

City Manager's Weekly Report

This is the weekly report for the week ending April 10th, 2009.

1. **Meeting Notes**

The next regular City Council meeting is Tuesday, April 21st.

2. **Move to Renovated City Hall at Civic Center Plaza**

There is only one week left before the first phase move to the Civic Center Plaza commences on Friday, April 17th. Until then, you will begin to see moving boxes sprouting up at what has become an even more temporary City Hall. Departments that will be moving in this first phase include Building Regulations, Planning, Information Technology (IT), Engineering, and a portion of Fire Administration and Finance.

Many staff members, especially from Redevelopment and IT, are working long hours to make this move go smoothly, and I thank them for it.

3. **Foreclosure Fine Ordinance**

I have understandably received a number of questions recently about the foreclosure fine ordinance, adopted by the Council late last year, which is based on state law and provides for large fines for owners of property obtained through a foreclosure action. The following information was provided this week by Trish Aljoe, who handles code enforcement legal issues out of the Police Department.

Based on the City's ordinance, once a property has been foreclosed and it is not being maintained, the owner (usually a bank or mortgage company) is issued a Notice of Violation requiring them to clean up and secure the property, call for an inspection and obtain a Certificate of Compliance, if they properly perform the clean up. If they fail to complete each of the three steps within the stated time period (30-days or less if based on life-safety or health hazards), they begin to accrue fines of \$1,000 per day until they either obtain the Certificate of Compliance or the fines reach a maximum of \$30,000.

If the property remains in violation, an Administrative Hearing is held and the Hearing Officer determines if the bank violated the ordinance and if the evidence supports that finding (or if a bank representative fails to appear), the accrued fine is imposed and the bank is invoiced. If the bank fails to pay the fine, it is placed as a special assessment lien on the property. Once the \$30,000 amount is imposed by the Hearing Officer, the fines can again begin to accrue in cycles of up to \$30,000.

It is important to note that the ordinance includes "due process" for the property owner. However, because it is not a judicial procedure, it is far speedier and more

result-orientated than the time consuming drafting, filing and serving of legal pleadings, which then results in multiple court appearances (that have to take place in Martinez), in an already overcrowded and backlogged court.

To date, the Code Enforcement Unit has sent approximately eighty-five 85 Notices of Violation, issued approximately eleven 11 Compliance Certificates and confirmed one fine of \$30,000. The Administrative Hearings on imposition of the fines on the remaining properties are now scheduled twice a month, with the next hearing set for April 22nd.

4. **Library Bluegrass at the Point Richmond Branch**

You never know where the Richmond Public Library will be mentioned. The West Side Branch Library's Storytime was mentioned on the California Bluegrass Association website (<http://www.cbaontheweb.org/welcome.asp?welcomeID=1>), as the author, George Martin, attends the storytimes with his grandson:

"I've written before about playing songs for the kids at the Point Richmond Library story hour. This past Tuesday I arrived with my grandson and my guitar and Miss Sheila wasn't there; there was another librarian, and she had a guitar propped up in the corner. Not a typical librarian sort of nylon string guitar, but a dreadnaught.

I introduced myself as Cassens' Grandpa George and explained that Miss Sheila lets me sing a song between stories each week. She said, "I think I recognize you. Are you a bluegrass player?"

Son of a gun, she turned out to be Highway One banjo player Jonathan Schiele's wife, Christina. So we ended up playing several children's songs together. Christina said she likes to play live music for children so they know people make music; it doesn't just come out of a TV or radio.

I couldn't agree more."

Christina Nypaver and Sheila Dickinson are both Children's Librarians with the Richmond Public Library.

Now my only question is, "What is 'a *typical librarian sort of* nylon string guitar'?"

5. **Public Works Progress**

The Public Works Department will welcome spring weather next week with its spring paving program starting at Mills Avenue from Shane Drive to the end of the street, and Moyers Road from Alta Mira Drive to Parker Road.

The Parks Division will continue working on turf and irrigation repairs at the North Richmond ballfield and at Shields-Reid Park. Crews will also be resurfacing the basketball courts at Nevin, Atchison, and MLK Parks.

6. **Recreation Highlights**

The following are highlights from the Recreation Department for the current week:

- **Easter**: The Recreation Department is hosting “Breakfast with the Easter Bunny”, \$5.00 for adults and \$3.00 for children 12 & under, on Saturday, April 11th from 8:30 AM to 10:30 AM at the Richmond Recreation Complex. In addition, an Easter egg hunt will be conducted, free of charge. The egg hunts will begin at 8:30 AM and commence every hour. The final egg hunt will begin at 11:30 AM.
- **Recreation Information Day**: The Recreation Department is conducting the Recreation Information Day in conjunction with the Easter Program at the Richmond Recreation Complex on Saturday, April 11, 2009 from 8:30 AM to 12 noon. The staff will be providing information regarding summer programming, offering giveaways and will conduct games and other activities for all ages.