

BANKERS HILL COMMUNITY GROUP MONTHLY MEETING MINUTES

Monday, June 21, 2021
Via Zoom videoconference

BHCG Chair Nancy Moors called the meeting to order at 6:31 p.m. The following Steering Committee members were present virtually: Moors, Vice Chair Becky Veen, Secretary John Lamb, Ann Garwood, John Percy and Bruce Dammann. Approximately 39 people participated in the virtual meeting.

Non-Agenda Public Comments

Lu Rehling, a candidate for Uptown Planners who lives in Hillcrest, noted that there are no representatives from Bankers Hill running for the city-recognized planning group. She offered to represent the community. Moors said she would add her to the BHCG contact email list.

Helen Rowe Allen, another Uptown Planners candidate, said she lived in Bankers Hill for “many years.” She said she would show concern for all the neighborhoods if elected.

Treasurer’s Report

Veen reported \$3,836.21 in the bank, not including Adopt-A-Plot fundraising. Percy said the BHCG has raised \$2,500 towards the re-landscaping plan for the Redwood Bridge Club. He and Moors thanked all who contributed to the fund, with Moors calling it a “heartwarming response.”

Project Review Committee

Percy said the Project Review Committee would be keeping an eye on new development in the community and encouraged residents to reach out. The hope, he said, is to give the community a stronger voice in the development of Bankers Hill.

San Diego Pride March Update

Moors said the march is planned to start at 6th Avenue and Laurel Street and proceed up to the Pride Flag in Hillcrest. BHCG has been asked to participate in the July event.

San Diego Police Department Liaison Update

Veen said there was no big news to report. She said she was trying to get more people to use the city’s Get It Done app. Moors gave an update on the status of one particular homeless individual.

Government Representatives

Stopher Vallejo, representing state Sen. Toni Atkins, said her office is assisting in unemployment claims. The state also passed a budget, he added.

Ansermio Jake Estrada, from state Assemblymember Chris Ward’s office, provided updates on state legislation and announced that Ward had been appointed Assembly majority whip.

BHCG 10TH ANNIVERSARY RECOGNITION

Moors noted that this month the Bankers Hill Community Group turned 10 years old. She listed the group’s accomplishments over the decade in a brief slideshow presentation. Looking forward, Moors said she hoped the group could attract some new talent to help with the group’s website. But she added that the monthly meetings generally attract 30 to 70 to the meetings, and the BHCG newsletter is sent to more than 400 people with an interest in Bankers Hill. Moors said the group appreciates everyone’s participation and feedback in helping to grow the community group going forward. She urged more people to attend BHCG Steering Committee meetings to help shape the discussion.

MAYOR TODD GLORIA

Moors introduced Todd Gloria, a familiar face to the BHCG, although appearing before the BHCG for the first time as San Diego mayor. Formerly Bankers Hill's City Council member and then state Assembly member, Gloria congratulated the BHCG on its 10th anniversary and noted that some faces had matured since he'd last seen them. He lauded the group's stick-to-it-iveness, conceding "neighborhood improvements don't happen overnight."

Gloria provided an update on the new city budget, lauding President Joe Biden for the federal funding that will help bolster the city's \$4.6 billion budget. He discussed anticipated financial assistance for small businesses and non-profits hit hard by the pandemic and increased funding to take his "sexy streets" initiative citywide. But he said his number-one issue is San Diego's growing homeless population. Gloria said he's working to get libraries and recreation centers back open slowly, but that's been hampered by the challenge of filling city-job vacancies. He said he hopes to expand park-related internships and "quadruple" local youth employment.

He said the market is dictating recent construction in Bankers Hill. The mayor said he supports building more housing to help revive the middle class.

COVERING INTERSTATE 5

Architects Mike Stepner, Rob Quigley and Roger Lewis provided an update on a plan to build "lids" on top of segments of I-5 to "heal the gash" and provide new space and interaction within several San Diego communities. Their group, called San Diego Commons, proposes one such lid at the south end of Bankers Hill, as well as others near Balboa Park, Sherman Heights and Golden Hill.

The idea, Stepner explained, is to rethink freeways, particularly how to minimize their adverse effects, from noise and pollution to the segregation that occurred when the freeways were designed and built. He noted that San Diego already has one example of a lid — Teralta Park, south of Normal Heights over Interstate 15.

Quigley asked attendees to consider how much damage I-5 has done to the air quality of the city since its construction. He said San Diego's "heart" is in bad shape. Lewis said he'd like to see Bankers Hill get involved in determining how or whether to move forward. Stepner said it would be a long effort but a promising one that could tie communities together.

More information can be found at sdcommons.org. Quigley hoped to have something built by 2027.

Meeting adjourned at 8:02 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by John Lamb, Secretary.