

LARA WEISIGER

From: Sarah Henry
Sent: Monday, July 23, 2018 8:42 PM
To: LARA WEISIGER
Subject: Fwd: 7/24 Council Meeting - Agenda Item 6-D - Letter from Rob Barics and Bethany Polentz
Attachments: 7_24 Agenda 6_D Letter From 3267 Fernside (1).pdf; ATT00001.htm

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: Rob Barics <rob.barics@gmail.com>
Date: July 23, 2018 at 6:19:37 PM PDT
To: Trish Spencer <tspencer@alamedaca.gov>, Malia Vella <mvella@alamedaca.gov>, Frank Matarrese <fmatarrese@alamedaca.gov>, "Marilyn Ezzy Ashcraft" <mezzyashcraft@alamedaca.gov>, Jim Oddie <joddie@alamedaca.gov>
Cc: Sarah Henry <shenry@alamedaca.gov>, Amy Wooldridge <awooldridge@alamedaca.gov>, PAUL ROLLERI <prolleri@alamedaca.gov>, "Bethany Polentz" <bethanypolentz@gmail.com>
Subject: 7/24 Council Meeting - Agenda Item 6-D - Letter from Rob Barics and Bethany Polentz

Mayor, Council Members, Chief, Staff,

I am attaching a letter that we've asked to be added to agenda item 6-D for Tuesdays council meeting. Sarah Henry has already requested it be added so this email is to notify you that while we cannot be in attendance that night we do want our voices heard. We also acknowledge that item 6-D is not discussing details of the forthcoming consultant report on the six walkways.

Thank you, as always, for all you do for our city.

Regards,
Rob Barics and Bethany Polentz
3267 Fernside

July 23, 2018

Dear Mayor Spencer, Council Members and City Staff,

Yet again, we're writing on the subject of the public pathways along Fernside and Eastshore on Alameda's East End. While we realize Amy Wooldridge's report to council (item 6-D) focuses on current improvements, such as new signs, cyclone fences and repaving, we felt now would also be an appropriate time, given the anticipation of the consultant report and upcoming public feedback on the project, to reiterate our position on various aspects of the project to date.

To start, we'd like to express our thanks to city staff and APD for working with us to help make the walkway adjacent to our home a safer place. Despite numerous city newspaper and social media blasts stating otherwise, we wish to remind people that we have never advocated closing any of these walkways, especially the one next to us (Fernside @ Monte Vista). To the contrary, we welcome the opportunity to help guide the development into something enriching for *all* Alamedans and visitors to our community by building a unique attraction that Alameda does not yet have.

Specifically, we are advocating for the development of a butterfly sanctuary to enhance the Fernside/Monte Vista walkway. We believe that responsible development, both fiscally and in terms of inclusiveness, should take priority above providing boating facilities for a small group (especially considering the nearby proximity of the Tidewater Boating Center across High Street bridge over the estuary which is at least partially funded by Alameda homeowners via Alameda County taxes). We have laid out a plan which achieves balance, in providing the community with an asset, and provides us with the security we are seeking.

For those unfamiliar with the details, these walkways have been neglected and undeveloped since their creation over a hundred years ago. Never has the adjacent walkway to our property been specifically zoned or categorized as a park. Instead, local bloggers planted that idea and allowed the public to believe it as fact (a quick call to the Alameda County Zoning Commission will surface the truth). Never has it been considered for development- public records instead shows that the bulk of the discourse through the decades has been strongly on the side of advocates for closure. Newspaper articles and advertisements suggest the original intent of the walkway was as a driveway for a neighborhood resident-only boating club, for residents of Waterside Terrace. The cement pillars, known as electroliers, around the Waterside Terrace neighborhood functioned as lamps but also as a communication device to allow residents to communicate with one another and signal law enforcement when so-called "undesirables" were in the neighborhood. These pathways were not designed as "for the good of the public" spaces- they were to be resident-only features. Thus, the forced narrative of these spaces as ideal "pocket parks" is laughable, given the actual history of the land. The proclamations made by various bloggers that the adjacent residents conspired to "steal public land" is wishful thinking at best and libelous to the core, and divisive to the community (especially as the "Save our land!" claims were supposedly to "help" Alamedans). The campaign to "open the parks" has been dishonest, initiated to serve a few (politicos and boating hobbyists) and has harmed our family- we have been verbally assaulted, threatened, and have been made to question our safety as residents. Thus, we ask the city to hear Ms. Wooldridge's report, review the consultant proposal, and push to hear community feedback WHILE considering homeowner concerns, and commit to RESOLVING the issue of these open spaces, once and for all.

