

VILLAGE RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

Public Meeting

October 10, 2007

7:00 p.m.

Four Corners Room/Community Center

PUBLIC SAFETY

Police Officer Brian Parsley addressed us:

- Bikes are routinely stolen from the Village, mostly by non-residents who come in looking for bikes to take. You can protect yourself from bike theft by doing the following:
 - *Invest in a high-quality lock.* A solid U-shaped lock is much, much better than a cable lock. If you have an expensive bike, keep it in your apartment or in your storage closet.
 - *Register your bike or at least record your serial number.* If your bike is stolen and recovered, you will not be able to get it back unless you know the serial number. To find the serial number, turn your bike over and look near the hub. Record the 7 or 8 digits on the bike.
 - If your bike is stolen, call the Village office and leave a message about it for Brian.
- Parking:
 - Each family in the Village is allowed 1 car and assigned 1 parking spot.
 - Please don't park your 2nd or 3rd cars in guest spots. It makes it very difficult for people to come visit the Village and is a violation of your rental agreement. Instead, you can park on Monroe in any of the spaces blacked out for up to 72 hours. You may park on Jackson St. overnight.
 - Do not leave valuable items in your car – they might be stolen.
- Etc:
 - There has been some theft of copper in the construction site.
 - They are going to try to get a couple more officers in the Village on Halloween to help out.

FIRE AND POLICE STATION TEMPORARY RELOCATION TO VILLAGE

Emily Marthinsen, Assistant Vice Chancellor for Physical and Environmental Planning at UC Berkeley addressed us. She was accompanied by Judy Lieberman, the City of Albany Assistant Administrator; Jewel Okawachi, a council member for the City of Albany, and John Weitzel, a Captain/Paramedic Training Officer for the Albany Fire Department. They spoke regarding the proposal to temporarily move the City of Albany's Fire and Police stations to the corner of Jackson St and Monroe St while the permanent buildings undergo seismic retrofitting.

- If there was a severe earthquake right now, there would be significant damage to Albany's City Hall, including the fire and police stations. The roofs need to be replaced, and a lot of structural work needs to be done. Right now the police and fire departments have a great response time. For fires, it is 1 – 3 minutes. In order to preserve this response time, they do not want to move Albany's emergency responders outside the city. Additionally, they would like to keep the police and fire stations together so that there can be better coordination.
- A year ago the City of Albany sent a letter to the UC Berkeley Chancellor to ask if there might be space in Village to relocate the Albany City Hall functions while they did a seismic retrofit of the building. Emily Marthinsen then worked with Judy Lieberman to see how they could accommodate Albany City Hall for 2 – 2 ½ years. The initial plan was to put the fire and police stations on the Gill Tract after demolishing a set of old warehouses on the site. But it has now become apparent that the demolition would not be completed in time.
- With the Section A buildings already demolished, however, it appeared that the City of Albany could fit portables on the land on the corner of Monroe St and Jackson St.
- Only the fire and police stations would be relocated to Monroe and Jackson; all City Hall functions would be placed elsewhere in Albany.
- They will use portable modular trailers. There will be 3 to 4 modulares in total, including: a dorm, an administrative office, a shop for repairing vehicles, and storage space. All vehicles will fit on the site; no street parking would be needed. The entire site would be fenced off, with two driveways.
- The project is estimated to take 18 months to construct and stay on the property for approximately 2 ½ years. If the project is approved then they will go to bid in January 2008 and they will start bringing in the modulares in February 2008.
- They are trying to get traffic signal controls for the traffic lights at the intersection of Monroe and Jackson.
- Because firemen work long shifts and are frequently sleeping at the station, the fire department shares residents' concerns about noise. Police cars and fire trucks will be exiting the Village via Monroe and turning onto San Pablo; they will not turn on their siren until they reach San Pablo.
- The AC Transit route should not be affected by the temporary stations. There are usually only about a half-dozen emergency calls per day. On non-emergency calls, police and fire vehicles would wait for the bus to pass before exiting the station.
- Village residents expressed concerned about the safety of their children as emergency vehicles exit the Village. They worry particularly because there is a playground and community center directly across the street from the proposed temporary site. The City of Albany representatives assured residents that fire and police vehicles will only travel on Jackson Street if there is a dire emergency and that route is the fastest one to the incident. City of Albany representatives even offered to put that agreement in writing.
- When emergency vehicles exit the station, they will use the utmost caution. Their number one priority is to reach the emergency safely. Most "siren calls" (emergency incidents) go to vehicles that are out in the city anyway.
- The City of Albany has agreed to pay \$200,000 to UC Berkeley in return for the use of the property. This money will be used to tear down the old warehouses on the Gill Tract.

- The stations will get their utilities (power, water, gas) from University lines, but they will be metered separately.
- The construction of the Whole Foods grocery store on San Pablo and Monroe may overlap the construction of the temporary stations. There is not yet a firm calendar for the Whole Foods project. The land for Whole Foods will be sold, not ground-leased.
- Judy Lieberman pointed out her support for affordable student family housing when residents were having rent rallies several years ago. She attended the rent rally and spoke on behalf of student families.
- There will be additional meetings on this issue in the future. Residents will be given additional opportunities to offer opinions, requests, and feedback regarding the temporary buildings and their impact on the Village.

GILL TRACT TREES – PITCH PINE CANKER

Emily Marthinsen, Assistant Vice Chancellor for Physical and Environmental Planning at UC Berkeley addressed us regarding a study of the pine trees on the Gill Tract that revealed that they have a disease called pitch pine canker:

- Researchers from UC Berkeley surveyed the pine trees in the southwest corner of the Gill Tract and found that many of them had pitch pine canker. This is a disease that weakens pine trees and weakens their limbs. In strong winds, the weakened limbs can fall.
- The pine trees on the Gill Tract were planted in a grid for research. The ones in the middle of grid are thin, have narrow trunks, and don't have extensive root systems to give them stability. If the ones on the perimeter fall, the ones in the middle become at risk for falling as well.
- The survey concluded that 1/3 to 1/2 of the pine trees on the Gill Tract would need to be removed (the ones that would fall onto the road if there was a storm). A two-phase removal of the impacted trees is being discussed.
- Currently the plan – being created by the University's physical plants division – is to have the area hydro-seeded with wildflowers where the trees are removed. The idea is to remove the impacted trees this fall before the rain starts.
- The long-term plan is to eventually remove all the trees.
- There are not any current plans for the Gill Tract. A few years ago there were plans to relocate the Village Community Center and other various Village-related buildings to the Gill Tract. Now there are no set plans. There are also no plans to change the traffic flow in front of Ocean View (such as expanding the road and adding a divider).
- The Environmental Impact Review process has not yet begun for the Whole Foods project. After it is submitted it will take about a year to work through. After that the land will be sold. Emily expects the entire review and construction process will take 2 to 3 years.

OTHER COMMUNITY ITEMS

Representatives from Bears for UNICEF addressed us regarding the annual Trick-or-Treat for UNICEF project:

- The goal of UNICEF is to protect children worldwide and work with governments to promote child and women's wellness.
- Trick-or-Treat for UNICEF is a great way to let kids help other kids.
- This year they are sending the money to earthquake victims.
- There are small orange boxes that children can use while trick-or-treating. We will make the available at Family Friday, the Village Office, Albany Children's Center, Kid's Corner, and Ocean View Elementary.

Village residents Willow Lung Amam, Krishna Balakrishnan, and George Denes explained a study they are doing on courtyard usage and its effects on community, then asked for feedback. They will be observing people in courtyards and asking to interview residents.

Prepared by:
Maile Urbancic
Nov 16, 2007