PLANS FOR 376 CASTRO STREET CLOSE TO COMPLETION
By Judith Hoyem, EVNA Board of Directors

A coalition of neighborhood organizations led by EVNA worked with the project sponsors and architect of 376 Castro over the past nine months as they developed their plans for the site of the RC gas station at the corner of Castro and Market Streets. The other organizations who joined the Coalition are DTNA (Duboce Triangle Neighborhood Association), CAPA (Castro Area Planning and Action), and CBD (Upper Market /Castro Benefits District). The Coalition asked for improvements in the design of the building and for certain community benefits. Although we could not achieve all of our goals, the meetings were for the most part cordial and collaborative.

As part of outreach to the neighborhood, the project sponsors will make available to the public an informational website showing architectural plans and renderings of the building as soon as our agreements are finalized and well before the project goes before the Planning Commission for conditional use approval. In addition, the Coalition will host a neighborhood meeting as part of the Planning Department’s requirement for neighborhood outreach. The building as planned will be 65 feet at the mid-point slope along Castro Street and as much as 72 feet at the bottom along Market Street, six stories altogether, the tallest structure in the Castro/Upper Market neighborhood. There will be 24 residential units on the upper five floors as well as almost 3000 square feet of commercial space on the ground floor along Market Street.

In addition to benefits required by the Planning Department, such as bicycle parking and certain streetscape restorations and improvements, the project sponsors have agreed to provide required affordable housing on site rather than paying a fee to fund affordable units in a non-specific location. Another agreement that will supply a much needed benefit to the neighborhood is to provide a 450-square foot space permanently rent-free and available as a community meeting room, with

Continued on page 4 ...

FERNANDO NELSON AND OUR NEIGHBORHOOD’S ARCHITECTURAL LEGACY
By Dan Risman Jones, EVNA Board of Directors

Long before Fernando Nelson garnered fame for being the pioneering developer of the Western Neighborhoods, he had already been a respected residential builder in Eureka Valley since the 1870’s and 1880’s. While his legacy today is most evident in the high quality architectural styling of the Fernando Nelson residences that still stand in our neighborhood, it was perhaps his unique and successful business practices that most distinguished him.

Today, there are 31 prominent Nelson homes remaining in Eureka Valley on Castro, Noe, Hartford, 20th, and 18th Streets, as well as 30 other homes in Duboce Triangle. Yet these represent just a small portion of the over 4,000 homes he had built in San Francisco. The fact that around 75 percent of all his homes remain standing today in various parts of the City is a testament to his major architectural legacy.

One reason for his prolific career was his early start in the building trade. At age 16, Fernando Nelson partnered with his brother-in-law to build homes. By age 22, he had built his own home. By age 30, after his business partnership had dissolved, Nelson switched to developing whole blocks at a time rather than working on single homes. Though he freely embraced a wide range of architectural styles of his time, most of his homes in Eureka Valley were of the Queen Ann, Edwardian, Italianate, and Stick Victorian styles. It wasn’t until later in the Richmond, Sunset, and West Portal neighborhoods that he also built in Mediterranean, Tudor, Elizabethan, Craftsman and other contemporary styles. Despite his success in adaptive architectural styling, his tract homes were most notable for their success as a business model rather than architectural design.

Continued on page 4...
LETTER FROM SAN FRANCISCO ENERGY COOPERATIVE  
By Evan Wynns, SF Energy Cooperative Executive Director

We at the San Francisco Energy Cooperative were very glad to have the chance to come speak at the Neighborhood Association at the January Membership Meeting. It was a warm reception and it is community groups like yours that are the heart of our city, and give us hope for the future.

Our organization is aimed at providing the benefits of green energy to everyone, and thereby to speed up our transition to renewable energy as a society and teach people that everyone can own a piece of the future of energy.

The Co-op takes small contributions from members all over the city to wire buildings in our community for solar. In return, we pay our members dividends on what we get back from those buildings’ owners, and we’re currently working on an initial pilot project in Bernal Heights. We operate as an incorporated California cooperative, and provide equal voice for all our members in this vital enterprise.

