

North & East Newsletter

March 2006

Newsletter of the North & East Neighborhood Council

P.O. Box 254, Richmond, CA 94808

(510) 237-5670

www.northandeast.org

Dear Neighbor,

The North & East Neighborhood Council is a member in good standing of the the Richmond Neighborhood Coordinating Council (RNCC), the umbrella organization for all the Neighborhood Councils. There are about 39 neighborhoods in Richmond, drawn roughly along census tract lines, and about 25 are currently active.

To be a member in good standing of RNCC means that your neighborhood has paid its annual dues (\$40) and that at least one representative (each neighborhood can send two) has attended at least half of the monthly meetings in the previous year.

Our representatives are me and Bridget O'Keefe, who is doing an excellent job at reporting to our monthly meeting what happened at that month's RNCC meeting. Jim Jenkins has recently agreed to be an alternate representative; we all need a back-up.

Jim was also just appointed to the Richmond Parks & Recreation Commission. This Commission is about to start work on our Humphrey Playlot and about six other small parks in other areas of town. These park upgrades have been in the planning stages for several years, and now they have the money to do the work. Elisa Scarborough has agreed to attend these meetings representing the N & E as they finalize the plans. Elisa has been attending the meetings anyway and agitating for Humphrey Playlot on her own. Now she has the Neighborhood Council, and we have her. What a deal!

I was appointed last July to the re-vamped Historic Preservation Advisory Committee (HPAC) which held its first meeting last month, and I also sit on the Citizens' Advisory Panel for Emergency Response (CAPER). With me on the HPAC are North & Easters Christopher Bowen and David Blackburn.

Our outgoing Treasurer, Ronnie Marty, has long been active with the Crime Prevention Program. Our current representative to that program is Alva Foreman, who reports to us each month on what is going on in Crime Prevention.

The City of Richmond has many Commissions, Boards and Committees, all made up of citizens who want to be involved and want to make a difference in their community. If this is something you might be interested in, please talk to me about it and (or) go to the City's website and look up the list of Commissions. You will see which have vacancies or are going to soon and how to apply.

More on all this later. And more on some new committees of the RNCC looking into such things as crime, blight and enforcing ordinances in Richmond.

Darrell Hoh
of Marvin Gardens Real Estate
is once again sponsoring this issue of the
N & E Newsletter.
Thank you, Darrell.

THE NORTH & EAST STILL NEEDS YOU!

Julie Freestone, who comes to most monthly meetings and takes notes, is willing to be our new Secretary IF someone will step up and volunteer to be her back-up for the few meetings she cannot attend. The Secretary takes minutes at our monthly meeting. We try to have two to make sure that one can be there at all times.

We had a volunteer for the Treasurer's job, but she did not come to the February meeting so I am not sure if she is still available. We don't have much money to worry about, and if you volunteer now, you will have time to spend with Ronnie to learn the ropes.

Please call or email me to talk about getting involved.

Sandi Genser-Maack
President

(510) 237-5670 northandeast@comcast.net

N & E Calendar

Thurs., Mar. 16 -- N&E Meeting, Senior Center, 7 p.m.,
Sat., Mar. 18 -- Good Neighbors Delivery Day, 10:30 a.m.,
950 32nd St., (510) 235 -5696.
Mon., Mar. 27 -- Planning & Zoning Committee, 7 p.m.

NEXT MEETING: THURS., MAR., 16, 7 P.M., AT THE SENIOR CENTER

CRIME INFORMATION

Lt. Ricky Clark, a 26-year veteran of the Richmond Police Department, provided information at the monthly Neighborhood Council meeting about crime statistics. He said he was surprised at the number of stolen vehicles that were reported in a month - 57. There were also 12 residential burglaries, but, with the help of two N&E residents, one person who may be responsible for many of the crimes, was arrested recently. Clark said home alarm systems are "the only way to go."

Crime tip sheets are available at the monthly meetings. One of our newly assigned officers also attended the meeting. Officer Joseph Deorian encouraged residents to call or email him (joseph_deorian@ci.richmond.ca.us) or leave a message at (510) 620-6675.

If you have a crime prevention issue, you are invited to attend the monthly Crime Prevention meeting at 330 25th Street at 7 p.m. on the third Wednesday.

