

London N. Breed  
MAYOR



Bivett Brackett  
CHAIR

Dr. Carolyn Ransom-Scott  
VICE-CHAIR

Vanessa Aquino  
Tamsen Drew  
Kent Lim  
COMMISSIONERS

Thor Kaslofsky  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

**MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE  
COMMISSION ON COMMUNITY INVESTMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE  
OF THE CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO HELD ON THE  
15TH DAY OF OCTOBER 2024**

The members of the Commission on Community Investment and Infrastructure of the City and County of San Francisco met in a regular meeting in person at 1:00 p.m. on the 15<sup>th</sup> day of October 2024.

**REMOTE ACCESS:**

**WATCH LIVE ON SFGOVTV:** <https://sfgovtv.org/ccii>

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Members of the public may provide public comment in-person at the noticed location or remotely via teleconference (detailed instructions available at: <https://sfocii.org/remote-meeting-information>). Members of the public may also submit their comments by email to: [commissionsecretary.ocii@sfgov.org](mailto:commissionsecretary.ocii@sfgov.org); all comments received will be made a part of the official record.

**INSTRUCTIONS FOR PUBLIC COMMENT:**

**DIAL:** 1-415-655-0001      **ENTER ACCESS CODE:** 2661 969 0071      **PRESS # PRESS #**  
**again to enter the call. Press \*3 to submit your request to speak.**

**REGULAR MEETING AGENDA**

**1. Recognition of a Quorum**

Meeting was called to order at 1:21 p.m. by Chair Brackett. Roll call was taken.

Commissioner Aquino - present  
Commissioner Drew - absent  
Commissioner Lim - present  
Vice-Chair Scott - present  
Chair Brackett - present

Commissioner Drew was absent. All other Commissioners were present.

**2. Announcements**

- a) The next regularly scheduled Commission meeting will be held **in person** on Tuesday, November 19, 2024 at 1:00 pm at City Hall in Room 416. The meeting scheduled for Tuesday, November 5th was canceled due to a lack of quorum.

- b) **Announcement of Prohibition of Sound Producing Electronic Devices during the Meeting:**  
Please be advised that the ringing of and use of cell phones, pagers, and similar sound-producing electronic devices are prohibited at this meeting. Please be advised that the Chair may order the removal from the meeting room of any person(s) responsible for the ringing of or use of a cell phone, pager, or other similar sound-producing electronic device.
  
- a) **Announcement of Time Allotment for Public Comments from participants dialing in:**  
Please be advised that a member of the public has up to three minutes to make pertinent public comments on each agenda item unless the Commission adopts a shorter period on any item. It is recommended that members of the public who are attending the meeting in person fill out a "Speaker Card" and submit the completed card to the Commission Secretary. All dial-in participants from the public will be instructed to call a toll-free number and use their touch-tone phones to provide any public comment. Audio prompts will signal to dial-in participants when their audio input has been enabled for commenting.

**PUBLIC COMMENT CALL-IN: 1-415-655-0001 ACCESS CODE: 2661 969 0071**

Secretary Cruz read the instructions for the public to call in.

**3. Report on actions taken at previous Closed Session meeting - None**

**4. Matters of Unfinished Business - None**

**5. Matters of New Business:**

**CONSENT AGENDA** - None

**REGULAR AGENDA** - None

**6. Public Comment on Non-Agenda Items - None**

**7. Report of the Chair**

- a) Commending and expressing appreciation to Oscar James for his devotion and dedication to the Bayview Hunters Point Community and the City and County of San Francisco (Discussion)

Chair Brackett stated that it was an honor to be able to recognize their most esteemed community leader for his service to OCII and the former Redevelopment Agency. A video was shown and then Vice-Chair Scott read Mr. James' biography. Ms. Brackett explained that the video was created as a result of advocacy under the Certificate of Preference (COP) program Subcommittee, which Mr. James currently served on. The series of videos was done along with the Human Rights Commission and were created to preserve the history of the area and in order to recognize members of the community who lived through redevelopment. Ms. Brackett commented that it had now been 60 years since the inception of the COP program and as a result of recent legislation providing over 6,000 replacement units, it would probably be around another 20-30 years to finish the work started.

