

1 [Preparation of Findings to Reverse Final Environmental Impact Report Certification - 1111
2 California Project - The Masonic Center Renovation Project]

3 **Motion directing the Clerk of the Board to prepare findings reversing the certification**
4 **by the Planning Commission of the Final Environmental Impact Report for The Masonic**
5 **Center Renovation Project at 1111 California Street.**

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7 WHEREAS, The project site is located at 1111 California Street, at the southwest
8 corner of California and Taylor Streets, in the Nob Hill neighborhood. The project block is
9 bounded by California, Taylor, Pine, and Jones Streets. The Masonic Center is an existing
10 assembly and entertainment venue that includes a 3,166-seat auditorium,
11 conference/exhibition space, 565-space underground parking garage, a small loading dock
12 area mid-block on Pine Street, and cultural facilities and offices of the Masons of California.
13 The Masonic Center contains approximately 325,093 square feet of floor area; and

14 WHEREAS, The proposed project (“Project”) includes the renovation and
15 modernization of the existing Auditorium and ground-floor California Room, Exhibition Hall,
16 and catering kitchen. The existing fixed seating area on the main floor of the Auditorium would
17 be removed and replaced with four tiered floor levels to allow for flexible audience and seating
18 configurations on the main floor. The fixed seating on the second floor Auditorium balcony
19 would not change. New lighting and sound systems would be installed in the Auditorium and
20 the existing stage would be replaced. The ground-floor California Room would be renovated,
21 and the Exhibition Hall would be upgraded, including renovations to the existing ceiling. The
22 existing catering kitchen on the ground floor would be renovated and upgraded to a full
23 commercial kitchen. Approximately 12,500 square feet of existing on-site publicly accessible
24 and private open space would be used occasionally during the daytime hours for refreshment
25 and break areas by patrons attending events at the Masonic Center; and

1 WHEREAS, The number of large events (those for over 250 attendees) would increase
2 from an existing maximum of 230 to an estimated annual maximum of 315 events, an
3 increase of about 85 large events per year; and the maximum number of event attendees
4 within the Auditorium would increase from 3,166 up to a maximum of 3,300 at a sold-out event
5 with general admission, an increase of 134 attendees per event; and

6 WHEREAS, The Planning Department determined that an environmental impact report
7 was required for the Project and prepared an Initial Study/Notice of Preparation of an
8 Environmental Impact Report ("IS/NOP") on October 12, 2012. The NOP was circulated for
9 public comment and review; and

10 WHEREAS, On April 17, 2013, the Department published the Draft Environmental
11 Impact Report ("DEIR") for the Project (Planning Department Case No. 2011.0471E); and

12 WHEREAS, The Planning Commission held a duly advertised public hearing on the
13 DEIR, on May 23, 2013, at which time opportunity for public comment was provided on the
14 DEIR, and written comments were received through June 3, 2013; and

15 WHEREAS, The Department prepared responses to comments received at the public
16 hearing on the DEIR and submitted in writing to the Department, prepared revisions to the text
17 of the DEIR, and published a Comments and Responses Document on October 31, 2013; and

18 WHEREAS, A Final Environmental Impact Report ("FEIR") for the Project was
19 prepared by the Department, consisting of the DEIR, any consultations and comments
20 received during the review process, any additional information that became available and the
21 Comments and Responses document, all as required by law; and

22 WHEREAS, On November 14, 2013, the Planning Commission reviewed and
23 considered the FEIR and, by Motion No. 19019, found that the contents of said report and the
24 procedures through which the FEIR was prepared, publicized and reviewed complied with the
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1 provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (“CEQA”), the State CEQA Guidelines,
2 and Chapter 31 of the San Francisco Administrative Code; and

3 WHEREAS, By Motion No. 19019 the Commission found the FEIR to be adequate,
4 accurate and objective, reflected the independent judgment and analysis of the Department
5 and the Commission and that the Comments and Responses document contained no
6 significant revisions to the DEIR, adopted findings relating to significant impacts associated
7 with the Project and certified the completion of the FEIR in compliance with CEQA and the
8 State CEQA Guidelines; and

9 WHEREAS, By letter to the Clerk of the Board of Supervisors dated December 13,
10 2013, from Jay Wallace, on behalf of the Coalition for San Francisco Neighborhoods, the Nob
11 Hill Neighbors, and Mrs. Berit Muh (collectively “Appellants”) filed an appeal of the FEIR to the
12 Board of Supervisors; and

13 WHEREAS, On January 14, 2014, this Board held a duly noticed public hearing to
14 consider the appeal of the FEIR certification filed by Appellant; and

15 WHEREAS, This Board has reviewed and considered the FEIR, the appeal letters, the
16 responses to concerns documents that the Planning Department prepared, the other written
17 records before the Board of Supervisors, and heard testimony and received public comment
18 regarding the adequacy of the FEIR; and

19 WHEREAS, The FEIR files and all correspondence and other documents have been
20 made available for review by this Board and the public. These files are available for public
21 review by appointment at the Planning Department offices at 1650 Mission Street, and are
22 part of the record before this Board by reference in this Motion; now, therefore, be it

23 MOVED, That this Board directs the Clerk of the Board to prepare findings specifying
24 the basis for its reversal of the certification of the FEIR by the Planning Commission.
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