We have created a web site to share our concerns as well as socialize our proposal which can be found here: <https://www.fernsideshorelineaccess.com/proposed-solution>

Thank you for your attention and consideration.

Regards,
Rob Barics & Bethany Polentz

Current Fernside/Monte Vista Walkway Status



Overall, since the Fernside public walkways have come into the Alameda limelight (roughly 2015), there have been some small improvements implemented.. The installation of the cyclone fence at the end of the walkway has been a necessary interim step in improving safety. It seems to have led to a reduction in the number of undesirable visitors. The number of community visitors has increased, more than likely due to the public visibility via city engagement and social media.

The pavement and sign issues are being discussed and it appears that the first step of improving signage is underway, if not completed. Public Works has been in touch and has been open to ideas about addressing the pavement issues short-term, yet in a way that considers long-term feasibility.

The image represents what we have requested of Public Works to repair dangerously cracked pavement and the walkway to the sea wall - it is not necessarily determined that this will be the solution, temporary or otherwise.

Special thanks to Alameda PD for being responsive and thus quick to apprehend another walkway masturbator. On 6/24/18, our

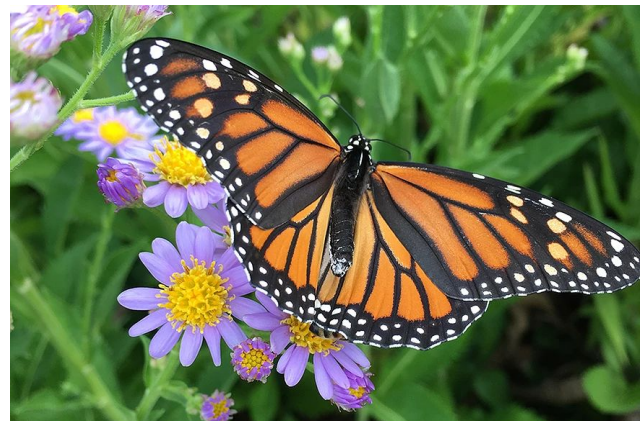
security camera recorded a male masturbating in the Fernside/Monte Vista walkway at the cyclone fence. Shortly after this recorded activity, the same man was spotted at one of the Eastshore public spaces, masturbating again. The man was arrested on outstanding warrants, and APD was diligent in following up with us on the situation and resolution.

We are thankful for the small improvements to date, and we appreciate APD's swift action. However, the repeated instances of public masturbation in the Fernside/Monte Vista path underscores the need for careful consideration of who will use these spaces, how they will use them, and how to adequately provide for the safety of the community AND residents around them. To counter a previous critic, public masturbation, aka Indecent Exposure, is ILLEGAL and is not on par or to be considered simply "inconvenient" or akin to a neighbor allowing their pet to defecate on a lawn (This was a specific false equivalency made, in writing, by a vocal critic, who has also levied and encouraged personal attacks on us and other residents).

"Butterfly Alley"

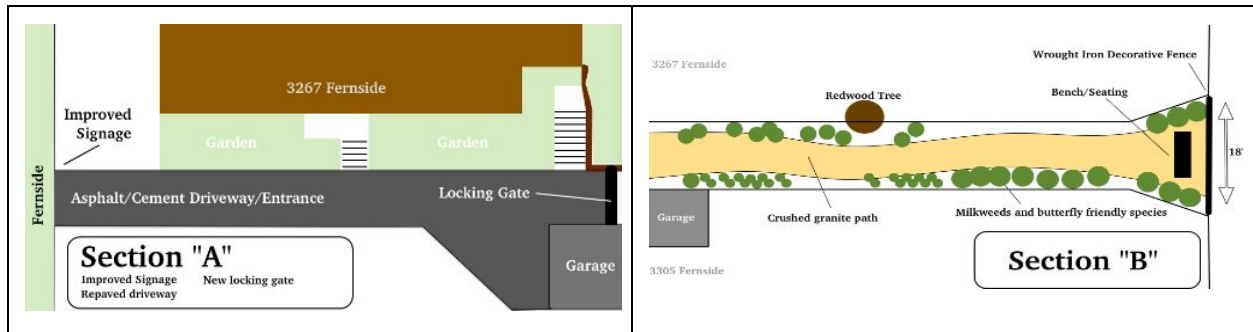
When we first moved in to our home, families would bushwhack through the overgrown unchecked brush to harvest caterpillars from the wild fennel (which still exists at the end of the walkway). Because of this fennel, we have Anise Swallowtails swarming the area from time to time. Unfortunately, due to security and liability concerns, the city put a cyclone fence barrier in place which has cut off access to the fennel.

