

People for the Parks Presidio

May 9, 2014

Notes: Karen Braseth and Ruth Gravanis

Before the meeting, Amy referred us to an article recommended by Neal Desai. 'Involvement of California and the West in the Civil War' is posted on GGNRA's website [The Civil War at Golden Gate](#).

During the meeting, Ruth announced that Becky Evans is to be awarded a Lifetime Achievement Award during SF Tomorrow's annual dinner on May 21st.

1) The Presidio Visitor Center – Joshua Steinberger, Presidio Trust

Progress report.

Location is Building 210 where the bank and post office now reside. Applebaum, the architectural firm that also worked on the Heritage Program at the Officers Club, is making good progress. The technical and physical design will be finished in the next two weeks. There is lots of momentum and effort under way.

Estimated opening date is May 2016 which coincides with the 100th anniversary of National Park Service. Ben Fash talked about roles: Presidio Trust – Architecture; NPS – Interpretation and GGNPC – Philanthropy. "We are collaborating on just about everything." Howard talked about the site being a central, signature viewing platform for the public. "As the tunnel tops unfold, the importance of the VC becomes even more profound. It looks like the right place, small – which is ok as it is not meant to capture visitors for hours and hours – more a feeling of the Post."

The temporary location for the Visitors Center is the Montgomery Street barracks, two buildings down from Building 103. It is small and is staffed Wed – Sun. Alternate locations for visitor information are the Presidio Trust and the new Officer's Club. The post office will remain somewhere on the Post.

The Visitor Center is meant to be the starting point, a grounding place, an information hub, a meeting spot for education and visitor services.

From: "Steinberger, Joshua" <JSteinberger@presidiotrust.gov>

Subject: RE: from last Friday's minutes

Date: May 16, 2014 at 2:29:31 PM PDT

To: Amy Meyer (b) (6)

Below is the current language about the Presidio Visitors Center's core functions. As we talked about, there is strong alignment among the partners as this exciting vision continues to solidify.

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As a **visitor**, this Center is a portal to the entire Presidio.

It is the:

- ***Starting point*** from which I can plan my trip and access all parts of the Presidio and the greater GGNRA
- ***Grounding place*** where I can gain an understanding of the Presidio and its significance
- ***Information hub*** where I can learn about the Presidio and the options it offers me
- ***Meeting spot*** where I can regroup, grab a snack, gather my group to begin or end a visit to the Presidio
- ***Education and Visitor Services place*** – where I can find books and products to expand the story and tools to explore the park.

2) Transition Committee for PFP/P – Amy Meyer, People for a GGNRA

Progress report. An idea is emerging for an electronic newsletter to reach all the people who are involved with our coastal Bay Area national parks.

PFP/P is now 10 years old. The Transition Committee consists of 6 members: Nancy Conner, JoAnn McAllister, John Frykman, Jan Blum, Susan Ives and Amy Meyer.

The newsletter idea is to bind the GGNRA with Point Reyes, NPS, the Park Academy, etc. with each park submitting policy and plan topics. The newsletter would be based at the GGNPC. It would connect, embrace and identify the parks. How to recruit new members, how to reach out? Susan Ives is a communication specialist who can help with this. Committee meetings will continue, possibly with folks taking turns as chair. It was suggested that a Facebook page be considered.

3) Gateway Project – Joshua Steinberger, Presidio Trust

Brief update.

The Gateway Project addresses new acreage connecting Crissy Field to the Post. There is a model at the Observation Post to view and offer feedback. Twenty-five stellar proposals were received, and five firms have been engaged spanning international, national and local talent. They were welcomed this week during a three day charrette designed to give them a history of the site and a sense of the park. 300 people attended the public discussion.

Everyone is invited to share in the discussion of this project. Guided tours will start at the Presidio Trust headquarters every Friday, 4-5pm. Dana Polk distributed a Comment Card designed to provide feedback. The Presidio Trust is reaching out to all audiences.

Amy described her experience with the guided tour led by Michael Boland.

