

Attachment C Draft EIR Public Hearing Transcript

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REPORTER'S TRANSCRIPT OF THE
SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING

Agenda Item No. 13

---oOo---

Significant Natural Resources Area Management Plan
Hearing on the Draft Environmental Impact Report

Case No. 2005.1912E

---oOo---

San Francisco, California

October 6, 2011

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1 THE CLERK: We are now on Item 13 for Case
2 No. 2005.1912E, Significant Natural Resources Area
3 Management Plan, public hearing on the draft environmental
4 impact report.

5 Please note that written comments will be
6 accepted at the planning department's office until the
7 close of business of October 17th, 2011.

8 MS. RANGE: Good afternoon, President Olague,
9 members of the commission. I am Jessica Range with the
10 Environmental Planning Division of the Planning
11 Department.

12 This is a hearing to receive public comments on
13 the draft environmental impact report for Case No.
14 2005.1912E, the Significant Natural Resources Area
15 Management Plan.

16 The Recreation and Parks Department developed
17 the natural areas program to protect and manage the
18 remaining natural areas owned by the City. There are 32
19 designated natural areas, 31 in San Francisco and one,
20 Sharp Park, is located in Pacifica.

21 The management plan identifies management
22 actions within each of these natural areas and is intended
23 to guide resource protection, habitat restoration, and
24 trail and access improvements, other capital projects, and
25 maintenance activities over the next 20 years. The EIR

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1 also addresses the impacts of the routine maintenance and
2 the Sharp Park restoration project at the project level.

3 Routine maintenance activities are similar to
4 the current scale and scope of the Natural Areas Program
5 and would not change substantially with implementation of
6 the management plan. Project level details have been
7 developed for the Sharp Park restoration project, enabling
8 this aspect of the management plan to be addressed at the
9 project level.

10 The purpose of the Sharp Park restoration
11 project is to enhance the habitat for the California
12 red-legged frog and the San Francisco garter snake. The
13 main components of the Sharp Park restoration project
14 includes dredging and re-contouring of the Laguna Salada
15 wetland complex, creating an upland and wetland habit in
16 and around the lagoon, and creating a habit corridor
17 between Laguna Salada and Horse Stable pond.

18 The project evaluated in the EIR is the project
19 proposed by Rec and Park. As part of the environmental
20 review under CEQA, we are required to analyze alternatives
21 to the project. These alternatives are not Rec and Park
22 proposals for management of the natural areas.

23 Staff is not here to answer comments today.
24 Comments will be transcribed and responded to in writing
25 in a comments and responses document, which will respond

Page 3

PH

1 to all verbal and written comments received and make
2 revisions to the draft EIR as appropriate.

3 I would, however, like to note one correction
4 that will be made in the comments and responses document,
5 which may clarify some comments received today. Page 2 of
6 the summary erroneously identifies the environmentally
7 superior alternative as the maximum restoration
8 alternative.

9 A comprehensive analysis of the environmentally
10 superior alternative is provided on draft EIR pages 525
11 through 526 and determines that the maintenance
12 alternative is the environmentally superior alternative.
13 Page 2 of the summary chapter will be corrected in the
14 comments and responses document.

15 This is not a hearing to consider approval or
16 disapproval of the project. That hearing will follow the
17 final EIR certification. Comments today should be
18 directed at the adequacy and accuracy of the
19 information -- of the information contained in the draft
20 EIR.

21 Commenters should speak slowly and clearly so
22 that the court reporter can produce an accurate
23 transcript. Also, commenters should state their name and
24 address so that they can be properly identified and so
25 that they can be sent a copy of the comments and responses

Page 4

PH

1 when completed.

2 After hearing comments from the general public,
3 we will also take any comments on the draft EIR by the
4 Planning Commission. The public comment period for this
5 project began on August 31st and it extends until
6 5:00 p.m. on Monday, August -- October 17th.

7 This concludes my presentation on this matter,
8 and unless the commission members have any questions, I
9 would respectfully suggest that the public hearing be
10 opened. Thank you.

11 PRESIDENT OLAGUE: Great. I do want to extend
12 the comment period until the end of October, so by a
13 couple of weeks at least. Okay. And we can discuss it if
14 we both want to extend it beyond that, you know, later on.

15 We have a few speaker cards, Sarah Ballard
16 followed by Sally Stephens.

PH-Ballard

17 MS. BALLARD: Good afternoon, Commissioners,
18 Director Rahaim. I'm Sarah Ballard from the Recreation
19 and Parks Department, and I just briefly wanted to put
20 this plan in a little bit of context for you.

21 As you may know, we own about 14 percent of the
22 land in San Francisco, about 4,000 acres, and of that,
23 about a thousand acres are what we refer to as natural
24 areas. As Jessica said, they're made up of 32 distinct
25 areas, including Bernal Hill, Twin Peaks, Sharp Park.

PH

1 The plan -- the Natural Areas Management Plan
2 was established through a decades-long process. It was
3 published in 2006, and about ten years of expert research
4 and community process went into creating the plan. Uhm,
5 and as Jessica spoke to, it really creates a road map for
6 us as the department for how to manage our sensitive
7 natural habit, including some threatened and endangered
8 species, directs us how to prioritize our scarce resources
9 and our volunteer time.

10 Our job as the Recreation and Parks Department
11 is to balance a variety of needs, and sometimes those
12 needs are competing. And we feel that this management
13 plan does that through a very carefully crafted process.
14 As you know, what's before you today is the draft EIR, and
15 we look forward to continuing to receive public feedback
16 on that, to hear your feedback, uhm, and continue working
17 with your staff. They've been really exceptional through
18 this process.

