Jane Warner Plaza Pro and Con

Jane Warner Plaza (JWP) has been in place for well over five years. Ever since it’s pilot year it has been a source of praise and a source of derision. Some love it. Some hate it. Is it: A Neighborhood Square or Neighborhood Crime Magnet? A failed experiment, or worth further investment? Two members of the community present their case for Jane Warner Plaza and two present their case for dismantling it.

**PRO Jane Warner Plaza:**

**I SUPPORT JWP!**

*By Jean-Pierre Ciudad, Hartford Street*

My friend and neighbor, Rob, asked me to write an article about why I am opposed to returning Jane Warner plaza to traffic. This idea is being considered because the plaza slowly became a magnet for people who slept or passed out there, yelled at people, and did all kinds of unsavory things. Although I am the first one to be unhappy about this development, I also do not believe that returning the plaza to its old state will do anything to improve our neighborhood, nor will it get rid of the people loitering there.

See PRO JWP on page 12

**CON Jane Warner Plaza:**

**Why JWP must go**

*By Shelab Barr*

The Castro has been my home since 1983. I moved here because I fell in love with the area, and I treasured the community. I knew my neighbors, they knew me, and we all looked out for each other. It was safe and clean and fun, and if I wanted to leave my apartment at 2:00 am I knew I’d be fine doing so. But The Castro isn’t that anymore. It still has some of the community feel, but it is no longer safe by a long shot, and it’s certainly not clean. Much of the problem stems from Jane Warner Plaza, and since the 28 unit apartment building I live in and manage is
Something happened that was to change our direction into one of the biggest civic enterprises ever attempted by a group of amateurs. It all began when I received a telephone call from Tom Peryham, agricultural commissioner of Marin County.

The pear growers in northern Marin County were in trouble. They could not sell their pears, because the canneries, under wartime pressure, were jammed and couldn't handle Marin County's famous Bartlett pears.

Pears in Marin County? Yes, there were 600 acres of choice Bartletts in what is now Novato, Ignacio, and up in the direction of Petaluma in Sonoma County.

For the benefit of the new generations coming on, this was 1943. Marin County, other than San Rafael, was a quiet, rural agricultural county. There was no highway traffic congestion or urban development. These headaches came later.

The pears were rotting on the ground. There were over 300 tons picked and boxed which could not be sold. Canneries were paying 4 cents a pound for choice pears, while pears in the retail markets in San Francisco were going from 17 to 22 cents a pound. We thought, why can't the consumer journey to the source and get the pears cut rate? This is just what we did.

Again, with the help of the news media, we publicized the problem and showed people how to get to the Novato area. They were assisted by posted roads with directions on how to get to the various orchards. The price was 4 cents a pound if you brought your own containers.

The response from San Franciscans and the Bay Area was so enthusiastic that the entire 300 tons of pears disappeared in one afternoon. This avalanche of customers encouraged the growers to pick the remaining 400 tons on the trees. As a result, San Francisco housewives saved their precious ‘Blue Points’ (rationing coupons), and the little farmers up in Novato thought the whole thing was pretty nice on the part of the city folks.

This little lesson on primitive economics started San Franciscans thinking. It was an age-old question. Who's getting all the money between the producer and consumer? They reasoned that something must be wrong with our system of food distribution since they paid such high prices in the city while, within a radius of 35 miles, the farmers couldn't give their crops away.

The Novato experiment was watched very closely by neighboring Sonoma County pear growers as well as those in Santa Clara County. Through the agricultural commissioners and farm advisors, I was besieged with requests for assistance. The growers there began to shout, “Hey, we, too, have lots of pears and Gravenstein apples. Help us.” Our problem was that being wartime, we were on gas rations. The Office of Price Administration (OPA) informed me that no extra gas would be allowed for this purpose. What were we going to do? How were we going to satisfy that pent-up desire on the part of consumers to get fresh fruit? It seemed that all our problems, as big as they were, were always solved in simple ways. What was the solution to this urgent situation where fruit growers were facing bankruptcy because there was no outlet for their fruit? Well, “If the consumer can’t go to the farmer, let the farmer come....
No less than the United Nations weighed in on the San Francisco Chronicle-led, five-day media initiative to bring the issue of homelessness to the forefront of discussion, and to encourage civil engagement. Leilani Farha, the United Nations Special Rapporteur, on adequate housing, underlined homelessness as “one of the most egregious violations” of the United Nations-recognized right to housing. While this series focused on homelessness, it also highlighted more generally the high cost of housing in San Francisco. While both issues have been part of San Francisco civic discourse for decades, this series gave them historical context and linked

unaffordable housing to the overall housing crisis in which San Francisco finds itself today.

As reported by Chris Roberts in his recent SF Weekly article, The Great Eliminator, unemployment in San Francisco currently stands at a near-record low of 3.1 percent, yet there are officially more people living on the street than at any other time over the past 10 years. Roberts links this to a divestment from federally-subsidized housing that began under Reagan, wherein federal spending on subsidized housing dropped from $26 billion to $8 billion. This resulted in homelessness going from a cyclical phenomenon to a permanent urban fixture. Roberts writes that while in 1976 President Gerald Ford asked Congress to fund 506,000 new low-income housing units, funding for new subsidies dipped below 100,000 units per year under Reagan. By the time President Bill Clinton signed the Welfare Reform Act in 1996, fewer than 9,000 units were funded. “If we had provided 500,000 additional low-income units every year since 1976, we would now have about 14 million families living in federally assisted low-income housing,” the National Low Income Housing Coalition wrote in 2002.

