



## Mission Dolores Neighborhood Association

DEDICATED TO PRESERVING AND ENHANCING OUR HISTORIC NEIGHBORHOOD

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February 18, 2019

### **Re: Letter of Opposition - Mission Dolores GBD**

Dear MDNA Members and Mission Dolores Neighbors:

On June 22, 2014 the MDNA Board of Directors voted unanimously to oppose a Green Benefit District (GBD) in the Mission Dolores Neighborhood after a group of our board members attended a meeting presented by former Supervisor Scott Wiener and the developer Michael Yarne, who promoted the idea.

On September 12, 2018 we heard evenly timed presentations from a Mission Dolores GBD Committee and an opposition group of citizens from the Inner Sunset and Buena Vista neighborhoods who had recently successfully defeated GBDs in their neighborhoods. At the end of the meeting our board refused to change their opposition to a GBD in Mission Dolores. In fact, the opposition was stronger than ever. Board member Robert Brust was a member of the visiting GBD Committee.

On February 13, 2019 the MDNA Board had an anti-GBD strategy meeting as part of our regular agenda. While GBD Committee members Robert Brust and Hans Kolbe asked us to change our position, after an hour debate the board voted overwhelmingly to write a letter of opposition and post it on our web site for everyone to see and refer to. (The vote was 10-2.) This is that letter. I'll include our various bullet points below.

1. We oppose a new parcel tax on all property owners in the Mission Dolores Neighborhood when the city already has a huge Rec & Park budget, spends hundreds of millions of dollars on the homeless, and spends more money on street cleaning than any other city of its size. Reference: *SF's filthy streets: We're spending far more on cleaning than other cities*, SF Chronicle, 9-10-18.
2. The self-appointed Mission Dolores GBD Committee recently oversaw a survey where only 9% of the property owners participated. Of those, the majority wanted more information. While they also stated that they wanted more services, they didn't state that they wanted a GBD to do the work.
3. The GBD Committee is currently preparing a management plan to decide on how the proposed double tax will be assessed. They're also planning an engineering report, even though they only received the 9% response and the Mayor's Office of Economic and Workplace Development (MOEWD) is allowing these extra funds to be spent for this process.
4. The meetings to establish the management plan and engineer's report are being held behind closed doors, which is highly unethical, especially since they are being funded by the city.
5. While the city claims to be neutral, they're also funding most of the outreach and development of the GBD. To our knowledge, this sum is currently over \$150,000. They're also funding the salary of DPW GBD Manager Jonathan Goldberg, who was clearly biased at the public meeting we attended.
6. The GBD Committee and DPW are now planning a skewed petition and vote this summer. The petition first requires 30% + 1 of ALL property owners to vote YES to approve the management plan. The election then requires a YES vote from 50% + 1 of only the property owners who vote to establish the GBD. Since a low turnout is expected, it is expected that a minority of voters could make this decision. Please remember the 9% response from the survey.
7. If the Mission Dolores GBD is approved, one third of all money raised will go to administration costs, including an executive director who would be paid a professional salary. The current executive director of the NW Potrero Hill/Dog Patch GBD has a salary of \$125,000. She also has a paid assistant. So, we're expecting a Mission Dolores GBD executive director to be paid far more, since it's a much larger area.

8. As for that area, the proposed boundaries ignore the unanimously adopted Mission Dolores Historic Context Statement and survey boundaries and extend our neighborhood all the way to Castro Street. Those professionally prepared documents were unanimously adopted by the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) on March 7, 2010. We're now working on making the Mission Dolores Neighborhood an historic District with plenty of support. For your reference, our preservation work since 2005 was funded by our members and the MOEWD. We therefore find this extended neighborhood map highly disrespectful and ignorant of our neighborhood history.
9. With respect to all of our neighbors who have been frustrated with city services, creating a new parcel tax and turning hundreds of thousands of dollars over to a non-professional citizens group is not the way to get more services, since it will only distract SFPD, DPW, MTA, Rec & Park, and the Department of Homeless and Supportive Housing from doing their jobs. Just imagine calling one of those departments and being referred to the GBD?
10. MDNA already has a productive working relationship with the city and Supervisor Mandelman. In fact, we meet with them on a regular basis and we don't need a GBD standing in the way of those relationships.
11. Please join MDNA and get involved. We have one of the most beautiful neighborhoods, a great renovated park, the oldest historic resource (Mission Dolores Church), and arguably the most outstanding boulevard in San Francisco (Dolores Street).

Thank you and best wishes,

Peter Lewis, President