Addressing The Pink Elephant In The Room:
The Pink Saturday Meeting Recap


Editors Note: For the past five years, Castro/EVNA has been monitoring the evolution of Pink Saturday from a gay-focused, neighborhood event into one that has exploded, much like Halloween did. We’ve actively participated in discussions surrounding the quality and safety of the event and ways to prevent it from getting out of hand. As President, I attended the meeting on Wednesday, September 10th, along with several other Board members. I had intended to write a piece for The Eureka! but, as Roy McKenzie of the Castro Biscuit, now part of Hoodline did such an amazing job, I asked Roy and Hoodline if they would allow us to reprint it. They graciously agreed. Alan Beach-Nelson

[On Wednesday, September 10] the Eureka Valley Recreation Center was filled with community members from all walks of city life ready to talk about the pink elephant in the room. Namely, what will the future of Pink Saturday look like?

Castro residents, event organizers, DJ’s, out-of-towners, politicians, police, and activists all showed up to make it clear that regardless of whether the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence continue to host Pink Saturday or turn the event over to the city, it can only continue if event organizers beef up security, establish an earlier end time, and change the event programming. If you missed the meeting or need a refresher, read on for a full recap of what went down.

Pink Saturday continues on page 6

Regulating Short-Term Rentals

By David Chiu, President, Board of Supervisors

Earlier this year, I introduced legislation to regulate short-term rentals in San Francisco. Although the City’s current laws prohibit housing units from being rented for fewer than 30 days, this activity has been pervasive and largely left unchecked. As a result, entire apartments have been converted into year-round vacation rentals, further straining the housing stock. These kinds of illegal hotel conversions must be stopped.

At the same time, I’ve heard from many residents who rent short-term while they are traveling to help pay their rent and make their mortgage. For students that travel during school breaks, workers that travel for business, and working families and seniors on a fixed income that travel during holidays, the supplementary income helps them stay in their homes. I believe it’s important to create some flexibility for permanent residents while shutting down the speculators who are displacing San Franciscans.

I think we can all agree that the status quo is simply not working. That’s why I’ve proposed a regulatory framework to address the problem. My legislation would prohibit short-term rental activity in units that are not occupied by permanent residents, and increases the penalties for violations and resources for enforcement.

Chiu - Short-Term Rentals continued on page 9
Everyone says they want to do something about at-risk populations and the consequences, now neighbors in the Castro are turning their concerns into action.

Castro Cares launches Friday September 19th. Under the leadership of the Castro/Upper Market Community Benefit District, a coalition of neighborhood groups will bring additional, dedicated resources to the Castro/Upper Market from the San Francisco Department of Public Health, the San Francisco Police Department, and Patrol Special Police.

The initiative begins with the placement in the Castro of a Homeless Outreach Team case manager, funded by the health department, to connect those living on the streets with services. When the full initiative rolls out over the coming year, Castro Cares will fund additional dedicated overtime SFPD officers, plus Patrol Special Police Officers and homeless outreach services.

A private fundraising campaign begins in October with the goal of raising an additional $235,000 per year.

Frustrated by the lack of progress in resolving quality of life issues in the Castro, the coalition has been meeting bimonthly since October 2013. Supervisor Wiener facilitated meetings with the SFPD and the Police Commission. The coalition also met with HOPE Director Bevan Dufty, SF Patrol Special Police, and the Department of Public Health’s Homeless Outreach Team (HOT).

“It soon became clear that at this time, given current staffing levels, the police do not have the resources to address the issues to our satisfaction and neither does the Homeless Outreach Team,” said Andrea Aiello, Executive Director, Castro/Upper Market Community Benefit District. “We realized we can...
continue to complain or we can try to do something ourselves. We opted for the latter.”

Members of the neighborhood coalition include: Castro/Upper Market Community Benefit District, Castro/Eureka Valley Neighborhood Association, Castro Community on Patrol, Most Holy Redeemer Catholic Church, Duboce Triangle Neighborhood Association, Hartford Street Neighbors, Collingwood Street Neighbors, St. Francis Lutheran Church, Safeway, and Castro Merchants.

“The overall goal of Castro Cares is to improve the quality of life for those living on the street and for those who live, work, and play in the Castro/Upper Market,” said Alan Beach-Nelson, President, Castro/Eureka Valley Neighborhood Association. “When fully funded, the program will provide 44 hours of outreach work to at-risk populations and 51 hours of added enforcement to core affected areas in the CBD boundaries every week.”