19 Uhm, I just did want to point out that, uhm, to
20 echo what Jessica said about the alternatives, we -- as
21 you know, there are -- we are required under CEQA to study
22 a variety of alternatives, but the project and the plan
23 for us has not changed. And I think there's been some
24 confusion around that, particularly as it pertains to the
25 dog play areas, and just wanted to clarify that for you.

PH

1 Thank you very much.

2 PRESIDENT OLAGUE: Thank you. Renee Pittin, Bo
3 Links, Linda Shaffer.

PH-Stephens

4 MS. STEPHENS: Yeah. Hi, my name is Sally
5 Stephens, and I'm the chair of the San Francisco Dog
6 Owners Group. Urban parks are for people. They're our
7 collective back yards, the places where we go to play with
8 our kids and our dogs and simply sit in the sun.

9 We have so little open space in San Francisco,
10 we cannot afford to lock a third of it away in plant
11 museums where you can look but not enter, which is what
12 the project and the maximum restoration alternatives would
13 do.

01

14 We obviously support the maintenance or maximum
15 recreational alternatives because they protect existing
16 natural areas yet preserve access for people. The EIR
17 incorrectly states the number and total acreage of all
18 placed dog play areas, or DPA's. There are actually 29,
19 which cover about 120 acres total, but 80 percent of that
20 total is located either within or adjacent to a natural
21 area and is therefore at risk of future closure if NAP
22 claims impacts from the dogs.

02

23 Many were designated as DPA's years before the
24 N -- the NAP came around, yet with a simple stroke of a
25 planner's or a NAP staffer's pen, they can be gone. If

PH

1 you're going to force people out of the parks, you better
2 have a good reason.

03

3 The NAP EIR reportedly -- repeatedly says dogs
4 may have an impact, but there's no evidence cited in the
5 EIR that dogs are now or ever have done so. EIR's must be
6 based on documented impacts, not hypothetical conjectures.
7 Specific proof of impacts, not just claims of observations
8 with no details given, must be added to the EIR.

04

9 Give us unbiased proven facts or don't kick us
10 out. NAP has become a way to get rid of DPA's and city
11 parks since the only real remedy from the alleged impacts
12 from dogs is closure of the DPA. As such, the EIR must
13 consider the impact of those closures on the human and
14 urban environments, not the just the natural environment.

05

15 Throughout the EIR, dogs are described solely as
16 nuisances. The EIR does not consider any benefits of dogs
17 and off-leash dog walking to people and communities. The
18 NAP EIR must consider impacts of a physical and emotional
19 health of people who can no longer walk their dogs in
20 closed DPA's, and on the sense of neighborhood and park
21 community that will be impacted if DPA's are closed or
22 significantly reduced. Yet it does not.

06

23 This is particularly important with the maximum
24 restoration alternative that will essentially close DPA's
25 at McClaren, Bernal Hill, Buena Vista, and Lake Merced.

PH

1 These DPA's constitute roughly 75 percent of the total
 2 legal off-leash area in the city parks. The EIR does not
 3 adequately analyze the impact of that local closure on the
 4 remaining DPA's and other nearby parks, especially when
 5 combined with the Golden Gate National Recreation Area's
 6 plan to close 90 percent of its off-leash space. The dogs
 7 and dog people aren't going to go away or be quietly
 8 forced out of our parks. Thank you. Copies of what I
 9 said.

PH-Links

10 MR. LINKS: Good afternoon. My name is Bo
 11 Links. I'm a lifelong San Francisco resident, and as I'm
 12 sure you can imagine with a last name like mine, I'm a
 13 very passionate golfer.

14 I've been playing Sharp Park golf course for 45
 15 years now, and I've also served for a number of years as a
 16 volunteer golf historian for the City and County of San
 17 Francisco, and what I wanted to convey to you -- and I've
 18 submitted some written comments as well, and my friend and
 19 colleague Richard Harris I think with will speak later on
 20 behalf of the San Francisco Public Golf Alliance, which we
 21 co-founded -- but I wanted to add some historical words
 22 and specifically to say the staff got it a hundred percent
 23 correct in the draft EIR designating this precious golf
 24 course as an historic resource.

01

25 This is the legacy of John McLaren. It was his

PH

01
(Cont.)

1 vision, and he brought in one of the greatest architects
2 in the history of the world, Alister MacKenzie, to create
3 this very special asset for the City and County of San
4 Francisco even though it's on property in Pacifica.

5 This is clearly the work of a master. It's the
6 equivalent of a Rembrandt that would hang in a museum, and
7 the fact that it's old and maybe a little faded doesn't
8 take away its luster. People come from all over the world
9 to walk it, to play it, to see it, to admire it, to know
10 it, to understand it. It's a symbol of golf's golden age.
11 It's part of our historic legacy just the way Sharp -- the
12 way Coit Tower is, the way the cable cars are.

02

13 And the habitat restoration that's in the works
14 in the subject of this EIR is by no means incompatible
15 with maintaining that golf course. The species in
16 question are fresh water species. This product -- this
17 property, excuse me, was a salt marsh before MacKenzie
18 transformed it into the oasis it is today. It's going to
19 celebrate its 80th anniversary next year, and the process
20 that's under way in this draft EIR should continue without
21 interruption so the city can move forward to do what's
22 needed to do, and that is to implement a very responsible
23 habitat restoration protocol.

24 The frogs are thriving down there. This is one
25 of the biggest birth years in recent memory, and that

PH

1 evidence is on the record, and what the city plans to do,
 2 we support. It's consistent with maintaining this
 3 property in a way that serves a variety of interests, and
 4 I want to thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak
 5 to you, and you consider in addition to written comments
 6 that have been submitted. Thank you so much.