Vice-Chair Scott read Mr. James' biography. She remembered that during the war and after, it did not matter if a black person had a college degree or not, blacks (or negroes) were told what they would be doing, if they wanted to work. Dr. Scott commended Mr. James for not giving up. She referred to Mr. James as the "historian of Bayview Hunters Point (BVHP)" and recognized that he was still involved with many community organizations and efforts to this day. OCII recognized and honored Mr. James on this day, October 15, 2024.

Mr. Oscar James, native resident BVHP, thanked OCII and staff. He stated that he and his friends, now gone, had started a club in 1955 to share and take care of each other. Those club members were from BVHP, the Western Addition, Dogpatch, Potrero Hill and other communities of color. He recalled that residents of BVHP were suffering from living there due to the toxic chemicals. Mr. James felt strongly that they needed to strengthen the economic base of those communities because it felt like whenever they took two steps forward, they were knocked three steps back. He recognized other members of the community at the meeting, like Dr. Davis (Sheryl Davis, former Executive Director of the San Francisco Human Rights Commission). Mr. James stated that when he started with the Redevelopment Agency in 1968, he was the only black Commissioner but noted that now there were many more Commissioners of color. He commended all the Commissioners for their work and advocated working together to create a thriving community.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Speakers: Lynette Mackey; Dr. Sheryl Davis, former Executive Director of the San Francisco Human Rights Commission; Demetrius Williams, President, SF Hyper Local Building Trades Contractors Collective; Ace Washington, community activist; Daniel Landry, activist in the Western Addition; Latoya Fisher, resident BVHP

Ms. Mackey congratulated Mr. James for his dedication to the community and for fighting for the COP program. She wanted him to know that his work had not been ignored; they were still fighting for it. Ms. Mackey personally thanked Mr. James because she was a displaced resident who received a certificate.

Dr. Davis thanked OCII for taking the time to recognize the two community leaders that day. She thanked Mr. James for always being at the meetings, because sometimes he was the only person in the room looking out for the community. He did not always say much but just his presence meant everything. Dr. Davis thanked him for his dedication and commitment.

Mr. Williams thanked OCII for holding these meetings that stood for and fought for the community and for holding those responsible accountable for their actions. He stated that he was born and raised in BVHP, was a plumbing contractor and still resided there. Mr. Williams stated that it was an honor and a privilege to be around an icon like Mr. James, who was a role model and leader in BVHP and who stands up and continued to fight for his community. He recalled the days in BVHP when doors did not have to be locked and everybody shared what they had and where it was considered a safe place. He thought BVHP was a better place now than it used to be and he thanked Mr. James for his contribution to that.

Mr. Washington stated that he had known Mr. James for over 40 years and wanted to honor him for giving himself the courage to speak out for the community and also for helping with the Western Addition (WA).

Mr. Landry thanked OCII for honoring Mr. James. He stated that Mr. James guided him and inspired him to work on the Fillmore Heritage Center in 2012 and other projects in the WA. He stated that Mr. James was a great historian for the community and area. He also thanked Ace Washington and Dr. Davis for their work as well.

Ms. Fisher thanked OCII for honoring Mr. James for all of his work. She pointed out that Mr. James continued to work to make the community a better place for future generations.

Commissioner Aquino stated it was a privilege and a thrill to be present to honor Mr. James. She could see his passion and commitment to the community and to the City. She felt she had met Mr. James many years prior at some community event. Ms. Aquino stated that she attended High School in the BV and had lived in Dogpatch for 20 years and had seen the community change.

Vice-Chair Scott referred to an old civil rights song which was Give Me My Flowers. She felt that the beauty of that song had been spoken about Mr. James today as mentor, role model, and historian. Dr. Scott was pleased that many younger people of the community had taken the time to call in and be present to recognize the contributions of Mr. James. She promoted getting one of Mr. James' calendars to view the history of BVHP. Dr. Scott stated that she had known Mr. James for a long time, and although he had changed physically, he was still doing the work that mattered.

Commissioner Lim thanked Mr. James for his devotion and commitment to serve the community.

