

PRESIDIO TRUST PUBLIC BOARD MEETING – April 9, 2013

NOTE: The following is the best transcript available of the public Board meeting of the Presidio Trust Board of Directors held on April 9, 2013. It is based upon an audio recording of the meeting.

[Start of recorded material]

Nancy Bechtle: Good evening, everybody, and welcome. I would like to introduce the Board members who are here: Charlene Harvey, Alex Mehran, Paula Collins – I'm Nancy Bechtle – Bill Hambrecht and John Reynolds. The meeting is now starting and it is 6:35. This meeting is being recorded, and a transcript will be posted on the Presidio Trust Web site.

If you would like to make a public comment this evening, please sign up at the reception desk. We will have three different times for public comment – one after the Art, one after the Commissary, and then public comment on any topic other than that at the end. We also have somebody here who is doing signing who will stay as long as there is somebody who would like to have it continue. So I would like to have approval of the Minutes. What is the date of the Minutes? Anyway, the Minutes were posted on the Web site; they were recorded from the last meeting. All those in favor please say "Aye."

Voices All: Aye.

Nancy Bechtle: I don't have a long report except to say that it is so beautiful outside. We are just lucky to be in this absolutely gorgeous part

of the world, and we're committed more than ever to welcoming the public into our park. Everywhere I go in San Francisco people come up and say, "It is so fantastic in the Presidio. We are really lucky." And I feel the same way. I'm out there walking just about every day.

In less than two weeks – which is Sunday, April 21st – we are going to have again the Off the Grid. If you don't know what Off the Grid is – they are the food trucks. They come into the Presidio. They will be at the Main Parade Ground, and it's really fun to come down and have a picnic there. This will continue more or less through the summer, and hopefully we'll have lots of weather like this.

I want to thank Greg and Frank for all of the work on the Visitor Center. I think we're just about there. Is that correct, partners? Close. It's going to be great. It's going to open on July 1st. The Rob Hill Campground and the new Presidio Youth Collaborative are welcoming young people to the Presidio. The 2013 camping season has started, and we look forward to beating last year's record number of 16,000 participants in our Camping at the Presidio program.

Actually, we are committed to getting more and more young people into the Presidio in educational places, in environmental projects, planting, enjoying themselves. We are also pleased, working with park partners across this region, to be welcoming people from all over the world as part of the 2015 International

Urban Parks Conference. I want to give a special thanks to Phil Ginsburg. Is Phil here? He is the head of Rec & Park – for their leadership in bringing this prestigious conference to the Presidio. And I thank each of you for being here tonight and for bringing your passion to this great place. So I would like to turn it over to the Executive Director.

Craig Middleton: Thank you all for coming on a nice night. I can imagine a picnic down on Crissy Field might be a little more fun. But we'll make this fun, so I'm looking forward to it. I just wanted to point out that we are in an especially exciting time here at the Presidio. I was just talking to Don Green about the first meeting 15 years ago – or maybe it was 16 years ago – I can't remember, but probably you do – of the Board of Directors. Don was reminding me that he was there and that he was promoting cultural institutions at that time. So here we are to talk about a cultural institution tonight. That's pretty exciting.

We are in our 16th year of stewarding the Presidio along with the National Park Service. It's a great opportunity to celebrate some milestones and to thank the people that have helped us get there. I would say that for some the achievement of note is financial self-sufficiency. I think we should all take great pride in that. It is really the precursor to all the good things to come. Without it we wouldn't be anywhere. Having accomplished it, we need to sustain it, and I know that we'll all keep that in mind.

But while this has been a significant focus, let's all celebrate all of the other things that have happened as well, while we were making that march toward financial self-sufficiency. When you think about the 350 historic buildings that have been rehabilitated – 80 percent of the total – that's a lot of historic buildings we have here. And as Senator Feinstein likes to say, "The older we get the more historic they get." Probably we'll have 800 before too long. But still, that has made this the most dynamic and the most accomplished historic preservation project in the country, and we should all be proud of that.

Our collective efforts add environmental sustainability. Landfills turning into native habitat – we have 65 acres of native habitat today under active restoration. That's a lot of acreage, and that's a result of the dedication of a whole lot of volunteers. I think that all of you – many of you I see in the room – are volunteers and should be commended. Thirty-three hundred trees have been planted in an effort to revitalize the historic Presidio forest. All of that has resulted in an incredible increase in bird species and other populations. I think this is a great time to go out and notice it.

Take a walk to El Polin Spring and really notice how the change there has become quite evident as we enter into the spring. New trails, seven new overlooks that offer scenic and poignant opportunities to reflect on the great legacy that we have inherited here and the great work in progress that we're all involved in. If you haven't taken a walk lately, take a walk. Go to one of the

overlooks, whether it's at the cemetery or overlooking the Pacific Ocean, and do a little bit of that reflection.

As the natural environment has rebounded over these 15 or 16 years, so has the human environment. The Presidio always was a community, and it is once again a community with 3,000 people living here, 4,000 people working here – probably the most vibrant community in a national park, if not the only full community in a national park. We have eight schools; many of you may not know that. Thirty percent of the households in the Presidio have children. So we have a whole generation of people who are growing up in the Presidio, learning about the place, becoming, hopefully, constituents for the place as they grow older.

A longstanding tradition of service which, of course, is embodied by soldiers and their families who have served here, is finding new expression. AmeriCorps teams are commonly seen here now building community gardens, working events like Memorial Day. And the community is stepping up in greater numbers than ever before. Last year volunteers clocked in over 65,000 hours of volunteer time for the park.

So a lot has been happening, and the Presidio is a very different place than it was a decade ago. As we move forward, we reaffirm our commitments to welcoming a broad public, to extending the impact of the Presidio far beyond its historic walls to the community and the nation and the world and, of course, to our

dedication to steward and care for this place in perpetuity.

Tonight we will hear some thoughts – your thoughts about the future of the former Commissary site on Crissy Field, a world-class site deserving of a world-class cultural institution. Again the Presidio is attracting the best, again the Presidio is demanding the best, and we look forward to hearing what you all think about that.

So I'll just close by saying thank you. Thanks to our partners, the Conservancy and the National Park Service. Congratulations for the recognition given this week by the Cultural Landscape Foundation for excellence in stewardship; thank you for that. I would be remiss if I didn't thank Nanci Pelosi, whose invaluable and unwavering support over the years has kept us all going. Thanks to the volunteers, the civic activists, the donors and the Presidio park community. Let's join together in writing the next chapter. So with that I'll turn it back to you.

Nancy Bechtle: Okay, great. Thank you, Craig. Also, I'd like to remind everybody to pick up one of our annual reports. It's really wonderfully done. It talks an awful lot about our milestones; that's what it's about. And I think you'll find it very, very informative and beautiful – we have a lot to photograph. So now we have our partner reports. Our partner is the National Park Service, Frank Dean, Superintendent . . . Frank and Greg Moore.

Frank Dean: Thank you, Nancy. Well, as I was driving over here tonight I was reflecting a little bit about the history of the Presidio and its more

recent history and how it's evolved. I think back on the commitment and the courage of various people that got us to this place that Craig so aptly described here as far as how did we get from post to park. And I just wanted to give you a couple of moments of reflection.

I think back on people like Amy Meyer – as we call her, the “mother of the park” – who challenged us to do the right thing at the Presidio. Obviously, her partner along the way in these issues was Ed Wayburn and all the citizens that created the GGNRA back in 1972. Congressman Phil Burton, who took their ideas and made them into law. More recently, leader Pelosi and her commitment in Congress, our champion in Congress, to help and assist us in tweaking things and getting either legal changes or even sometimes financial help to the Presidio. And, of course, the late superintendant Brian O'Neil, who championed the GGNRA and the Presidio for many years. And our Park Service staff.

