



SUMMARY OF SEPTEMBER 21, 2006 PUBLIC MEETING RECREATION IN THE PRESIDIO OF SAN FRANCISCO

Thank you for participating in the September 21, 2006 meeting regarding recreation at the Presidio. It was encouraging to see so many people take time from their busy schedules – and once again, we are gratified to see how much the Presidio means to so many.

As promised, we are forwarding you this summary of the evening as well the next steps in planning for recreation in the Presidio including a **November 15th** workshop (see inside for details). We encourage you to stay involved and look forward to working with the public in making the Presidio an exceptional national park site. Please note that you have been added to a mailing list for recreation-related planning activities. If you prefer not to receive information in the future, please just let us know:

By phone: (415) 561-5414

By e-mail: planning@presidiotrust.gov

Or by US Mail: Presidio Trust Planning Department
34 Graham Street
P.O. Box 29052
San Francisco, CA 94129

NOTES

On Thursday, September 21, 2006 the Presidio Trust hosted a public meeting to discuss recreation at the Presidio. More than 250 people attended. The following is an overview of the materials presented by the Trust, public comments received, and the next steps the Trust proposes to further engage the public.

PRESIDIO TRUST PRESENTATION

Michael Boland, Presidio Trust Planning Director, presented background information related to recreational use in the Presidio and an overview of the relevant policies and plans. Among the issues addressed in the presentation were:

- The complex landscape of the Presidio – its historic, natural, recreational, and scenic values
- Background on the Presidio Trust, its jurisdiction and congressional mandates that distinguish it from the National Park Service
- Planning context
- The diversity of recreational activities currently occurring in the Presidio

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Nearly 50 people provided comments. The vast majority of those who spoke currently use one or more of the Presidio's existing fields on a regular basis, including representatives from recreation leagues, the YMCA, and officials from schools that lease Presidio fields. Members of the environmental community also spoke including those who actively volunteer their time restoring native plant communities in the Presidio and/or have been participating in planning efforts for the Tennessee Hollow watershed.

General Themes/Issues Raised

- There is a substantial shortage of athletic fields in San Francisco.
- The number of athletic fields in the park should be increased - only a small percentage of space at the Presidio is dedicated to active recreation.
- The Trust should consider replacing a field before it removes one.
- Athletic fields are not an appropriate use for a national park and should be removed.
- The restoration of the Tennessee Hollow creek system presents a rare opportunity which cannot be accomplished elsewhere.
- The Presidio has many valuable resources. Active recreation should be accorded "equal dignity" with other resource values.
- More should be done to educate people about what a watershed is and why Tennessee Hollow is important to the future of the park.
- Most commentators, even those representing diverse interests, appeared to agree that there was room to accommodate both natural areas and active recreation, and that both were important in maintaining the character and beauty of the Presidio. "Not a zero sum game."
- Several people commented on the unique experience of playing and/or watching their children play on a Presidio field; noting the beautiful scenery, frequent wildlife sightings, and associated trips to other areas in the park.
- Commentors with ties to the Army use of the Presidio noted that ballfields are part of the Presidio's military heritage.
- There were specific suggestions for new field locations and criticisms that Pop Hicks Field has not been returned to active play. Others stated a preference for Pop Hicks to be removed from the Tennessee Hollow watershed.

- A few people requested better communication from the Trust regarding future disposition of fields; pointing out that lack of information creates fear and misperceptions.

CONCLUSIONS

The Trust appreciates the candor and feedback received during the September 21 meeting, as well as the 100+ letters and e-mails received before and immediately following the meeting. The Trust identified a series of “next steps” which are summarized below. Some of the key issues expressed in your letters and e-mails were addressed, in part, in the “Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)” sheet which was distributed at the September 21st meeting. If you did not receive a copy of the FAQs, one can be found on our website at www.presidio.gov. These and other issues will be discussed further at the upcoming November workshop. In addition, clarification of an issue raised at the Sept 21st meeting is provided below.

Percentage of Land Dedicated to Recreation

Several people commented that there is so little space dedicated to active recreation in the Presidio. Within Area B (the land managed by the Presidio Trust) there is actually more than 165 acres of land dedicated exclusively to active recreation. This land represents about 20% of the existing open space areas managed by the Trust and includes the Presidio Golf Course, playing and practice fields, and various basketball and tennis courts. Most of the remaining open space in Area B supports a variety of other forms of recreation including miles of hiking and biking trails, picnic areas, a campground, scenic overlooks, playgrounds, stewardship areas, bird watching, and community gardens.

NEXT STEPS

- On Wednesday November 15, the Trust will host a workshop to explore the potential location, type and organization of athletic fields in the Presidio. Many of you volunteered to participate in future efforts and we encourage you to roll up your sleeves and join us for this interactive workshop. The objective of the evening is to allow the public to give the Trust input regarding preferences and suggestions. The meeting will be run as a workshop with small group “break out” sessions, and thus there will be limited seating capacity. We need to plan for your attendance. Please RSVP as soon as possible, *but no later than November 13* to (415) 561-5414 or planning@presidiotrust.gov. The workshop will be held in the Presidio Officers’ Club, 50 Moraga Avenue, and will begin at 6:30pm.
- The next phase of Tennessee Hollow creek restoration will be considered in a forthcoming Environmental Assessment (EA). The EA will address the future disposition of one athletic field, Morton Street. The EA will not be released until after the November 15 workshop so that the Trust has an opportunity to consider a more comprehensive strategy for improving and expanding active recreation in the Presidio, including options to relocate Morton Street Field prior to planned creek restoration.

- We would like to offer guided walking tours of the Tennessee Hollow watershed for those who are interested in learning more about this hidden jewel in the Presidio and why it is important in the plans to transform the Presidio into a premiere national park site. If you are interested in participating in a tour, please let us know (see first page for contact information).