PH-Pittin

7 MS. PITTIN: Good afternoon, Commissioners. My
 8 name is Renee Pittin. The Hippocratic Oath says first do
 9 no harm. This seems to be a good approach for any person
 10 and certainly for government.

01

11 I don't think that this applies to the National
 12 Areas Program. As a senior, whose primary -- okay, whose
 13 only exercise is walking with my dog, I feel that the
 14 increased removal of our shared open space is -- by the
 15 Natural Areas Program, which is a single purpose and
 16 exclusionary program, will drive more and more local
 17 residents into increasingly smaller areas for exercise,
 18 access, and enjoyment of our San Francisco landscape.

19 I live near Glen Canyon, and too many times I
 20 have not been able to walk there because the Natural Areas
 21 Program was engaging in yet another round of toxic
 22 warfare, laying waste to new generations of hapless and
 23 helpless flora and fauna and exposing the local
 24 neighborhood and everyone moving through the area to these
 25 poisons.

PH

01
(Cont.)

1 I oppose this unfettered increase of the Natural
 2 Areas Program into more and more of San Francisco's
 3 parkland and open space, and I ask that you all, as
 4 members of the planning commission, recognize that this
 5 program removes shared space from the community on the
 6 basis of sharply and scientifically contested assumptions
 7 about what is native or natural and makes equally
 8 unfounded assumptions about what actions, such as walking
 9 with one's pooch, can or cannot occur in our shared and
 10 all-too-limited San Francisco open spaces.

11 Please oppose any expansion of this program.
 12 Thank you.

PH-Shaffer

13 MS. SHAFFER: Good afternoon, Commissioners. My
 14 name is Linda Shaffer. That's spelled S-h-a-f-f-e-r. I
 15 am currently the vice-president of the local chapter of
 16 the California Native Plant Society, and I would like to
 17 thank you for this opportunity to address you. Uhm, I
 18 have three points that I would like to try to make in this
 19 limited time.

20 The first one is, uhm, that I have -- I have to
 21 admit I was very curious to see what an environmental
 22 impact analysis would look like, given that it's of a
 23 program that is environmental in nature, and I have to say
 24 in the time that I've had to read it so far, I've been
 25 very impressed. It's -- I think that those involved have

PH

1 done a good job, a wonderful job, particularly with
2 respect to the 31 natural areas that are located in the
3 City of San Francisco. So I would like to commend those
4 involved.

5 I would also like to add that the Native Plant
6 Society is in the process of having people who have
7 volunteered in a lot of these natural areas for many years
8 read over the sections that pertain specifically to the
9 projects proposed for those natural areas and make sure
10 that, uhm, based on their knowledge of the area that the
11 report is both accurate and complete.

12 And I'm delighted to hear that there will be an
13 extension to the public comment period because it's been
14 very difficult. The same group of people that's been
15 involved in commenting on this has also been involved in
16 commenting on the recreation/open space element, and the
17 first 30 days of this comment period overlapped with the
18 last 30 days of that. So it's been kind of crazy. So
19 thank you for that. The other -- that was actually the
20 second point that I wanted to make.

21 The third point that I would like to make is
22 that I'm still in the process of reading this. The
23 complexity in this document has to do with the issue at
24 Sharp Park. You can already tell that this is a
25 controversial issue -- issue, a controversial program.

PH

1 Uhm, I have so far identified one factual error in the
2 portion of the document that deals with Sharp Park.

3 I will be submitting comments in writing, but I
4 don't have them finished yet, and I would like to add,
5 please, I do not want to receive a copy of the comments
6 and responses, so I'd like to get that -- I had that
7 happen to me once when I wasn't expecting it, so no thank
8 you. That was just fine.

9 Thank you very much for your attention.

10 PRESIDENT OLAGUE: Thank you. Tenzin Sherap,
11 George Mozingo, Patrick Skain, followed by Clarence
12 Bryant.

PN-Sherap

13 MR. SHERAP: My name is Tenzin Sherap, and my --
14 my address is General Delivery, San Francisco, 94142. I
15 would like -- I know that there's been comments about the
16 golf course as being -- whether or not the golf course is
17 going to be preserved, and I would like to say that I'm
18 speaking highly in favor of the golf course being
19 preserved.

01

20 It seems as though Mr. Antonini and -- or maybe
21 the rest of this board has been mercilessly okaying
22 practically any request that has to do with children's --
23 such as in our beautiful Dolores Park that is being
24 defaced for this child's park. And it's very important
25 that a place like this golf course, which is for teenagers

PH

1 and for elderly and older people to get exercise and enjoy
 2 the environment, that this be maintained for San Francisco
 3 residents. Thank you very much.

4 PRESIDENT OLAGUE: Thank you. If I did call
 5 your name, if you can just keep coming up to the mic.

PH-Mozingo

6 MR. MOZINGO: Good morning, my name is -- or
 7 good afternoon, rather. My name is George Mozingo. I'm a
 8 resident of the City and County of San Francisco, and I'm
 9 an employee of the County of San Mateo.

01

10 Our counties have worked collaboratively and
 11 cooperatively to come up with a plan that really does
 12 address the issues of habitat preservation and to protect
 13 those species that are enumerated in the article -- in the
 14 draft EIR, specifically frogs, the red-legged rana aurora
 15 draytonii, the garter snake, and others. Those are, in
 16 fact, as Mr. Links previously stated, fresh water species.
 17 That original geography was called in the colonial period,
 18 Laguna Salada, which I believe to be meaning a still body
 19 of water that is salty.