Also, a tip of the cap to Greg and his team at the Conservancy for all the great work they've done, even renovating this building in the early days at the Presidio when it was under our watch. There are just so many accomplishments along the way that we should be celebrating. But also all of you tonight, out here in the audience – the advocates in the community that have supported the Presidio's reinvention over the years. And finally to the Trust Board and staff. So thank you for all you guys have done in the last 15 years, and congratulations on reaching financial self-sufficiency.

It's been quite a journey. I've been here four years now, and it's been nice even in my time here briefly to see the evolution in the relationship. I did want to thank you, Nancy, for reaching out to me. We were chatting about the Commissary process a little bit in the last few weeks as we get to the point of commenting and what's the Park Service role going to be. I really do want to sincerely thank Nancy and Craig and the rest of the Board for reaching out to us because I think basically what I was told recently was that the Park Service would have a more formal role and be involved in the deliberations and the process. So I think that's appropriate for us as co-managers of the Presidio. We have the territory at Crissy Field across the street. So whatever happens in the Commissary obviously will have some effect on the rest of the GGNRA in that area.

I think it's a breath of fresh air and some new transparency in partnership, and I think it bodes well for the future of us as we turn the page on the first 15 years. And next year will be the 20th anniversary of the Presidio being within the GGNRA, so it's only fitting that we start on this new journey together even more closely than we have in the past. So thank you.

And I did want to also acknowledge the partnership. Nancy mentioned the Visitor Center. We've committed to designing that this year. All three partners have committed funds to get the design launched on that structure where the bank and Post Office currently are. If you haven't seen the view there since the trees

have come down along with the new Doyle Drive work, it's a spectacular site – even more so than we thought. So I just again wanted to thank you and congratulate you all for all your great work. It's great to be here with you tonight. So thanks.

Greg Moore:

Frank and I are both in a reflective mood tonight because when you hit a 15-year birthday it's time to take stock of what this teenager has become. So congratulations to the Trust on reaching this point, and most of all congratulations on financial self-sufficiency and your plans for the next chapter of the Presidio. They're really exciting and build upon a great foundation of work that you have done and the community has done as well.

I think probably most people in this room can remember where their association with the Presidio began over the past timeframe. For me and for the Conservancy, and probably for many people, we can remember the day in 1988 when the Presidio closure was announced. We can remember the community's reaction. It was a mixture of fear, denial, opportunism and optimism – just a great mix of emotions as this historic military post was closed. We knew that there was a challenge to figure out how to take this historic asset and reinvent it, and the Conservancy helped establish the Presidio Council, a group of national advisers to help everybody think it through. The concept of the Trust was developed, the legislation was passed, and there we were underway on the task ahead of us.

None of us knew what the road would entail, how hard the work would be, how rigorous the debate would become, how much we would get done. And here we are at 15 years, able to look back at an amazing record of accomplishment that the Trust has helped bring into place with the partners, with the community and with the donors. So for me I'm very humbled to be here tonight recognizing the challenge that was put in front of this community in 1988 and to see not only was the challenge accomplished but, with financial self-sufficiency, the Presidio was saved forever. The penalty of not hitting that goal was that the Presidio would be deauthorized as a national park and sold, so thank you for bringing the Presidio home as a national park.

Tonight, instead of going on our more recent accomplishments, Frank and I have conceived a little video tribute to the Trust that we'd like to present – a video tribute that includes the many people in the community and in leadership positions who have been working with the Trust to bring us to this period of accomplishment. That's why all those curtains dropped.

Nancy Bechtle: I know. I thought it was just because you didn't want to look at the beautiful view.

[General laughter]

Greg Moore: Yeah, I wanted all the attention.

Craig Middleton: I thought the curtains were dropping on the Presidio or something.

[Video playing]

[General applause]

Nancy Bechtle: Thank you. That's really wonderful. It shows off the Presidio so well.

Craig Middleton: Thank you.

Nancy Bechtle: Now we can get the curtains back up so we can look out the window. So we're going to move onto the item about the proposed art acquisitions. If people would like to speak, they should sign up. There are some cards at the table outside. Every speaker will have two minutes. The names of the speakers will be called in order. Sign up and three names will be called at a time to allow speakers . . .

[Crosstalk]

Michael Boland: Unfortunately, I left my video at home.

Nancy Bechtle: Oh!

[General laughter]

Michael Boland: I just have a few pictures. Guys, that was incredible. I think all of us who have worked in the park for a long time are just awed

by that – how beautiful that was. So thank you. I have a couple of images I just wanted to run through. I'm sorry to ask everybody to turn around again. My goal tonight was to just update everybody briefly on where we are in our review of two works of art that are potential acquisitions to the Trust. I wanted to talk a little bit about the two of them and then briefly update the Board and the community on the results of the process to date.

We have an opportunity to add two works of art to the Presidio collection. The first that I'd like to talk briefly about is a piece by Bernar Venet. It's called *Indeterminate Line*. It's the piece that you see here. It's a piece that's held in a private collection and is offered to us via donation to be housed on the future bluff that will be created as part of the Doyle Drive project at the bottom of the Main Post.

This is a drawing that is provided to us by the Doyle Drive project. You'll notice there isn't a lot of landscape going on. We have much more exciting plans for this site than just a flat plane of grass. Nonetheless, the notion is that the work would be located somewhere on this new bluff landscape to be created on top of the tunnel tops. Because of its transparency and its scale – the work is approximately 30 feet tall – it's very transparent that it could frame views which are going to be absolutely magnificent up there on the bluff.

The second piece is a piece that does not yet exist, so this is a conceptual image. Even though it looks like this is an actual

piece, in fact this is a concept for a piece. It's a proposal for a bronze statue approximately nine feet tall, proposed by a non-profit organization located in San Francisco – the United Humanitarian Mission. The bronze is designed to commemorate two characters associated with Presidio history – Count Nikolai Rezanov and Concepcion Arguello – a Russian count and the daughter of the Spanish commandante who lived here in the Presidio and their tragic love affair, which is actually a story that is a fairly small moment in the history of the Presidio but widely known – celebrated in Russia and known throughout a number of different cultures. This piece is proposed to be created and located in the courtyard adjacent to the Main Post chapel. This is a photograph of that area. The idea is that it would be located at some point in this chapel facility.

So as is true with any piece of work that is being proposed to be displayed in the landscape of the Presidio for more than a year, we undertake a three-step process. We have been engaged in those three steps over the last couple of months. The first is the convening of an art review panel that includes several Trust staff as well as a number of art experts from the community who come and do an evaluation as to the artistic merit of the works.

The second step in the process is we create opportunities for public comment. In this process we held three walks – guided walks by staff – where we visited both of the sites, described the works and also talked a little bit about their placement.

And the third is environmental and historic preservation compliance – NEPA and NHPA compliance which we complete. We've now worked through all three of those steps, and I thought it would be helpful to just share a couple of pieces of feedback that we received through that process.

In terms of the first step in the process – the art panel review – each work the panel had very different reactions to, as I think it's obvious from the works. They're quite different, and they really have a different relationship to the Presidio and its history and environment. In terms of the Venet, the panel was quite complimentary about the quality of the work. It is a good example of contemporary abstract art. It's a high quality piece of work by the artist Bernar Venet, who is an internationally recognized artist.

There was a very lively conversation about the appropriateness of abstract art in the Presidio. To date, most of the works of art that have been placed in the Presidio – *Spire* and *Wood Line*, as well as the temporary works that have been in the park – have really been either site-specific works or works that are really related to the Presidio's history or ecology. So this would be somewhat precedent-setting in terms of the direction of art collection taking on an abstract work like this.

In terms of the Rezanov piece, there was a sense that this piece is a fairly conventional representation of a moment in history. They encouraged us to work with the proponents to try to develop a

slightly more abstract, more poetic way of telling this important story and celebrated the fact that it is site-specific, that it's a place-based work of art. So there was a lot of support for that notion on the panel.

