

**CITY OF ALBANY
WATERFRONT COMMITTEE
STAFF REPORT**

**Agenda date: March 7, 2012
Prepared by: JB**

ITEM: 5-8

SUBJECT: Report on City Council Action Regarding Communications to Fern Tiger Associates, Members of the Golden Gate Fields/Waterfront Task Force, and The Stronach Group

RECOMMENDATION

No action required. For information only.

BACKGROUND AND DISCUSSION

On March 5, 2012, the City Council will be considering a recommendation from the City Manager to authorize letters of appreciation to Fern Tiger Associates and members of the Golden Gate Fields/Waterfront Task Force, and a letter inviting continued conversation with the owner of the Golden Gate Fields property (The Stronach Group). The staff report is attached.

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

Agenda Date: March 5, 2012

Reviewed by: BP

SUBJECT: Communications to Fern Tiger Associates, Members of the Golden Gate Fields/Waterfront Task Force, and The Stronach Group

REPORT BY: Beth Pollard, City Manager

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

That Council authorize letters of appreciation to Fern Tiger Associates and Members of the Golden Gate Fields/Waterfront Task Force, and a letter inviting continued conversation with the owner of the Golden Gate Fields property (The Stronach Group).

BACKGROUND

Last year, the Golden Gate Fields property was selected as one of six potential sites for the second campus of the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory. To assist the community in being informed and engaged about the proposal, the City of Albany hired Fern Tiger Associates (FTA) to conduct various educational and outreach initiatives. FTA was the firm that conducted the City sponsored Voices to Vision waterfront visioning process in 2008-10, which provided Albany with recommended guidelines for the future of the GGF property. The property owner – The Stronach Group – agreed to reimburse the City for the costs to hire FTA to inform and engage the community about the proposal for the Lab and associated development.

FTA began the process by collecting as much information as possible in a very brief amount of time, followed by conducting engagement sessions with the community. Upon receipt of an interim report from Fern Tiger in September, the City Council established a Task Force to serve as a platform for further education in engagement with the community.

The 22-member Task Force was comprised of three appointees of each Council Member (with the exception of Council Member Lieber, who recused himself due to a conflict of interest); one appointee of each member of the Albany Board of Education; and the chairs or designees of the Planning & Zoning Commission; Parks & Recreation Commission; Traffic & Safety Commission; Waterfront Committee; and Sustainability Committee.

The Task Force met six times where it had iterative conversations and presentations related to site plan, economic impact, infrastructure, environmental impacts, land entitlements, taxes, ownership, open space, and other topics. In addition, the Task Force met with the City Council in a workshop on December 4, 2011 where it presented what members saw as

the pros, cons, and opportunities of the realities of the developer's intentions to develop the site with LBNL as the anchor project with related development (hotel, retail, offices, commercial labs, etc.) as part of the proposal in order to satisfy infrastructure costs, city funding needs, and to create the developer's vision for a technology park.

On January 23, 2012, the Lab announced that it had selected the Richmond Field Station as its preferred site for a second campus. At its meeting of February 6, 2012, the City Council directed staff to return to the City Council with draft correspondence of appreciation to FTA and the Task Force for their work, and draft correspondence to the property owner.

DISCUSSION

Attached are draft letters, as follows:

FTA: To Fern Tiger Associates expressing gratitude for the significant and excellent work by Fern Tiger and her team to inform and engage the community about the complex proposal, under time and information constraints.

Task Force: A draft letter to be individually addressed to each Task Force member thanking them for their dedication to understanding, analyzing, and evaluating the proposal, meeting on a weekly basis, and advising the City Council

The Stronach Group: To the property owner acknowledging the opportunity the Lab proposal provided for communication between the property owner and Albany, and inviting that conversation to continue.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT

N/A

FINANCIAL IMPACT

N/A

Attachments

1. Draft letter to FTA
2. Draft letter to Task Force Members
3. Draft letter to The Stronach Group

DRAFT

March 6, 2012

Fern Tiger
Fern Tiger Associates
201 Clay Street, Suite 290
Oakland, CA 94607

Dear Fern,

The Albany City Council wishes to extend its gratitude for the extraordinary work of Fern Tiger Associates (FTA) in engaging and informing the community about the proposed possibility to locate the second campus of the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory at Golden Gate Fields (GGF).