02

20 Now, those frogs do not exist in those
 21 environments, so this is, in fact, a construction. It is
 22 a historical construction by a -- one of the great
 23 architects of golf courses ever. It is also a -- of
 24 cultural value. If you were to go there on any day, you
 25 would find old people and young people and students and

PH

1 every -- people from every group and nation playing on as
2 groups, as -- and as individuals. It is also affordable
3 relative to other golf courses in the area.

4 In the county, we don't have a lot of
5 inexpensive golf courses. Here in the city and county we
6 have even fewer. This is an opportunity for people of
7 limited income to play in a golf course that is stunningly
8 beautiful and can be restored.

9 Uhm, it is also -- uhm, this plan will protect
10 those species that are enumerated. Without it, it will,
11 again, become a rather dry and difficult place for those
12 species to exist. Particularly in the plan, the creating
13 of the contours for the snakes to exist where they can go
14 down and feed on the frogs I thought was just nothing
15 short of engineering brilliance on the part of the two
16 park -- park groups.

17 And finally, it is a recreational. Even those
18 like myself who don't golf, it is a wonderful place to go
19 walk. Thank you.

20 PRESIDENT OLAGUE: Again, I'd like to ask those
21 who are standing in front of the door to either find a
22 seat or move to this other side since it is creating a
23 fire hazard, just those standing in front of the door.
24 Have to clear the doorways.

25 So if you've heard your name called, please come

PH

PH-Skain

01

02

1 up to the mic. Greg Gaar, Paul Rotter, and Neff Rotter --
2 Roter?

3 MR. SKAIN: Good afternoon, Commissioners. My
4 name is Pat Skain. I was a member of the Citizens
5 Advisory Committee for the Natural Areas Program. And I
6 see this draft environmental impact report as a
7 continuance of those efforts in past years. We need to
8 move ahead with these -- this study itself in the defined,
9 and give Park and Rec staff wherewithal to actually begin
10 to improve our recreational facilities and our natural
11 areas in San Francisco.

12 I do want to -- specifically to comment on the
13 great work that staff did in preparing this and work done
14 by all the consultants on it. We're never going to be
15 100 percent happy. There are some elements in the city
16 that want to occupy everything. There are activities that
17 simply have significant impacts on every area of our
18 recreation facilities.

19 We've seen in the last year exponential growth
20 in requests for soccer fields and whatnot, so it's not
21 just any one group, but these are simply 32 areas. It was
22 even culled down in terms of 32 areas. And the management
23 of those 32 areas have been looked into significantly by
24 the staff, the individuals working on this report.

25 I think it's very important to move this

PH

1 environmental impact report forward. It's a 20-year
 2 project. I'm sure it will be tweaked in the course of the
 3 next 20 years, but it's important to give staff and the
 4 citizens an opportunity to see what San Francisco can be
 5 and how good our recreational facilities can become. I
 6 want to thank you all.

PH-Bryant

7 MR. BRYANT: Good afternoon, Commissioners. My
 8 name is Clarence Bryant. I am a resident of San Francisco
 9 and a product of its streets, its environment. I'm also a
 10 golfer, and I would like to read into -- I'm not sure what
 11 the protocol is for this hearing, but I would like to read
 12 into the record a copy of a letter that the Bay Area Golf
 13 Association has submitted to Congressman Speier, Mayor Ed
 14 Lee, Board of Supervisors of both San Francisco and San
 15 Mateo.

16 And, to wit, it says, Dear Congressman Speier,
 17 Sharp Park is well known as the people's golf course,
 18 public course, where racial minorities, retired seniors,
 19 school children, working men and women, and in these days
 20 even unemployed can play golf.

21 Because of its modest fees, all these groups
 22 play golf in large numbers in Sharp Park. The Bay Area
 23 Golf Club represents such golfers. We are a mostly
 24 African-American club formed in 1954 and based in San
 25 Francisco.

PH

01

1 We are a founding member of the Western States
 2 Golf Association, one of America's oldest African-American
 3 golf associations. We were the host club for the Western
 4 States Inaugural Championship Tournament in 1955, where
 5 the founding members of the clubs met and played golf
 6 together for the first time. The tournament was held at
 7 Sharp Park.

8 It is significant that Sharp Park was built by
 9 history's greatest golf architect, Alister MacKenzie.
 10 Most of MacKenzie's courses include the most famous ones,
 11 like Augusta National, the site of the annual Master's
 12 Tournament, and Cypress Point. These are private and
 13 inaccessible to common people. Sharp Park is part of San
 14 Francisco's legatorian tradition of providing great
 15 classical architecture for its public places. This is the
 16 spirit of San Francisco.

17 Is that my dong?

18 PRESIDENT OLAGUE: There's a second one, but you
 19 have about 30 seconds, but you can certainly submit the
 20 letter.

21 MR. BRYANT: I'd like to submit this into the
 22 record if possible.

23 PRESIDENT OLAGUE: Into the record, yeah,
 24 definitely.

25 MR. BRYANT: Okay. Thank you very much for your

PH

1 time.

2 PRESIDENT OLAGUE: Thank you, sir. If I've
3 called your name, please feel free to come to the mic, and
4 Peter Brastow is the last card I have, and I know I did
5 call a few other names, so please feel free to come up.

PH-Rotter-P

6 MR. ROTTER: Commissioners, my name is Paul
7 Rotter. I'm a resident of San Francisco. This program is
8 offering the city a major expansion of NAP programs into
9 the MA3 -- maintenance area 3. And in support of that,
10 the statement on page 2 says that the EIR considers the
11 maximum restoration alternative as the environmentally
12 superior.

13 However, if you wade yourself -- wade through it
14 back to page 525, the EIR says, the maximum recreation and
15 maintenance alternatives are the environmentally superior
16 alternatives, and it ends the statement that the
17 maintenance alternative, on the other hand, would preserve
18 the existing distribution extent of biological resources,
19 including sensitive habitats.

