

MARINA BAY NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES OF APRIL 14TH, 2010

Meeting called to order at 7:30 by Virginia Finlay, Council President. Also present: Niccore Rapp Tyler, Treasurer, and Ruth Zablotsky, Secretary. Barbara Norrish, VP was absent. Self-introductions were made by the officers of the Council and members of the audience.

BEAT OFFICERS REPORT: There was no Beat Officer's Report by the Richmond P.D. as Officer Krug was not able to join the meeting.

PRE-AGENDA OVERVIEW: Virginia Finlay gave a short recap on various issues, including Measure D for more school district funding (flyers for this were on front table), Voter Registration (forms on front table), and next month's agenda item being the City's 2010-2011 budget. Time will be allotted at the end of tonight's meeting for the audience to submit questions about the projected fiscal year deficit, etc. Virginia also briefly spoke about the new Marina Bay Bingo Parlor at the American Legion Hall and a proposal by Virtual Development Corporation, a local developer, to build a cemetery at the foot of Marina Way South.

THE MARINA BAY PARKWAY GRADE SEPARATION: Alan Wolken, Director of the Richmond Redevelopment Agency, spoke about the several-year history of this project to bring newcomers to the community up to speed. He spoke about the long history of the Grade Separation Feasibility Study, the various areas in MB that were under consideration for grade crossing separations (and why they were ultimately not chosen for a variety of factors, some of which were access to freeways, safety, accident rates at crossings, numbers of crossings, etc.). Wolken also shared how Marina Bay Parkway ultimately came to be the preferred location with an underpass as the preferred type of separation, even though it is more expensive to construct than an overpass.

Full funding has been secured from [1] the State of California, [2] Measure J Transportation Sales Tax, [3] Developer fees from area projects, and [4] Union Pacific Railroad, which kicked in 10% of the total cost. **NO COMMUNITY FUNDS, TAXES, or ASSESSMENTS WERE INVOLVED IN FUNDING THE \$37.5 MILLION set aside for this project.**

A PowerPoint presentation was shown to the group regarding the history and salient points of the project. The City's website has the evening's presentation already posted.

Stakeholders in this project:

Stakeholders are residents of all eleven MB subdivisions and other regular users of the parkway and our area; Redevelopment Agency and the City; the various rail lines (Union Pacific, Richmond Pacific, and Burlington Northern Santa Fe); utility owners (every utility company will be affected in "depressing" the roadway as all have lines underground).

Construction issues:

Excavation will go down 20' for the base of the road. There will be 4' – 4 1/2' wide retaining walls built because of existing groundwater levels. The speed limit on the parkway will be 35 MPH between Meeker and Regatta (past Regatta, the limit will stay 25); some driveways near the railroad will be closed off or rerouted; there will be adequate sight lines for all drivers; there will be a narrow landscaped median down the center and two lanes of traffic in both directions; for "The Anchorage" town homes, they will no longer be able to pull out of their main driveway and cross the road to turn left towards the shopping center and freeway...they will have to turn right, go to the Meeker/Regatta intersection and make a U turn when the light is green; a pedestrian/bike path will be elevated adjacent to either side of the new road so that neither bicyclist nor pedestrian will have to stand by and wait for long trains to pass as they currently do, along with motorists. This is great news as it means that BOTH sides of the Parkway will have sidewalks. The parkway's east side sidewalk will be added but will only extend to Regatta. It is still great progress as there is currently NO sidewalk on that side of the road.

Aesthetic / Landscaping Elements:

The road is considered a gateway to our very special area. There will be numerous pedestrian elements; green features; underpass architecture; memorial identification (see previous postings about Officer Bradley A. Moody Memorial Underpass). Once one passes through the underpass, there will be a beautiful gateway entry to the area. Plans are definitely in place to have the whole corridor be beautiful.

Construction Features:

The process will take 3 years (but if we are in agreement that we want it to take less than three years, we must all get behind the roadway being completely shut down 24/7 instead of the roadway being shut down only part of the time). One vehicular lane must remain open for police and emergency vehicles and there will be one pedestrian path on one side of the road. The current plan is to have limited night and weekend closures (thus the three year horizon). There will be a tremendous amount of heavy equipment in the area (questions were asked about pile driving; there will be NO pile-driving, jack-hammering).

Next steps:

Design, Development and Approval. This includes more public input, plans, railroad coordination, more public meetings; project approval is expected to be complete by year end. Construction scheduled to start Spring, 2011 (originally thought to happen sometime this year).

There was a Q&A session that followed with questions asked about:

- = noise levels at night;
- = the Meade Street bypass (this is very complicated as complex negotiations are involved with UC who owns the land; also, easements are needed; soil analysis and a myriad of other factors are involved; BUT once work begins on the underpass, the Meade St. Bypass WILL be ready for us to use for coming and going--many of us already use that area to get in and out when we know trains are passing);
- = aesthetics of the construction;
- = graffiti-proofing the construction;
- = shortening the closure time so as to speed up overall duration of the construction;
- = sidewalks, etc.

The underpass is really important for area safety and is an integral part of the future of the ferry project. The June 9 MBNC meeting will include drawings and renderings of the underpass project.

Questions for next month's MBNC City-budget meeting were posed by the audience and Virginia took note. Pam Stello from Marina Bay condos addressed the Point Molate Casino project and distributed flyers about what her group is involved in vis-à-vis the Casino planned there by Upstream Developers LLC.

Respectfully submitted,
Ruth Zablotsky
Secretary, Marina Bay Neighborhood Council