We incorporated in 2011, and since then have received an overwhelmingly positive response from the people of San Francisco and the Bay Area. The commitment of our communities to leading this nation and the world when it comes to environmental stewardship and egalitarian values has found new expression in the Co-op.

Our pilot project installing solar panels on a local community center will soon be underway, and as we move toward that goal and our larger aims of teaching new ways of thinking about, creating and owning energy, we need all the help we can get. So we ask all the people of our city who care about justice, progress and cooperation for a better tomorrow to join us, add their voice to ours and get their piece of the new energy future by getting a membership today.

You can find more information on what we do, and what you can do to help on our website at http://sfenergycooperative.com, call us at (415) 894-7620, email us at info@sfenergycooperative.com or follow us on twitter @sfpowercoop.

Thanks again to Alan Beach-Nelson and the welcoming folks at the EVNA, and here’s to a very bright cooperative future!

SUPPORT YOUR LOCAL NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION, ADVERTISE IN CASTRO/EVNA’S NEWSLETTER!

Eureka! is distributed to 2,000 addresses in Castro/Eureka Valley, generally, Sanchez to the East, Liberty/20th to the South, Eureka to the West and 16th to the North and to civic, planning and community leaders across the city.

2012 ADVERTISING RATES:

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The Café is committed to ensuring that the Castro has a vibrant and active nightlife and a peaceful neighborhood.

All who live, work and play in our neighborhood deserve a positive and healthy community.

We are proud to help set the tone for working in partnership with fellow businesses, neighborhood leaders and residents.

It’s about respect.
It’s about partnership.
It’s about fun.
376 Castro Continued form page 1...

additional use as a community-based non-profit office, with an entrance on Castro Street and including an accessible restroom.

The project sponsors have also agreed to provide streetscape improvements to enhance the pedestrian experience. These improvements, which are still under discussion, may include but are not limited to such ideas as an irrigated landscaped area with trees and planters and/or raised planters to create a seating area, other public seating, an artistic water feature, public art, a neighborhood “way finder” indicating points of interest both neighborhood specific and city-wide, and so on.

Although we had hoped that the size of the lot and the height permitted by the Planning code as well as the significant location of the project at the world-famous intersection of Market and Castro Streets could result in an architecturally unique project, none of the basic structure of the project has changed since it was proposed in Spring 2011. However, the architect of the project, Mitchell Benjamin, has responded positively to a number of our requests and many design features have been improved; for example, re-configuring the entrances to the commercial space, the residential lobby, and the garage; providing inner courtyard green space; breaking up the visual bulk of the building with upper story cut-backs, and better unifying the articulation of the surface. Interesting materials are proposed for the facade, which are expected to further enhance the aesthetics of the building. The design review process will continue until all the improvements are agreed upon. EVNA looks forward to supporting the project as it goes through the entitlement and permit process.

Nelson Continued from page 1...

As a business person, Nelson zealously employed cost-cutting measures that allowed working class families to afford homes.

In 1897, he purchased a group of lots around Castro and 20th Streets where he built several homes, including his own family residence that served as a model for others. He placed his shop and lumber yard on adjoining lots to keep costs low. He would offer his clients select choice of two floor plans. These choices were laid out on a notecard, a plan “A” on one side and a plan “B” on the other. In his attempt to make properties both affordable and customizable, he would allow for limited modifications to these two plans.

Nelson also saved money on the adornments on the outside of his Victorians. Today a Nelson home can be defined by its exterior. Though he would allow clients to choose their own embellishments, the cheapest option was his own custom-made design. His signature piece is the “donut” which was a donut-shaped redwood piece that would be attached in rows above the doorframe. He bought these designs in bulk in order to cheaply decorate the facades. One famous example of bargain hunting was that he purchased nails in bulk from broken kegs and had his children sort out the good ones.

Among other cost-cutting initiatives he implemented was to build only a home that already had a prior purchase commitment from a homebuyer. Nelson would also act as the lender, allowing customers to pay only down payments initially and then slowly pay him back at equivalent rent levels. This strategy worked because he would go out of his way to collect monthly payments.

Though Nelson’s work in Eureka Valley was extensive, it was also short lived. By the time he reached his 40’s, Nelson targeted his business to sparsely populated areas along streetcar routes where he could truly implement his developer techniques. He became known as the father of the Richmond, Sunset and West Portal neighborhoods by implementing the business techniques he had perfected in the Eureka Valley.
Neighbors’ Faves!

