



The MARA News

Summer 2017 Edition

Montecito Area Residents' Association

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San Rafael, CA 94915-0266

Montecito.residents@gmail.com

<http://www.montecitoresidents.com>

<http://montecito.nextdoor.com>

Facebook: "Montecito Area Residents Association"

In the event of an emergency call 911. For noise issues, call the SRPD at 485-3000

Now is the time to join MARA. To become a MARA Member or renew your annual membership, please send your name, address, telephone number, and email address along with a \$10 check per person (\$5 for seniors) payable to "Montecito Area Residents Association," to MARA P.O. Box 150266, San Rafael, CA 94915-0366.

You are invited....

On Tuesday, August 1, 2017, neighborhoods throughout San Rafael are joining forces with communities nationwide for the "34th Annual National Night Out" (NNO) crime and drug prevention event. This is San Rafael's sixth time participating in this event, and the first time for MARA to sponsor a gathering.



WHO: Montecito Area Residents

WHAT: A pot-luck dinner

WHEN: Tuesday, Aug. 1, 6:00 pm

WHERE: 208 Union St. (corner of Belle)

HOW: Food, music

WHY: Get to know your neighbors!

MARA'S ACTIVITIES DURING THE PAST 12 MONTHS

MARA keeps track of major and minor issues in our neighborhood—or nearby which might affect our neighborhood. The following is not comprehensive, but some of the major issues we have been involved with in the past 12 months:

On-going: enhanced communications with the neighborhood, using NextDoor.com, Facebook, the MARA web site, and emails—in addition to the Newsletter—to advise neighbors about things going on in our neighborhood which we think you would like to know about.

On-going: responded to specific complaints/ issues brought up by individual neighbors, and tried to help them communicate with appropriate people in City Hall.

On-going: MARA gave the City of San Rafael **input on specific projects** that affect our neighborhood. For example, MARA Board members attended meetings and wrote letters to the City regarding the relocation of the Marin Transit Center (bus station). We also advocated that the City NOT agree to the permanent closure of Fifth St. to all vehicle, pedestrian, and bike traffic, which was Golden Gate Transit's favored plan. (This part of the plan has now been abandoned.)

On-going: San Rafael High School: MARA Board members attended and participated on the school's site facilities meetings, the new stadium committee, and more, supporting the neighborhood on issues such as noise, traffic, parking, and building design. (See more on page 3.)

On-going: Parking: MARA has been advocating for the neighborhood regarding the parking situation (overflow parking from commercial stores, SMART, Golden Gate Transit, and even downtown.) One of the MARA Board members is on a City committee which is working with a consultant who did research and wrote a report about Parking and Wayfinding in downtown San Rafael. The City has agreed to take another look at the idea of residential parking permits.

Dominican Student Housing: Dominican University will be leasing the new 15 unit development at Mission and Irwin for student housing for 5 years. MARA asked a representative of the University to meet to learn about their plans for security and oversight. (See more on page 5.)

Marin Shakespeare Company purchasing the old Heller building on Fourth St. to open a theater. MARA attended meetings and wrote letters regarding parking, hours of operation, etc. (See more pg 5.)

Measure E funds: MARA Board members have participated on a committee which is overseeing the use of Measure E funds to replace or remodel all of the fire stations and police facilities, and the City's Emergency Operations Center.

SHOPPING CARTS – AND MORE

If someone has left a shopping cart in the neighborhood, please call the store where it came from:

Whole Foods: (415) 451-6333. **Trader Joe's:** (415) 454-9530. **Rite Aid:** (415) 457-7744.

Tuesday Morning: (415) 453-9816. **Petco:** (415) 457-5262.

If there is trash on public property – the street or sidewalk – please call the city's Department of Public Works: at (415) 485-3355. The DPW will pick up trash on Mondays.

GROUNDBREAKING CELEBRATION FOR NEW FIRE STATION

On Tuesday, June 6, a ceremony was held to start construction of the new Fire Station No. 52—the station in our neighborhood—at the corner of Third and Union streets. MARA was represented by Jackie Schmidt, local resident, member of our Board of Directors, and a member of the Measure E Oversight Committee.



Jackie Schmidt with Mayor Gary Phillips and Fire Chief Chris Gray



Jackie, the Mayor, the Fire Chief and other dignitaries



Sign showing architect's drawing of new Fire Station 52

Construction of Fire Station 52 is expected to be finished in 2018. Meanwhile, Station 52's fire and paramedic services have been relocated two blocks away, at 519 Fourth Street. This allows our fire fighters to maintain fast response times to the community.

SAN RAFAEL HIGH SCHOOL STADIUM RENOVATION PROJECT STARTED

Construction for the San Rafael High School Stadium Renovation Project has started, with a completion date scheduled for the Spring of 2018. The project includes replacement of the field lighting system using energy-saving, highly efficient LED replacement fixtures designed to eliminate excess light spill, and a new public address system that will greatly improve the announcement system.

PLEASE NOTE: During the early states of construction, a process called “Lime Treatment” will be used to stabilize the existing soil. During this operation, atmospheric conditions (moisture in the air) can sometimes create steam, which can be mistaken as smoke. This is **not** smoke and the steam is **not toxic**: it is a safe and expected byproduct of the operation. All regulatory agencies have been properly notified of the process.