This shortfall exists despite demand, particularly in San Francisco. In early 2015, homeless families were given the opportunity to sign up for the chance at a public housing unit, the first time in six years the wait list for public housing in San Francisco was opened up. More than 10,000 families signed up for a chance at one of fewer than 200 units. With San Francisco affordable housing in short supply generally, low-income residents’ hold on housing is even more tenuous.

Of course there are other barriers to the development of affordable housing. In October 1998, as part of an in-depth...
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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.
Supervisor Scott Wiener’s Statement on Week of Violence

Posted on July 11, 2016

By Scott Wiener

“This has been a week of profound grief and heartbreaking loss. After the events of this week, Americans across our country are feeling a sense of helplessness, of uncertainty and of fear. We must reject the easy impulses of bitterness and rancor and embrace the difficult work—but the important work, the vital work—of finding a path forward together.”

-Attorney General Loretta Lynch

I commit to being part of the solution.

This week has been a rough one and a depressing one. Just when we were coming to terms with the massacre in Orlando and moving forward to address the hate crime violence plaguing our country. Just when we thought that maybe, just maybe, we were beginning to see a small amount of progress in the relationship between police and communities of color. Just a day after we saw deescalation training in practice, when police apprehended an armed standoff suspect on Market Street without shooting anyone. Then we saw—and I mean *saw*—the deeply disturbing and tragic video out of Louisiana. Then we saw the equally disturbing and tragic video out of Minnesota. Then we saw the disturbing and tragic events in Dallas. Then we saw other targeting of police officers in other cities. And, we continue to see the fear, anxiety, and anger that disturbing incidents like Louisiana and Minnesota trigger in communities of color.

Then we saw the toxicity. Tweets outrageously blaming #BlackLivesMatter for the murders of the officers in Dallas, even though the protesters in Dallas were absolutely peaceful and the police were facilitating that protest. Tweets saying that “real Americans” were going to rise up, as if people protesting police shootings weren’t really part of our society (proving once again why #BlackLivesMatter exists and is so important).

Attorney General Lynch is right. Now is the time for all of us to come together as a community to reduce violence in all its forms. To tear down the systems and deeply embedded attitudes perpetuating racism—systems and attitudes that have been with this country from the beginning and that continue to systematically work against people of color and minority communities. We have real work to do—work that has no easy answer—and the unfathomable tragedies of this week should motivate us to work harder, not to shut down and go into our corners.

As a white man, I have not experienced what it means to be a young black man walking down the street and getting “the look” wondering whether I’m a criminal, whether from a civilian or a police officer. I’ve never gotten that look, and I almost certainly never will.

As a white man, I have not experienced the fear of black parents who must warn their children to be calmly compliant with police officers at the risk of getting shot. These were not fears my parents had, and these are not fears I will be required to pass onto the next generation.

I have not experienced what black parents think or feel when their child walks out of their home and they wonder if today is the day their child will have a negative, or even deadly, encounter with a police officer.

Nor have I experienced what it means for police officers—the large majority of whom never shoot anyone—to put on their uniforms in the morning not knowing if they will come home at night. And, I haven’t experienced what it feels like for family members of officers watching their husband or wife or father or mother walk out the door and not knowing if they will come home.

Yet, the fact that I haven’t shared those experiences doesn’t excuse me from trying my very best and working very hard to understand them and then act on that understanding. As
review which lambasted the gentrification of San Francisco, the Bay Area Guardian implored its readers not to “oppose affordable housing developments in your neighborhood.” As reported by the Guardian, “Nonprofit housing developers report that after lack of federal subsidies, NIMBYism is the biggest obstacle to building affordable housing.” In a recent press release, San Francisco Planning and Urban Research Association (SPUR) concurs with this sentiment. “There are many causes of the Bay Area’s current housing crisis, but unfortunately chief among them is that, over the last few decades, our local land-use system has made it extremely difficult to add new housing. Proposals to build housing are met with years of delay and, often, outright disapproval.”

A New York Times article from June 1981 prophesied that San Francisco would “become a place only the elite can afford” due in great part to the high cost of housing. Even 35 years ago, San Francisco dwarfed other cities in terms of housing prices. The article attributed the high cost of housing to its “relative scarcity, since the number of housing units has not grown significantly in a decade.” Fast-forward to another New York Times article of July 3, 2016, How Anti-Growth Sentiment, Reflected in Zoning Laws, Thwarts Equality, which detailed how zoning has contributed to the lack of affordable housing across the country including, perhaps especially, in San Francisco.

To most people, zoning and land-use regulations might conjure up little more than images of late-night City Council meetings full of gadflies and minutiae. But these laws go a long way toward determining some fundamental aspects of life: what American neighborhoods look like, who gets to live where and what schools their children attend.