In terms of public comment, we've received a broad range of feedback from the public, both at the walks and via email and also in a series of written letters that we received, both supporting notes for and against each of these works. But I think there are a couple of key points I would like to emphasize that came up.

First, echoing the comments made by the art panel, several members of the public asked whether or not it really was a precedent that we wanted to set – to begin to collect abstract art – rather than sticking with place-based art and art that's about the history and ecology of the Presidio.

They also were concerned about the impact of locating any work of art within the footprint of the former El Presidio. This piece on the right – the Rezanov and Arguello piece – would actually be located in a site that is underlain by the foundations of El Presidio. So there was a concern expressed that we really shouldn't be inserting art, whether contemporary or figurative – as this is – in that location.

And then lastly we've got quite a few comments, actually, from the public about the process itself, primarily about the criteria that we use. There are really three criteria that we use for evaluating a

work of art – its appropriateness. The first has to do with whether or not it's site-specific. The second has to do with whether or not it is interpretive of the Presidio's history and ecology. And the third has to do with whether or not it enhances the visitor experience.

I think there was a sense put forth by many members of the public that “enhance the visitor experience” is actually a very open criterion as opposed to the other two, which are much more restrictive. They encouraged us to have a conversation with the Board about the possibility of looking back at the policy and actually creating slightly more directed and restrictive language around that third criterion, or at least explaining what we mean by “enhance the visitor experience.”

But, as I say, generally there were quite a few lively conversations, both in the walks and also in the email dialogue that we received about both pieces. Again, support for each and concerns expressed about each. So that's my brief summary of where we are. We're hoping tonight to ask the public to offer up their thoughts in anticipation of a future conversation with the Board about whether or not we should actually acquire these two pieces.

Nancy Bechtle: Thank you very much. Oh, I'm so sorry – after I deafened everybody first. So as I said, if you didn't hear – I have some cards here. There are still more cards if anybody would like to sign up to speak about this. The names of the speakers will be

called in order of sign-up. Three names will be called at a time to allow speakers time to get to the microphones. Each speaker is to say his or her name into the microphone before making comments to assist in the accuracy of the transcript. We'll wait till they go all the way up before starting.

Okay, I will start reading three names. As always, we let the people who have been working so hard on the Presidio for so many years – former Board members – go first. So the first person to speak will be Amy Meyer, then Bill Hudson, and then Becky Evans. Welcome, Amy. Good evening.

Amy Meyer:

Thank you. I'm very glad to have these presented together. I appreciate the process that has been used to get us to this day. I was glad to go on a field trip. It's been good. I think this is a very important time. We were very successful in getting those Goldworthy sculptures in, and they are site-specific appropriate. But, really, this is very premature. The picture that Michael was able to show of the meadow leading down in Doyle Drive – it's not even done. We have no idea as to whether a sculpture of this kind would grace that meadow or how people are going to use that meadow.

We also have to recognize that there's only going to be a finite number of sculptures that can possibly be accommodated on our Presidio, particularly of large scale. We haven't worked that out, either, and where their places might be. As far as the Russian sculpture, the main concern is, first of all, it's a very great size.

Yes, it is a popular story, but where it fits within the Presidio interpretive plan . . .

We understand it's a piece, it's a story, and people will carry away a story with it, but it seems to be very much in the wrong place. It might very well do well in a smaller scale inside and have an explanatory statement next to it that would show, among other things, what went on between Fort Ross and the Presidio in those early days and what it meant to have the Americans and the Russians meeting. There's a lot to be done with it beyond the gentle story. So I would say that both of these are premature and need a lot of work. Thanks.

Nancy Bechtle: Great. Thank you very much, Amy. I forgot to mention before – Bill, please come on up – but Amy knows the rules. Everybody has two minutes to speak. So, Bill, if you would [crosstalk]?

Bill Hudson: Bill Hudson. Thank you for the opportunity to comment. I want to commend and reinforce the comments of the NEPA and NHPA review about the Venet that really questions its location at the field in front of the Visitor Center that is to be created. I think that will become the most special prominent view corridor for the Presidio, as Mr. Dean pointed out. And I think that to put this right in the middle of that view corridor really does a disservice to the views that will be created. It's a fine piece of work, but I don't think it belongs in that location, and I really think that the Trust should seriously consider trying to find a different place for it.

Nancy Bechtle: Great. Thank you very much. Becky Evans? Oh, there you are.

Becky Evans: Thank you. First I want to congratulate the Trust on its financial success. I would like to echo the comments that Amy made. I walked by that site this evening. I spent about eight years working on the Doyle Drive Task Force. The Doyle Drive construction, as you know, is creating that space. I think to put any kind of a 21st-century piece of art in that space – in the view corridor – is a very bad idea. I think, as Amy said, that these are both premature proposals. And I would echo the things that Michael Boland said about tightening up some of the review guidelines for how to accept art. Thank you.

Nancy Bechtle: Thank you very much. I'd like to remind everybody to please state their name so that we have it on the record, even though I know you're Becky Evans. Paul Wermer, I believe, then Gary Widman, and then Margo Parke.

Paul Wermer: Good evening. My name is Paul Wermer, and having heard the previous three public comments, I really have nothing to add to that.

[General laughter]

Paul Wermer: I endorse them heartily.

Nancy Bechtle: We appreciate that. Thank you very much. So "ditto," right?

Gary Widman: Gary Widman, speaking on behalf of the PHA this time. When I addressed the subject at the last meeting, those were my own individual thoughts – that can be incorporated here – but this is on behalf of the PHA. Speaking to the large coil, the *Indeterminate Line*, we're really aghast both at the process and at the prospect of having that piece at that location and at the prospect of it even being offered.

Looking at the policies, the law – Section 110(f), National Historic Preservation Act – the regulations, your own art policy, the very first page, says, “The purpose of the collections is to introduce works of art that enhance the visitor experience, are relevant to the natural and cultural history of the Presidio or uniquely suited to the site.” Those criteria right there should have been enough to throw it out at the beginning. There is no possible connection – or I shouldn't say “no possible” – no reasonable connection between that sculpture and the natural and cultural history of the Presidio.

The process is inappropriate for the site and is going to lead, if followed, to a very poor choice. The idea of this opportunistic policy of taking the first bidder who comes along is like conducting a fire sale. If you follow that, we're going to have to approve or disapprove this, then approve or disapprove the next one, and so on. You should plan for the site and then perhaps have a competition or whatever for criteria [for] a sculpture that

fit this particular site, that meet the requirements of the law and meet the requirements of your own policy. This does not do it.

On the other hand, the other statue – the Rezanov/Arguello statue – I did speak in favor of last time personally, and will do so again on behalf of the PHA with some observations and some conditions. The observation is, as Michael mentioned, that the donor is willing to make this any way you'd like to make it beautiful – make it taller, make it shorter, make it out of stone, put it in a different location. I think it is a subject that needs to be told; we discussed that a little last time. The statue should be allowed with whatever changes you want to make, but respect the generosity of the giver and make it something that's an asset rather than reject it because one doesn't like the material or whatever.

Nancy Bechtle: Thank you. Margo?

Margo Parke: Yes, I just wanted to say “ditto” to what Amy said. She stole all of our thunder.

[General laughter]

Margo Parke: I said to somebody, “I don't even think I'd want a Michelangelo on that site” if somebody offered it to you. And I think it's premature. I think that's the keyword now. I wouldn't rule out a sculpture, but I'm afraid it will become iconic if it's in that position – you know, Golden Gate Bridge. It will be one of those

photos everybody has to take. And I don't think that's it. Thank you. Oh, and I had one more question: Who is on the art review panel? You don't even have to tell me, but is there a landscape architect –

Nancy Bechtle: Well, Michael.

Craig Middleton: Michael.