01

20 For these reasons the maintenance alternative is
21 environmentally superior alternative. That's not what's
22 being proposed by this EIR. The EIR is proposing that you
23 adopt a program that is environmentally least good.

02

24 Second thing about that is that this proposal is
25 a violation of CEQA. CEQA says that public agencies

PH

02
(Cont.)

03

04

05

1 should not approve projects proposed if there are feasible
 2 alternatives or feasible mitigation measures available.
 3 There are -- from what they propose is the maintenance
 4 intervention of into the environment.

5 There are alternatives, and it says so in this
 6 EIR. This EIR is not a good one. This is a bad policy
 7 for the city. NAP largely is also a bad policy for the
 8 city with their environmental destruction, use of toxic
 9 sprays.

10 I walk on Twin Peaks almost every weekday
 11 morning, and on there I run into the department doing
 12 spraying of pesticides when they should be -- the members
 13 doing that should be wearing respirators. Things like
 14 that when I point out to them they say that's none of your
 15 business.

16 So it's important that you realize that this EIR
 17 is not the direction that you should be going. We should
 18 be going into a more environmentally protected type of
 19 alternative, and that is maximum maintenance of the
 20 existing environment.

21 The environment also decides the use of toxics.
 22 The destruction of the number of trees is a gross
 23 violation. San Francisco has barely one tree per citizen
 24 in this city, and this proposes to turn down a large
 25 percentage of that. It shouldn't be done. Thank you very

PH

1 much.

2 PRESIDENT OLAGUE: Any additional public comment
3 on this item?

PH-Rotter-N

01

4 MS. ROTTER: Hi, I'm Neff Rotter, and I agree
5 with my husband that the maintenance alternative would be
6 the very best way for San Francisco to go.

PH-Bowman

01

7 MS. BOWMAN: Hello. I'm Arnita Bowman, and I'm
8 a user of these parks, and I really feel that recreational
9 funding and open space for people is being hijacked by
10 this plan. San Francisco has already taken extreme
11 position of excluding all people from the San Francisco
12 watershed. The 26,000 acres there is surrounded by a
13 seven foot chain link fence, and this plan ignores that
14 this has been already allocated to natural areas.

15 The San Francisco park sites are only ten
16 percent or tenth of the size of that single refuge, and
17 this extreme plan takes 40 percent of that little space
18 for more native plant projects. For me, the gardening
19 projects will provide little benefit and will destroy the
20 new ecosystems that have been developed over the past 400
21 years and will destroy this treasured San Francisco
22 landscape that is part of our diverse culture, history,
23 and future.

24 This costly plan is not even the environmentally
25 superior plan that's been mentioned and does not

PH

02

1 necessarily improve the beauty of the parks or quality of
 2 the life for residents. In addition, introducing new or
 3 expanding endangered species habitats will permanently
 4 hijack our small but precious recreational areas.

5 For example, the historic Sharp Park
 6 recreational area is under attack even though man made the
 7 fresh water habit that wasn't previously there, and
 8 neither the endangered snake nor the endangered frog could
 9 live there if the saltwater habitat was restored.

02
(Cont.)

10 This plan doesn't take into consideration these
 11 future impacts on people or recreation. People with dogs
 12 are only allocated freedom in three percent of the city
 13 park areas, and the hoarding plan treats us like an
 14 invasive nuisance and takes away an additional 20 percent,
 15 and the monitoring plan will probably eliminate the rest.
 16 I resent being treated like an invasive part of the
 17 community in our treasured city parks.

18 Please support the -- either the recreational
 19 plan or the maintenance plan so that we won't wake up from
 20 the nightmare of NAP to an ugly and uninviting open space.
 21 Thank you very much.

22 PRESIDENT OLAGUE: Thank you.

PH-Gaar

23 MR. GAAR: Good afternoon, Commissioners. My
 24 Name's Greg Gaar. I've lived in San Francisco all my
 25 life, and I've volunteered with the Natural Areas Program

PH

1 and the National Park Service doing habitat restoration.
 2 I also started a San Francisco native plant nursery in
 3 Golden Gate Park because I want to propagate San Francisco
 4 native plants that can be used for habitat restoration
 5 throughout the city and would help complement the Natural
 6 Areas Program.

7 I already sent my written comments in to the
 8 environmental review officer. So that will be on the
 9 record. But some of the criticisms I have of the draft
 10 EIR is although I support the plan, the Natural Areas
 11 Management plan, there are a few little flaws that I would
 12 like to tweak in the -- the draft EIR.

01

13 Number one, what is recreation? Well,
 14 recreation in the draft EIR is predominantly traditional
 15 recreation: Bicycle riding, hiking, dog walking, et
 16 cetera. But for a lot of us who are naturalists, we do a
 17 lot of vigorous habitat restoration, which is real hard,
 18 physical labor, controlling the weeds from over-running
 19 the native plant communities, and that is very
 20 invigorating recreation. And also you get to meet
 21 other -- you get to work with other city workers, and you
 22 work with your community.

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23 It's unfortunate that the draft EIR cannot talk
 24 about the environmental benefits of restoring San
 25 Francisco's natural heritage. The 31 natural areas in San

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(Cont.)

1 Francisco are natural areas because they're remnants of
2 the original landscape containing flora and fauna that
3 were here when the Spaniards arrived in 1769.

4 So the goal is to try to protect what remains of
5 San Francisco's natural heritage. And, you know, it's
6 been a long time coming trying to get this EIR adopted,
7 and I think we're getting very close now, and we can start
8 implementing some of the action items in the management
9 plan. I'm very excited by that. So I hope we have your
10 support. Thank you.