To better determine the array of services provided by Castro Cares to those living on the street, HOT surveyed 100 at-risk people on the street in the Castro/Upper Market regarding their needs, demographics, etc. The analysis of this data will help shape the services provided by Castro Cares. Services could comprise a range including, but not limited to, dedicated street outreach, medical care, case management, rooms, or help reuniting with family.

Greg Carey, Chief of Patrol, Castro Community on Patrol said, “The idea is to try to build relationships with people over time and get them engaged in the health and social service system.”

Daniel Bergerac, President, Castro Merchants expressed optimism about Castro Cares, explaining the services will be spread randomly throughout a 24 hour period on a daily basis, “The model is to provide dedicated police and homeless related services, randomly scheduled, 7 days a week throughout the day and evening and across the district. I believe it won't happen over night, but with dedicated services over the program’s first year we will see and notice a reduction in quality of life issues in the neighborhood.”

**Handy Resources for Home**

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Report Litter and Graffiti, St. Cleaning, Abandoned Vehicles, St. Signs Missing/Damaged, Pot Hole Repair

**Police:**
Non-Emergency: 553-0123
Report nuisance and non-urgent issues. Always ask for a CAD #.
Mission Station: 558-5400

**Homeless Issues:**
Community Awareness & Treatment Service (CATS) non-emergency: 734-4233

**Parking and Traffic Issues:**
SFMTA Parking Enforcement: 553-1200
SFMTA Parking Tickets: 701-3000

**Dist. 8 Supervisor Scott Wiener:**
554-6968, Scott.Wiener@sfgov.org

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Love Where You Live
by Mark D McHale, Resident and EVNA Board Member

History Unveiled
The last 8 months here on Castro Street have been exciting and chaotic for residents and visitors. It has been a true test of stamina for all the merchants having to weather the downturn in shoppers and anemic sales numbers while the Sidewalk Widening Project is being completed. Being a part of this massive commitment to make our neighborhood stronger and more attractive has been a testament to all who call the Castro home. To the residents and merchants, the workers and tourists, the city employees and contractors, my hat is off to all who are making it happen.

It’s been exciting to watch the phased demolition of the sidewalks, and interesting to discover the artifacts and abandoned connections that lay beneath the walkways since the days of origin. It has been fascinating to watch the daily siege and retreat of the contractors and engineers, having to tinker with their best plans to come up with creative workarounds for all the many surprises like unmapped water pipes and basement extensions protruding from under buildings into the walkways.

On many a trip to and back, it was hilarious to witness the slow and jerky single file pedestrian processions leading up and down the street; whole collections of wayfarers knotted up behind a bottleneck of construction barriers ahead in the path, until it widened and they dispersed like cats out of a cage. The street people jockeyed constantly for better perches outside of Walgreens, and Recology drivers struggled to keep servicing the moving trash receptacles. Not since the first time that Castro Street was poured and paved has so much been exposed to the sky above, swells of dust clouds and floating sand drifts, piles of dirt being heaved here and there, all to create something new. Oftentimes, the only thing that kept tempers in check was the promise of something wonderful about to happen.

In the last weeks, most of the big splash items were put in place, and the change in mood was palpable as visitors and tourists poured back into the area for August vacation. The lightposts are positioned toward the new curbs, the ginko and palm trees have been planted, and the overhead wiring shrunk down to size over the reduced lanes. The changes to the Jane Warner Park and Market Street are quite welcome and needed. All that remains are some of the sidewalk furniture and fittings for completion. An amazing job by SF City engineers and Ghilotti Brothers Construction.

While the reconstruction project occurs on the large scale, unfolding over 3 dimensions and 6 city blocks, there is a significant message delivered to observant passersby on the flat plane of the new sidewalks. The sidewalk contains dozens of notable quotes from people instrumental to the LGBT cause, capturing significant moments in the advancement of our history. The first installment of twenty gorgeous brass plaques have been placed in the walkway as a means of commemorating some of the heroes who came before us and make how we live our lives possible. The Rainbow Honor Walk is the culmination of a shared dream conceived and launched by our own David Perry and Isaac Lindenauer.

As you get out to tour and become familiar with our remodeled neighborhood, you will be immersed in living history. The Honor Walk, the etchings, and other iconic symbols help to catalog a movement and to educate participants regarding a people who were courageous enough to break new ground to be accepted into mainstream America. A local resident and activist, Raphael Mandelman, put it best when he said, “Neighborhoods change, it’s a part of life and urban life, but something remarkable happened in the Castro over the last decades that should never be forgotten.” My hat’s off to our community, for having the vision and the courage to put this most recent and unique chapter of history into stone as a legacy to future generations of the LGBT community.
Throughout the event, moderator Sister Saki Tumi reminded attendees to focus on how to keep the event alive, even as a few community members expressed their desire to see the event end. “The event has gotten so out of hand, I’m afraid to be in my own neighborhood,” said Frank Pietro, a 15-year Castro resident. “The event shouldn’t happen.” Other residents mentioned feeling unsafe and upset about the mess left behind from all the partiers.