Nancy Bechtle: Michael and his staff.

Margo Parke: You need somebody less biased –

[General laughter]

Margo Parke: – is my recommendation.

Nancy Bechtle: Oh, Michael. Okay, thank you.

Margo Parke: Thank you.

Nancy Bechtle: Thank you. We have just one more person. William Shepard.

William Shepard: Hi. Hello, my name is William Shepard and I'm the Board Chair of the Neighborhood Associations for Presidio Planning. I'm sorry?

Nancy Bechtle: Speak a little louder.

William Shepard: Oh. How about now? Okay. Well, you didn't miss much.

[General laughter]

William Shepard: I introduced myself. I'm the Board Chair of the Neighborhood Association for Presidio Planning and speaking on their behalf. We're very appreciative of your involving the public in this process the way you have. I think it's outstanding, both for this project and for the one still coming up on your agenda.

We've submitted a three-page comment letter, which we ask that you take into consideration in making your decisions in this matter. Our letter addresses the reasons why neither art work should be selected. We also explain how and why the art policy in the selection process should be refined before you implement it. We believe both sculptures would set a poor precedent, and particularly as your initial selections. Any selection at this time would be premature, in our opinion.

The Trust staff has suggested some mitigation ideas for both proposed art works. We don't believe the mitigation for either one of them as proposed is appropriate. Mitigation that would compromise the Presidio is not a good mitigation. The *Indeterminate Line* sculpture mitigation is to install a wall around the 30-foot high sculpture. That would be quite a wall, whether made of vegetation or solid material. It would block views in that area – an area that should be free of any kind of obstructions. The

Rezanov/Arguello sculpture is a representational, larger-than-life bronze of two lovers – a 15-year-old girl and a well-traveled, middle-aged man. I don't know.

[General laughter]

William Shepard: If that sculpture accurately portrays the two, it could be an embarrassment.

[General laughter]

William Shepard: But, in any event, it's been described as "not creative," "boring" – other than the subject matter. While the story may be adequate and true for an opera, it does not merit the prominence of outdoor Presidio. Instead, the story may be effectively told through the Presidio's interpretive program, perhaps within the Officers' Club. Thank you.

Nancy Bechtle: Thank you very much. Okay, that will end the public comment on the art project. Now we're going to have a short presentation on the Request for Concept Proposals for a cultural institution at the former Commissary site.

[Crosstalk]

Craig Middleton: I don't think there's any doubt that the site of the former Commissary, now affectionately known as "Sports Basement," is one of the great opportunities that we have in the Presidio to build

on that incomparable transformation of Crissy Field that the film so clearly articulated as well as the new Doyle Drive tunnel tops that will be so incredibly beautiful, offering so many incredible views and connecting – reconnecting, in fact – the Main Post back to Crissy Field and, really, reconnecting the base. We are so pleased to have 16 proposals in response to our Request for Concept Proposals that was issued in November. They offer an array of ideas and an amazing level of creativity and vision. So thank you, those of you in the audience who are among those 16 proposers.

Those of you who were involved – and I see several – in the early days in the development of the Presidio Trust Management Plan will remember that this concept of having a cultural institution on that site is a long one. It's an old one. It's one we've been thinking about for many, many years. And I think that given the transformation of Crissy Field and this opportunity that's going to present itself in the next three years at the tunnel tops – this reconnection I talked about – now is the time. So in November we issued a Request for Concept Proposals, and I'd like to just very briefly read the six goals that we have for the concepts.

Number one is to enhance the visitor experience of the Presidio.

Number two, provide programmatic offerings that are fresh and vital, that connect to broader themes, and that stimulate imagination and creativity, that offer cross-disciplinary

programming that can be effective in advancing knowledge that has broad and lasting relevance.

Number three, be compatible with the magnificent natural and cultural setting along Crissy Field and the San Francisco Bay and responsive to the Trust's mid-Crissy area design guidelines and LEED requirements. Many of you will remember that those design guidelines were established about a year ago as a result of public comment and a rigorous public process.

Number four, complement current uses and activities in the Presidio and integrate well with plans for Crissy Field and the Main Post.

Number five – there are only six – welcome a broad cross-section of the community in a manner that reflects and reaffirms the public nature of the Presidio. Be transparent and active in engaging the community.

And six, be economically viable.

Tonight we're not going to try to characterize each of the 16 proposals. They've been on the Web site since March 4th, and I imagine many of you, if not all of you, have already taken a look at them. If not, I urge you to. What we are going to do tonight and are looking forward to doing is hearing from you about the goals that I mentioned, about the proposals or any other related

topic before we narrow the field to a number of teams that we will then invite to develop more detailed proposals.

These teams will be encouraged to engage with the public in the development of these proposals, and we will offer opportunities for that engagement. We will also ask them to present their more developed proposals once developed to the public later in the year. I want to thank each of the proposing teams. I also want to thank the people who have already given us the benefit of their thoughts through the Web site and the blog, which I'm told is on Facebook; but go to the Web site and you'll find it. A lot of people are responding to this. It's been a very transparent process, and we really appreciate that. And I'll turn it over to you, Nancy.

Nancy Bechtle:

Okay, thank you. I think it's a great tribute to the Presidio and to people's creativity that we were able to inspire 16 people to actually submit proposals. We have proposals from all across the country, and it does remind us how important the Presidio is to the whole nation and the responsibility we have as Americans to do this right. That's why we are going through the process in the manner that we are.

We are very interested in hearing what you think. That is why we urged our staff to make this process transparent, to upload each of the proposals on the Web site and to establish a blog, also to schedule this meeting prior to our making any decisions. Also,

there are copies of all of the proposals in the library, and I think that many people have actually taken advantage of that.

I want to thank our proposers for their willingness to put forward these inspired ideas. It was really great fun to go through each one of them. I also want to thank the leadership of the Sports Basement for their interest in remaining at the Presidio, and look forward to the prospect of their having long-term presence in the park. I think one of the things that disturbed people the most was the possibility of us losing the Sports Basement. We got a number of people who were going to start a petition because we were going to lose the Sports Basement. We are not going to lose the Sports Basement. We love them and they love us, I hope. So that's a done deal.

So we are going to provide each person who wants to speak on this topic with two minutes. Same rules. Please come up and state your name clearly for the record, and then you will have two minutes; and you will have a warning, I think, with 30 seconds to go. Also, I appreciated very much the last time when people were going to say the same thing as the person before – that they simply said “ditto, I am there with you,” because it would be very interesting to hear what everybody has to say, but not in multiples and duplicates and everything.

So, again, everybody has two minutes. I will read three of the names, and they will come up and be ready to speak. The first one is Amy Meyer, then Laurie Armstrong and Judy

Bretschneider. I apologize if I mispronounce anybody's name. I apologize ahead of time. Amy?

Amy Meyer: Amy Meyer. That's right. I've just been around the longest.

Nancy Bechtle: It's an easy name.

Amy Meyer: Well, first of all, I appreciate the process that has been entered into here. We had some similar processes when Fort Mason Center was developed and when the decision was made to do Letterman Digital Arts on that campus, where a large number of proponents submitted ideas and then a smaller number submitted in great detail. And I think you've drawn out a wonderful group of proposals.

I'd be glad to read the blogs. Talking with Tia, I know that people are trying to make it so that those of us who sent in emailed comments – which don't get on the blog – can become something that we share. And I see Craig nodding, so that's really good.

Nancy Bechtle: We have them all here, Amy.

Amy Meyer: Okay. I mean – well, you understand. The main thing is that a few groups stood out – the Altered Lands, the Post Exchange, the Chora and the O'Reilly group. They stood out in particular as having a great deal of substance. I'd love to see those developed, and I realize that you're going to be cutting down on a number.

