INFORMATIONAL MEMORANDUM

TO: Agency Commissioners
FROM: Fred Blackwell, Executive Director
SUBJECT: Media Clippings from 8/7/09 to 8/26/09

Enclosed is a collection of newspaper and media clippings from the past month that refer to the Redevelopment Agency or an Agency-related project or program.

(Originated by Gia Casteel-Brown, Executive Assistant)

Fred Blackwell
Executive Director

YERBA BUENA:


Attachment 2: SF Business Times: “Moscone Center Makeover Gets Set to Begin First Phase”, August 21, 2009
Moscone Center makeover gets set to begin first phase

San Francisco Business Times - by Sarah Duxbury

Moscone Center is laying the foundation for its much-needed makeover.

The aging star of San Francisco’s convention business desperately needs major work to remain competitive in the meetings world.

Bids to replace the moveable airwalls in Hall E, a 60,000-square-foot room that can be subdivided into six smaller spaces, came in last week. Next, design firms will bid for the contract to devise the palette and look for Hall E, and thus for the eventual top-to-bottom renovation of Moscones North and South.

“This is a great time to get work like this done because it is so competitive,” said Joe D’Alessandro, president and CEO of the San Francisco Convention & Visitors Bureau. In all, it will cost up to $2.5 million to renovate Hall E — less than the CVB had anticipated.

The first major work will start during the usually-dead period around Christmas and New Year’s and will continue in fits and spurts during vacant weeks over the next 18 months. 2010 is not expected to be a strong convention year for San Francisco.

Project funds will come from the Tourism Improvement District, which began in January and assesses all downtown hotels a 1.5 percent fee on each hotel stay; less central hotels are assessed 1 percent.

The renovation of the whole of Moscone will take about five years and will cost between $70 million and $80 million for aesthetic and infrastructure upgrades, D’Alessandro said. The TID is expected to provide about $45 million of that, and the city will provide about $35 million. Once complete, the new Moscone will go for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design certification.

Separately, the Convention and Visitors Bureau board of trustees approved funds to hire San Francisco firm Economics Research Associates to study the return on investment of a proposed expansion of Moscone Center across Third Street to 680 Folsom St.

That feasibility study should be complete in 10 to 12 weeks.

sduxbury@bizjournals.com / (415) 288-4963

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Mexican Museum gets $280K from S.F.

San Francisco Business Times

The San Francisco Redevelopment Agency has signaled its ongoing support of the Mexican Museum with more dollars.

The San Francisco agency has granted $280,000 to the embattled institution, which has for over a decade struggled to raise enough money and support to open a new museum in the Yerba Buena Redevelopment Area.

San Francisco Arts Commission will manage $250,000 of the grant; the Mexican Museum will retain $30,000 for its operations and to work with consultants. Together they will work on pre-development plans for a museum adjacent to Jessie Square.

The failure of the Mexican Museum to make progress all these years has been a dim spot on the emerging Yerba Buena Cultural Area; this museum is the final, unfinished piece of the redevelopment.

The Arts Commission will require the museum to meet specific performance milestones related to fundraising, facility planning, membership and building a board of trustees.

Earlier hopes to build a standalone building have been abandoned. The current vision calls for incorporating the Mexican Museum into a mixed-use development at 706 Mission St. by JMA Ventures and Millennium Partners.

"The Mexican Museum is elated at the unanimous approval by the San Francisco Redevelopment Commissioners for the release of these funds to give us the impetus to move forward and kick off our revival fundraising," said Mario Diaz, co-chair of the Mexican Museum's board of trustees.

Nelson Rockefeller donated thousands of artifacts to the Mexican Museum, and its 12,000-piece collection is highly esteemed. Parts of the collection will be on display at the Palo Alto Arts Center starting Sept. 26.