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From: Paul A. Epstein <paulsfo@gmail.com>

To: commissary <commissary@presidiotrust.gov>

Sent: Wed, Oct 23, 2013 9:18 pm

Subject: The PX Proposal is the best choice for the Commissary site.

In 1996 Congress recognized that the Presidio "... is one of America's great natural and historic sites..." when it created the Presidio Trust (the Trust). The legislation further recognized the Presidio's "... significant role in the history of the United States.". Congress sought "... preservation of the cultural and historic integrity of the Presidio for public use."

The Trust was primarily charged with preserving and managing Presidio property in a way to limit the exposure of American taxpayers. The Presidio was to be self-sufficient by 2013. Happily, the Trust achieved financial self-sufficiency well before the target date. While much physical preservation and updating has been carried out while it filled up buildings. Truth be told, for the most part the interpretation of those themes which distinguish the Presidio from all other places on earth has taken a back seat while financial pressures were eased.

The Commissary site is the last significant remaining untouched Presidio parcel. It is centrally located and has unique vistas. It will be at the new crossroads which will be created after the Doyle Drive reconstruction is completed. Visitors will soon be able to walk from the Main Post over the rebuilt highway to the Commissary site then on to Crissy Field, to Fort Point, to the Bridge or elsewhere.

The Lucas Museum and The Sustainability Institute proposals both have extremely ambitious goals. Each anticipates widespread public interest in their programs. Yet, neither proposal has given any explanation of how their program is related to the Presidio, or why it must be located in the Presidio. Yes, they have each admired the beautiful site. But what would either of their programs do to help the Presidio meet its programmatic objectives as a national park?

In April 2013, Golden Gate National Park and the Presidio Trust published the Presidio Interpretive Plan ("the PIP). The PIP has identified the historic and cultural themes uniquely connected to the Presidio which would benefit from new outreach, education and collaborations. The PIP anticipates that National Park Service (NPS), the Trust and the Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy (the Conservancy) will be the three principle partners to implement the PIP's program goals. These three partners are jointly responsible for all the significant "park-like" improvements already in the Presidio. There are too many to list. The Conservancy is largely responsible for projects which include the 100 acre shoreline park at Crissy Field, constructing five Presidio overlooks, ongoing habitat restoration on the Presidio Bluffs, etc., etc.

The Conservancy proposal to construct and operate the PX will be wholly about the Presidio. Undoubtedly, in addition to the PIP, the PX could create many other projects with the NPS and Trust in a new facility. The Conservancy has a proven track record of funding those projects it takes on. It only makes sense for the Trust to continue its long partnership with the Conservancy by accepting the PX proposal.

Paul A. Epstein