Chair Brackett gave honor to Mr. James for his consistency, his commitment and collection of history and for sharing it with everyone. She felt strongly that history was the roadmap for where to go in the future. However, due to the actions of the Redevelopment Agency, much of the history of San Francisco (SF) was lost forever. Ms. Brackett recalled that when she first joined OCII, there were other Commissioners who were committed to preserving the history, such as of the COP program, which had not only lasted, but expanded so that all community members who were promised the right to return were able to benefit from it. Ms. Brackett extended gratitude for his memories, which had helped to shape the COP program changes and policies, namely being able to remove the barriers to access and distribution of the certificates, sharing what worked and what did not work and advance the descendant bill and the replacement housing bill. She thanked him for his participation in archiving his stories from the Fillmore and BVHP, which had transformed words into actions.

b) Honoring Rev. Arnold Townsend for his distinguished service and outstanding dedication to the Fillmore Community and the City and County of San Francisco (Discussion)

Chair Brackett apologized for not having all the videos available. However, she did have clips from a one-hour video, which she urged everyone to watch. One of the videos was shown. Unfortunately, Rev. Townsend passed away on October 7, 2024. Ms. Brackett read Rev.

Townsend's biography with comments. He spent most of his community work in the Fillmore and served as Chairman of WAPAC (Western Addition Project Area Committee), fighting redevelopment. He also served on many other organizations in the City as well. Ms. Brackett stated that OCII was privileged to celebrate his achievements, honor his legacy and express their deepest gratitude for his contributions to their shared SF history.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Speakers: Dr. Sheryl Davis, former Executive Director of the San Francisco Human Rights Commission; Lynette Mackey; Cornelius Jordan, member of the construction industry in BVHP; Oscar James, BVHP native resident; Erica Scott; Ace Washington, community activist; Howard Smith; Daniel Landry

Dr. Davis thanked OCII for holding and hosting this event. She stated that Mr. Townsend had been a friend for over 30 years and that it was him that brought her to OCII meetings. She described him as a very special person not only for his stories but also his jokes. He gave everything and his life for his community work and had nothing.

Ms. Mackey stated that Rev. Townsend was a neighbor and a friend of hers and that she was honored to be there for his recognition that day. She related that Rev. Townsend helped everyone in the community, including her and she expressed regret that he was not able to be there to receive this honor. Ms. Mackey stated that he would truly be missed and thanked OCII for holding this event.

Mr. Jordan stated that he had not been in SF for very long, but even so, had received much wisdom from both Mr. James and Rev. Townsend. He stated that he felt that there was opportunity and support and he felt strongly that platforms such as OCII, where one could come to speak freely, would not exist without those two leaders. Mr. Jordan was very grateful to them both and thanked OCII for the opportunity to speak.

Mr. James stated that it gave him great pleasure to be able to come before OCII and speak about Rev. Townsend. Rev. Townsend had worked in many districts in the City and County of San Francisco, especially in the Western Addition, and made sure that community member minorities benefitted from his work. Rev. Townsend worked out of his heart and for the people. Mr. James recalled some of the people who were in the videos that were shown and said a word of respect for them. He thanked OCII for their commitment and work.

Erica Scott thanked OCII for hosting this significant honoring of two amazing trailblazers and she was pleased that Mr. James was able to be present for this award. She spoke about his wealth of knowledge about the City and about the history of BVHP. She stated that the video demonstrated the man that they all knew as Rev. Townsend as well as his fight, his dedication and his commitment to the community and to the City. Watching the video and listening to Mr. James was a reminder of what the work was really about, which was the people, the struggle, and working in unity and it was a very humbling moment. She gave an example of how he treated people by asking them what they wanted in their community.

Mr. Washington stated that he had known Rev. Townsend for over 50 years, when they met in 1974. Mr. Washington had a record company and Rev. Townsend was a DJ at KPOO Radio Station and he played his record on the station for the first time. Mr. Washington wanted to name one of the streets in SF as Arnold Townsend Way and he asked OCII for help with this. He described the particular street he wanted to name. Mr. Washington stated that he took over for Rev. Townsend at WAPAC after the Reverend left. He described some of his time with Rev. Townsend and stated that he would be missed.