I must say I feel that the Lucas proposal was not responsive to the goals that Craig outlined; that it will not accomplish many of those goals – and I’m not going to read them out – but that it was an idea that could go in many other places, whereas this Board has invested quite a bit of time and money in the work of Dr. Brent Glass. I’ve been lucky enough with my people for the parks group – he’s come a couple of times and I’ve met with him. He’s been doing a good job of showing what can happen in the relationship between the Visitor Center, the Heritage Center and what could be produced at the Commissary.

There are a number of different things that could go in at the Commissary, and I’m looking forward to the more developed designs. But Lucas just doesn’t fit that, and I would prefer to see that not become something that was a bone of contention that took away from the really difficult job of choosing what ought to go in that site. The other thing is that there were small groups, like Antenna and Colors and a few others which, while they don’t have a full program, could very well be helpful to whatever group is chosen to do the program. Thank you.

Nancy Bechtle: Thank you.

Laurie Armstrong: Good evening. My name is Laurie Armstrong. I’m with the San Francisco Travel Association. We are very excited about the proposal for the Lucas Cultural Arts Museum. We think that this has the potential to bring a great number of visitors to the Presidio

and, as I understand that, that is the number one goal of this project. This is going to bring people from around the world not only to San Francisco but also to the Presidio, to visit the museum and to enjoy all of the amenities that you so wonderfully built here in the Presidio.

Located here next to Mr. Lucas's headquarters and the Walt Disney Family Museum, it will reinforce San Francisco's standing as a home to the creative arts and industries past, present and future. We've just completed a really remarkable century, and you can tell that by all of the centennials and 75th anniversaries that have been going on. The last century was amazing, the next century even more so. This museum will celebrate both.

As a Marin resident, I know that Mr. Lucas is a good neighbor and a generous benefactor. We're fortunate that he calls the Bay Area home. The truth is that he will build this museum. If he doesn't build it here, he will build it in another city. That would be San Francisco's loss in many ways. I encourage the Presidio Trust Board to consider this and select this proposal for the short list. Thank you.

Nancy Bechtle: Thank you. Judy?

Judy Bretschneider: I'm Judy Bretschneider from the Presidio Performing Arts Foundation, and I'd like to congratulate the Presidio Trust on 15 years. It's our 15th year here, too.

Nancy Bechtle: Congratulations.

Judy Bretschneider: Thank you. We are very interested in seeing the Presidio continue to develop programs that are inspirational and educational and at a high quality level. So we put our support with George Lucas. And we believe that this museum will be a destination also for our community. We have summer camps, we take the children to Disney Museum, and we partner with YMCA. This would be another wonderful place to take them during summertime. So we're looking for collaborations. We know that Mr. Lucas is a wonderful, supportive collaborator. So we encourage you to consider his project and consider the benefits that it will do in the long range, too. Thank you.

Nancy Bechtle: Thank you very much. We have Robert Sindelar, Nina Roberts and Leonid Nakhodkin.

Robert Sindelar: Good evening. My name is Robert Sindelar and I'm the Executive Director of the Presidio Community Y as well as a resident of West Washington Neighborhood. I'd like to thank the trustees and the staff for the opportunity to comment on this space. At the Y we're definitely promoting this process to our members and participants, as we deeply believe in civic engagement. And we hope this process, from beginning to end, continues to offer multiple paths for that.

As many of you know, the Y has been active in the life of the Presidio since 1898 and was one of the first tenants here in the

park in the '90s. With more than 25,000 members and participants, we attract more than 1,000 people every day into the Presidio and, as such, we have a very strong interest in this project and are invested in the outcome. The Y's cause is strengthening the foundation of community, and we do that through three areas of focus: healthy living, youth development, and social responsibility. With these values and priorities in mind, we'd like to highlight two of the six outlined goals that have particular resonance.

First, welcoming a broad section of the community in a manner that reflects and reaffirms the public nature of the Presidio. At the Y we welcome all and turn no one away for lack of ability to pay. We strive to keep our programs affordable. We offer scholarships and financial assistance, and we secure grants and raise money to make sure some of our programs are free. This beautiful park deserves to be enjoyed by all San Franciscans regardless of income level or other dimensions of diversity. As such, we truly urge the Presidio Trust Board and staff to make sure the proposals that are selected for the next round address the issue of access and inclusion in a meaningful way.

Second, complement current uses and activity in the Presidio. There are many wonderful organizations, businesses and activities, and with each passing year the partnerships and collaborations are growing in this park. We at the Y value the role of collaboration in the community and believe strongly that the projects selected should have a plan that outlines how they

might collaborate with existing entities and, ideally, a track record of success doing so. Thank you.

Nancy Bechtle: Thank you. Nina?

Nina Roberts: Hello and thank you. My name is Nina Roberts. I am a professor at San Francisco State University and also in the Department of Recreation, Parks and Tourism and Director of the Pacific Leadership Institute. And as a former NPS – National Park Service – employee, I have a longstanding interest in the Presidio, Golden Gate National Rec Area, the partners. We also manage at the university the flagship program for the PLI called the Fort Miley Adventure Challenge course, of which many people are familiar. We work in partnership in a variety of ways with the system here.

So I'm here in support of the Parks Conservancy's proposal, and I'm actually pretty excited about this next chapter and the Trust in terms of their goal – to transform this incredible space. Given the stated mission of the Trust, it's my firm conviction that this new purpose must be based on a fundamental understanding of our changing demographics and the need to embrace all cultures. So I think for me the Trust has an enormous opportunity and an obligation to bring their vision into focus. And the Trust, in my professional opinion, should commit to use this space under discussion that is relevant to everybody and not just a privileged few.

So it seems to me that the concept for the Presidio Exchange, then, put forth by the Conservancy, is the best option for that site. So hear me out. My position is based on five key factors regarding that Conservancy proposal.

One is authentic to place. They respect the site. It creates new parkland for everybody to enjoy. It contributes to larger societal goals such as health and wellness. It's non-commercial, primarily free activities. It's appropriate for an urban national park.

Two, it's not focused on one single effort. It's based on a collection of eight programs significant to the Presidio, the Bay Area, globally certainly when people come here to visit – programs designed for today's audience with constant change, spontaneity, learning, enjoyment.

Third, it's engaging. The proposal embraces our multicultural community in developing and delivering programs that are relevant. Without relevance to people you're trying to serve, there's not much inclusion. And that helps make the parks accessible to non-traditional users.

Fourth, it empowers youth, creates opportunities for leadership development, outdoor learning, recreation opportunities that enhance the quality of life for everybody – especially our young people. And then last, it builds on success of the Conservancy's 30-year track record working with community. They respect

diversity and they consistently raise funds for capital projects and incredible improvements. So 16 proposals – this one is the best.

[General laughter]

Nancy Bechtle: Leonid?

Leonid Nakhodkin: My name is Leonid Nakhodkin, and I am President of the United Humanitarian Mission. I came to San Francisco directly from jail from Ukraine, where I was five years for human rights. The Presidio at that time was a military base, and now its status is changed. It's an historical place, a cultural place, an artful place. Then what is it I support, for example – create a museum for George Lucas, a very famous cinematographer.

It is the reason why our organization proposed creating a monument in honor of Nikolai Rezanov and Conchita Arguella – not only as an historical [unintelligible], but as a symbol of fidelity and the eternity of love. I [unintelligible] very nice magazine [unintelligible], and I'm very proud that maybe our statue will be one more place for [unintelligible]. Thank you very much.

Nancy Bechtle: Thank you very much. Martha Walters, Angus Whyte and Brandy . . . Brandy, you'll have to tell me who you are – Brandy Vause?

Martha Walters: How many Brandys are here? Hi, my name is Martha Walters. I am the Chair of the Crissy Field Dog Group, everybody's favorite

subject here. I am speaking on behalf of our board tonight. First, I want to thank you for the opportunity to let us share our perspective with you. In addressing the long-term reuse of the former Commissary, we think that the Trust should try to have a consistent approach with the goals identified in the GGNRA's Amended General Management Plan in supporting its cultural heritage.