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In early September, the five Design Teams will share their initial ideas with the public. The idea is to highlight the work of the teams. There is no 'winner'. The end result may be a combination of the work from all the teams, or one team or none of them should they decide they are not there yet. They are hoping to include the best ideas from around the country. The Trust will pay for the designs so it will own them.

There was some concern voiced about this project having the same outcome as the Commissary Project. There is also frustration that there is no historical context to the project and that some people on the walk had said that history wasn't relevant. Ben clarified that the first day of the 3-day charrette consisted of tours of historical spots in the park. It was recognized that soldiers who have died or gone through the Presidio should be honored. It was noted that this is just the start of project, that there will be ample time to get everyone's input.

Will the Tunnel Top exist before the design is overlaid on it so that people can experience the physical connection? Joshua was not sure and will follow up. He did emphasize that the teams will not make the decision on the design. Rather, the Presidio Trust, NPS and GGNPC will make the decision. The intent is the community will collectively decide.

It is easy to get people to Crissy Field. The design needs to be mindful of how to bring the people from the popular Crissy Field to the Post. The way to get up and over has to be obvious and draw people up. It is easier to go down than to climb up.

Doyle Drive is expected to complete in 2016. The Gateway Project target will be subsequent to that and depends on the design outcome.

4) GGNRA General Management Plan – Howard Levitt, GGNRA

Introduction to the new GGNRA General Management Plan. GGNRA will bring CD copies of the new plan and briefly outline what has changed since the last plan was done in 1980. We will schedule further discussion of aspects of the plan as asked for or seem necessary in the future.

The new plan introduced today just came out two weeks ago and replaces the previous plan the park used for 32 years. Howard provided CD's and one very large hard copy. The online version is on the GGNRA website [Golden Gate National Recreation Area - National Park Service](#).

The plan affirms the 'Parks for the People' concept that led to the original GGNRA legislation. Next steps are to better connect people to the park and to protect the resources of the park. The original GMP was done when less was known about the GGNRA's biological and cultural resources, so the update includes more about resource identification and protection. There are management zones for resource preservation, recreational experiences and cultural immersion. Natural areas will not be fenced off; appropriate recreation will be allowed.

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The plan does not include the Presidio, Fort Mason or Fort Baker which were more recently planned. A full list is provided in the report and on the CD's. The Plan also describes financial and staffing needs. \$150M in capital improvements are needed over 20 years. Staffing in the park is being reviewed and is expected to add \$4M for a total of \$32M annually to operate the park.

The Plan is a broad vision with a 20-year lifespan. Each component will have its own implementation process, subject to the NEPA process. (Fears of immediate implementation are unfounded.) It took 10 years and 1,000 people to create the plan. Does the plan address new acquisitions? Yes, but Howard didn't have specifics. It is understood that we must be prepared for things to change.

The Introduction chapter is a good summary; there is not an Executive Summary yet. Themes are 'Connecting People to the Park' and 'A Focus on National Treasures' (specifically for Muir Woods and Alcatraz. Howard suggested everyone review the Introduction for the next meeting in order to pose informed questions.

The plan does not ban dogs from the park. The park has its own Dog Management process. The Plan does not mention dog walking specifically, and there is no elevated status for dogs over any other recreational use of the park.

5) Presidio Contamination Cleanup – Mark Youngkin & Julie Cheever, Restoration Advisory Board (RAB)

The cleanup of all known contamination of the Presidio left in place by the Army will conclude in May 2014 and the RAB has adjourned. The RAB's many contributions have the potential to serve as a model for other communities in the cleanup of former military sites, making them safe for public reuse. Mark and Julie were each with the RAB for all of its years. They told us what they have been doing and how they worked with the Presidio Trust staff.

Amy noted that when Jim Meadows, first executive director of the Trust, came to the Presidio in 1998, the Army was planning a superficial cleanup, but the community urged the post be cleaned up to national park standards. He was able to use the 54 letters generated by the RAB working with the People for the Presidio of the 1990s to get a full cleanup. Mark and Julie acknowledged that support of P4P.