But even though many attendees expressed their displeasure surrounding the event, most seemed to agree that Pink Saturday is important for the community and sending the event the way of Halloween was not acceptable.

If the community had only came together as group to help solve the problems of Halloween the same way it is now trying to solve the issues with Pink Saturday, SF Pride president Gary Virginia said that perhaps things could have turned out differently for the October event. Waiyde Palmer, who worked to organize some of the first Pink Saturday celebrations, said, “Canceling it is a disservice to the community.” Palmer spoke of the initial Pink Saturday celebrations as being political and designed to celebrate the power of the GLBT community.

**Solutions**

Many of the meeting attendees agreed that the event should end earlier, noting that the turning point at which the event goes from “magical to mess” (as Selma Soul put it) is around 8pm. Supervisor Scott Wiener and San Francisco Mission Station Police Chief Daniel Perea echoed the same sentiments.

Another complaint highlighted last night was that the event’s programming is no longer centered around gay pride, queer revolution, or celebrating as a community. A few attendees pointed specifically to the style of music. Bill Dupp, a Castro nightlife DJ, said that while he himself includes hip hop and rap in his sets, “gangster hip hop” songs are not what gay pride is all about. Top 100-style gay anthems by pop singers like Madonna, Cher, Kylie Minogue, etc. would be more appropriate, said Dupp.

Attendee Joshua Smith, who helped organize the Global Village stage this year at Pink Saturday, responded by saying that the event should end earlier, noting that the turning point at which the event goes from “magical to mess” (as Selma Soul put it) is around 8pm. Supervisor Scott Wiener and San Francisco Mission Station Police Chief Daniel Perea echoed the same sentiments.

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night’s discussion needed to take into account viewpoints across all demographics, including youth of color. Dyke March organizer Rosa Hernandez noted that one genre of music can’t be blamed for the event’s problems.

Other attendees mentioned making the event more programmatically diverse by using the Castro Street Fair as a model. Right now, Pink Saturday party stages are mostly filled with music and dancing, with not much else goes on during the event. One person mentioned leaving the Frameline Film Festival at the Castro Theatre and being bombarded by a sea of people all were looking around for something to do.

The biggest discussion of the evening, though, centered around crowd control and increased security presence. Chief Perea said that he had 150 SFPD officers dedicated to the event and could have used 35 more just on Market Street, but that his station, like others around the city, is suffering from a staffing shortage, with the city police department currently running at a 300 officer deficit. Perea said that during last year’s event, he received requests for backup from officers on the beat and had to tell the officers he was unable to send them help. “It makes me sick,” Perea admitted.

The problem does not lie with the general crowd, but with those coming to the event specifically to cause trouble, said Chief Perea, who noted that during this year’s event several “validated” gangs came into the event space. Chief Perea said he made sure that gang members knew their presence was noticed by posting platoons at the gate before they entered and having them followed once they got in. However, he said, diverting officers to these tasks and to large brawls creates a cop visibility “perception” problem, though if all police officers are being diverted to another area to handle a disturbance, the lack of police visibility is actually a reality.

**How to Step Up Safety**

What’s the solution for these issues? More private security? An SFPD “police share” with neighboring city forces? According to The Sisters, there just isn’t enough money for increased private security, with Sister Selma Soul saying that the event is just barely breaking even and collects, on average, less than a dollar per attendee. Castro Community Benefit President Andrea Aiello noted that the CBD has been chipping in to help cover some of the costs of cleanup. And when it comes to outsourcing cops, Chief Perea said that police officers from other units in the Bay Area may not have the type of training necessary to deal with the San Francisco-style events.

Brian Hill of Castro Community on Patrol said a major problem for the event is the access to alcohol. Although Selma Soul noted that event goers are checked for weapons and alcohol before going into the party, Hill observed that merchants inside the event’s footprint sell alcohol and one merchant was seen selling alcohol in to-go containers through a store window. Other community members agreed that access to alcohol and open containers, especially for minors, is a problem that leads to a more unruly crowd.
THE CASTRO & UPPER MARKET RETAIL STRATEGY
By Orié Zaklad, EVNA Board Member

Over a year after its initial envisioning, the collaborative project has been fully funded and will take place over the next year. The goal – to improve the neighborhood’s retail character and fill its vacant spaces. See www.CastroRetail.com.