11 PRESIDENT OLAGUE: Thank you.

PH-Brastow

12 MR. BRASTOW: Good afternoon, Commissioners. My
13 name is Peter Brastow. I'm director of Nature in the
14 City, and I want to make a few comments about the natural
15 areas planned EIR today.

16 First, I want to commend the goals which are in
17 the natural areas plan. These, in fact, are the goals --
18 should be the goals of the PUC and DPW and for the rest of
19 the Recreation and Parks in managing their lands, frankly.
20 I think the DEIR in general has done a terrific job of
21 analyzing the environmental impacts of the proposed
22 project, and I'd like to say that the plan is not radical
23 at all.

24 In fact, it was a pretty serious compromise. It
25 was negotiated with the working group several years ago

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1 chaired by General Manager Agunbiade I guess at the time.

2 And so the -- all the myths that I keep hear
3 being perpetuated about natural resource management and
4 weeds and lagoons and this, that, and the other thing, I
5 don't want to take up all my time dispelling those myths,
6 but you're hearing a lot of mythology today,
7 unfortunately.

8 So I support the plan wholeheartedly. I would
9 like to see it go forward. I hope we have your support,
10 but I also have some constructive criticism that I would
11 like to offer. And that is to say that it's -- it is a
12 lot of -- kind of ironic that the recreation and the
13 maintenance -- that was a typo, by the way, sir.

14 The true environmentally superior alternatives
15 apparently are the recreation and maintenance
16 alternatives, which I find to be quite ironic, considering
17 that we're trying to restore the natural environment. So
18 the project plan -- neither the project plan nor the
19 maximum restoration alternative are the environmentally
20 superior alternatives, and I would just like to ask a few
21 questions about that.

22 What are the assumptions behind those
23 alternatives becoming the environmentally superior
24 alternative? Which human environment are we actually
25 trying to create if the maximum restoration alternative is

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(Cont.)

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1 not the environmentally superior alternative? One where
2 nature conservation is not paramount?

3 What, in fact, is environmental sustainability
4 without the actual conservation of our indigenous
5 biodiversity? I mean, that should be the underlying
6 fabric of sustainability. And so I thank you for
7 extending the comment period because I'm going to need
8 some more time to help you answer these questions.

9 And a couple more things, so I'm afraid that the
10 true impacts of the maximum restoration alternative are
11 really hard to evaluate because the description of that is
12 literally only two pages long, and then it goes into the
13 impacts, which is a few pages, but within describing the
14 impacts, there's no specifics.

15 There's nothing about how the maximum
16 restoration alternative varies from the project plan --
17 from the project at the remainder -- at all of the sites,
18 and so I find it really hard for the public to say, well,
19 this is what the maximum restoration alternative is going
20 to do or this is what the maximum recreation alternative
21 is going to do at any given site.

22 And finally, we would like to have a lot more
23 specifics, as I said, included in those other
24 alternatives, including at Sharp Park. I think given that
25 the proposed project includes the 18-hole golf alternative

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(Cont.)

1 from the alternatives report, the maximum restoration
2 alternative should include restoring all of Sharp Park
3 golf course. Thank you.

4 PRESIDENT OLAGUE: Thank you. John Keating,
5 Richard Harris.

PH-Keating

6 MR. KEATING: Good afternoon. I'm John Keating.
7 I want to thank you for your public service. I'm a native
8 and resident, and curiously, I realize my first house was
9 right across the street from the speaker a couple ago,
10 Greg Gaar. So I appreciate all the ardent advocacy of the
11 citizen comments on all sides of this issue.

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12 I think your highest duty and your highest
13 benefit you can provide in society is making sure that the
14 staff reports you're getting in the environmental impact
15 reports are straight up. That's all I think you can
16 really do is make -- because you got to rely on your --
17 those reports, but make sure they're straight up, and I
18 don't know the answer to that. I've heard a lot of things
19 both ways.

20 What I suggest generally in other areas I've
21 been involved in are the two easiest ways to find out
22 whether you're getting good, impartial analysis is, one,
23 what are the presumptions that are being made, the
24 unfounded presumptions? Everyone always makes unfounded
25 presumptions. So to find out whether it's biased or not,

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1 find out whether they're all sort of in one favor.

2 Do they make presumptions that always go in one
3 favor, or are the presumptions balanced in valuing
4 recreation versus natural restoration, in evaluating
5 whether these restoration efforts will have adverse short
6 term impacts regardless of the long term impacts? So you
7 look at whether the presumptions all go one way.

8 The second thing I think you look at is what's
9 being considered and what's not being considered. Are
10 they looking at the relevant issues? We have maybe, what,
11 100, 150 years of managing these parks in our city
12 balancing these issues. I think if you're finding that
13 they're making a radical departure in a general management
14 strategy, you ought to have a heightened scrutiny then.

15 And, you know, quick analogy is when we got our
16 house -- and I live on sort of the east end of the Sunset
17 up above the Sunset looking out -- the biggest attraction
18 on our day looking at it a blue heron flew right over the
19 top. So I thought this was cool. We had a lot of blue
20 herons coming over, and we had hawks. We had a hill
21 nearby, and there was a natural restoration plan, which I
22 favored, and it was a good deal.

23 Subsequently, we lost some habitat for the blue
24 herons and all those hawks. I don't know whether they'll
25 ever come back, but now we have ravens all over the place.