When zoning laws get out of hand, economists say, the damage to the American economy and society can be profound. Studies have shown that laws aimed at things like “maintaining neighborhood character” or limiting how many unrelated people can live together in the same house contribute to racial segregation and deeper class disparities. They also exacerbate inequality by restricting the housing supply in places where demand is greatest.

This brings me to the gist of my column this month. Although San Francisco has lamented the ever-increasing cost of housing for decades, solutions have mired in controversy and contention. Finally on July second, the Board of Supervisors by a unanimous vote of 11 - 0 passed legislation to allow developers to construct taller or denser buildings in exchange for more affordable housing units (see Hoodline article, page 11). A more promising path forward has recently been proposed by California Governor Brown.

In May, Governor Jerry Brown proposed streamlining the approvals process for multi-family housing developments that are built in urbanized areas and include affordable housing. If passed, this proposal would mean that eligible housing proposals across the state would be approved “by right,” meaning they would not be subject to case-by-case local approvals or review under the California Environmental Quality Act.

Under the governor’s proposal, eligible projects:

- Are multifamily housing developments surrounded by urban uses
- Have affordable housing components of 5 to 20 percent (depending on access to transit and the income levels targeted)
- Conform to local general plan and zoning standards
- Provide relocation assistance to displaced households

By limiting local discretion on mixed-income infill housing proposals that are compliant with existing zoning, this proposal could speed up the delivery of housing and cut the cost of development, making it feasible to provide projects with lower home prices and lower rents.

Under the governor’s proposal, cities would still have great control over land use. They would still develop their own zoning rules, but the zoning codes would actually matter.
There would be a predictable, transparent rule of law, rather than today’s system in which even projects that conform to zoning rules are routinely rejected. Under this proposal, there would still be significant process for public input and decision-making by elected officials. The process would simply take place when cities develop their general plans, area plans and zoning; rather than on a case-by-case basis.

In discussing Governor Brown’s legislation, some EVNA board members raised concerns that speeding up housing development would come at the cost of resident input. As expressed by Dan Carrigg, legislative director of the League of California Cities, those who are opposed to development near them, deserve to be heard. These concerns notwithstanding, the EVNA board voted to support Governor Brown’s proposed legislation.

The EVNA board believes that those who have concerns with development deserve to be heard. The board’s vote to support Governor Brown’s legislation is consistent with that belief. If this legislation passes, cities will only have to approve housing developments that fit within their zoning. The process will still allow for historic districts, affordable housing requirements or zoning that directly limits housing. This law would add integrity to the process and push our city to make decisions through a planning process rather than through project-by-project fights.

Research is increasingly showing that local growth controls and local discretion in the permitting process are significantly associated with rising residential segregation and inequality. As Jason Furman, President Obama’s Chairman of the Council of Economic Advisors, has argued, restrictive zoning impedes residential mobility which leads to increased levels of inequality: “While land use regulations sometimes serve reasonable and legitimate purposes, they can also give extranormal returns to entrenched interests at the expense of everyone else…[reducing these barriers] could make the economy more competitive by removing artificial barriers, thus improving both the distribution of income and the productive capacity of the economy.”

Our agenda for housing is to make it affordable to live here. No single policy tool can solve the severity of California’s housing crisis. Addressing the affordability crisis means investing in housing subsidies from local, state and federal sources. However, given limited resources, it is vital that we use existing public subsidies as effectively as possible. The Governor’s proposal will make affordable housing development less expensive and more efficient.

In tandem with funding for permanent affordable housing, increasing the overall housing supply is part of the solution to San Francisco’s affordability issues. The governor’s proposal is not a panacea, but it is a practical, modest step in the right direction.
Neighbors' Faves!
Neighbors share their favorite places in the ‘hood!

This issue’s Faves come from EVNA Board Member Gary McCoy (Castro St.)

Castro Country Club
4058 18th Street
The Castro Country Club has been my home away from home in the neighborhood for many years. It’s a great place to go for LGBT folks in recovery from a myriad of things – they have a large variety of 12-step meetings 7 days a week. They also serve Peet’s coffee, at probably some of the lowest prices for coffee in the neighborhood.

Castro Tarts
564 Castro Street
Castro Tarts has a large variety of items on their menu, and they are known in the neighborhood for their Banh Mi sandwiches (with Pate!!). I love the relaxed neighborhood atmosphere, and usually find myself eating breakfast here at least a couple times a week.

Most Holy Redeemer Church
100 Diamond Street
While I consider myself less religious and more spiritual, this is one of my favorite churches in the neighborhood. It’s all-inclusive. I’ve attended many 12-step meetings at Most Holy Redeemer, and many celebrations of life for friends that have passed. Most Holy Redeemer also goes above and beyond in serving our seniors and homeless in the neighborhood.

Handy Resources for Home
Call 311 FOR:
Report Litter and Graffiti, St. Cleaning, Abandoned Vehicles, St. Signs Missing/Damaged, Pot Holes

Police:
Non-Emergency: 553-0123
Report nuisance and non-urgent issues. Always ask for a CAD #.
Mission Station: 558-5400
Captain Dan Perea’s email: daniel.perea@sfgov.org

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

District. 8 Supervisor Scott Wiener: 554-6968, Scott.Wiener@sfgov.org
to town.” This is how the San Francisco Farmers’ Market was born.