The Castro/Upper Market commercial corridor is the second most active business district in San Francisco, with high pedestrian activity and draw as both a tourist destination and a “gay mecca.” Its retail vacancy rate of 6.9%, however, is much higher than the City’s 3.8% average. New large-scale construction projects, adding over 30,000 square feet of new ground floor space, threaten to push the neighborhood’s retail vacancy rate even higher.

To address the concern around vacancy, the Retail Strategy is being created as a collaborative effort by the Castro/Upper Market Community Benefit District (CBD), the Duboce Triangle Neighborhood Association (DTNA), the Castro / Eureka Valley Neighborhood Association (EVNA), and Castro Merchants (CM). The project was funded with the support of these organizations, local developers, grants from the Office of Economic and Workforce Development (OEWD) and District 8 Supervisor Scott Wiener.

The primary aim of the Retail Strategy initiative is to address the existing high vacancy rate and develop an actionable plan to fill new ground floor retail in a manner that enables the commercial corridor to thrive, while preserving its unique character. It also aims to ensure a high quality of life for area residents, while maintaining international draw as a tourist destination.

Specific questions under consideration include:
1. What new businesses would residents like to see in the neighborhood?
2. What mix of residents vs. international, national and regional tourists visit the neighborhood commercial corridor?
3. Why are some businesses vacating the neighborhood?
4. For which goods and services do local residents leave the neighborhood, and where do they go to buy them?
5. How can desired businesses be attracted to the neighborhood?

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CASTRO BUSINESS IS DOWN UP TO 50%.

PLEASE HELP ENSURE THAT OUR LOCAL SHOPS THRIVE BY SHOPPING ON CASTRO DURING CONSTRUCTION!

CASTRO STREETSCAPE IMPROVEMENT PROJECT, JUNE 2014. PHOTO COURTESY OF THE CASTRO/UPPER MARKET CBD. PHOTO BY STEVEN KYLE WELKER

PUBLIC SAFETY IN THE CASTRO
By Scott Wiener, District 8 Supervisor

A few recent events in the Castro – including violence during Pink Saturday, shots fired on Collingwood Street, and the killing of a member of our community on Church Street – have rightfully caused serious concern in the neighborhood. The City and the community need to work together to ensure that our streets are safe for residents and visitors.

We recently held a community meeting to discuss the future of Pink Saturday. This is an important community event, but it has been marred by significant challenges in the past few years. The Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence have done a tremendous job working to manage the event, and I understand their frustrations with the ongoing challenges around Pink Saturday. At the community meeting, we discussed potential solutions, including ending the event earlier and enacting more specific access restrictions.

I will continue to engage with the Sisters, the police, and other city departments to chart out a future for a successful Pink Saturday.

Regarding public safety beyond Pink Saturday, the current situation isn’t acceptable. We’re seeing more and more bad street behavior on and around Castro Street, at Jane Warner Plaza, and throughout Upper Market. I’ve been working closely with the police to ensure more consistent and proactive public safety approaches in the neighborhood. I also continue to ensure that the city funds police academy classes in order to eliminate the department’s staffing shortage. In the recently adopted budget, I obtained funding for a pilot program in the Castro to address quality of life and public safety concerns with more patrolling resources as well as social work support to get people into services.

The Castro is a wonderful place and we are all lucky to live here. We all need to work together to ensure it’s a safe place for everyone.

Scott Wiener represents District 8 on the Board of Supervisors. More information at www.scottwiener.com.
Chiu - Short-Term Rentals continued

It would only allow permanent residents to rent out their homes for fewer than 30 days at a time if:

• The unit is the primary place of residence
• The unit is occupied for at least three-quarters of the year
• The resident obtains liability insurance
• The resident registers the unit, maintains good standing, and renews registration every two years with the Planning Department

To maintain good standing, the permanent resident cannot have any outstanding city violations, including building, planning, or nuisance violations; cannot charge more than the monthly allowable rent under rent control; cannot violate any of the registration terms; and must pay all transient occupancy taxes. Otherwise, their permission would be suspended and they would be subject to administrative and civil penalties.

The legislation also regulates hosting platforms for the first time; these are the individual or online entities that facilitate short-term rental activity. The legislation requires that all hosting platforms inform their users of the local short-term rental laws before allowing them to post any advertisements, and also requires that they collect and remit the occupancy taxes on behalf of their users. I’m pleased that one of the biggest platforms, AirBNB, has agreed to remit taxes beginning October 1st after pressure from my office.

How to promote reasonable sharing of homes while effectively shutting down illegal hotel conversions has proven to be a complex policy issue. In the last two years, I’ve worked with a multitude of stakeholders and residents to solicit ideas and feedback on the legislation. In response to the Planning Commission hearing in July and the first Land Use hearing earlier this week, I’ve made additional amendments to strengthen the legislation and increase enforcement. I will continue to do so as the legislation works its way through the committee in the coming weeks.