Neighbors share some of their favorite things and places in the Castro/Eureka Valley.
To submit your Fave, e-mail evna.org

Our inaugural Neighbors’ Faves is from EVNA President, Alan Beach-Nelson.

Castro Coffee Company, 427 Castro St. My place to get whole bean or fresh ground coffee since 1992! The staff is wonderful, helpful – they’ll even help you figure out a good blend based on the flavors you crave. All for an incredibly reasonable price.

Rossi’s Deli, 426 Castro Street. Rossis’ Deli is truly ONE OF A KIND. This establishment has been in the neighborhood for more than 35 years!!! I come here almost every morning for a breakfast bagel. They have an amazing cheese selection. As for their customer service, it’s GREAT! Rossis’ Deli is family owned and they are genuine, friendly people.

Sam’s, 17th and Noe. ABSOLUTELY the BEST corner market in the ‘hood. Whether you are looking for an ingredient you need, a quick stock up or an amazing bottle of wine for a fair price, Sam is always there with a smile in the evenings and always asks “For here of to go,” and I think he might just welcome it if you stayed.

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Visit www.molliestones.com for more information and store locations.
Trigger Report
By Patrick Crogan, EVNA Board of Directors

In spring 2009, the bar Trigger, located at 2344 Market Street near Castro, applied for and received an entertainment license subject to a number of “conditions of use.” One of them was that all noise was to be contained within the building and another was that Trigger was to retain the services of “professional security whose duties include ensuring that patrons behave in an orderly, peaceful and respectful manner...within a one-block distance from (Trigger) (or approximately 500-feet from the Subject Property...)

Trigger opened its doors on May 1, 2009 and immediately started receiving noise complaints from the neighbors.

Time went on.

In 2011, Trigger was fined $50,000 by the Entertainment Commission for noise violations. (It lost an appeal of this fine at a public hearing on August 10, 2011.)

In the fall of 2011 the Entertainment Commission ordered the club to shut the roll-down glass door at the front of the building and keep it shut, This area, which was used as a smoking area, was otherwise unventilated so it effectively became unusable. This successfully put a stop to patrons’ noise in that area from carrying across the street.

However, the number of complaints increased from neighbors on Market Street and from behind Trigger on 16th Street concerning excessive bass noise and crowd noise.

An ad hoc group of angry neighbors was formed with Alan Beach-Nelson, President of EVNA, acting as its facilitator. After extensive communications with Trigger it was decided that - barring a miracle - EVNA would ask the Entertainment Commission to revoke Trigger’s entertainment license.

Then in steps Supervisor Scott Wiener. At his behest and with the agreement of Trigger and the neighbors, a mediation meeting was held on January 1, 2012, at City Hall.

Trigger agreed to contract with a respected sound engineer to address the bass problem. Trigger also agreed to take seriously its responsibility to adequately patrol the sidewalk.

A follow-up meeting was held on February 16 at Supervisor Wiener’s office. It was generally agreed that the bass levels had significantly decreased. Trigger said that other mitigating sound-dampening measures suggested by the sound engineer (isolation of a sub-woofer) were to take place within a short time frame.

It was also noted that the security provided on the sidewalk was doing its job and was significantly reducing noise from patrons.

Follow-up meetings will be held in 6 and 12 months at City Hall to verify that Trigger is living up to its conditions of use.

Countless number of hours have gone into getting Trigger to be a responsible neighbor.

