

DOLPHIN CLUB  
502 JEFFERSON STREET SAN FRANCISCO CA 94109

**January 12, 2022**

**Comments to SF Board of Supervisors Budget and Finance Committee  
from Ward Bushee, President on File 211133, Dolphin Club lease**

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to talk briefly about the Dolphin Club.

- Run by volunteers, the historic club has been in San Francisco for 145 years. To give you some idea of our long history, two of our active wooden boats were in our boat house before the last pandemic in 1918. Dolphins were swimming the Golden Gate well before the bridge was built.
- In the bigger picture of recreation in San Francisco, the Dolphin Club and neighboring South End Rowing Club are unique and special places. Aquatic Park originally was envisioned by city leaders as the seashore for all San Franciscans.
- The club offers everybody a place to enjoy the Bay with access to locker rooms, showers and saunas. Our club house includes a galley, small gym and a big panoramic space that gives our community a living room with world-class views of Alcatraz, the Golden Gate, Marin and beyond.
- We have swim, boating and fitness programs, social events and we coordinate closely with the South End Club for competitions and joint gatherings. As always, we are committed to working with our neighbor on issues that affect both clubs.
- Six days a week our clubs are open to the public to swim and use their facilities. I was a day-user who became a member like many others. Members can also bring in guests.
- The Dolphin Club now has over 1800 members and we've had a spurt of growth during the pandemic for people looking for the unique healthy, outdoor exercise we provide.
- The Dolphin Youth Swim Fund, founded in 1996, is currently planning to fund Presidio YMCA afterschool swim lessons for underserved youth and lifeguard training for teens transitioning out of Foster care, and the Boys and Girls Clubs of SF as they ramp up with their Learn to Swim, Transitional and Swim Team programs
- The club is currently in the planning and fund-raising stage of repairing and upgrading the clubhouse, a \$2.75 million project.

- In reopening, we met the requirements for the Department of Health Covid Order. Those who use our indoor facilities are 100 percent fully vaccinated and most of them boosted.
- COVID also had an economic impact on our members; the Dolphin Club has had a financial aid program since the early 2010s that provides up to 2 quarters aid over a two year period for members of 2 years standing or longer who are experiencing financial hardship. During the pandemic, because some members experienced increased financial difficulty for a longer period due to highly-impacted work sectors, we increased the allowance to 4 quarters over 2 years, and increased the allocation in the budget accordingly. We will sustain this higher level until we see a reduction in need among applicants and recognize that the pandemic may require further augmentation to our program. In 2021, we awarded aid to 33 members.

In 2021, we also adjusted our membership billing to reduce the initial cost of becoming a member by making quarterly payment available upon entry. This allows easier access to the club to determine whether it is a good fit with less financial commitment up front.

- This lease is very similar to the South End lease that was passed by the Board of Supervisors in 2019.

From all of us at the Dolphin Club, again, thank you for the new lease and new term. I will be joined on this call by past president Diane Walton, and member and attorney Clint Callan who have guided the club through the lease process. We would be glad to answer any questions you might have.



File 211133  
Dolphin Club  
lease

Rec & Park and  
Sup. Stefani  
know all, but  
I'm glad to  
answer any  
questions!

Diane Walton

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