I want to thank the Eureka Valley Neighborhood Association for its engagement on this very important issue. I’m absolutely committed to getting the policy details of the legislation right, so that we are protecting our housing and maintaining quality of life in our neighborhoods. I look forward to hearing feedback from your upcoming meetings.

EVNA Design Awards: New in 2014

By Jack Keating

This year the Planning and Land Use Committee [PLUC] will be presenting awards to projects in our neighborhood that are exceptional. Called the “PLUCky” Awards, they are intended to recognize projects in the neighborhood that stand out in several areas and that were completed in 2014.

Potential categories include overall design, integrating well into the existing neighborhood, historic context, creative land use or significant contribution in retail/other use.

The Planning and Land Use Committee seeks input from neighbors. If you know of an exceptional building or project that fits into the above categories, please nominate it! Nominations will be accepted from the membership through October 15th. Submissions should include the project location, a brief description of why it deserves an award, as well as your contact information. Nominations can be sent to: planning@evna.org.

The PLUC will determine winners at its November committee meeting and winners will be announced in the January 2015 Eureka!


**Neighbors’ Faves!**

Neighbors share their favorite places in the ‘hood!

This issue’s Faves come from EVNA Member, James Kelm

**Best In Show, 545 Castro**

This independent shop offers some great dog and cat supplies. The dog toys I’ve bought here are nearly indestructible—much higher quality than what I’ve found at chain stores.

**Anchor Oyster Bar, 579 Castro**

The secret has long been out that this small restaurant offers one of the best raw bars in SF. It’s a great place for lunch or dinner. Come early because the wait list for tables fills up quickly.

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**EVNA Membership Drive:**

We NEED you!

EVNA is only as strong as our membership. A robust membership helps fulfill our mission to improve the neighborhood AND provides much-needed clout with city agencies.

Please join or renew your membership today, [http://evna.org/join](http://evna.org/join).

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**EVNA is again a beneficiary of the Castro Street Fair.** As a beneficiary, EVNA will receive a portion of the proceeds for every volunteer hour we donate to staff the event.

EVNA’s Social Committee invites volunteers to help staff the Castro Street Fair. There are more than a dozen positions to choose from and shifts ranging from early morning to evening.

Volunteer positions include roles as gate donation collectors, stage hands, security, safety, set up and tear down. Whatever your interest, whatever time of the day, there’s likely a position just for you.

Staffing the event is a lot of fun, and provides so many other benefits: meeting old and new friends, helping carry on the tradition of one of the last remaining truly neighborhood events, and helping to raise money for EVNA to carry on with its mission and outreach.

If you’d like to help, please sign up today at the link below. Be sure to designate “C/EVNA” as your sponsor group, and if you have questions or need help, just email me (mark.mchale@evna.org). We’d love to see you there!

[http://castrostreetfairvolunteer.eventbrite.com](http://castrostreetfairvolunteer.eventbrite.com)

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**History Facts Unveiling Celebration**

**Friday, October 3rd, 6:00 PM, Harvey Milk Plaza**

By Alan Beach-Nelson, EVNA President and History Fact Committee Member

As reported in the May-June edition of The Eureka, as part of the Castro Streetscape Improvement Project, the Castro/Upper Market Community Benefit District funded the “stamping” of 20 historical facts about Eureka Valley in the sidewalk. Facts were vetted by several organizations and the CBD conducted outreach to the community for additional facts and/or changes. Selected facts are meant to convey interesting pieces of information and milestones spanning the history of the neighborhood, from the original Native American inhabitants to the present-day. Final list was selected May 8.

The facts will be unveiled during a ceremony on Friday, October 3 at 6PM. Come join us as we unveil these historical facts as a tribute to the long and rich history of our neighborhood.

**Criteria:**

1) Credible sources, original source documentation is ideal; 2) Castro/Eureka Valley centered; 3) Events/milestones in the neighborhood that had a local or national impact; 4) Notes history of official City landmarks. First two are mandatory. 3 and 4 are desirable.

**Design:**

1) 20 facts located in groups of two near leaning posts; 2) Approx. 230 characters each; 3) Listed chronologically in a U-shape on Castro. Pre-1776-1943 (1-10) on west side, Market to 19th and 1953-2013 (11-20) on east side, 19th to Market.