NATIVE GARDEN TOURS SCHEDULED

A free tour of 65 pesticide-free, water-conserving gardens that provide habitat for wildlife and contain 30% or more native plants is scheduled for Sunday, May 7, from 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. Five gardens in Richmond, and others in Berkeley, El Cerrito, El Sobrante and other East Bay cities are included in the event.

Native plants will be available for sale at many gardens, and numerous garden talks will be offered throughout the day.

Registration is required at www.BringingBackTheNatives.net prior to April 20. Volunteers are needed and rewarded with free, private tours of beautiful native gardens.

For more information email Kathy@KathyKramerConsulting.net or call (510) 236-9558 between 9 a.m. and 9 p.m.

BAY TRAIL REPORT AVAILABLE

The colorful, upbeat Richmond Bay Trail New Year Report has been mailed to about 600 people including elected officials, community and business leaders and key government agency management. If you weren't one of the lucky recipients, the report and a new trail map can be downloaded at www.ci.richmond.ca.us/trac/ along. The report points out that 2005 was a great year for Richmond's Bay Trail. Not only did construction begin on three trail segments totaling 2.7 miles, but also \$500K in new grants and appropriations were obtained for planning and designing three miles of trail during 2006. In addition, 33 new exhibit panels designed during 2005 will be appearing along the trail early this year.

Richmond has 24 miles of completed Bay Trail and 17 miles of gaps remaining in the planned route. The report describes breakthroughs for planning and design work needed to fill two major gaps and the greatest challenge remaining to fill a gap of almost seven miles between the Plunge and the Point San Pablo Yacht Harbor. More information is available by emailing tracbaytrail@earthlink.net or calling (510) 235-2835.

SINGLE MOMS GROUP OF N&E

I'd like to start a Single Mother's group for the moms of N & E Richmond. The purpose would be to talk about issues we face raising kids on our own AND to have fun.

Let me know if you are interested. I can be reached at (510) 235-3148.

Karen -- single mom of N & E

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS IS KEY

If you haven't set aside supplies you and your family will need after a big earthquake or other disaster hits, do it now! You should have enough food and water, medication, radio with batteries, cash and other supplies to last at least three days. Don't pat yourself on the back yet.

Kathryn Gerk, Director of Richmond's Office of Emergency Services, encourages residents to sign up for a course that will make it possible for neighbors to help each other. That's particularly important because statistics show that people who are trapped and rescued within an hour have an 81% chance of surviving. Those who have to wait a day until police or fire professionals can get to them, have only a 34% chance of making it.

"The true first responders are the neighborhood residents," Gerk told N&E Council members last month. The City provides free REACT (Richmond Emergency Action Community Teams) training. The six-session program covers home disaster planning, utility control, fire fighting, shelter-in-place, disaster medicine, light search and rescue and more. For more information, call (510) 620-6866.

For more help with your own disaster planning, plan to attend a "Disaster Fest" at Civic Center Plaza on Saturday, April 22.

FEEDBACK ON SPENDING THE SURPLUS

My, how times change. Last year the City of Richmond couldn't pay its bills and had to lay off workers, close community centers and libraries and reduce other services. Now the City has a \$10 million budget surplus.

If you want your voice heard about how that money should be spent, talk to a City Council member.

GOOD NEIGHBORS WELCOME RICHMOND'S NEW CHIEF OF POLICE

The Good Neighbor committee and volunteers welcomed 34 new homeowners in January, including Richmond's new Chief of Police, Chris Magnus, who has bought a home in the N&E area. The Good Neighbors were assisted by the Richmond Police Department Explorers under the direction of Officer Danny Harris.

It was a little wet and drizzly, but that did not stop Committee members and volunteers Lois Mignone, Patti Paul, Art Peterson, Marilyn Langlois, Bessanderson McNeil, Jordan Vilchez and Ronnie Marty, who, with the help of RPD Explorers Sgt. Sophia Martinez, Rosa Orellana, Samuel Espinal and Officer Danny Harris, from delivering baskets and welcoming new homeowners in the N&E neighborhood. The decorated Welcome Baskets were filled with information on the N&E area and the City of Richmond, including cookies donated by Snazz Enterprises.