While we have reviewed all of the 16 proposals for the building, we want to be sure that the Trust will adhere to NEPA regulations and develop some important criteria in determining a successful reuse of this building. Specifically, usage at Crissy Field has changed dramatically over the past ten years, and we would want the Trust to evaluate the cumulative effects of the traffic impact with this new reuse.

We encourage the Trust to select a reuse entity that would generate at most low to moderate traffic flow along the vicinity of Mason Street and the neighboring city streets. While we encourage public transportation, we are realistic enough to know that the vast majority of people who will come to this new cultural center will be driving their cars. This will create a spillover effect at Crissy Field, where multiple usage is already at an extremely high level – especially on the weekends – where many special events occur throughout the year.

We also encourage the Trust to select a reuse entity that is culturally consistent with the neighboring Crissy Field Center on

Mason Street, adjacent to the building. We understand that the Crissy Field Center will be relocating back to their original location after the Doyle Drive project is completed from their temporary location at the east end of Crissy Field. There was a statement here a little bit earlier about bringing more people to Crissy Field. We don't need more people. There's a huge carry capacity at Crissy Field; it's in overload. It doesn't matter what the use is, but I think we need to keep that in perspective for this future use.

Nancy Bechtle: Thank you. Angus Whyte?

Angus Whyte: Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. My name is Angus Whyte, and I have been an art dealer for some 40 years. For the past 15 years I was the Executive Director of Art For Healing, an organization which has placed thousands of pieces of art in hospitals and healthcare facilities in the Bay Area. I am very concerned about the quality of art in this community. We have wonderful museums.

I think the opportunity for George Lucas to bring his expertise, his funding and his imagination to the Crissy Field venue would enhance the Presidio enormously. It will bring more people in, it will be attractive to families as well as to art people and cinema people, and I think it will do more good than any other of the proposals that I have read, which I appreciate because some of them are really good. But for the stated goals of the Presidio

Trust, I think the Lucas organization will follow through better than any. Thank you.

Nancy Bechtle: Thank you. And Brandy?

Brandy Vause: You pronounced it right. My name is Brandy Vause.

Nancy Bechtle: Brandy Vause.

Brandy Vause: Thank you for allowing me to speak tonight. I'm here on behalf of the Bay Area Discovery Museum to express our support for the Presidio PlayLabs proposal. The Bay Area Discovery Museum is part of the GGNRA, right across the Bay. You can almost – you can see us from here. And our mission is to ignite and advance creative thinking for all children. The way we work to achieve our mission is through play. And so, therefore, we are very supportive of the PlayLabs proposal.

We know research shows that play is critical to brain development, to fostering creative thinking, to innovation. Studies show that mammals who play have bigger brains. That's at the heart of everything we do at the Bay Area Discovery Museum. With the PlayLabs proposal to offer play experiences for all visitors from all backgrounds, that will foster creative thinking. Innovative solution really will impact the community, have a lasting legacy and draw upon the legacy of the Presidio and the Bay Area. So we hope you will consider moving their proposal forward. Thank you.

Nancy Bechtle: Thank you. Lewis Butler, Becky Evans and Paul Wermer.

Lewis Butler: Thank you. I'd just like to speak briefly on behalf of the proposal of the Parks Conservancy for the Presidio Exchange. My connection to this goes back some 20 years, when a group of us wanted to create a Presidio Pacific Center. Unfortunately, some of those wonderful people are no longer with us – Warren Hellman and Don Fisher and Peter Haas. What we wanted to do was build on the experience of the 1992 U.N. conference in Rio de Janeiro on sustainable development.

Well, as Craig knows, we had to abandon the whole effort in 1995. We joined up with Jim Harvey – Craig was part of that – and we all went to Washington to try to campaign for the Presidio Trust. I'm not sure how effective we were, but fortunately in the last few hours of the 1996 session the Trust legislation passed. By the way, congratulations on making the Trust such a huge success.

So now, 20 years later, I think the Presidio Exchange could do a lot of what we hoped to do. It could do it in an absolutely beautiful, appropriate place. And the issues that we were then working on, like sustainable development, energy efficiency and global warming, all could be part of this center. So thanks. I hope you approve it.

Nancy Bechtle: Thank you very much, Lew.

Becky Evans: My name is Becky Evans. I'm speaking on behalf of the Sierra Club. I'd like to identify with Ms. Walter's remarks about traffic impacts and about people; I think that's really important. My affiliation with the Presidio goes back to the 1960s, when I visited some of the veterans that were in Letterman Hospital coming back from Vietnam. I've been involved with Amy's efforts over the last 40 years.

I would hope that you would not let the celebrity of Mr. Lucas overwhelm the good and excellent applications of the other proposals. I think it's important that you pick the five from among those who meet your criteria, who forward the goals of the national park. Perhaps some of these smaller proposers can get together and come up with some joint proposals that would work the same way that Fort Mason has worked so very wonderfully over the years.

I encourage you to be true to the goals you've set and to the criteria. While I respect Mr. Lucas, I think that his museum can go anywhere in this City. There are places like the Palace of Fine Arts as an example. So I would urge you to make your selections based on the needs of the park and its visitors and not the celebrity status of one of the proposers. I particularly would like to single out the proposals of the Conservancy. They have a proven track record with you, and I think that should go a long way in knowing that they will be able to serve the public that you serve. Thank you.

Nancy Bechtle: Thank you.

Paul Wermer: Good evening, again. My name is Paul Wermer. This time I actually do have something to say.

[General laughter]

Paul Wermer: It is an amazing and creative bunch of proposals. Not all belong in the Presidio. I would fall amongst the many who believe, for example, the Lucas proposal is a great idea that could be a real benefit elsewhere in San Francisco. We have a whole southeastern coastline with incredible vistas that needs that economic jump start. And that's a real opportunity that's missed. You don't get that same benefit here by putting him in.

Some of the proposals really don't have a good fit with the Presidio's history and interaction, and I would like to reference the absolutely outstanding 2013 interpretive plan which crossed my desk by email –which, by the way, for some reason I can't find on the Presidio site. I hope that can get rectified. The elements in there that are proposed for the interpretive plan are a wonderful guide to the sorts of programming and activities that should be linked into the Commissary plan.

I will say that the Conservancy's PX plan does indeed seem to fit many of them. I believe others in a revised form might, as well. And I strongly encourage the expansion of the criteria in the next round to look at how these map up against the goals of the

interpretive plan. That's something we've been looking for for many years. A frustration that such a document doesn't exist, and it's really an outstanding document and a great guide. Thank you.

Nancy Bechtle: Thank you. The next three will be Dee Dee Workman, Don Green and Summerlea Kashar.

Dee Dee Workman: Good evening. I'm Dee Dee Workman. I am currently the Director of Public Policy for the San Francisco Chamber of Commerce. We have reviewed the information on your Web site regarding the 16 concept proposals for the Commissary site. We look forward to tracking your selection process to see which groups make the final cut. It's really very exciting.

The Chamber is particularly intrigued by the Lucas Cultural Arts Museum concept. In addition to being the only project that would be entirely self-funded, we feel the opportunity to host Mr. Lucas's vast, unique and important art collection in a beautiful, new, well designed and well integrated building at Crissy Field is worth consideration. Mr. Lucas has an excellent track record in the Presidio, and we certainly don't want to lose his collection – that's estimated at a value of a billion dollars – to another city. The Chamber encourages the Trust to select the Lucas Cultural Arts Museum as one of the finalists that you invite to respond to the RFP. Thanks.

Nancy Bechtle: Thank you.