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Summary of Pink Saturday Meeting
By Alan R. Beach-Nelson, and Mark D. McHale, EVNA Board:

"We know a lot of the people who attend aren’t part of the community, and aren’t here to celebrate Pride" Captain Daniel Perea, Mission Station

While this quote seems like it is stating the obvious, the fact that it was publicly acknowledged was, to me, significant. It shows that there is official acknowledgement of what the primary issue is, and that steps have already been taken to address the issue. Much like the "Take Back The Night" Campaign, we need to "Take Back our event."

Mark McHale summed up issues and solutions aptly with this FB Post:

Agreed:
- There’s a switch in the energy about 8pm from friendly to dangerous
- The crowd is getting younger, drunker, bolder, less local and less gay
- The impact on the neighborhood during or after is not acceptable
- Sister’s of Perpetual Indulgence are SAINTS for their efforts to keep it alive

Suggestions:
- Keep it - It’s a neighborhood and gay institution, if we cancel, bad guys win
- Enforce an earlier shut down, i.e. 8pm
- Move the footprint inward - make it a smaller event
- More police presence (although their efforts were lauded!)
- Music matters - what do you get when you play gangsta rap?
- Emulate best practices of successful fairs, aka the Castro Street Fair

Global Village stage organizer Joshua Smith

The party continues?
Most people at the meeting seemed to agree that the city needs to significantly step up its support, both financially and in terms of safety resources, to help make the event a success. Sister moderators mentioned that the event is not currently run as an official city event, so the group has not applied for the grants from the city that groups like SF Pride usually receive.

Last night’s community discussion was an opportunity for the Sisters, Supervisor Wiener, and the SFPD to get feedback and ideas for how to proceed with the future of Pink Saturday. Sister Selma Soul said that a decision on the issue would be made by November at the latest.

Although no firm decisions were made at last night’s event, there was consensus around retaining the Pink Saturday celebration by ending it earlier, securing it better, and changing the programming to make the Castro a safe space for people of all ages and backgrounds to come and celebrate Pride.

Sister Mae Joy Be With You offered the final invocation for the night, asking attendees to think three, five, even 25 years into the future with regards to Pink Saturday, and reminding people to never underestimate the power of small incremental changes.

Hopefully, whatever changes the Sisters and City officials make regarding the future of Pink Saturday, they will reflect the optimism of Sister Mae Joy’s words.
Extensive survey work will be completed to get a better understanding of the district’s retail environment and the perceptions of its customers, and will occur in several forms. Surveys will target residents, local and tourist customers, as well as merchants.

The Retail Strategy project will be divided into two phases — the first, largely devoted to information gathering and the second to strategic planning. A consultant team lead by Seifel Consulting has been hired to lead the efforts. A Technical Advisory Group (TAG) comprised of local merchants, neighborhood organizations and business stakeholders will continue to guide the process. By doing so, the Retail Strategy work-team acknowledges previous efforts and incorporates important, local knowledge.

A public presentation will share findings of the Retail Strategy Project in June 2015.

We will be looking for volunteers to help us with surveying and other data collection strategies. If you are interested in helping Castro & Upper Market become a thriving and bustling commercial corridor, please visit www.CastroRetail.com and sign up to stay informed. The website also contains important project information such as TAG membership and a map of the project study area.

For project inquiries please email info@castroretail.com.
EVNA SEPTEMBER MEETING HUMAN INTEREST PRESENTATION: JESSICA JIRSA

Jessica Joy Jirsa is an urban plein air artist who has been painting in oils for over 20 years, inspired by the beauty of the world around her. In early 2010 she moved to the Bay Area from South Dakota so she could paint outside in all seasons. She started painting right outside the door of her sister's home at Noe and Hancock where she originally resided. Jessica and her easel continue to radiate out from that area as she captures the new and old of the Castro while watching her nephews grow from being babies to boys. Family, rainbows, sunshine and great people with immense love and pride for their neighborhood provide a never-ending source of inspiration in the Eureka Valley. Jirsa’s wild brush strokes and vibrant colors capture the energy of the streets and make for paintings that jump off walls.

You can find permanent pieces of Jirsa’s work on display at Harvey’s and Orphan Andy’s. Her work will be at City Art Collective Oct 1st-Nov 1st, 2014 and Dec 3rd-Feb 1st, 2015, at 828 Valencia, SF. Oakland and East Bay works will be at the Uptown Nightclub Oct. 1st- Dec. 3rd, 2014, 1928 Telegraph Ave, Oakland. See Jirsa’s full collection and a map of where each was created at www.jjjirsa.com.
CASTRO HOODIES - STORIES FROM HOODLINE

As you may have heard, the Castro Biscuit has moved over to Hoodline - San Francisco Neighborhood news. Biscuit founder Roy McKenzie is still on the beat for Castro news, but now you’ll find him at http://hoodline.com.

