ingleside Terrace to divert their pathways. They were taking cats and creating fear. I accomplished what Ingleside Terrace wanted. But they were diverted to another neighborhood. How do we keep these guys in their respective spaces. Yes, we are in a drought. But we are also disturbing habitat. Education is very important, people need to know how to behave around coyotes. People need to understand how to take care of their dogs. The city has been doing education. Coyotes are claiming the parks and golf courses as their habitats. The speaker tells a story about how coyotes whipped out a neighborhood’s feral cats, but the following year, didn’t touch the cats, and asserts that it was due to drought changing the coyote’s environment. Says that coyotes only eat what is familiar to them, unless they are hungry.

When you hear this in the suburbs it's because they have expanded into the coyote's habitat, that's not the true here in the city, why are they here? We are disturbing more natural habitat in the country side so they migrate to new places.

If you see a coyote, what is it you should do? Just walk away.

Coyotes have a habitat in the parks and golf courses, they would stay there is premised on the idea the coyote population is stable. That may not be true, the population is increasing? There is no real evidence that the coyote population is increasing. **The coyotes recently came from north of the bay in 2002?** She doesn't believe it. Andrew notes, Fish and Wildlife has sold science to support that coyotes came from North bay. There is an alternate theory that coyotes were released by a trapper.

I went to supervisor meeting, Presidio trust has documented them coming over the Golden Gate Bridge.

Sally asks to speak, she was a former member, of the advisor committee on animals prevention. She notes that the city has not been very proactive about the issues. We need more data and we need a management plan. We don't have solid data. They will trap them and put radio collars on them, and we can find out where they are living. The city could do more of that at Stern Grove, such as identifying where the coyotes hare making their habitat. There is abundant food sources, from people feeding the animals, from people leaving garbage. There are things you can do to keep your dog safe. The main thing is we need to do is get actual data to develop a science based plan.

Mark – I want to point out two things- we initiated the relationship with Mary to take a regional approach, as a proof of concept that this was a viable plan, that we could have a plan like this on the western side of the city. We may need to provide them with additional food sources, and make sure there is a wildlife program. We can advocate for a more thoughtful plan.

Matt- We can advocated for specific actions. More important is that we can express concern, and hope that we trigger action. But rarely will we get the specific action we propose. We need to “ask for the moon” and hope for a small hill.

Denise- Notes that the resolution asks only the coyotes be removed to the extent permitted by law. Since its not permitted by law. Let's add a sentence, requesting action. Denise moves to support the motion, saying we should add a cover letter to expand on the issue.

Roger- Notes that the city's attitude of the city seemed to be extremely “laize fair”. People are upset about the issue.

Concern is raised that we will be going on record for support a regulation that will not be effective.

An explanation is given for the wording was based on using legal reading of the language in the fish in wildlife documentations.

Denise moves, and Matt Seconds Motion to support the Balboa Terrace. After discussion, Denise rescinds motion.

A request is made to support Balboa Terrace's motion, but we need to work over the summer to get a more clarity and a more specific resolution to be drafted and then approved. If it's a "West of Twin Peaks problem" then we should deal with it more comprehensively.

Denise Moves that we prepare a letter supporting the Balboa's generally concern, collectively we urge the city to develop a plan after we get more input from the neighborhoods, by way of an attachment that we come up with a policy statement. Weather the letter is attached is not determined.

President calls for a vote: **8 votes in favor, 3 Abstentions, 3 No's. Motion carries.**

Jen Low- From Supervisor's Office: Thanks us for the discussion on Coyotes. Who here would like City to take care of Street Trees? There are a number of taxes on the ballot. The parcel tax is moving forward with the board supervisors. It should be the city's policy that we take care of Street Trees. It should not be that difficult, and we believe it can be done as a simple measure. If this ordinance was passed, then we could take care of the trees. The ordinance to take back the trees.

Nomination of Delegates: Dave Bisho presents the slates:

Karen Breslin Moves, Dave Bisho seconds.

Carolyn Squeri- Treasurer

David Golden- Secretary

Roger Ritter- President

Sally Stephens- Vice President

The measure is approved for the slate to serve another term.

9:00 pm Adjourn + Social: Karen motions to Adjourn. We are adjourned.
Adjourned.

Minutes by David Golden