Joe Sanchetti was up earlier than usual on the morning of August 12, 1943. He had a bumper crop of pears on his trees and quite a few had dropped to the ground. There was no market for his high-quality Sonoma County pears. While the fruit-starved people in San Francisco were paying 22 cents a pound for pears, Joe was lucky to get 4 cents a pound; that is, if there were any buyers. He was too far removed from the consumer. Joe and many other fruit growers in Sonoma, Napa, and Santa Clara Counties heard that farmers were welcomed in San Francisco and could sell their crops directly to the public. There was no middle man, no commission to be paid, no consignment sales; just farmer to consumer and pure, hard cash.

The event was highly publicized in the San Francisco news media. My little group of civic-minded citizens negotiated for a vacant lot owned by Gantner, Felder and Kenny, who happened to be morticians. With the help of some of our city officials and the generosity of the property owner, we were able to obtain the full use of the one-acre lot on Market and Duboce Streets in the heart of the city at no cost to us. The morticians even took out the necessary insurance coverage.

The farmers came in on the first day. There were only six truckloads, but they sold out in less than two hours. A box or lug weighing 25 pounds sold for a dollar as most of the farmers had from 40 to 100 lugs on their trucks.

We never realized that we would have the immediate opposition of the Wholesale Produce Merchants and the Retail Grocers Association, but we did. Joe Sanchetti, who drove in the first truck, followed by Paul Mancini from Santa Rosa were the first two who dared to oppose the entrenched merchants who did everything possible to stop this ‘newborn infant’ the Farmers’ Market, from taking hold.

Thursday was a trickle of six trucks and Friday’s total was only eight, but on Saturday, all hell broke loose. They came from the north, the east, and the south. First it was fruit and then vegetables. No one really realized the plight of the farmers. They were desperate.

Who ever thought that this six-pronged spearhead would prick the monopoly of the Washington Street Wholesale Produce Commission district? Although fully anesthetized by the morphia of profits, the commission merchants scarcely noticed the first gentle insertion of the economic lance; that is, not until the first Saturday when over 135 farmers sold their fresh-picked produce to an all-day crowd of more than 50,000 people. They came on foot, in cars, and by public transportation.
Initial ‘Fix-It’ Efforts To Focus On Eureka Valley/ Harvey Milk Library
By Shane Downing, 7/15/2016

Asmaa Donahue lives just a couple of doors down from the Eureka Valley/ Harvey Milk Library. Over the past year, she says she’s seen some distinct changes in the area surrounding the library, including an increase in public drug use, waste accumulation, and temporary encampments. “We’ve noticed a parallel between those groups congregating there and an increase in property crime in our neighborhood,” said Donahue.

According to Donahue, she has used 311 numerous times to report individuals sleeping on the sidewalk or to call attention to something that has been seemingly vandalized. “Most of my calls have been looking for services for people,” said Donahue. “That is the reality on my block. On any given day you can come through and find somebody who is not able to really make decisions for themselves or take care of themselves, or who may be a danger to themselves or others. It seems like the city should be able to respond to those very human needs.”

The city is attempting to respond to neighbors’ concerns. In May, Mayor Lee created a new organization, Fix-It Team SF, which is intended to address quality-of-life concerns across San Francisco. Fix-It director Sandra Zuniga hosted a community meeting on June 15th that was intended to give a forum for residents to voice their concerns, as well as identify specific locations for those concerns. Two weeks later, Zuniga led her team of city officials on a two-hour walk through the neighborhood, again with the hopes of identifying quality-of-life concerns along the Castro’s streets.

Now, armed with extensive 311 data, first-hand observations, and plenty of anecdotal evidence, Zuniga is preparing to focus her team’s efforts on the Eureka Valley/Harvey Milk Library at 16th and Pond. She’ll be leading a community cleanup event tomorrow (Saturday, July 16th, from 9am-12pm). Her plans are to, with the help of volunteers, clear an overgrown pathway located at the backside of the library.

In addition to tomorrow’s cleanup, the ficus tree stumps along Pond Street were removed this past week and will be cemented over. The trees were brought down in an attempt to increase visibility in that area, and to widen sidewalk access. Zuniga has also requested a light to be placed directly across from the library on 16th Street.

For Zuniga, focusing her team’s initial efforts around the library made sense. “During our walk, we noticed the library can use some attention. Our libraries are treasured neighborhood resources and should be welcoming for everyone,” said Zuniga. “We know both through 311 street cleaning requests, public comment, and our own observations that the library entrance is dark and not very welcoming or pleasant. We want to change that.”

According to Zuniga, in July, Public Works is focusing on District 8 as part of the Community Clean Team Cleaning and Greening Program. She asked her partners at Public Works if the agency would provide assistance if she helped to lead a cleanup of the library. Public Works agreed, and Zuniga got a thumbs up from Roberto Lombardi, the library’s director of facilities, who said that if her team spruced up the area—with lighting, landscaping, and signage—the library would agree to provide ongoing maintenance.

Mark Silva has lived on Pond Street since 1988. He would like to see the city do more than what he described as “soft solutions,” such as lighting and signage. He wants the city, including Zuniga’s Fix-It team, to put forward and implement more concrete solutions.