AFTER 30 YEARS, ESCAPE FROM NEW YORK PIZZA BIDS ADIEU TO CASTRO
September 13, 2014, By Roy McKenzie

Next week, Escape from New York Pizza (508 Castro St) will close up shop in the Castro. The restaurant shared the news via a note in its window, which bid the Castro a fond, yet sorrowful farewell after nearly 30 years of serving Castro revelers and pizza lovers. “Regrettably we have been forced to sell our Castro store,” it reads.

We went inside and spoke with Trixie, one of the pizza shop’s employees. When asked if the closure was related to a rent increase, as so many others are, Trixie said that was not the case, though rent was high. She explained that because of expenses related to upgrading old ovens, repairing the interior, and providing employees with healthcare benefits under the Affordable Healthcare Act Employer Mandate starting in 2015, the chain could no longer afford to stay in the Castro.

The chain’s other five locations will remain open, and the note in the window states that Escape From New York lovers can still get delivery from their Haight & Mission shops.

Next up

Even as Escape From New York leaves, another business is already planned to take its place. The next business has filed a DBA (doing business as) with the Office of Treasurer-Tax Collector for the restaurant name “Oz.” According to Trixie, Oz will also be a pizza shop. The new owners have also posted a note in the back inviting current employees to stay on for the next incarnation.

For now, the awning treatment has been taken down and the decor inside the restaurant removed. Escape From New York’s last day was September 17th.

GOODBYE, BANDIDOS; HELLO, HECHO
Thu. September 11, 2014, By Ray McKenzie

As we reported earlier in the week, the controversy surrounding the name of the Castro’s newest restaurant, the Mexican spot Bandidos, hit a fever pitch with activists protesting that the term was offensive and requesting that the new spot change its name.

This afternoon, the restaurant announced on their Facebook page that they would indeed be changing the name, with the former Bandidos now to be called “Hecho,” which is Spanish for “made.”

The restaurant’s statement on Facebook reads thusly:

“As small business owners, we have been saddened that unknowingly the name of the restaurant we recently opened has offended people. This was never our intention and we feel horribly about it, so we have decided to change the name. We hope that the focus of the restaurant can be on our creative food, delicious drinks and fun atmosphere where everyone feels welcome, and not what is written above our door. We have always wanted to celebrate Mexican culture, food and drinks, and never would want anyone to feel like they were being discriminated.

Therefore, as of today, the wonderful space at 2200 Market Street will be known as HECHO! The new name is Spanish for “made” as in Hecho en Mexico or Hecho en SF. We take this to mean different things for different people, no matter where they are from. Since our menu is inspired by Mexican cuisine but has a San Francisco twist to it, we believe that this is an appropriate name that means we are not just one specific style, we are “made” everywhere.”

And with that, it appears the Castro’s latest restaurant drama has come to a close.

CASTRO STREETScape TO Miss DeADline
Fri. September 5, 2014, By Roy McKenzie

The Bay Area Reporter’s Matthew Bajko reported back from the Castro Merchants meeting yesterday that due to manufacturer delays in some parts needed to complete the streetscape improvement project by the Castro Street Fair, the project completion date will be delayed until mid-October.

Not to worry, however, the bulk of the project including the sidewalks, the street repaving, the rainbow crosswalks, the tree planting, and the historical etchings in the sidewalks will be completed by the street fair, but the steel support structures for the poles, which were supposed to be delivered August 30th won’t come till late September.

The Ghilotti Brothers, the crew working on the project, will also be starting improvements to Jane Warner Plaza post-Castro Street Fair. Nick Perry, Department of Public Works project manager during the community planning phase, listed improvements to the plaza that are slated to include:

- expanded sidewalk area to shorten crossings along Market Street
- reconfigured pedestrian crossings within plaza
- expanded sidewalk adjacent to existing planters near Market St.
- new colored asphalt for Jane Warner Plaza
- ADA compliant warning pavers at key spots near F-Line tracks

Additional improvement will be replacing the temporary police barriers at the east end of the plaza with a new decorative metal gate that matches the art deco design of the Castro Theatre marque.
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Eureka Valley Real Estate Report

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Contact us and we can provide you with a more detailed report, including property specifics.

The Swann Group SF
Rachel 415.225.7743
or David 415.637.6825
Info@TheSwannGroupSF.com
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The Evolution of Castro Street
Photos courtesy SFMTA Photography Department & Archive and Alan Beach-Nelson (9/19/2014)
As work continues on the Castro Streetscape improvement project, we bring you these historic and current photos for a little then and now. We’ll do a bigger version after the project is complete.