Don Green:

Good evening. My name is Donald Green. I've been involved since Craig Middleton and I were together some years back. I have three comments to make. The first is we did read the interpretive plan, which was issue by the Park Service and signed by Craig. It's a joint project, and the Conservancy was involved. It's a very, very interesting document. It lays out what people should learn by coming to the Presidio. It isn't a question of number of people, it's the quality of the information they receive. So use that as guidance when you go through your six project goals. Keep the themes of the interpretive plan and see if the project meets it.

Secondly, the legislation calls for the National Park Service and the Presidio Trust to be responsible for interpretation and education. This project basically is an education project. It's bringing people in, it's teaching them something. My suggestion is, as you've done before, that the Presidio Trust, the National Park Service and the Conservancy form an agreement – as you did with the Visitor Center, as you've done with other things – so the three organizations would be responsible. You can lay out your funding responsibilities, your programmatic responsibilities and your operating responsibilities.

And thirdly, in reading the proposals – and I've been doing this most of my professional life – there's no question that the Conservancy stands head and shoulders above any others. And if I were in your shoes . . . and Craig, you had said originally in the Request for Concepts that you will choose one or more or none of

the proposals being submitted. I would urge you to issue the RFP to one organization: the Conservancy. That would save you lots of time and cost in reviewing another three or four or five which, in my judgment, come nowhere as near the quality of the others. That's what I have to say. Thank you very much.

Nancy Bechtle: Thank you.

Summerlea Kashar: Hi. I'm Summerlea Kashar. I'm the Executive Director at the Cartoon Art Museum. We're a rather small museum here in San Francisco. It seems that you have a good decision on your shoulders to decide between all these proposals, and I don't envy what you're going to go through to try and figure that out. One of the things that we would like, from the Cartoon Art Museum, to have you keep in mind is even though Mr. Lucas is such a celebrity and carries some amount of weight, his collection is quite extensive.

He has one of the largest collections of illustration art, including Norman Rockwells and Maxfield Parrish among many others. He's a great resource to the City and to all the cultural institutions, would be a great partner to many people, offers a lot of educational resources. And this is not the Lucas company, which has been sold to Disney. This is George Lucas's legacy that he wants to give to future generations. So don't consider it as the corporation, please. Think of it as more of an institution that he would like to pass onto future generations. Thank you.

Nancy Bechtle: Thank you. The next three will be Gary Widman, Melanie Blum and William Shepard.

Gary Widman: Thank you. Gary Widman on behalf of the PHA. And once again, as I have at times before, I ask you to think ahead. Think of the long range future. Think of what you want to have transpire at that location for the next 20 years, the next 50 years, and compare the opportunities that you have with these different proposals.

We very much appreciated your first five criteria, and we hope that you make a pick particularly fitting for those first five criteria because this is a place that has enormous history education potential. It's something that you need to take advantage of to make the Presidio all that it can be. When you get right down to it, Lucas has the funds to put his collection anywhere; the other organizations that make these proposals do not. You need to judge them on their merits, on the extent to which they can achieve something in teaching and giving the feeling of history in the Presidio. And that, we think, should be your main criterion.

We, of course, have added one in our comments that we think you should take a special look at and make a special effort at – a Crissy Field museum of era history we think could be part of the enterprise. But we urge that you blend different proposals – it's an enormous space; it doesn't all have to go to a single user – and make it into the educational potential that it could have. Thank you.

Melanie Blum: I'm Melanie Blum. I've had the fortune of working in the Presidio for the last 15 years and have developed the San Francisco Film Centre, Futures Without Violence, Building 100, and worked on the Letterman Digital Arts Center. I want to applaud the Trust for reaching self-sustainability. I know what a challenge it's been, and I commend the families and the organizations that have helped you get there, including George Lucas, George Gund, the Disney Millers, Equity Community Builders and the Haas family, who have helped and worked with the Trust as partners to create an amazing place.

George Lucas proposed the Letterman Digital Arts Center. He then built the Letterman Digital Arts Center, and it has become an anchor for the Presidio. He chose to live here, he chose to raise his family here. He created jobs here, he paid taxes here. And he now wants to create an art museum that he will pass onto the Bay Area and its constituents to enjoy and fully fund it so that the Trust can use funding that they have to invest their resources into many other needed projects in the Presidio that do not have funding available to them.

The Bay Area is the center of innovation and technology. George Lucas and his companies have contributed greatly to that legacy. The Lucas Cultural Arts Museum and its collection of the art of story-telling and the current technology of digital arts are an important part of Bay Area history and should not be considered

as anything else. He offers the public an amazing opportunity and is willing to underwrite and pay for it.

My concern is that while there are many other interesting projects that have been put forward, there is not funding available for those projects. By the time the funding and resources are raised to actually execute those projects, they may become something totally different. I hope the Trust will look favorably upon this project. I feel it fits into the Presidio along with the Disney Museum, the Film Centre and Letterman Digital Arts. Thank you.

Nancy Bechtle: Thank you.

William Shepard: Hello again. I'm William Shepard of the Neighborhood Associations for Presidio Planning. We again thank the Board and the staff for their openness in involving the public the way you have in this process as well as the art project. The Commissary project is one of the most exciting projects to be undertaken by the Trust. We view the project as a great opportunity to excel in doing something truly great for the park. This project, if done well, will bring great benefits to the Presidio. For that reason this project justifies the Trust investing its own capital in it.

We ask that you apply the six project goals in the context of the recently adopted Presidio interpretive plan so that the Trust and the park's values are enhanced by this far-reaching project. We ask that you select a proposal that best meets all six of the goals,

not just one or two of them. Avoid narrowly-focused proposals or proposals that could just as well be located in San Francisco or elsewhere. We ask that you avoid applying one goal – economic viability – in a manner that essentially eliminates all the competition but for one contender who, if at all, only marginally meets the other five goals. To do this, in our opinion, would be inherently wrong and compromise the greatness of this opportunity.

We believe that one proposal stands out above the crowd, and that is the Conservancy’s Presidio Exchange proposal. It offers intelligent, stunning vision and concepts that can grow and evolve with time to keep the Presidio truly a great place on multiple levels. Also, this proposal can readily collaborate or partner with others who can bring their own creativity and other resources and funding to the project. We’ve submitted a nine-page comment letter in which we evaluate all 16 of the proposals, and we ask that you read them. Thank you.

Nancy Bechtle: Thank you. Steven Krefting, Megan Tulac and Elea Carey.

Steven Krefting: Good evening. My name is Steven Krefting. I’m here representing the San Francisco League of Conservation Voters, and also I convened the Presidio Environmental Council. I first want to note that we’ll be submitting more formal comments in our letter shortly, but we want to thank the Trust in particular for the process that you have followed in engaging the public as a

part of the planning for this site. It's been a very nice, wide open, and properly executed process.

The League believes that the foremost purpose of the use of this space should exemplify and emphasize the important values that this unique national park exhibits. The Presidio, as we know, stands alone in the national park system for the combination of its rich, multicultural human history and rare and important natural resources, including species found nowhere else on Earth. What an exciting educational opportunity.

So we strongly encourage you to keep these factors in mind when determining the future of this important site. Now that you are self-sufficient and free of the Sword of Damocles, we do hope that you can avoid looking too closely at the wad of cash. We believe that a number of these proposals have merit and relate to the history and natural attributes of this park and could be combined into an exciting visitor experience, perhaps around the hub of the Parks Conservancy. Thank you.

Nancy Bechtle: Thank you.

Megan Tulac: Hi. I'm Megan Tulac, and I'm here tonight to speak in support of the PlayLabs. Play is near and dear to my heart because it is my work. I'm the Director of Research at the National Institute for Play, and what we do there is we look at the science behind play behavior. It's an exciting time to be in the field because researchers across academic fields are looking at play through

more lenses than ever before – we’ve got neuroscience, evolutionary biology, developmental psychology. And it’s fantastic because what they’re finding is play – this behavior that we dismiss as frivolous or just for kids, a nice-to-have when the work is done – is actually a complex mental and physical phenomenon.