Hoodies continues next page
“When I say hard solutions, I mean put a fence up around the library,” said Silva. In addition to fencing, Silva suggested something similar to pigeon spikes to be placed around the library to discourage people from sitting and lingering. “We don’t want to criminalize homelessness,” explained Silva, “but the behavior that we are dealing with is bad street behavior and crime.”

Silva shared the example of the nearby Dimensions Queer Youth Clinic, which, according to him, used to be “a magnet for homeless people to sleep at night.” According to the Pond Street resident, it wasn’t until a fence was placed around the perimeter of the clinic that the problem was solved.

Though he thinks that Fix-It’s “soft solutions”—including power washing the area at 5:30am every morning—are steps in the right direction, Silva would also like the city to explore its rationale for having a library parking lot. “I don’t understand why the city has to provide free parking in the neighborhood at night when the library is closed,” said Silva. “People congregate there; they go there to do drugs. It’s one thing to say ‘we’re going to provide free parking for the neighborhood,’ but the neighbors who live on that street actually pay for it with the behavior that takes place in our block.”

Petey Barma, a public school teacher, has lived on Pond Street for nearly 13 years. According to her, what’s happening around the library today is reminiscent of the first dotcom bust. One major difference, she said, is that now, the library offers free Wi-Fi access. “It has Wi-Fi,” said Barma, “so people are drawn to it. It presents like a park. Not just the library inside, but how they’ve structured the architecture outside. It looks like a park, so of course people are gonna want to go there and sit.”

“We’re not treating this space like it’s a public space that is meant to be used,” said Barma, who warned that if the city deters some people, it will deter everybody from using the public space around the library. When asked what she would like to see done to improve the area around the library, Barma said that she is all for public bathrooms, posting rules, and garbage cans. “It sounds simplistic, but there are no garbage cans. This is a place that presents like a park and yet there are no garbage cans,” said Barma. “Rules should be posted, because then you have a talking point. ‘Here are the rules and expectations for this public space.’”

In the short term, Zuniga said that additional signage will be posted around the library. “The library is coordinating the appropriate language for the signage with the city attorney,” Zuniga said. “The signs will probably be different than the ‘no trespassing’ signs.”

Given that her priority area is defined as 18th to Market, from Castro to Church, when asked about what she plans to tackle in the neighborhood after the library, Zuniga said “plazas, gathering spaces, and parking lots are being reviewed for quick fixes to help improve safety and cleanliness.”

In addition to the Castro, the Fix-It team is also focusing on the UN Plaza/Civic Center and Market Street areas. In August, Zuniga’s team will start working with the Inner Sunset neighbors on their concerns.

**SUPERVISORS PASS BONUS PLAN FOR 100% AFFORDABLE HOUSING; IN-LAW LEGISLATION ON NEXT WEEK’S AGENDA**

*By Walter Thompson, 7/13/2016*

The Board of Supervisors voted 11-0 yesterday to pass the portion of the Affordable Housing Bonus Plan that rewards private developers who build housing projects that are 100 percent affordable with increased height limits.

The vote follows a contentious debate last month, in which supervisors voted 6-5 to put off any decision. At the time, Sups. Aaron Peskin and Eric Mar were promoting “Density Done Right,” a rival plan that would have made density bonuses available only for permanently 100-percent affordable projects.

In response, Sup. Katy Tang, the AHBP’s sponsor, split her proposed bonus plan for developers into two parts. One section, which has been set aside for now, would give builders who set aside 30 percent of new units for low- and middle-income residents the right to build two extra stories. The other, passed yesterday, allows developers who create 100 percent affordable projects to go up three extra stories.

According to a statement from Tang’s office, yesterday’s vote impacts seven 100 percent affordable projects that are already under consideration. Without local density bonuses, these projects would have created 639 permanently affordable units. Now that each of them can add three extra stories, 203 more units will be able to be created, raising the total to 842.

“I’m glad that my colleagues realize the full consequences of not supporting the production of affordable housing units during this housing crisis,” said Tang, who added that the other portion of the AHBP legislation will move forward in a few months, after SF Planning completes a feasibility analysis. During the session, Tang thanked Peskin for his help improving the legislation.

“I just want to acknowledge that it has been a long and twisty road to get here, but I think we have made it better and it will be a useful tool,” said Peskin, who congratulated Tang “on her good work.”

After yesterday’s vote, Tang also withdrew a proposed ballot measure that would have put the mixed-income section of AHBP before city voters as a ballot proposition.

“I hope they will continue to support our efforts in the fall,” said Tang. “The housing challenges we face cannot be politicized—let’s take real action to build more housing now, and not less, later.”

The next housing issue to be taken up by the Board of Supervisors will be
I moved to Hartford Street in 1997. For many years, cars were zooming down Market Street straight onto 17th, in between Twin Peaks and the Chevron station. Similarly, in the other direction, 17th Street was a simple and quicker way to get on Market towards downtown. To get there (or from there) many drivers raced up and down Hartford Street. So much so that our neighborhood talked about getting speed bumps installed. That didn’t happen. Once the plaza was closed to passing cars, traffic was significantly reduced, making our street a quieter and safer place. The only zooming cars now are taxis at night, trying to get to Castro and 18th quickly to get a fare.