Castro Street looking South from 400 Castro, 1911 & 2014
18th & Castro, 1912 & 2014.

18th & Castro, 1912 & 2014. In the 1912 photo you can see the “grand” arch of the former Castro Theatre, where Clift’s is now, and the newly installed Rainbow Honor Walk plaque today.
EUREKA!
Published six times a year by Castro/EVNA
2014 EVNA Public Meetings
Fourth Wednesday of odd numbered months, except Nov. from 7 - 8:30PM, 501 Castro St.: Jan. 22, Mar. 26, May 28, Jul. 23, Sep. 24 & Nov. 11

2014 Board
Email the entire board: board@evna.org

President: Alan Beach-Nelson, Castro St.
Secretary: Rob Cox, Hartford St.
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Join EVNA online at http://www.evna.org or via check payable to EVNA, PO Box 14137, San Francisco, CA 94114

Get Involved Being Informed
President’s Column, Alan Beach-Nelson

Join us at Castro/EVNA’s Bimonthly Public Meeting, September 24, featuring: Short-Term Rental legislation from David Chiu; A Panel on Quality of Life crime issues, information on Castro Cares and the art of Jessica Jirsa.

Hot Topics
• Please Be Sure to Shop in the Castro During Construction! Due to the Castro Improvement Project, many businesses are experiencing as much as a 50% reduction in business. While there is sure to be an uptick in business after completion, we are in the home stretch, but they still need our business!

• Castro Street Fair - Call for Volunteers! Castro Street Fair, Sunday, October 5 - EVNA is again a beneficiary of the Castro Street Fair. This is one of our largest sources of funding and helps us keep our memberships fees low. Last year our volunteers earned a rate of nearly $30 per hour for EVNA! If you are interested in volunteering for two hours or more, please contact Social Committee Chair, Mark McHale, Mark.McHale@EVNA.org

• The Neighborhood Empowerment Network’s NEN Awards are coming back to City Hall for their 7th year! The NEN Awards are dedicated to elevating and celebrating the tremendous work that residents and organizations do every day to make our City an amazing and innovative place to live. As is the tradition with the awards, they need your help to find this year’s winners! Visit http://empowersf.org/akenawards/ for categories and to nominate. The ceremony will be held in the rotunda of City Hall in January 2015. Get your nominations in today!

• Philz Coffee at 4023 18th Street is hoping to move to a bigger space in the current location of Supervisor David Chiu’s California Assembly campaign headquarters at 549 Castro Street. Philz Coffee project coordinators have gone to several neighborhood organizations, including Castro Merchants, Corbett Heights Neighbors group and EVNA’s Planning and Land Use Committee (PLUC), to explain their planned move from the 18th Street location to Castro Street. Based on initial feedback from the PLUC, despite this being a Formula Retail Use, the Committee and the EVNA Board is likely to support the project.

• Soulcycle proposes a new fitness center at 400 Castro Street. Soulcycle studios offer a stationary bicycle rhythm based group cycling exercise experience lasting approximately 45-minutes. Soulcycle typically operate 6AM - 10PM weekdays, 7 - 7 weekends. Representatives from Soulcycle have presented to EVNA’s Planning and Land Use Committee (PLUC), to explain their planned move from the 18th Street location to Castro Street. Based on initial feedback from the PLUC, despite this being a Formula Retail Use, the Committee and the EVNA Board is likely to support the project.

• Swedish American Hall Project Update: The elevator has been installed, approved by the state and is undergoing final tests! The restaurant, bar and events spaces are mid build-out and we hope to open the first of the spaces by late fall. You may have noticed a posted sign for our entertainment permit, we had to re-apply as a condition of transferring ownership from the previous tenants. The hearing will be 10/21 at 5:30pm at City Hall!

• LGBTQ Connect, Friday, October 17th 10am-3:00pm, SF LGBT Community Center, 1800 Market. Sponsored by Project Homeless Connect, AIDS Housing Alliance, Blue Shield and SF LGBT Community Center. We hope to create a one-day, multiple-services event for members of the LGBTQ Community who lack stable housing or face barriers that either have or could lead to homelessness. While LGBTQ focused, no one will be denied access to services.

• Volunteers wanted to Break Down Jane Warner Plaza (JWP) Furniture: The Castro CBD is looking for volunteers to take over the daily breakdown of the red tables & chairs at JWP. Nearby Orphan Andy’s and The Café have been handling the task nightly for several years, and the CBD wants to find other community groups interested in shouldering the task. The idea is to get a rotation of volunteers involved so no one group gets burnt out. If interested, contact Andrea Aiello at 415/500-1181 or execdirector@castrocbd.org.