Every Saturday following the N&E Neighborhood Council meeting, the Good Neighbor committee and volunteers welcome new homeowners to the area. PLEASE JOIN US, it only takes an hour and is so much fun!!

You can also help in other ways, by donating your unwanted baskets, or supplying freebies or flyers to advertise your business to be put in the baskets. (FREE ADVERTISEMENT.)

As the Good Neighbor committee starts its 6th year delivering baskets, we hope different Youth Groups in Richmond will help. If you know of a youth group which would like to participate, or to obtain more information about the Good Neighbor program, or to donate, please contact Ronnie Marty at (510) 235-5696.

Our next basket delivery will be on Saturday March 18th at 10:30 a.m., and remember, it only takes an hour.

When asked, Chief Magnus said he was really happy to get the basket and all the good information about his new city, and he really loved the cookies!

Ronnie Marty
Chairperson

NORTH & EAST PLANNING & ZONING COMMITTEE REPORT

February 27, 2006

The Committee convened at 7:08 p.m. with members Dolores Hembree, Felix Hunziker, Martha Seymour and Jerry Rasmussen (Acting Chair) present.

1. Single-family dwelling at 2344 Esmond Avenue — addition and conversion to duplex. Conditionally approved.

Myro Escobar, realtor, re-presented his proposal to add 400 sq. ft. to the rear of an existing 1100 sq. ft. house, plus a 1500 sq. ft. second story. A four-car attached garage would replace a two-car garage.

The Committee, at its previous meeting, suggested cosmetic changes, including tile trim along the parapet edges, and reconfiguring the new upper front entry, both to replicate existing design details. Re-aligning windows on the east facade was also suggested.

Also, noting the five exterior entry doors and the four separate rooms designated "livingroom," the Committee had asked for clarification of exactly how many units are proposed.

The applicant presented his revisions, including a double-gabled roof instead of a flat, and incorporating some of the Committee's suggestions. However, their strong misgivings about the ready potential for conversion to additional units remain.

By 4 - 0, the Committee voted to approve the project subject to the following conditions:

- a. In order to reduce apparent bulk, the second floor ceiling level plate should be dropped about 2.5', and the roof pitch should be reduced.
- b. Roof tile nosing trim should be added along the new gables, similar to the existing front gable.
- c. One or more street trees shall be planted in accordance with City standards.

2. Two-story addition at rear of single-family dwelling at 2368 Humphrey Avenue. Action deferred.

Peter Saphirhack, building designer, presented his proposal to double the area of a one-story, three bedroom, one bath dwelling with a +-1100 sq. ft., three bedroom addition. The existing one-car garage would be replaced with an attached one-car garage. Additional uncovered parking would be on the 60' deep driveway. A 22' deep rear yard would remain.

Considerable discussion revealed the roof configuration (especially the marriage of the old structure and the addition) was mis-drawn and needed re-thinking. The added third first-story gable should be deleted. In order to reduce the apparent bulk of the massive flat, two-story rear facade, the Committee suggested the whole facade center portion could be recessed about 2' and a first-floor overhang be added to shade the south-facing windows. The elevation drawing needs to be flipped to properly match the floor plan. Also suggested: two second-story dormers might offer some visual relief to this rear facade.

The Committee voted 4 -- 0 to ask the applicant to return in a month with changes to address these concerns.

The Committee adjourned at 8:40 p.m. to reconvene on March 27.

LAZY COMPOST

Cleaning up winter's debris? It's a great opportunity to start a compost pile.

Making compost provides wonderful soil for your garden, and may save you money, if reducing wet garbage lets you reduce the size of your City garbage can. It will certainly save Richmond money: if all residents composted, Richmond would save significant landfill costs.

Don't fall for fancy gadgets; all you need is an area at the back of your lot, about 5' square (on any kind of surface), a tarp, a pitchfork and a bucket in the kitchen to collect your garbage. Compost is nature's way of making soil...with a little help from you.

Nature wants your wet garbage: all vegetable discards, leftovers and spoiled food, easily digestible paper (butter paper, paper towels, even shredded newspaper) and bones and shells, unless you have rats. In addition, she wants your grass or weed clippings and other green debris, and your brown, dried leaves and small twigs.