A few years ago, Castro Street went through a long overdue renovation. This was the best thing that happened to our neighborhood since I moved in. The wide pedestrian-friendly sidewalks came at a cost though. Castro Street is now narrower, turning traffic is often blocked by pedestrians crossing 18th or Market, resulting in a back-up that brings congestion to the 400 and 500 blocks of Castro. With the plaza gone, Hartford would become an easy alternative to Castro for through traffic. Crossing 17th and Market will become more dangerous since drivers will be practically making a U-turn. F-line users will also be at risk since their stop is almost in the middle of 17th Street.

It is not clear to me that restoring traffic on Jane Warner Plaza will prevent people from sleeping or loitering there. The same people are on 18th and Castro, 16th and Market, and along 13th Street, all places with a lot of traffic. I don’t think cars are a deterrent.

“Rome was not built in a day.”

Jane Warner Plaza is a victim of a larger issue that has been affecting many other neighborhoods in the city. That is the problem that needs to be resolved, and where our efforts should go. I have no solution to offer. More shelters, more police, more social services, Castro Cares, a combination of all of them? All I know is that returning the plaza to cars is going to do nothing to solve the problem, and will definitely kill the dream of ever having a welcoming plaza that can be enjoyed by all.

The CBD studied similar public spaces that have been successful in San Francisco, including Mechanics Monument Plaza downtown, and across the nation, such as Flatiron Plaza in Manhattan. The CBD learned that, in many cases, successful plazas are actively managed to encourage public use. So the CBD applied for a series of grants to bring that same level of attentiveness to The Castro.

Activities are also part of the plan. Events and performances are scheduled for the plaza for every weekend through October, including the Klipptones, Sundance Saloon, and the Trolley Dances. The plaza will also host the newest Pop Up Art Fair: the Castro Bazaar, featuring art by local artists, July 20th and August 17th from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. A complete schedule of the Live! In the Castro events can be found at [http://castrocbd.org/live-in-the-castro-events/](http://castrocbd.org/live-in-the-castro-events/)

Other changes and improvements in the works include an LED lighting installation to beautify the plaza with increased illumination. The installation, called The Seed by Aphidoidea, was selected through a competitive public process, in consultation the MTA, DPW and PUC, plus input from local experts in LED lighting. The installation is intended to be temporary, lasting two years, and could be installed next spring.

Finally, the plaza pavement will be replaced. The original colored asphalt had installation problems and broke apart with pressure washing. Under the terms of the original neighborhood sidewalk improvement contract, new durable pavement will be installed this summer at no new cost to taxpayers.

Anyone interested in helping the Castro CBD activate Jane Warner Plaza can contact info@castrocbd.org or 415.500.1181.
CON JWP, continued from page 1

a stone’s throw from it, we get the 24/7 brunt of its issues. The Plaza has been a logistical problem from the outset, causing the area and the city to waste valuable resources trying to ‘improve’ and manage an inherently faulty and destructive alteration to a major hub.

The reason that the design was doomed to fail was the lack of practical planning, lack of resident and merchant input and need, and general pie-in-the-sky wishful thinking about what the plaza would be.

I found out about the final ‘community’ meeting for the project the day before. I was shocked that no one in my building had been notified and many of my neighbors were unaware of the plans to close a major through street and alter pedestrian and vehicular traffic. Any project like this that alters traffic, affects residents and merchants, changes the landscape of an area, requires notice to residents and merchants in the area. In this case the process for notification was anemic at best.

In hindsight our input would probably have prevented the project from moving forward, at least as it was presented. Why? Because there was no accommodation in the plans for emergency vehicles to access to the 17th Street corridor between Hartford and Castro. There was no accommodation for merchants to receive deliveries. There were no realistic plans to address how the traffic normally traveling west on 17th would be re-routed. There was no plan to protect the 2 private driveways on that corridor from misuse and obstruction. There was no response to the concern that the plaza would become an attraction to an ‘unsavory’ element, and overnighters. There was no thought given to what would happen to the dead space between the MUNI platform and the gas station.

The plaza, as it was presented, was supposed to be a community gathering place. A lovely sunny spot where performers could perform, diners could dine, and children of the neighborhood could learn to ride bikes and skate.

No kidding. Biking and skating among tables of diners up against multi-ton steel wheeled vehicles on slippery steel tracks. That’s what we were told, and that was the envisioned plan. The drawings made it look like a green space, with lots of plants and rainbows and sunshine.

But we what we got was what we predicted: an increase in an ‘unsavory’ populace, an increase in overnighters, an increase in street trash, an increase in petty and violent crime, an increase in public urination and defection. The neighborhood is no longer safe, and it smells and looks like a bowery.

The landscaping that was done has all been destroyed. The planters have all been broken leaving cement discs in the most awkward places. The chairs and tables that were supposed to be for the public have had to be removed and guarded. The gates preventing vehicles from passing through the plaza have also been destroyed, and it’s not uncommon to see drivers using the tracks as a road to Market Street, sometimes passing the F Car to do so.

Traffic through the Chevron station both from and to Market Street is impressive. The F line cars and busses frequently cause traffic to be blocked around the 17th Street and Hartford intersection. Pedestrians are walking randomly through the street, unaware that there’s no traffic pattern, and no pedestrian protection. Again, lack of planning.