PH

1 So the question is what's the short term?

2 The other analogy is I spent my childhood
3 clearing out what we called greasewood, which is coyote
4 brush that grows when you let things grow wild around
5 here. And it's called greasewood because the cities made
6 us cut it out --

7 PRESIDENT OLAGUE: Thank you.

8 MR. KEATING: -- because so it was so dangerous
9 for fires. Thank you.

10 PRESIDENT OLAGUE: Thank you.

PH-Harris

11 MR. HARRIS: Good afternoon, Commissioners. I'm
12 Richard Harris. Thank you for your time on this. I am a
13 founder of the Public Golf Alliance, and we are concerned
14 with issues having to do with the city's golf courses. We
15 have submitted previously to Bill Wycko a letter with
16 substantial exhibits on the history of the Sharp Park golf
17 course.

18 We are -- we want to assist you and your staff
19 in knowing the history. We've done a lot of research on
20 it. There's old newspaper articles, old photographs.
21 There's writings of MacKenzie himself. The staff has
22 designated the golf course as a historic resource, and we
23 support that designation.

24 The -- and we -- given very substantial amount
25 of additional support than the matter that was in the

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1 staff's report. The -- we will be submitting additional
 2 comment. Generally the notion of sharing the property
 3 between species and golfers, uhm, we support that. Uhm,
 4 and, uhm, we think there are ways that it can be done
 5 where the property can be shared to mutual benefit by the
 6 species and the golfers.

7 There are some details in the -- in the draft
 8 EIR that we will make more comment -- more detailed
 9 comment on. We have architects and engineers that are
 10 looking at that, and we will have detailed comment. We
 11 give preliminary comment in the letter that you've had.
 12 We will have much more detailed comment about that.

13 Uhm, and we, uhm, look forward to continuing to
 14 participate in this process with the city, with the County
 15 of San Mateo, and with your body and with your staff.
 16 This is very important property. It's significant to the
 17 world of golf. And I have some letters that have come in
 18 from the World Golf Association, the PGA, the National
 19 Golf Course Superintendents Organizations, and we will be
 20 submitting those as well.

21 Thank you very much. We look forward to
 22 working -- cooperating with you and with your staff.

PH-Noetzel

23 MR. NOETZEL: Good afternoon. I'm Steven
 24 Noetzel. I live in the mission. I happen to also be a
 25 commissioner on the veterans affairs commission in San

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1 Francisco. So I thank you all for your service as well.

2 I -- I do have a dog in this fight. She happens
3 to be a beautiful black lab mix that we got from the SPCA
4 some six years ago. And that's what I want to take a
5 moment to talk about, the squeeze that's happening in this
6 city between dog adoption numbers and at the same time
7 restriction of space for dogs to run free.

8 And so I hope that you all recognize that we in
9 San Francisco have probably the most progressive and most
10 productive SPCA in the entire United States. The ratio of
11 dogs adopted by families in San Francisco is higher than
12 almost anywhere in the United States, and almost no dogs
13 are euthanized in San Francisco.

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14 So you have this squeeze while at the same time
15 young families and young people are adopting dogs in
16 record numbers, at the same time there's a squeeze in some
17 plans to restrict the places that those dogs can run,
18 either on leash or off leash, and I think this needs to be
19 seriously looked into and addressed by any EIR or any
20 planning for off-leash dog areas in the future.

21 Don't restrict them. There's more dogs coming
22 every day. Thank you.

PH-Emanuel

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23 PRESIDENT OLAGUE: Thank you.

24 MR. EMANUEL: Hello, I'm David Emanuel. I've
25 lived in Glen Park. I am for the maximum recreational

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(Cont.)

1 alternative, and I just wanted to point out the Golden
2 Gate National Recreational Area just proposed a dog
3 management plan, and they forcefully cited the dog play
4 areas in the San Francisco parks as alternatives.

5 So if those areas are closed, like the maximum
6 plan is suggesting, people with dogs will not have places
7 to take their animals for exercise with them. So I just
8 want to point out that it's -- that this plan is just a
9 further reduction of those areas, and please consider
10 allowing our animals to have space because they are
11 compatible with plants. Thank you.

12 PRESIDENT OLAGUE: Thank you.

PH-Solomon

13 MR. SOLOMON: Good afternoon, Commissioners.
14 Mark Solomon again, an invasive nuisance in the north
15 Mission, who rolled into town 22 years ago today to a
16 police riot on the Castro, and the ultimate Natural Areas
17 Program happened 11 years later when the earth shook
18 violently.

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19 I think that this EIR is probably going to be
20 incomplete unless it analyzes the option of taking Sharp
21 Park and giving it to the Golden Gate National Recreation
22 Area. That's something that has been proposed already. I
23 don't believe it's covered in this. I really think that
24 should be on the table for analysis in order for this to
25 be a complete EIR. Thank you very much.

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1 PRESIDENT OLAGUE: Thank you. Is there
 2 additional public comment on this item? Seeing none,
 3 public comment is closed. And just wanted to repeat that
 4 the comment period has been extended to October 31st? Is
 5 that a Monday or -- at 5:00 p.m.? Commissioner Antonini.

PH-Antonini

6 COMMISSIONER ANOTONINI: Thank you. Thank you
 7 all for your comments. Just a few overviews and some
 8 questions. Of the 31 areas within the City and County of
 9 San Francisco under consideration, leaving Sharp Park out
 10 for the moment, of course, we have to realize that these
 11 are not there by design but rather by happenstance.

12 Many of them happened to be in areas that were
 13 un-accessible or hard to build on or at the tops of hills
 14 or various other things, and so I don't know that we
 15 necessarily have to look at whatever exists there as being
 16 the best use. I'm not saying that these are areas that
 17 should be developed.

18 Obviously, we have to kind of consider the
 19 situation and decide whether or not what has developed
 20 over the years is what we want on the lands and if every
 21 inch of these lands should be maintained as public
 22 property.