Through this proposal, we would like to restore the area with butterflies as the focus of development and advocate for the city to develop and promote a butterfly sanctuary (similar to one in Pacific Grove, CA and one at Lake Merritt in Oakland, CA) at the Fernside/Monte Vista walkway.

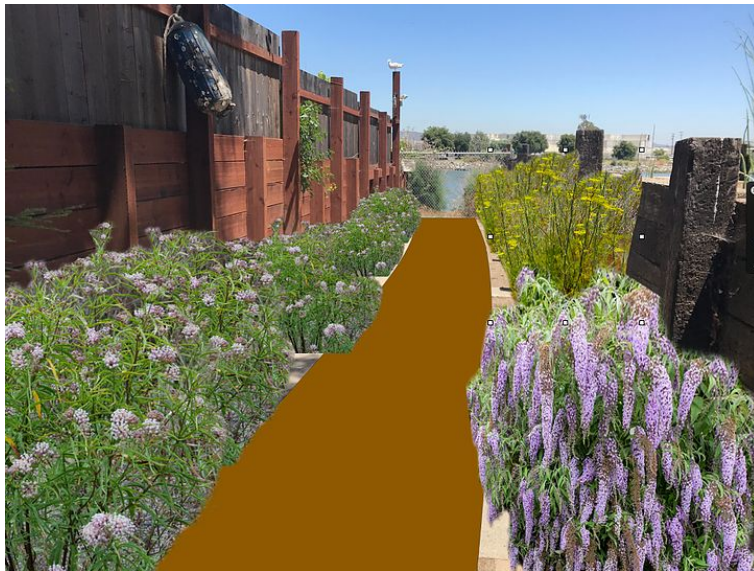


This would create in Alameda yet another unique feature that would hopefully attract hundreds, if not thousands, of butterflies, as well as butterfly enthusiasts, community members, and other visitors to Alameda. It would double as an engaging, walkable science exhibit for the local schools.

In this proposal, native and native friendly non-native plant varieties would densely line the crushed gravel walkway starting, at the garage and extend towards the very end of the walkway, at the sea wall. Milkweeds, butterfly bushes, pipevine growing on the wall and native fennels would be planted and encouraged to form thick vegetation providing a safe refuge for the butterflies and their caterpillars.



(The images above detail the general desired outcome of developing the Fernside/Monte Vista walkway)



Engagement with the community will provide volunteers to maintain and care for the walkway garden including harvesting the seedpods of the milkweeds, responsible pruning of the plants, educational outreach and more. Seeds and seedlings would be given away through a “little library” styled program located at the walkway, allowing for the propagation of plants throughout the community, for free. The public would be encouraged to harvest caterpillars to be safely raised and released at their homes. ARPD would be able

to develop programs centered around this walkway garden to allow the entire city to access and benefit.

Poster signs would be placed to aid in the identification and education of the various plant, butterfly and bird species/varieties located at the walkway. Much in the same way East Bay Regional Parks provide wildlife signs, these would be created with school kids in mind, allowing them to learn about the life cycle and importance of all of these various animals and plants that make our world a better place.



At the end of the walkway seating cubes would be provided to allow for contemplation amid the beauty of the plants, birds and pollinators. A beautiful wrought iron sea wall fence would be put in place to discourage tomfoolery around the 10+ drop at low tide from the sea wall. Flanking fences to the left and right of the walkway, flaring out to provide an 18' exposure to the estuary would be built and lined by native fennel or another appropriate plant variety to aid in the security of the adjacent home owners. Solar motion activated security lights will line the walkway to discourage nighttime usage. A beautiful wrought iron gate at the entrance to the butterfly sanctuary will lock at night, as is the case with many community gardens, to aid with security of not only the gardens but the adjacent property owners as well. The iron gate and fence could provide an additional opportunity for community involvement by petitioning Alameda's art commission to find a local artist to design, build and install the pieces.

Meyers Walkway

Alarmingly, those who slung accusations of NIMBYism towards those of us who live adjacent to the Fernside walkways, have long ignored that a sixth walkway exists at Eastshore and Meyers that is completely blocked to public access despite being listed in the city's general and pedestrain plans. We have brought this to the attention of the city and community numerous times and have forced it's consideration in the forthcoming consultant report on the six walkways. While we do not necessarily demand the walkway be opened and developed, we find it hard to swallow that these community activists have rallied around the Fernside walkways, erroneously and ignorantly labeling them as "pocket parks" while a truely stolen walkway exists in plain site. In fact, one of the most vocal "activists" lives just one door away, yet failed to acknowledge until pressed on the issue within the abhorrent construct of the Nextdoor echo chamber.