When the City Council learned that GGF was one of six finalists competing as a preferred site for the Lab, we were grateful to have the guidelines from your previous work with the Albany community - Voices to Vision - to inform the planning, analysis, and evaluation of the proposal. When we learned that a site selection would be made in a matter of months, we were grateful that you agreed to start work immediately to help the Albany community understand and engage in what was being proposed.

Despite the fact that you had limited time and information, you crafted a process that was inclusive, intelligent, and informative. Voices to Vision 2, as the process was called, provided the community with as much information as you could gather in the transparent and engaging format that is your trademark. Your creation and facilitation of the 22-member Golden Gate Fields/Waterfront Task Force was masterful; it provided a broad spectrum of the community with a platform on which to learn, thoughtfully discuss, and carefully consider the property owner's proposal for the Lab and associated development.

Your willingness, as well as the willingness of Liz Newman, to work virtually every Sunday evening for two months, is in itself remarkable. Added to that commitment is the tremendous work that you, Liz, and other members of your team dedicated to gathering data and information, obtaining professional analyses, and creating summaries and matrixes. It was a complex proposal, involving multiple – and at times conflicting - public agencies and interests. Throughout Voices to Vision 2, it was clear that your primary interest was that the community deserved to be informed, engaged, and respected.

Thank you, Fern, for your working once again with excellence in Albany about the future of this very special property on our waterfront.

Sincerely,

Farid Javandel
Mayor

Marge Atkinson
Vice-Mayor

Peggy Thomsen
Council Member

Joanne Wile
Council Member

DRAFT

March 6, 2012

Task Force Member
Address
Albany, CA 94706

Dear (Task Force member name),

On behalf of the Albany City Council, thank you very much for your service on the Golden Gate Fields/Waterfront Task Force.

When the City Council established the Task Force, it envisioned a broad spectrum of Albany perspectives coming together to help the community understand and evaluate the proposal to locate the second campus of the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory and associated development on the Golden Gate Fields (GGF) property. What emerged from the Task Force was respectful discussion, careful analysis, and thoughtful evaluation that were critical to helping the City Council Members further develop and refine their own understanding.

When the City Council and Task Force met together on December 4th, it was evident that every member had taken seriously the responsibility to study the available information and identify the pros, cons and opportunities that emerged out of the proposal. In addition to reading through the written materials, you dedicated virtually every Sunday evening for two months to attend meetings and express your questions and ideas about what you had learned as well as what you had heard from other members of the community. This was a remarkable commitment, for which the City Council is very grateful.

Although the GGF site was not selected by the Lab for its campus project, the work of the Task Force better prepared the community for that possibility. The City Council appreciates your willingness to serve in this capacity.

Sincerely,

Nicole Almaguer
City Clerk

DRAFT

March 6, 2012

Belinda Stronach
The Stronach Group
(Address etc)

Dear Ms. Stronach,

It was a pleasure to meet you last spring to hear your vision for the Golden Gate Fields (GGF) property to become a world-class public and private green technology center hosting the second campus of the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory (Lab).

While the Lab chose another location, the experience allowed us to learn more about the aspirations of The Stronach Group (TSG) to create legacy projects, to consider community desires, and to remain committed to horse racing in Northern California.

On behalf of the Albany City Council, I invite you to continue the conversation with the City of Albany about future possibilities, and how we might work together to achieve results. Drawing on the guidelines from the Voices to Vision process, and our further thinking as both TSG and Albany considered the Lab project, I am confident we can engage in productive communication about alternatives.

I look forward to discussions with you or with any member of your team about the opportunities and challenges of this spectacular waterfront property, and planning for the future.

Sincerely,

Farid Javandel
Mayor

cc: Frank Stronach
Ari Huber