

BANKERS HILL COMMUNITY GROUP MONTHLY MEETING MINUTES

Monday, February 18, 2019
Bankers Hill Clubhouse, 3030 Front St.

BHCG Chair Amie Hayes called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. The following Steering Committee members were present: Amie Hayes, Jeanne Rawlings, Char Lou Benedict, John Lamb and Susanne Carvalho. There were approximately 30 people in attendance.

Announcements

Hayes called for volunteers to help serve lunch at the Bankers Hill Club in February.

Hayes alerted attendees of two upcoming Uptown Planners meetings -- one on Feb. 20 featuring a presentation on the Normal Street Promenade project in Hillcrest, and the other on March 5, when elections will be held for the community planning group. Hayes introduced two candidates for Uptown Planners from Bankers Hill who spoke briefly to the audience. Donna Shanske, a member of Bankers Hill 150, spoke of her efforts to oppose the excessive height of the Greystar apartment high-rise planned next to St. Paul's Episcopal Church. She said her goal is to get more people involved in the community while focusing on gentrification, the lack of affordable housing and transit improvements. Chuck Pennell, another member of Bankers Hill 150, also addressed the audience about his candidacy for Uptown Planners. Hayes encouraged audience members to get out and vote.

Hayes noted that the March BHCG meeting will begin at 6 p.m. because the featured speaker will be San Diego Police Chief David Nisleit. She also said there would be no BHCG Steering Committee meeting in February.

Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Jeanne Rawlings announced the group has \$3,610.66 in the bank. She noted the Bankers Hill Community Group recently made a \$500 donation to the Bankers Hill Clubhouse for new padded folding chairs to be used for clubhouse events.

Featured Business

Curtis Allen, owner of Uptown Bicycles on Fifth Avenue, expressed his excitement about locating a bike shop in a community like Bankers Hill where cycling popularity is growing. In business since 2011 in Normal Heights, Allen opened the Bankers Hill location in October 2017 in a neighborhood underserved by bike shops. He said his business has been warmly welcomed in the community. Allen predicted that electric bikes, which his shop sells, will be especially popular in a hilly area like Bankers Hill.

Request for Letters of Support

At the request of Friend of Maple Canyon Tershia d'Elgin, BHCG meeting attendees unanimously endorsed sending a letter to Mayor Kevin Faulconer requesting that he, in collaboration with San Diego Canyonlands, seek federal disaster funding so that a fully designed and permitted restoration project can commence this summer. D'Elgin said city staff has balked so far at the proposal, despite State Coastal Conservancy support and continuing soil-runoff damage to downstream properties, such as Solar Turbines and the airport's cargo terminal, during rainstorms. Her concern is that city staff may be seeking the same funding for its storm-pipe replacement project, presently being redesigned. With continued delays in dealing with Maple Canyon's significant erosion issues, d'Elgin said the city "risks continued exposure to liability and water-quality violations."

Attendees also unanimously approved sending a letter of support for the 50th annual San Diego Pride festivities. One audience member asked for permanent trashcans along Sixth Avenue.

Government Updates

No government representatives attended.

Non-Agenda Public Comment

Sean Redmond, executive director of the Stonewall Citizens' Patrol, introduced himself to attendees. His 13-year-old organization is a volunteer neighborhood-watch patrol group that operates in Bankers Hill, Hillcrest, North Park and University Heights. The group was spawned after a tragic incident that occurred outside the Pride Festival in Balboa Park in 2006. He was encouraging about starting up a Neighborhood Watch program in Bankers Hill and reiterated that it is a lot of work. In the meantime, he said Stonewall does patrol in Bankers Hill and apologized that the organization had not made an appearance at any recent BHCG meeting. His hope is that a Stonewall representative will attend BHCG meetings at least quarterly. He emphasized that his patrol group is a "hands-off, weapons-free" organization. In other words, he said, "If we see something, we say something." The patrol is always looking for volunteers who are willing to be trained and work three hours a month. He said more information may be obtained at stonewallcitizenspatrol.org.

San Diego Police Community Relations Officer Marlo Woods addressed the audience about an upcoming community walk in Bankers Hill. Police will join citizens starting at First Avenue and Laurel Street and walk as many blocks as possible on February 27 from 4 to 5 p.m. Woods said it will be a chance for residents to get more involved in the community and also a good opportunity to attract new volunteers, especially with growing interest in a Neighborhood Watch Program for the area.

Neighborhood Watch Program Presentation

Adriana Enloe, Clairemont Neighborhood Watch Coordinator, shared her experiences with the Neighborhood Watch Program and offered advice about starting a similar program in Bankers Hill. She said the program has enjoyed a resurgence in recent years for one important reason -- in the last five years, the number of SDPD officers has declined, and communities are realizing that they need to "step in and help out." The key is to get to know your neighbors, she said. When you're not isolated, it's very powerful, she explained. To start, 50 percent of a neighborhood has to agree to participate. She detailed how Neighborhood Watch coordinators are selected by SDPD community relations officers, how block captains are chosen, and the type of information that's required to keep neighbors in contact with one another. She warned that program participants should never put themselves in harm's way, and individual groups should be limited to 30 homes. Also important to keep in mind that problem-solving in some neighborhoods can take months and even years to resolve. The process is time-consuming but well worth it for peace of mind, she said.

Featured Speaker

Gary Fogel, an authority on early aviation, gave audience members an overview of San Diego's role in the history of flight, focusing primarily on the early days of gliding and soaring at the historic Torrey Pines Gliderport. At one time, he said, San Diego was the epicenter of non-motorized flying. Waldo Waterman, a local aviation pioneer and namesake of the pocket park in Bankers Hill on Maple Street, gained notoriety at 15 years of age when he conducted the first glider flight within city limits, Fogel said. Torrey Pines, he said, became a mecca for gliding after World War II and is referred to as the "Kitty Hawk of the West."

Meeting adjourned at 8 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by John Lamb, interim Secretary.