

**MINUTES
CITY OF NOVATO
Novato Streetscape Committee Meeting
TUESDAY, May 13, 2014 7:00 P.M.**

I. ROLL CALL

Members:

Len Bernstein
Larry Paulger
Marcia Basalla
Ed Schulze
Susan Stompe - absent
Charlotte Urban - absent

Staff:

Bill Johnson
Dave Meyers
Clive Shigoli
Andrew Poster

Guests

Olive Avenue residents:

Laura Colin
Joanna Dixon
Vicki Schneider
Marge Schram

II. APPROVE MINUTES OF APRIL 14, 2014

Approved – Basalla, Bernstein, Paulger, Schulze

III. APPROVE AGENDA

Approved as amended: keep Measure A on agenda, add 350 Ignacio to Business Recognition. Basalla, Bernstein, Paulger, Schulze

IV. CITIZENS' TIME TO ADDRESS THE COMMITTEE

Marge Schram, Joanna Dixon, Vicki Schneider, Laura Colin: neighbors met about Olive Avenue park between Chase and Railroad. Area is under the freeway overpass, part of which is Caltrans property. Residents brought photos of the area showing weed problems and other issues. There are homeless problems. A homeowner nearby calls the PD weekly about the problem. The numbers of homeless varies. After the last visit to this meeting by residents, some committee members and staff had gone out and done some work and turned off leaky irrigation. A lot of garbage comes down off the freeway. People are drinking in the park. There are a number of issues in this area that are ongoing and need more PD attention. They people don't seem to be camping, they seem to hang out there during the day, no evidence of encampments. The area in question is about two blocks in length. Committee reviewed a map of the area. The area contains parcels owned by Caltrans and by the City of Novato.



Residents would like the bushes to be completely removed which would make the problem area visible from the street. One resident's fence was kicked in, by a person concealed behind the bushes, who then entered her property and urinated in her garage. Perhaps removing a lot of the vegetation and planting a hedge around the perimeter along her fence line and around other properties, providing a barrier that could become a community space. About a month and a half ago the resident living right next to the freeway saw a person hanging around the area, a known homeless person, who was actually cleaning up the area, but then another person arrived who seemed suspect, so after she left her home she received a call from someone within her house who reported the second person was behind the bushes masturbating. She called Novato PD and asked them to respond and she returned to her home (this resident is a SF police officer). She was able to video this episode from within her home and showed it to the police officers who responded. The individual was cited and released and who turned out to be a parolee (for armed robbery in San Francisco). She frequently has to ask people to leave the area next to her home.

The hedge that transients can hide behind is about 7' high and is on a city property. When the city cleaned-up debris behind the bushes that left a flat surface making it easier to hide back there and even to set up tents. The residents feel if this area is more visible from the street, and not concealed by the tall hedges, it will not be attractive to people for hanging out, and it will be better for defensible space fire safety, as well as for officers patrolling. Residents are happy to help with this effort. Staff stated they can cut down the hedge and dig up the roots, or cut it down very short and then in the new fiscal year, replace it with something else. Residents requested *complete removal* of the hedge. Later landscaping can be put in since there is irrigation. Staff will go take a look and evaluate the hedges and get back to the residents about the removal. Residents are encouraged work together to change the character of the neighborhood. They asked questions about how the adopt-an-island program works. In addition, they might want to start a neighborhood watch – information is available from the police department.

Olive Avenue residents also mentioned that the street sweeper doesn't come down their street. Staff will check on why the sweeper isn't coming in noting that parked cars will keep the street sweeper from cleaning a street. The residents stated there *are* parked cars, but going *past* the parked cars there are clear areas where the sweeper could. Staff will follow up on this with the sweeper operator.

The residents of the Olive Avenue neighborhood were invited to come back to the meeting in June an exchange of updates with the committee and staff. Committee asked staff to expedite getting approval for bush removal from the city management.

V. STAFF CONCERNS

Public Works Director Andrew Poster shared that he recently met with Len to discuss the committee's concern about the transition from Bill to Clive. Public Works Director has complete confidence in Clive's ability to take over as the staff person for the committee, with continued mentoring from Bill over a six-month period.

Also, there is a need to figure out how the minutes will be produced going forward. Committee had a discussion with the Public Works Director regarding the role of Maggie Rufo on the committee (meeting agenda, minutes, etc.). The committee members present stated they would like to see her role continue, even if she is no longer partially funded by the Public Works budget.

VI. COMMITTEE MEMBERS' COMMENT TIME

Marcia noted some islands have large trash bags on them waiting to be picked up for over a week. For example, the Ignacio Island has been adopted and the city hasn't been asked to pick up the bags. Redwood Island between Vallejo and Grant (?) also have full bags with weeds growing up around them, so they have been there for awhile.