Pile all this stuff together; add water till it's the consistency of a wet sponge. Don't tamp it down -- it needs air as well as moisture. Cover it with the tarp to keep heat and moisture in. To "cook" it rapidly, turn it once a week with your pitchfork; if you're not in a hurry, just leave it be.

Rapidly digesting compost will reach temperatures up to 140 degrees (from bacterial action), killing weed seeds and plant diseases, but a lazy compost will make soil, too. If your pile smells bad, like rotting gar-

bage, it's too wet. It should smell good, and the completed compost underneath it should smell like mushrooms. Whether turning frequently or rarely, move your pile from one side of your designated area to the other, revealing the made compost underneath for spreading on your flower or veggie beds, around shrubs and, after sieving, on your lawn. The bones will be clean and white. I add them to my veggie beds to return minerals to the soil.

Warning: don't buy one of those blue plastic woven tarps, they wear out soon and you'll have little blue strips all over your yard. Canvas is heavy and doesn't last much longer. The best I've found is a camping tarp with an inner lining.

As your compost is established, friends will come to help. Redworms will appear, so don't waste money buying them. Pill bugs and black beetles will show up. These are all good eaters, helping to digest your stuff, and harmless. When your pile cools, ants will come, too. Mice may turn up, especially in winter, as it's toasty warm in there. Since your pile is far from your house, they shouldn't be a problem, though you may find the neighbor's cat sitting by your pile.

Give nature a hand! Happy soil!

Jeffrey M. Dickemann

(Lazy compost-maker for 35 years)

TREES IN RICHMOND

Street Trees -- Why?

Beautify your neighborhood

Increase property values

Trees make oxygen — good for our health, especially in polluted city air

Create more native habitat for birds and butterflies

How Do I Get One?

1) Call Steve DeLucci, City of Richmond Arborist, at (510) 774-3026. He will come and let you know if you qualify (there are certain restrictions re: distance from utility lines and driveways) and whether you qualify for one or two trees. He also has a book with photographs and can show you pictures of what's available and appropriate.

2) Get an application form from Steve to send/fax to the city. Diane Bloom on 38th St. also has a supply and you're welcome to come by and pick one up or she can fax it to you. Email her at dibloom@norcov.com.

3) While the city provides the tree without charge, it's your responsibility to remove any concrete necessary to make a spot for the tree(s). There's a landscaper who does this for people around the neighborhood at a reasonable cost: Javier Casanova, (510) 375-5125.

4) How much care does it need? Just water!! Also, keeping weeds away from the base of the tree helps it grow faster.

Want to see some trees that have been planted? We're working on a list with addresses so you can tour around. The City will only provide the trees they have available and some neighbors simply choose and pay for their own selections.

Diane Bloom

Tree Lover of the N & E

HEALTH CLINIC AT CIVIC CENTER?

What do you think?

The County wants to build its new facility in the area of the Civic Center (the REAL Civic Center) after that has been renovated and is back in service as City Hall.

There will be a study session on this on Tuesday, March 28, at the City Council Chambers in the temporary City Hall at 1401 Marina Way South.

Having City Hall back in the North & East is of major importance to us; whether or not to have this Health Clinic there might also be of major importance, good or bad.

Plan to go -- to listen to the plans and share your thoughts. Or at least watch it on KCRT Channel 28.

Check the agenda on the City's website for the time: www.ci.richmond.ca.us

HOME SALES IN NORTH AND EAST FOR THE MONTH OF FEBRUARY

As we near the Spring selling season, we are experiencing a “wait and see” approach from many buyers. Consumers are slightly more cautious in making a quick bid on a property. Home sales prices are still appreciating, but at a much slower rate than six months ago. Housing inventory has increased in our North and East neighborhood during the past month. With proper pricing, these homes should sell within a three- to four-week period.

