

Wong, Jocelyn (BOS)

From: Cynthia Zamboukos <czamboukos.sfic@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, November 9, 2018 10:45 AM
To: Cynthia Zamboukos (cynthiaz@sfinterfaithcouncil.org)
Cc: Michael G. Pappas
Subject: File No. 180993 and No. 180997 (450 O'Farrell Street Church and Housing Project)
Attachments: Board of Supervisors Letter 11-9-2018.pdf

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Dear President Cohen and Supervisors,

Attached please find the San Francisco Interfaith Council's letter in support of the 450 O'Farrell Street Church and Housing Project - Fifth Church of Christ, Scientist referenced in the subject line above.

Sincerely,

Michael G. Pappas, M.Div.

Executive Director



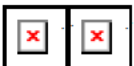
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San Francisco Interfaith Council

*Celebrating our diverse faiths & spiritual traditions
Bringing people together to build understanding
Serving our community*

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Executive Director

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Swami Vedananda
Vedanta Society

Dr. Mary Wardell
University of San Francisco

Dr. Sally Wei
Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation

November 9, 2018

The Honorable Malia Cohen, President
and Members of the San Francisco Board of Supervisors
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place
City Hall, Room 244
San Francisco, CA 94102-4689

RE: File No. 180993 and No. 180997 (450 O'Farrell Street Church and Housing Project)

Dear President Cohen and Supervisors:

We are writing today on an item that is of vital importance to our communities of faith and to the achievement of San Francisco's housing goals.

The San Francisco Interfaith Council supports the work of religious institutions to better serve their communities and we support the building of new housing on their underutilized properties. The project of Fifth Church of Christ, Scientist, thoughtfully achieves both goals, and 172 units of housing would be created, where none exist now.

For the past 35 years, Fifth Church has rigorously followed all of the processes established by the City. Then, after the Fifth Church project received the final Planning Commission approval, SF Heritage demanded a payment of \$1.5 million. Not receiving this amount, SF Heritage filed an appeal with the Board of Supervisors, to enforce their demand.

Is this the process envisioned by CEQA? Is this a process of which the great City of San Francisco can be proud? Are houses of worship just bricks, just material structures? Or can there be an appreciation – like right now – of their abilities to love in the presence of hate, of their encouragement to love one another, of their role in shining the light to move forward, together, in a progressive way?

The City has been encouraging religious institutions to repurpose their underutilized property for housing. But it's difficult to encourage houses of worship to engage in this process and create housing that is so desperately needed if they are going to be constantly met with obstacles and roadblocks at every stage of the process. The San Francisco Interfaith Council stands ready to work with you to make the City process function in a fair, common sense, and efficient way.

A critical issue at this point is that the legal civil rights of houses of worship in San Francisco, including Fifth Church, have been systematically and intentionally disregarded throughout the City processes for communities of faith and their housing



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projects. Civil rights under the Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act have not been respected.

With regard to your present consideration of the SF Heritage appeal, we respectfully call your attention to the legal opinion in your packet - written by Storzer and Associates, a well-regarded religious-liberty law firm - which says in part that: "Requiring the Church to pay \$1.5 million as a mitigation would greatly jeopardize the Church's ability to rebuild in accordance with its religious needs. ... Courts have found that municipalities can substantially burden religious exercise by acting in a manner that creates significant 'delay, uncertainty, and expense' for a church." If the Board of Supervisors grants the SF Heritage appeal and imposes their financial demand, "...the Board of Supervisors and the City and County of San Francisco would violate the Church's civil rights as protected by the federal Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act of 2000, 42 U.S.C. s.s. 2000cc *et seq.*, and the Free Exercise Clause of the United States Constitution."

We stand with Fifth Church in demonstration of our civil rights as communities of faith. We stand together with our Brothers and Sisters at Fifth Church of Christ, Scientist.

We urge you to reject the SF Heritage appeal and their financial demand and delays, and to restore a sense of trust and fairness to the City process.

Respectfully,

Michael Pappas, M.Div.
Executive Director of the San Francisco Interfaith Council

FIRST CHURCH OF CHRIST, SCIENTIST

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File No 180997

November 3, 2018

Hand Delivered

Honorable Malia Cohen, President
and Members of the San Francisco Board of Supervisors
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place
City Hall, Room 244
San Francisco, CA 94102-4689

Dear President Cohen and Members of the Board of Supervisors:

The purpose of this letter is to urge you to deny the appeal by San Francisco Heritage of Planning Commission approval of the proposed 450 O'Farrell redevelopment proposal.

As indicated throughout the lengthy City approval process, including CEQA historic resources analysis, this redevelopment proposal will significantly benefit the Tenderloin community.

Please expeditiously deny this last minute appeal and allow the developer to proceed. This proposal has had years of community review, and the developer has been responsive to community input.

Sincerely,

Katherine C. Agnew

Katherine C. Agnew
President

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