What was considered one of the prettiest neighborhoods in the city is now blighted with cement walls blocking an empty slab of painted asphalt at one of its 2 major intersections, and the one that gets the most visual traffic.

The police will say that the safety, crime and sanitary issues are prevalent throughout the city, but just step outside our neighborhood and you can clearly see that’s not the case. I travel to almost every neighborhood in the city for my work, and I not only don’t see this in most commercial corridors, the people who live in those neighborhoods don’t have the problems we have. They also don’t have an unmonitored badly planned ‘parklet’.

There was a recent Castro Merchant’s meeting with members of the police force present to answer questions. The comments that were repeated by most merchants with locations here and in other parts of the city were that they don’t have these issues in other stores. Just here. Harassment of employees, theft, vandalism. Just here. And what we have that the other commercial corridors don’t is an unmonitored badly planned ‘parklet’.

So the questions we must ask ourselves are these:

- Does the plaza do what it was intended to?
- Is the neighborhood benefiting from Jane Warner Plaza?
- If it has an unintended purpose, is it beneficial?

If you answer No to even one of these we have to re-visit the plan for the Castro/Market/17th intersection. It is the gateway to our beloved neighborhood. The most visible and trafficked part of our community. How do we want it to represent us, our history and our values? Should the Plaza continue to represent us as is, or should we reopen the area to allow proper and safe pedestrian and vehicular traffic?

See CON JWP on page 14
Let’s not just throw more money at it, or pretend that we need to tackle the issue of homelessness first, or that power washing the street 4 times a year will fix anything. It’s really simple. Let the neighborhood residents and merchants finally have their say as to what should be done with what has become a neighborhood embarrassment. Let’s ask emergency services what they think of this plaza.

I propose we systematically poll residents, people with permanent addresses within a specific distance of the plaza, along with first responders. We never got due process in the creation of the plaza, but let us, the people who actually live with the Plaza, have a say in how we live.

**JANE WARNER PLAZA: ENOUGH IS ENOUGH**

*By Rob Cox*

Authors note: I am writing this as a neighbor living in the Castro and not as an EVNA Board member. This article is not the opinion or position of EVNA.

In case you haven’t heard, a person at Jane Warner Plaza waiting for the F Market train was recently stabbed in the neck. Thanks to the quick help of the staff of Orphan Andy’s the person survived.

But this leads me to begin this conversation yet again: is it time to shut down Jane Warner Plaza?

I’ve talked to many neighbors and Castro merchants about this. There is an overwhelming feeling that the “experiment” of his plaza has run its course.

When Bevan Dufty railroaded this project through without input from the immediate neighbors that would be directly impacted by the Plaza - 17th Street, Hartford Street, Collingwood Street and others - via the Market/Octavia plan he envisioned Jane Warner Plaza as a tranquil place where neighbors would congregate and enjoy the sunshine and ‘teach their kids to learn to ride a bike’ (really, with the F Market turnaround looming?).

Once the immediate neighbors learned of these plans, and before the plaza opened, we had several “emergency” meetings about the implementation of this plaza and how it would be managed. I’m trying my best to remember, but my recollection is that with one or two exceptions no one in the neighborhood saw a need for or wanted this plaza.

The meetings were held at my house. SFMTA, SFPD, Patrol Special, CBD and several of the candidates for District 8 Supervisor (including Scott) all attended. Then Supervisor Bevan Dufty would attend with his young daughter, but would quickly excuse himself and duck out with her to the back yard while the meetings took place, leaving other City officials to figure out how to solve the issues of traffic and implementation, and to try to accommodate the objections from the neighbors.

As a consequence there were no rules set for the use of this space, only a promise to “figure it out.” And, by the way, there would be a six-month “trial” followed by an evaluation. The “trial” was deemed a success, although again the immediate neighbors weren’t involved in the evaluation. The result from the start has been chaos.

I know that some people supported this Plaza. Some neighbors sent me messages about how Paris, Rome, London, Boston and New York had plazas and piazzas for citizens and tourists to enjoy. And I agree! Those cities have viable public space. The difference is that those cities grew up around those spaces; the spaces weren’t shoehorned into an existing major intersection with a trolley stop in the middle.

Jane Warner Plaza has become a place where the “street bound” gather in groups (I was going to say “gangs” but that term may carry too much baggage) and make the space, at a minimum uncomfortable and at times dangerous. People pouring out of the bars and clubs at 2:00 am are having loud arguments and even physical altercations and fights in the plaza.

How many neighbors have brought their kids up there to teach them to ride a bike? How many of you have
chosen to grab a newspaper and coffee and just sit and enjoy the plaza and the sunshine? I rarely even see people sitting at the cafe tables – which can’t be put out because of the activities that prevent even that small gesture of invitation.

To their credit CBD has tried to energize this space with a number of programs like music and dance and other events. But all of the other “down time” in this plaza is continually occupied with a bad element. At best this space is “activated” for maybe 100 hours per year. The rest of the 8,660 hours a year it is a nuisance.

