



## COMMUNITY CONGRESS 2018

May 19, 2018

Responsible Urban Infill Development Workshop

Facilitators: Herb Felsenfeld and Bobby Cocharn

Note Taker: Magda Aguirre

Resource: Terry Milne, East Slope Design Review Board

Participants: Bobby C., Richard, Jose M., Shawn R., Terry M., Carren, Herb F

Session Purpose: Not for problem-solving, but raise issues, highlight past practice and present concerns, and bring these back to Congress

1. Concerns noted about Inappropriate Development in BH
  - a. Agreed new construction needed, but not to the detriment of housing size & neighborhood character.
    - i. Older residence avg. size, approx. 1300 sq. ft.
    - ii. Some new residences are 2600 + square feet: out of scale
  - b. Safety concerns re: building on or near a 26" PGE gas transmission line; monitoring is needed.
2. Local Report
  - a. Remodeling is happening @ Holly Court
  - b. NERT and (the former) Northwest Bernal Alliance (a source for volunteers?).
3. East Slope Design Review Board (ESDRB) - its focus and history:
  - a. Vision for the future? What do we want BH to look like in 8 – 10 years?
  - b. RUID is important so vacant lots are not scooped up for irresponsible purposes.
  - c. Prevent "eye sores".
  - d. Neighbors should be involved in new construction planning.
  - e. Does construction conform to City codes?
  - f. Important to preserve neighborhood character
  - g. City planners were involved in developing the ESDRB Guidelines– helped the neighbors, facilitated creation of Guidelines, spent time in the neighborhood, discussed proposals.
  - h. Guidelines finished in 1986, revised later b/c some things didn't work & revisions were added to City planning code. Two Supervisors lived in BH, made it convenient to deal with architects.
  - i. Northwest Bernal Alliance had a Review Board
    - i. Alliance became defunct
    - ii. Their Review Board also b/c defunct
  - j. Both Boards dealt with remodeling permits, architects were involved; (co-ordination between these two Boards, a connection to the City?)
  - k. Questions: Are/were there similar organizations in other parts of BH? Can a developer continue building if they are not compliant w/the Guidelines? Were architects consulted when the Guidelines went into effect?
  - l. Suggestions/modifications were offered but City officials had final decision. Developers became very powerful in the process, despite appeals by neighbors.
4. Need to bring neighbors back into the Planning & Decision-making Process. Process is skewed now in favor of developers & neighbors want more participation.
  - a. Guidelines revised, 1991
  - b. Contained more data & focused on mass reduction, asked for revisions in housing size

- c. Guidelines still being followed but loopholes exist, especially if developers are campaign contributors & pay heavy City taxes
  - d. What is desired?
    - i. Limit housing size
    - ii. Provide parking
    - iii. 1 car garage w/room for bicycles
    - iv. Bigger back yards
    - v. 45% open space
    - vi. City should listen more to the community
    - vii. Long-Term Goal: Develop a Planning Process with City officials, neighbors, & developers ***working together.***
    - viii. SF Planning (Department and Commission) has become more interested in expanding home size and less interested in size restrictions.
5. ESDRB Guidelines – regarding respect for neighborhood character and “architectural politeness” are perhaps considered but certainly not adhered to.
6. **For The Future**
- \*At a recent meeting of several neighborhood groups, former Mayor, Art Agnos said, “Why don’t you invite me to your local meetings to speak about your issues?” Bottom line: he could help us & he is available.
- BH Neighborhood Center can’t advocate a position due to their non-profit status
  - But they can host a forum for a free exchange of ideas.
  - Marketing and Outreach – The SF Parks Alliance is connected to SF Parks/Rec & acts as fiscal sponsors of “pocket parks”; they work w/small community groups & can help us:
    - Outreach
    - Advocacy

#### SUMMARY:

Overall we want new construction that reflects the elements of the ESDRB Guidelines, such as: “architectural politeness”, respect for existing neighborhood design, and harmony with neighborhood character.

- New construction should respect existing/neighborhood square foot limits.
- Developers and City Planners should pay more attention to community and neighbor concerns.
- As neighbors we should develop our influence with the City – and work inclusively with a City planner.
- Appropriate housing size should be part of the City planning process for BH.
- The City should adhere to the ESDRB Guidelines.
- Utilize the San Francisco Parks Alliance for outreach, advocacy, and to enhance our neighborhood connections.
- Invite former Mayor Art Agnos, to a “town hall meeting” on the subject of “RUID”.
  - Do proper outreach and planning beforehand to make sure that individuals from under-represented parts of Bernal attend.

NB: These minutes were originally taken by Magda Aguirre of BHNC, the summary was reported to Congress. A later revised version was compiled by Herb Felsenfeld.