

**CITY OF ALBANY
CITY COUNCIL AGENDA
STAFF REPORT**

Agenda Date: November 7, 2011
Reviewed by: BP

SUBJECT: Golden Gate Fields/Albany Waterfront Task Force

REPORT BY: Beth Pollard, City Manager

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

That Council clarify its expectations of the Albany Waterfront Task Force and request an interim report from the Task Force for the special City Council work session of Sunday, December 4, 2011, that contains members' understandings to date of the strengths, challenges, questions, concerns, and suggested direction associated with the proposal to locate a second campus and other development on the Golden Gate Fields property on the waterfront.

BACKGROUND

The Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory (Lab) is seeking a location for a second campus to consolidate and expand its operations. In May 2011, the Golden Gate Fields property was selected as one of six finalists for site selection. The property owner – The Stronach Group – has been developing a proposal for the Lab and associated private development. The City hired Fern Tiger Associates (FTA) – the same firm that conducted the Voices to Vision waterfront visioning process for the City between 2008 and 2010 – to inform and engage the community about what is being proposed, and TSG agreed to reimburse the City for the costs of this work.

On September 19, 2011, FTA reported to the City Council on progress to date, and suggested options for next steps. The Council approved the option to form a 20-25 member Task Force. The stated purpose of the Task Force was "to focus specifically on the developer's proposal for the waterfront; to monitor and assess changes; to request and understand/analyze information related to the project's impact on the community; to understand tradeoffs, options and alternatives; and to help determine both the strengths and challenges of the proposal as it adapts to address community concerns and needs."

The Task Force met for the first time on October 9, 2011, at which time it adopted the following mission, based on direction from the City Council when the group was formed:

To ensure the collection, review, and dissemination (to the Albany community) of adequate, factual information and data related to potential development by The Stronach Group at the Albany Waterfront(GGF site).

The Task Force also met on October 16 and 30th, and has meetings scheduled for November 6, 13, and 20, 2011, as well as January 8 and 15, 2012. Attached are meeting notes from October 9 and 16. The meeting notes from October 30 are being prepared for the meeting of November 6.

All documents presented to the Task Force are available at www.voicestovision.com or at City Hall. The meetings are video recorded and can be viewed on the KALB section of the City website, www.albanyca.org.

On October 17, 2011, the City Council stated its intent to hold a Council work session to understand the information being reviewed by the Task Force. That work session is being scheduled for the evening of Sunday, December 4, either from 6 - 8 or 7 - 9.

DISCUSSION

One of the issues that has been raised by Task Force members concerns their role and responsibility with respect to submitting a report and/or recommendations to the City Council or community. It would be useful to their discussion if the City Council could clarify its expectations of parameters for, or outcomes from, the group.

What staff recommends is that Council ask the Task Force to prepare information for the December 4th City Council work session that contains members' understandings to date of the strengths, challenges, questions, concerns, and suggestions associated with the proposed project. By the start of its November 20th meeting, the Task Force will have already met five times and focused on a range of project-related topics (site plan; entitlement processes, CEQA, Measure C, initiative process; environment; economics; open space). The Task Force invited the Lab to attend a session to respond to questions that are within their purview and which cannot be answered by either the City or The Stronach Group, and there has not been a response.

By the November 20 meeting, the members will be in a position to reflect on their understanding, analysis and evaluation of what they have learned to date that can help inform the City Council in its work session. They will also, likely, be able to articulate information they believe is missing or necessary to gather should the project move forward. It is the City's understanding that LBNL will announce its selected site(s) by the end of November.

After Council's review of the information presented from the Task Force for December 4th, the Council could then identify any further information or other work products it desires from the group.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT

N/A

FINANCIAL IMPACT

The Stronach Group has agreed to reimburse the City for costs associated with FTA's work to facilitate the Task Force, at least up until the Lab makes its announcement about a selection at around the end of November.

Attachments

Task Force meeting notes to date