| <u>Address</u> | <u>List Price</u> | <u>Sale Price</u> | <u>BR/BA</u> | <u>Sq. Ft.</u> | <u>Lot Size</u> |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|--------------|----------------|-----------------|
| 600 Block of 37th | \$374,950 | \$385,000 | 3/1 | 861 | 2500 |
| 2300 Block of Clinton | \$399,000 | \$425,000 | 2/1 | 1096 | 3872 |
| 2600 Block of Andrade Ave. | \$413,880 | \$430,000 | 2/1 | 857 | 2500 |
| 2300 Block of Grant Ave. | \$425,000 | \$455,000 | 4/3 | 1256 | 2500 |
| 2800 Block of Gaynor Ave. | \$425,000 | \$412,000 | 2/2 | 1156 | 3136 |
| 600 Block of 34 th St. | \$439,000 | \$460,000 | 3/1 | 1127 | 4000 |
| 3200 Block of Clinton Ave. | \$449,500 | \$460,000 | 2/1 | 880 | 5000 |
| 4100 Block of Barrett Ave. | \$460,000 | \$460,000 | 3/2 | 1164 | 3100 |
| 900 Block of 32 nd St. | \$485,000 | \$500,000 | 4/2 | 1381 | 5000 |
| 600 Block of 24 th St. | \$499,000 | \$600,000 | 3/2 | 1990 | 7500 |
| 2800 Block of McBryde | \$549,000 | \$557,000 | 3/2 | 1601 | 5000 |

Darrell Hoh and Marvin Gardens Real Estate believe all material to be correct but assume no liability for its accuracy.

FREE TAX PREPARATION FOR QUALIFIED TAXPAYERS

The free tax preparation program for low to moderate-income residents continues.

All sites are now open for the annual free tax preparation program helping hard-working, low- to moderate-income families and individuals file their taxes and claim refunds owed to them, such as federal Earned Income Tax and Child Care credits.

The third annual Earn It! Keep It! Save It! (EIKISI) Contra Costa Campaign runs through April 15. All 12 Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) sites are now open throughout the county.

Households earning \$38,000 or less can receive up to \$4,400 in tax refunds. Last year, the program helped about 1,700 Contra Costans claim more than \$2 million.

The VITA sites are at the following locations and times in West County:

Community Housing Development Corp. of North Richmond, Senior Community Room, 1555 Third St., 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturdays, through April 15.

Police Activities League, 2200 Macdonald Ave., 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 6 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. Thursdays, through April 13.

Pullman Point Community Room, 2989 Pullman Ave., 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. Mondays and Wednesdays, through April 6.

One-Stop Career Center, 2300 El Portal Drive, 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. Tuesdays and Thursdays, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturdays, through April 15.

For more information on EIKISI, visit cchealth.org or call (800)358-8832.

CINCO DE MAYO PLANNING UNDERWAY

Council member John Marquez and others are developing a plan for Cinco de Mayo that includes a parade on Saturday, May 6, and a festival on Sunday, May 7, in San Pablo.

The Richmond Police Department is working with the California Highway Patrol and other agencies to provide high levels of enforcement on Friday, the actual day of the celebration. The Police Department’s policy will be “zero tolerance.”

At the February Neighborhood Council meeting, members voted to write the City Council and express concern that no positive family-friendly events have been scheduled for Friday. Neighborhood Council President Sandi Genser-Maack had already responded to information she received from City Manager Bill Lindsay.

“People will gather on Friday night. We think the ‘police response’ isn’t the answer.”

Residents asked that those involved in the planning be invited to an upcoming neighborhood council meeting to discuss the plans. We hope to have someone from this group at the March meeting.

Richmond Neighborhood Coordinating Council

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Richmond, CA 94804

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The North & East Newsletter

The North & East Neighborhood: West to 23rd St., East to San Pablo Ave., North to the City limits, South to Macdonald Ave.

| | |
|--|---|
| <p>I support my Neighborhood Council! <input type="checkbox"/> I enclose dues (voluntary) of \$10 for the 05 - 06 year. <input type="checkbox"/> I enclose a donation of _____ <input type="checkbox"/> I enclose a donation for the newsletter _____ Name _____ Address _____ City, State, Zip _____ Phone _____ email _____ <input type="checkbox"/> I do not want to remain on the mailing list</p> | <p>Mail to: Ronnie Marty 950 32nd St. Richmond, CA 94804</p> <p>make checks to: N & E</p> |
|--|---|

North & East Neighborhood Council Meeting

Thursday, March 16, 2006

Third Thursday

7:00 p.m.

**Richmond Senior Center
2525 Macdonald Avenue**

Guest Speaker:

Richmond and San Pablo
have plans for Cinco de Mayo.

Do these plans meet the needs of the residents
of the
North & East and Belding Woods?