HOUSING FOR HOMELESS MEN PLANNED FOR PARK STREET

By Constanza Perry

Ms. Christine Paquette, Executive Director of the St. Vincent de Paul Society of Marin County, was the keynote speaker at MARA's Annual Meeting on June 15. She had accepted MARA's invitation to talk about the new housing being planned for homeless men at 119 Park St., and more than 70 people attended the gathering, including San Rafael's Mayor Gary Phillips.

Ms. Paquette told MARA residents that St. Vincent de Paul has a one year lease on the property at 119 Park St., which they intend to rent to six "chronically homeless" men who have housing vouchers, and with whom St. Vincent's has been working with for a long time. There will be a St. Vincent's staff person living on the premises and working with the tenants. There will be rental agreements, and rules for residing there, such as not allowing any other persons to move in.

Ms. Paquette emphasized that none of the new tenants are sex offenders—they are ill. Some of them have jobs, and some of them do not. She said that St. Vincent's will try to help them become more independent, but this housing is intended to be "permanent," not transitional. She said that the

tenants are not expected to have cars, and that probably only one parking space will be used.

Raffi Boloyan, Planning Manager of San Rafael's Planning Division, Andrew Hening, San Rafael's Director of Homeless Planning and Outreach, and Lt. Alan Piomba of San Rafael's Police Department also attended the meeting, and answered many questions about 119 Park St. regarding City oversight or the lack thereof.

- Raffi Boloyan explained, for example, that the City does not permit or regulate such housing: it falls under the same laws that any house falls under where room mates live. The zoning does not require any type of special permit.
- Andrew Hening talked about new programs the City is trying to deal with homelessness, and
- Lt. Piomba made clear that the Police Department is the place to call if there is any sort of illegal activity.

NOTE: The house at 218 Union St.—which is part of the same property and is being renovated—is not involved with the plans to house homeless people.

CERT – Community Emergency Response Team training

If you wish to step beyond preparing your home and reach out to help your community in an emergency, train to be a Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) member. This 18-hour national program will teach you skills to organize and help out in the event of a large scale disaster. To register, call Maggie Lang, Marin County CERT Coordinator at (Wk.) 415-485-3409 or (Cell) 415-279-6529.

SHAKESPEARE COMING TO FOURTH STREET

A representative of the Marin Shakespeare Company met with MARA's Board of Directors on June 2 to explain that the Company had purchased the old Heller's building at 514 Fourth Street in January of 2017, with a Conditional Use Permit from the City of San Rafael to create a Performing Arts Center with a 165-seat indoor theatre, classrooms, administrative offices, and costume and prop repository. In May, Marin Shakespeare completed interior demolition of the former massage business at the east end of the building. This summer, they will be holding classes for youth and adults.

Marin Shakespeare has been making the building available to other groups for meetings including AlterTheatre Ensemble, Ross Valley Players, and the Downtown Streets Team. Once the building has been renovated to meet fire and safety codes, which Marin Shakespeare estimates will be in 2 to 3 years, public performances will be permitted.



Architect's rendering of new theater's lobby

Currently, the company is raising money for renovations and in its summer season at Dominican University's Forest Meadows Amphitheater with performances of *Much Ado About Nothing*, *The Three Musketeers*, and *Love's Labour's Lost* from June 23 through September 25. Marin Shakespeare also provides extension arts education programs in public schools and beyond, as well as Shakespeare in Prison classes in eight California state prisons.

Marin Shakespeare donated tickets which were raffled off at MARA's annual meeting, for which we thank them very much.

DOMINICAN UNIVERSITY LEASING 15-UNIT APARTMENT BUILDING AT MISSION AND IRWIN FOR STUDENT HOUSING

Dominican University will be leasing the new 15-unit development at Mission and Irwin for student housing for 5 years. MARA asked a representative of the University to meet to learn about their plans for security and oversight.

On March 2, Ms. Hanna Rodriguez-Farrah, the Vice President for Public Affairs for Dominican University, met with MARA and explained that the expectation is that there will be 75 students living there—5 each per unit. She said that the students eligible to rent the units would be graduate students, and that the University's security company (Barbier) will add patrols to the property to its rotation. (If there are problems you can call Barbier at 415-747-8473.) The complex does have off-street parking for each unit.



The SMART Train is coming to Marin, and so are Quiet Zones. You may have been hearing train horns recently during testing. In response to community concerns about noise the San Rafael and Novato City Councils established a Quiet Zone. As SMART begins preview service, it's important to be aware:

THE HORN WILL NOT BLOW AT RAILROAD CROSSINGS

- The train will only sound the horn as it leaves a station or in the event of an emergency. Please talk to your family and neighbors about using extreme caution around the railroad tracks.
- The horn will not blow at any intersection in Marin. San Rafael and Novato have worked with SMART to install all the required safety improvements at all the rail crossings.

FOR YOUR SAFETY

- Never walk on railroad tracks. SMART operates an active railroad and walking on the tracks is illegal.
- Use designated railroad crossings only. Wait for the bells and flashing lights to stop and for the gate to rise completely before crossing railroad tracks.
- Be prepared to stop at railroad crossings. Slow down, look both ways and listen for warning signals.
- When driving, never stop on the tracks and never race a train.

For valuable train safety tips, visit BeTrackSmart.org
