
Report on Cupertino

The Cupertino Growth Forum occurred on Sept 15. Joe Simitian did a marvelous job moderating. Eric Parfrey, chair of Mother Lode chapter and Sierra Club CA Urban Growth Mgmt Committee, represented the Club perspective on growth, a non-profit developer who does green building was on the panel along with a transportation planner. They spoke to a packed house- about 60 people. Great questions, great speakers and a good audience. Subsequently, Shiloh Ballard reports she has heard many good comments about the forum. Shiloh must be given credit for doing most of the organizing for the forum. Stephanie Schaaf introduced the panel, and made closing comments on behalf of SLU. Stephanie was careful not to speak to the three initiatives on the Cupertino ballot that we oppose, as it was a "C3" event – but the audience asked questions about it.

Rod Brown, SLU's Cupertino lead on opposing Measures A,B,C, reports that Citizen Action Network made phone calls to oppose the measures and vote for our endorsed candidates.

Some measure proponents and their city council candidate have made false statements about the Club's motives, so Rod has written an LTE and Melissa has spoken to a Cupertino Courier reporter to refute their false assertions. Much work to do to rally supporters before the election.

Report on SLU September meeting"

The September Land Use Committee meeting included a notable turnout of SLU members as well as non-members to view a slide presentation by member Martin Dreiling at his Burlingame office. The subject was "Images of Urbanism" and attendees were treated to a wide range of images depicting both good and bad aspects of city making and urban habitats.

The presentation was intended to "decode" some myths about the apparent conflicts between protecting nature and building cities. Mr. Dreiling sought to present positive images of vibrant, diverse and increasingly sustainable ways of making desirable urban places as a means to reduce pressure for suburban sprawl.

As many environmentalists are realizing that improving human habitats can actually help save natural habitats, cities are becoming useful places to explore and understand. And, as new ideas and typologies emerge for building cities, many architects, planners and environmentalists are seeing a common goal of making cities attractive places so that more people stay near the center rather than spreading out over the diminishing landscape.

There were numerous questions and comments from those present and many expressed interest in seeing further presentations on the subject of cities as they relate to the larger environment.

Report on Bay Meadows

We had a great turnout at the final City Council hearing on Bay Meadows, including Rafael, Stephanie, Tim Frank/Sierra Club consultant, Kelly Moran, Gita Dev (SLU voting member), Bob Wilkinson (Club member), and allies from Housing Leadership Council, Greenbelt Alliance, Silicon Valley Leadership Group, League of Women Voters, and many others. Supporters outnumbered opponents by about 28-25. After 3 hours of public input, the Council put off the final decision until November 7th.

Bay Meadows Land Company increased their affordable housing component by donating 1 acre of land to the city to use for affordable housing as they see fit. If the city uses the density bonus law, that will allow for 63-67 units on the property, bringing the total % of affordable housing at Bay Meadows to 15%.

The Council will almost certainly approve the development on November 7th, giving the opposition 30 days to gather signatures for a referendum. The Sierra Club is taking part in a public opinion campaign in the hopes of staving off a referendum. A joint letter of support authored by the Sierra Club, Greenbelt Alliance, League of Women Voters, and Housing Leadership Council was sent to San Mateo residents, paid for by BMLC. TV ads are also being shown that include the Sierra Club name.

Housing Leadership Day/Open Space panel:

SLU worked with staff of Housing Leadership Council, San Mateo, to put together a "Protecting Open Space and Creating Affordable Homes" panel for HLC's annual fundraising event, Housing Leadership Day, held at the palatial Oracle HQ in Redwood Shores. The panel featured:

- Terry Trumbull (League of Conservation Voters, Santa Clara County)
- Our own Melissa!
- Kate O'Hara, Regional Issues Organizer for Greenbelt Alliance
- Zoë Kersteen-Tucker, VP, Committee for Green Foothills

This workshop was well-attended and the audience had many interesting questions.

Our website is up-to-date, including our San Mateo Daily Journal: Oct 5, 2005; Letter to Editor on our support for Bay Meadows development.