23 I mean, I often walk around when bigs, walk
 24 around a lot of the areas that are under consideration,
 25 and one thing that's quite clear is many have become

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1 overgrown over the years. Trees are wonderful things, but
 2 too many trees, like anything else, is not the best thing
 3 and, you know, thinning them out makes for a healthier
 4 environment sometimes. Makes it safer; makes it the ones
 5 that remain healthier, and they're -- I think careful tree
 6 removal would be something that is important.

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7 However, on the other side of it is those who
 8 want everything completely removed back to the so-called
 9 natural environment. The pictures I've seen of San
 10 Francisco, you know, in 1850 or before is mostly sand,
 11 wind, and almost an un-inhabitable area. So we've done a
 12 wonderful job in making this city that people can live in.

13 So I think to -- you know, I don't know what
 14 native plants are really native. There couldn't have been
 15 very much from the pictures I've seen, but maybe some
 16 scrub grass and an occasional tree here or there, but not
 17 a lot. Uhm, so you know, I think we have to look
 18 carefully at a lot of these areas.

19 For example, you take places like Bayview Park,
 20 which is brought up in here, parts of McLaren Park, the
 21 PUC lands around Laguna Honda, even parts of Mount
 22 Davidson, but, you know, make sure that we're looking at
 23 this and maximizing our natural resources so that people
 24 can use them as well as possible, and some of these areas
 25 probably need improvements. Just to leave the mess they

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1 are probably may not be the best thing.

03 { 2 You know, people talk about dog walking areas.
3 People talk about recreational areas. We have a big
4 shortage of playing fields and other things and these are
5 things that we need to really look into.

04 { 6 The other thing in regards to Sharp Park in
7 particular, I'm glad the one speaker brought up the fact
8 that before there was a break water, you know, the Laguna
9 Salida [sic] means Salt Lake, and it was basically -- or
10 salt lagoon, you know, which was a salty environment that
11 would not have supported the red-legged frog and the
12 garter snake. So we actually created a breeding ground
13 and, you know, to eliminate the break water would, of
14 course, eliminate those species.

05 { 15 So I think that part of this whole thing is
16 protecting something that was never there in the first
17 place, but I'm not saying that we shouldn't protect them,
18 but they're not really indigenous to the area. The most
19 important thing is to make sure that, in my opinion, that
20 the Sharp Park golf course is maintained.

06 { 21 I did not see -- and maybe staff can answer this
22 question, Jessica Range in particular -- uhm, I didn't
23 see -- there's talk about removing one of the holes of
24 Sharp Park, and is there a replacement? I did not see
25 that in the EIR. Maybe it's in there and I didn't read

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(Cont.)

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1 carefully enough, because a 17-hole golf course doesn't
2 work real good for me.

3 And also I did not see an alternative that
4 utilized some of the space to the east of Highway 1, which
5 now has four holes -- I believe it's either three or
6 four -- and I always thought when I was golfing there that
7 that would be a great place to put a couple of extra
8 holes.

9 Because back in 1981 when we had one of our big
10 storms, I remember what happened to number 16 and 17, and
11 they got washed out for quite a few years. Took a long
12 time to get them back in there, and mostly you were
13 playing golf in the sand. So I think you may be fighting
14 kind of a losing battle on it.

15 I'm not saying you should ever really change
16 this historic course, but you know, some of the things you
17 have to look at is if you're losing a hole somewhere,
18 certainly maybe you can reclaim it on the other side of
19 Highway 1 and make sure that the holes you do have can
20 withstand the forces of Mother Nature and make the course
21 a really good, playable course at all times.

22 Maybe you can answer my question about these
23 alternatives.

24 MS. RANGE: Jessica Range, planning staff. Uhm,
25 we did identify that removal of the hole would be a

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1 significant impact on the Sharp Park golf course as a
2 recreational resource. And so the recreation section
3 identifies a mitigation measure at the very end, which is
4 to restore the playability of the Sharp Park golf course
5 as an 18-hole course, and after the mitigation section,
6 there's also a programmatic analysis of the impact of the
7 mitigation measure, and there's two options that are --
8 are proposed programmatically.

9 And one is to restore the hole on the east side
10 of the highway, and the other one is to restore the hole
11 on the west side of the highway. That project would need
12 to be further evaluated. It's only addressed very
13 programmatically at this stage, so Rec and Park would have
14 to come back for additional environmental clearance to do
15 that.

16 COMMISSIONER ANTONINI: Okay. Thanks for your
17 answer. I would say whatever you need to do to make sure
18 you end up with an 18-hole course is important, and also
19 work with the San Francisco Public Golf Alliance and Bo
20 Links and Richard Harris and the other people who spoke to
21 make sure we're as close to the historic Alister MacKenzie
22 design as possible.

23 But where there are situations where, even
24 without the frog and snake habitat issue, if it's kind of
25 a losing battle with nature, we have to make sure that,

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1 you know, we make a course that's going to work. So thank
2 you very much for your work on this.

3 PRESIDENT OLAGUE: Commissioner Sugaya?

4 COMMISSIONER SUGAYA: Oh, I should have taken
5 off. I'll submit something in writing.

6 PRESIDENT OLAGUE: Okay.

7 COMMISSIONER SUGAYA: Had a concern about the
8 way the resources --

9 PRESIDENT OLAGUE: Thank you. I think we're
10 done with the public hearing on this item, and we will be
11 taking a 15-minute recess after this.

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CERTIFICATE

I, the undersigned, a Certified Shorthand Reporter for the state of California, hereby certify that the foregoing proceedings were reported by me, a disinterested person, and were thereafter transcribed under my direction into typewriting; that the foregoing is a full, complete, and true record of said proceedings.

Executed this 15th day of November, 2011.

LAURA AXELSEN, CSR NO. 6173