And SFPD can do nothing about it. The cops are in an untenable position. Unless there is (witnessed) illegal activity SFPD is powerless to clear out the “street bound” that lie around solo and in groups making recreational use of the Plaza uncomfortable for others. Even if illegal activity is reported, by the time SFPD is able to respond it is often too late.

And because “Sit/Lie” does not apply in “parks” or “plazas” it is perfectly legal for this population to occupy the plaza.

The plaza is dirty, unsafe, mostly unused and a nuisance. It needs to be eliminated or reimagined. If it is to remain, then the neighbors, the people who live right here, must have a controlling voice in how it should be designed and used.

The bottom line is, if you have had enough, email Scott Wiener (scott.wiener@sfgov.org) and MUMC (info@castromerchants.com) and EVNA, (EVNA.org/Contact) and ask them to remove the Plaza, or to reimagine how this plaza should be utilized and maintained. It serves no real community benefit and is down right dangerous at times.

Editors Note: Both Con and Pro were offered the same amount of space, with Con utilizing the full allotment.

Supervisor Wiener from page 5 an elected official, I hold a public trust to represent *everyone*, including people whose experiences are radically different from my own. Breaking out of your own experience and listening to— and I mean truly listening to and learning from— people with different experiences is one of the most challenging aspects of public service. Yet, it is so critically important if democracy is to mean anything.

People overwhelmingly want peace and respect. Every community. Every background. Every profession. Every hashtag. Civilian, police, black, white, Latino, Asian, LGBT, non-LGBT, Christian, Jewish, Muslim, and just about everyone else on God’s beautiful earth. We can get there, and we must get there. Yet, we will only get there if we are all working together.

These challenges of deep, structural racism, the need for reform and the critical importance of law enforcement and the community coming together and working hand in glove to improve public safety aren’t going away. They can’t go away.

To the activists, organizers, and everyday San Franciscans demanding change: I hear you. I am learning. I am listening. I want change. At City Hall, we have begun to make progress with reform, including emphasizing deescalation and non-violent interventions, improving and strengthening civilian oversight and independent investigations, requiring body cameras, and emphasizing the importance of neighborhood beat cops— which I’m advocating in a ballot measure I introduced to require more neighborhood-level police— so that officers are as intertwined with the community as possible and thus better able to build trust.

We will continue until the pain, trauma, and fear in communities of color is fully healed. We will continue until all black parents trust in their hearts that officers will treat their sons and daughters the same way my white parents in New Jersey trusted officers to treat me: peacefully and with respect.

I commit to being part of the solution.
Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs), more commonly known as in-law apartments. In March, Peskin proposed citywide ADU legislation, based on a framework developed for Districts 3 and 8. At the end of May, Sups. Scott Wiener and Mark Farrell submitted a rival ADU proposal, in an act that was “far from civil or collegial,” Peskin argued in a letter to Board President London Breed.

On Monday, the Land Use and Transportation Committee, a three-member panel consisting of Wiener, Peskin and Sup. Malia Cohen, voted to pass Peskin’s ADU proposal on to the full board for a vote next Tuesday. Next Monday, the same committee will vote on the Wiener/Farrell ADU plan, which means both proposals could be on the Board’s agenda at Tuesday’s meeting.

The likely sale of Cafe Flore only adds to a long list of vacant storefronts or spaces in flux in the Castro. Nonetheless, Gerry told Eater that he’s hopeful a buyer will be found to keep it alive. “I don’t want to be the one to bury Cafe Flore … We’d love to see it continue, but we need someone else to come in and finish the job.”

The partners are willing to structure the deal in a variety of ways. Gerry said they’re even willing to sell a portion of the business to someone who could provide the necessary capital to make improvements, remaining with the cafe in some capacity.

Whoever purchases the business will have free reign to make any changes—including changing the name. “It could be something else entirely,” says Gerry.

Gerry and his business partners purchased Cafe Flore two years ago, and have done a lot of work to renovate the space since then. When they purchased the business, it was with the intention of saving it, but as Gerry explained in an interview with Eater SF, “we just don’t have the capital to take it all the way.”

This isn’t the first time Cafe Flore has flirted with closure. Back in 2007, the cafe threatened to close if it didn’t get permission to serve food 24 hours a day, have amplified entertainment or to serve alcohol until 2am.

In 2013, Cafe Flore’s off-site kitchen to serve alcohol until 2am.

By Steven Bracco, 7/13/2016

The Bay Area Reporter brought word yesterday that popular Castro brunch spot Cafe Flore was put on the market this week.

In business in 1973, the 954-square-foot restaurant, which offers plenty of outdoor seating, is listed for $450,000 (not including the liquor license). The purchase price is only for the business; the property itself will remain owned by JD Petras, who’s also one of the cafe’s business partners.

SF Gay History tells us that Cafe Flore was built in 1973 by the Finnila Family on what had once been the site of the pharmacy for the Finnila’s Finnish Baths. Cafe Flore was purchased by Mahmood and Ahmad Ghazi in 1977 and owned by them until JD Petras purchased the restaurant in 2002.

Cafe Flore’s current owners are hopeful that they’ll be able to find someone else to take over. General manager Stu Gerry, who’s one of three business partners who own the cafe, told the BAR that the owners have already shown the business to three prospective buyers.