It’s a wonder it took so long. Let’s hope this issue is finally resolved. Time will tell.
District 8 Supervisor
Scott Wiener

It’s been a busy few months for me representing District 8. Since the new year, the Board of Supervisors has passed a number of pieces of legislation I authored, including:

- Setting basic standards for commercial dogwalkers who use city parks, including a maximum number of dogs, safety and training standards, insurance requirements, and a requirement to carry leashes in case they are needed;
- Funding HIV/AIDS services to compensate for draconian federal budget cuts;
- Protecting the “Corbett Slope” from being sold to developers and allowing neighbors to continue to transform it into a community garden and park;
- Creating a mechanism for the city to adjust its criminal sentencing policies to cope with state prisoner realignment and to prevent an explosion of prisoners in our jails;
- Improving our prevailing wage ordinance to ensure that city contractors are paying workers, especially low-wage janitors, a fair wage;
- Setting rules for Jane Warner and Harvey Milk Plazas, including bans on smoking, camping, and sleeping;

I’m currently working on other legislation, including revisions to our Planning Code to foster more student housing without cannibalizing our existing housing stock, legislation to encourage food trucks in a way that doesn’t undermine brick-and-mortar restaurants, improving access to tax incentives for owners of historic properties and ensuring a balanced and inclusive approach to creating new historic districts, simplifying the byzantine permitting requirements for restaurants and cafes, focusing the City on the needs of LGBT seniors, and pressing PG&E and the PUC to do a better job maintaining our street lights and fixing them when they break down.

On March 5, the City Economist released an economic impact study on the contributions of nightlife to our economy. I requested this report last year and held a hearing on it. The report shows what many of us intuitively knew: nightlife contributes significant tax dollars and jobs to San Francisco’s economy. It also showed that the Castro is one of the key nightlife centers of the City.

I continue to focus especially on transportation issues, in my role as a Commissioner on the regional Metropolitan Transportation Commission and Vice Chair of the San Francisco County Transportation Authority. I work with Muni regularly to improve service and spend a lot of time working to improve taxi service. I’m taking a lead working with our regional partners to ensure that high speed rail from San Jose to the Transbay Terminal becomes a reality in the not-too-distant future.

In the neighborhood, a lot is happening. The streetscape improvements on Church and Duboce are moving forward, including the new crosswalk connecting the Safeway directly to the former Home Restaurant. This is a significant pedestrian improvement. The beautiful new playground at Dolores Park is going to open soon, as is the new Youth Play Area in Duboce Park. Numerous new businesses are going into the neighborhood, and the vacancy rate is going down. I’ve been working closely with several of those new businesses and also with the Castro County Club, for which things are looking better and better.

Feel free to contact my office at 554-6968 or me at scott.wiener@sfgov.org. To receive my monthly newsletter or to follow me on Facebook or Twitter, go to www.scottwiener.com.

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“A tavola non si invecchia mai...”
President’s Column

March 28 Membership Meeting - Join us at EVNA’s bimonthly meeting to hear from new Mission Police Station Captain Robert Moser about his views on the partnership between residents and the police. Also, District 8 Supervisor Scott Wiener will join us to give a City Hall update.

HOT TOPICS AROUND THE ‘HOOD

376 Castro - The neighborhood coalition is near an agreement with the project sponsor on community benefits and design.

Trigger - As a result of EVNA’s efforts, Trigger is now compliant with their Conditions of Use and nearby residents have the peace and quiet to which they are entitled. Many thanks to Supervisor Wiener’s Office, Entertainment Commission, Planning Enforcement, neighbors and Trigger!

Jane Warner Plaza Plaque Dedication - On February 4 community leaders dedicated the plaza with a plaque commemorating all the great work Officer Jane did for our community.

17th Street Radar Trailer - Park Station set up a Speed Radar Trailer at the Corbin Steps and another further down 17th. Park Station is serious about dangerous speeding on 17th Street.

Squat & Gobble (3600 16th St.) - Despite the Planning Department’s official recommendation against it and letters of opposition from four neighborhood organizations, as well as a number of individuals, DPW Bureau Chief Mr. Jerry Sanguinetti and DPW Permit Manager John Kwong unceremoniously renewed Squat & Gobble’s Parklet Permit. NO hearing, NO notice to either neighborhood groups or citizens in opposition. NO notice even to Supervisor Wiener in whose district this troublesome Parklet resides. Despite repeated and on-going violations of their permit conditions (with photographic proof provided) Mr. Sanguinetti felt it was a-ok to renew. According to Mr. Kwong, “The Parklet permitting program, . . . does not require notification upon renewal.”

I urge you to call the Board of Supervisors, DPW, and the Mayor to voice your displeasure with this violation of the public trust. I certainly will be doing so. And EVNA will appeal the permit to the Board of Appeals.