Larry added that it looks like irrigation lines at Hamilton have been vandalized along Hamilton Parkway, towards Todd Road, outside of the Newport and Sunny Cove developments. Staff has only recently learned of this issue.

The Bay Trail is open and is really wonderful.

Larry Paulger left the meeting at approximately 7:51 p.m., and there was no longer a quorum present.

VII. SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Signs - scheduled date to do adoption sign placements: May 22, 1:30 p.m.

B. Island/Park Adoption

1. Island/Park Updates

Ed Shulze provide an update on interested parties he contacted who had requested applications to adopt, but have not yet returned them. He had to leave message for a lot of the people and is awaiting calls, one person was being contacted at an invalid email address, which has been corrected. Prandi Properties is expanding into Novato and Ed suggested some spots for them to adopt – no call back yet. Sunset Parkway (aka Christina McNair's Island) has trenching going on and there are numerous maintenance issues for that island. Staff feels another island must be offered instead, and suggested one near Paradise Foods that already has water and plants. However, that might not be a safe island for volunteers to work on. An entire lane of the roadway would have to be blocked off, to make it safe to work next to Ignacio Blvd. Another island should be offered to the adopter. Suggestion: a corner island at Redwood and Delong. Water has to be run, but no trenching needed. An island will be found for her, there are plenty available.

Committee will help with the follow-up calls going forward and adopters will be invited to meeting.

2. Number adopted past month – no report

3. Streetscape Committee Island

Streetscape Committee island is awaiting Marcia's planting plan and then city will start remediation of weeds. The irrigation is mostly repaired but one area has a sprinkler over an older sprinkler system that needs to be sorted out. The island will have pop-up irrigation. Peter Torre and his one staff person will be working on this.

C. Public Outreach – Tabled due to lack of a quorum.

- D. Finance & Fundraising – Tabled due to lack of a quorum.
1. Creation of an Annual Budget
 2. Establish Annual Budgets by Sub-Committees
 3. Approval of Sub-Committee budgets by full committee

VIII. OLD BUSINESS

A. Clean and Green Day: April 26, 2014 – Wrap-Up

- Thank you letters have been mailed. More results to go over when Susan returns.
- A large group filled a dumpster at the Dog Park, but no sign-up sheet was turned in for them. Eight people at Pacheco Valley did a lot of work in the area and at the park-n-ride, they picked up over 200 cigarette butts at the park-n-ride.
- Len proposes to add another C&G event so there is one in spring and one in the fall, perhaps in early October.
- Continue to promote C&G as a Streetscape Committee sponsored event. More publicity to keep the committee known for Clean and Green and Keep Novato Green – year round with clean-up community events.
- Approach HOAs and neighborhood watch groups to organize clean-ups of their own neighborhoods.
- Publicize how volunteering to clean up benefits residents and businesses and all community members.
- Staff received some comments that people had trouble finding the event at the City Green. Needs more signage when an event is happening there. The location is very convenient once people know it is there.

B. Farmer's Market; Art & Wine Festival

An application needs to be sent to the Farmer's Market for the table to be set up on the second Tuesday of each month the market is in session. There is no cost for a city table. **Len will get the application in. Len will also staff the table in June and could use a second person.** Set up at 3:30 and stay until 6:30- 7 p.m.

Art & Wine Festival (June 14-15) committee needs to contact the Novato Chamber to apply to be part of the festival.

C. Revision of Business Recognition Program Criteria – no discussion this month. (Recommendation to review the criteria over the year.)

D. Business Recognition Nominations – no quorum to have a vote, continued until next month.

Trek Winery, 1026 Machin Avenue
350 Ignacio Blvd. – need to know who the owner is, and the address, for sending the letter

E. Annual Goals of the Committee – no discussion this month.

F. **Measure A**

Marcia spoke to Finance Director Brian Cochrane about Measure A. He reported that about \$300,000 is available now. Maintenance worker positions: one existing position

will be moved from Measure F to Measure A because Measure F is year-to-year, but Measure A funds will exist longer term. In addition, one new maintenance person will be hired in the new fiscal year starting July 1, 2014. The rest of the funds are approximately as follows (not verified with city budget): \$26K for hiring Conservation Corp to do work around the creeks; \$19k for movie night in the park (to fund staffing for the event); new park equipment for the four Bahia pocket parks, and playground equipment for one of the parks. The budget staff report is on the city website and was discussed at the May 6 meeting, Item I.

<http://www.novato.org/Index.aspx?page=636&recordid=6425>

IX. NEW BUSINESS - None

X. ADJOURNMENT

Adjourned at 8:40 p.m.

Next Meeting: June 9, 2014

Any Committee member that cannot attend the next meeting, please notify the City of Novato Maintenance Division at 899-8280 one week in advance so we may insure a quorum.