The benefits wrapped up in this complexity are numerous. We don’t have time tonight to go into everything, so I’m just going to focus on one: the connection between play and creativity. We actually teach a class at Stanford – at the d.school – going into how do you get from play to innovation? Again, we don’t have the whole semester tonight. So, in a nutshell, play ignites the engine of discovery by sparking our curiosity.

Now, play is not all positive. It’s this limbo zone. It’s an in-between area where that internal voice is dull, that criticism that’s constantly going on isn’t as loud. We’re open to serendipity and to improvisation. Our barriers are dulled. So this “play state” that we call it is ideal for the creative process. So, in short, if play provides the vehicle to explore the realm of possibilities, the Presidio can provide the space. We know that the Presidio has a rich history of innovation, and now the Trust has the opportunity to continue this legacy. And Craig, if I correctly recall what you said earlier, when we play we are at our best. And that’s what the Presidio is about. Thank you.

Nancy Bechtle: He’s wondering whether he said that or not.

[General laughter]

Nancy Bechtle: I'm sure he did.

Craig Middleton: But I agree with it.

Nancy Bechtle: If he didn't, he'd like to take credit for it.

Elea Carey: Hi, I'm Elea Carey. I work with a number of small start-ups and entrepreneurs and investors. I also advise the Women's Startup Lab in Menlo Park. I came today to say a little something about the PlayLabs proposal, but I want to go on record first as a citizen saying that I think it's unbecoming to this discussion to – what I'm hearing – say that we somehow owe anything to Mr. Lucas or that we should fear that he will take a project elsewhere. I think that that doesn't have a place in a level playing field of bringing together projects and deciding on projects. That's me talking as myself.

I've had a few conversations with the team that's putting together the PlayLabs project, and I'm surprised as anyone – since I'm the daughter of someone who worked his way through San Francisco by sacking groceries at the Marina Safeway, and my mother was a migrant worker – I'm surprised to hear myself say that I think capitalism and business have incredibly powerful democratic and healing possibilities.

I see that in the PlayLabs proposal. I'm hopeful that what they can create, what they are interested in creating for this City is an arena in which business innovation and ideas and creativity come together in a cross-generational and multicultural way to show people that there are incredible possibilities for everyone in this City that's always been known for its great innovation. Thank you.

Nancy Bechtle: Thank you. Chris Wright, I believe, is the last card I have. Hi.

Chris Wright: Good evening. My name is Chris Wright. I'm the Executive Director of the Committee on Jobs here in San Francisco. The Committee on Jobs is an organization that advocates for economic growth and job creation in the City. I'm here this evening to express my support for the Lucas Cultural Arts Museum. Locating the Lucas Cultural Arts Museum here would benefit San Francisco and the region by serving as an additional reason for people to want to visit our great City, stay in our hotels, eat in our restaurants, and shop in our diverse merchant corridors.

Also, as a father of two public school children here in the Richmond District, the cultural arts museum focuses on education and is an extremely attractive proposal. I understand the selection process is still in an early stage and that there are a number of proposals before you today, but as you consider the responses I hope that the Lucas Cultural Arts Museum remains among one of the finalists. Because of its unique and remarkably broad

collection of art offerings, it would be a tremendous asset to the Presidio and to the City. Thank you.

Nancy Bechtle: Thank you. Okay, we are going to open up the meeting for general comments. Anybody can sign up for another two minutes. We have two right here. So you can talk about anything you want to talk about. Leslee Coady and Raymond Holland. Yes, please?

Alex Mehran: I think because of the interest that is shown here tonight, if we could just walk through the process that we're going to be following so that everybody is reminded about where we're going over the next couple of months – or maybe Craig, you could just let the audience know what we're going to do so that they know we're going to have a process and take their input seriously?

Nancy Bechtle: Leslee, could you wait one minute and we'll just finish up this one . . . Sit right down there. Sorry. I think that's a very good idea.

Craig Middleton: Thank you. Can you hear me? Oh, good. Yeah, roughly the way it's going to go is the Board is listening to public comment. We have certainly heard a lot from you already in various venues, like the email and Web and other things. We will narrow the field of 16 to a smaller number. We will interview a number of those folks. This will all happen in the month of April.

In May we will invite the “finalists” – as some have been calling them – to put together more detailed proposals that would have a

lot more detail. Those proposals would then come back to us in the fall and we would, at that time, have another opportunity for people to hear, this time from the proposers themselves, about their proposal wherein we will also encourage those finalists to do a public presentation of their concepts even before they start to develop the proposal so that you'll have an opportunity to influence the concept and then ultimately hear what the proposal will be at the end of the period. So it will run through the summer and into early fall. Does that help, Alex?

Alex Mehran: Yeah. And I just want to encourage everybody to continue to stay involved because your voices are really important to us. This is going to be a difficult process for us. There are a lot of really good ideas. And to the extent that we can hear from you as to what your input is, it's going to be very helpful. So we set the process up for your input, and we encourage you to stay involved.

Nancy Bechtle: Thank you, Alex. That's right, so get your comments going. Okay, comments on everything and anything. Leslee Coady and Raymond Holland. Leslee, sorry.

Leslee Coady: That's okay. Hi, I'm Leslee Coady. I am a San Francisco native, and I am a junior high history teacher. The Presidio is a very special place in my life – has been. My parents were married at Our Lady's Chapel. We were all baptized there. All our family events were at the Presidio Officers' Club. My dad retired here after 30 years, and my parents were buried right inside the gate over there. They're watching over me as I'm saying this. It's a

wonderful place and, as a teacher, I can't thank you enough for the great educational opportunities for junior high students that you've provided for so many years. It's a great place to be near and to have available to us in so many ways.

One thing I would like to see on the Presidio – and I know you've had some emails about this and some proposals – is I'd like to see a New Deal art museum. New Deal art is disappearing from the public space throughout the Bay Area and throughout the United States. Places are being privatized – Post Offices, et cetera. And what more perfect place than the public space of the Presidio to have a New Deal museum?

Harvey Smith, Gray Brechin and local people are working on collecting the art, but we need a place to have it available to the public. So I'd like you to consider that in your proposals for the future. The New Deal was designed for the public, and here we are next to the Golden Gate Bridge, part of that whole era. I just think it's a perfect space. So if there was some part of the Commissary or some other building that was available for that, please consider it. I think it belongs to our public. Thank you very much.

Nancy Bechtle: Thank you.

Raymond Holland: Hi. My name is Ray Holland. I'm representing the Planning Association for The Richmond PAR, which is one of the ten organizations that makes up the Neighborhood Associations for

Presidio Planning and border on the Presidio. First off, I'd like to congratulate you in achieving your financial goals. That's just terrific. I hope it leads to more open consideration of some other things that could happen, and I think the way you've conducted this procurement is really fascinating because it started off really wide open. You have 16 really diverse kinds of proposals before you. And Craig, I was glad to hear what the second step is going to look like. We will be participating in that, both as PAR and as a member of NAPP, as much as we can.

PAR's position on the 16 proposals is best described by NAPP – by Mr. Green and Mr. Shepard. I think that, along with the Presidio interpretive plan – which I don't think any of us have seen the final version of yet – really, with your six goals, should be the guiding light as you proceed forth. And that's the way we'd recommend it. Thank you.

Nancy Bechtle: Great. Thank you very much. Okay. Well, I think it's been a very informative meeting. I think all of us really appreciate your input into this process. As Alex said, it's going to be difficult because there are some very, very good proposals in there. So thank you all very much for coming. We will adjourn the meeting. And I have to get it onto the Record what time it is, if I can read my watch.

Craig Middleton: 8:15.

Nancy Bechtle: It is now 8:15, and the meeting is adjourned. Thank you.

[General applause]

[End of recorded material]