The last RAB meeting was held on April 8th. There were 20 years of continuous community service. 150 members of the public and 54 agency representatives attended meetings. All RAB and agency meetings are on the record. A resolution was passed to commend their accomplishments, see attached. Becky Evans noted the Board of Supervisors will also offer a resolution. The Presidio Trust will have spent \$173M between 1999 and May, 2014 on the effort to clean up oil, hazardous waste, lead based paint and more; some sites were cleaned out entirely and some were capped. This sum includes \$103M from the Army, \$19M in interest on \$100M of that money which was deposited

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with the Trust, and money from two insurance policies. The Trust also put in some money, including \$2M to buy the insurance.

When the GGNRA Advisory Commission was phased out, the RAB was the only advisory body left. This RAB is the only one in California that has finished its work. The reason seems to be how much people care about national parks.

The effort spanned four areas:

- Document Review – reviewing documents and reporting out.
- Outreach – reaching out to the community with presentations. This made a difference with lots of support received from the public.
- Independent Research – looking up sites the Army did not count. ‘Un-enumerated sites’ and landfills that were larger than previously thought.
- Inter-Agency Working Groups – revived the Summit Meeting concept to bring agencies together.

A final report is about to be distributed (140 pages) and it will go on the Trust’s website. It includes recommendations regarding early notification and the need to be proactive in continuing to look for lead. Former land use information is in offsite storage, about to be brought in. The environmental cleanup is essentially finished; all the main sites appear to be done. The insurance policies expire in May 2014. Now is the time to plan for addressing any new contamination, especially petroleum.

Dana Polk and Barbara Corff commented on the importance of the cleanup to natural resource protection and restoration.

6) Proposed Korean War Memorial – Amy Meyer, People for a GGNRA

The proposed Korean War Memorial. What about other war memorials? This begins a discussion of major importance to the Presidio’s future.

Amy’s preliminary observation of the proposed Korean War Memorial is – it is a lot of concrete. She wants to make sure there is a public review. There has been none yet, but the proponents are putting out images to generate funds. A relevant policy is needed.

The question becomes, this memorial vs other memorials – what and who should be recognized? This is the basis for a future discussion that should start with a document to bring this matter to public attention.

Dana Polk announced the public process kicks off next Thursday, 5/15, with two sessions 10-11am and 5-6pm to walk to the site, a triangle of land opposite the cemetery. The walk is posted on the Trust website [Korean-War-Memorial-Site-Walk-May-15.aspx](http://www.ggnra.org/Korean-War-Memorial-Site-Walk-May-15.aspx). Another walk can be scheduled.

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Michael Boland will take the Korean War Memorial proposal through the N² NEPA process and the art approval process.

Note just in from Dana Polk: Hi Amy, We don't currently have other walks scheduled. In spite of the obvious energy around this issue at the PFP meeting, only one person showed up to each walk, and neither were from PFP. Pretty disappointing. We'll plan for more walks in the near future. Hopefully we will have better attendance since it takes a lot of staff time to plan for these and staff them. Dana

IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN A WALK, PLEASE SEND AN E-MAIL TO DANA. SHE IS AT DPolk@PresidioTrust.gov

Comments:

- Do not draw away from the white crosses – it is the best visual.
- Do we have a right to reject another monument? Yes. (But as Phil Burton said, “There are more veterans than conservationists.”)
- Can we celebrate the Korean War Veterans with an event rather than a memorial with more statues? Or, a program through Futures without Violence?
- It's too far down the line to convert it into an event.
- Favor leaving as a park rather than dedicating it to anyone in particular. Little pockets to celebrate different things are not a good idea.
- This is another example of an inverted planning process. When money is spent developing ideas, people get committed to those ideas.
- Need a more proactive approach from the Trust to build a general policy for memorials and other gifts, using the national parks policy as a springboard.

Amy said she will be gone for a week in mid-June. Next meeting will be before or after.

Dana circulated two handouts: **Observe-Presidio Biodiversity** and **Picturing the Presidio**- an interactive exhibit.

The meeting adjourned at 10 AM.