Mr. Smith stated that he had to come up and speak about Rev. Townsend, who he truly missed. He stated that Rev. Townsend was part of the Fillmore history and a legend and a pillar of the community. His life spoke for him. Mr. Smith stated he was a beneficiary of the mentoring he received from Rev. Townsend. He thanked OCII for acknowledging and honoring Rev. Townsend that day.

Mr. Landry stated he could speak for hours about Rev. Townsend. He documented his life during an interview for a history of the Fillmore. He sent condolences to the family and thanked OCII for honoring Rev. Townsend. Mr. Landry described Rev. Townsend as someone who meant what he said and said what he meant. He recalled working with Rev. Townsend in 2008 on the renaming of Eddy Street in the Fillmore to Marcus Garvey Way. Rev. Townsend was Chair of the CAC at that time and stood with the community to support them. He would truly be missed and was greatly loved.

Vice-Chair Scott stated that the videos were very moving for her because it was about two men who loved God and loved justice and worked for truth and righteousness. She stated that she had been with Rev. Townsend right before he died and they spoke about finding a way to unite and do everything needed to give hope to people. She was honored to have known him and acknowledged the history he helped to create, not just in WA, but in all districts of SF, his persistence for social justice and being a roadmap to the future. She thanked Rev. Townsend and Mr. James for their work in bringing forth righteousness and justice.

Commissioner Aquino had not met Rev. Townsend, but stated that it was evident that he was a great man. She stated that they needed to continue to talk about him and remember him for his work in the Fillmore and in other communities. These stories should be aired on TV, in SF and around the world. Rest in peace, Rev. Townsend.

Chair Brackett wanted to continue this item to the next meeting to be able to play the other video.

Vice-Chair Scott moved to continue this item. She stated that this history should never be lost but should be aired and archived in order to pass this on for future generations. This was about all people in the U.S. and everyone deserved to know the history that belonged to SF.

Commissioner Aquino seconded the motion.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Speakers: Ace Washington, Western Addition activist; Oscar James, native resident BVHP

Mr. Washington supported moving this item to the next meeting so that the public could hear the other videos. He commended OCII for their work that day and agreed with continuing this item. Mr. Washington stated that he was the last director of WAPAC and after it closed down, he wanted to bring WAPAC back. He went to Sacramento to try to recover the records and was told there were no records of it, but he insisted and eventually was given the WAPAC records and returned to SF with them. Mr. Washington stated he was trying to put together an event to honor the late Rev. Townsend at the Honey Art Studio which was across the street from the former WAPAC building. He asked OCII for their help with this.

Mr. James stated that he was in support of this motion.

Vice-Chair Scott motioned to continue Item 7(b) and Commissioner Aquino seconded that motion.

Secretary Cruz called for a voice vote on Item 7(b).

Commissioner Aquino - yes  
Commissioner Drew - absent  
Commissioner Lim - yes  
Vice-Chair Scott - yes  
Chair Brackett - yes

**ADOPTION:** IT WAS VOTED BY FOUR COMMISSIONERS WITH ONE ABSENCE THAT THE MOTION TO CONTINUE ITEM 7(B) FOR THE NEXT MEETING, BE ADOPTED.

### **8. Report of the Executive Director**

Executive Director Kaslofsky stated that he had been working with Mr. James for nearly 20 years. They had met when Mr. Kaslofsky was the Assistant Project Manager for BVHP/HPS (Hunters Point Shipyard) working for the Redevelopment Agency and Mr. James told Mr. Kaslofsky to let him know if he needed anything. Mr. Kaslofsky stated that he spent half his working life in the community working with Mr. James and community members during that period. He remarked that nobody ever said a bad word about Mr. James and, on the contrary, everyone had great respect for him. He was very pleased that they were able to honor both Mr. James and Rev. Townsend that day.

### **9. Commissioners Questions and Matters**

Commissioner Aquino emphasized the importance of getting these stories of SF history out in the media, especially for the younger generations.

Vice-Chair Scott invited everyone to some birthday cake from Commissioner Aquino and her birthday celebrations.

Chair Brackett informed everyone that the crane that they saw at the HPS was built by Mr. James' grandfather. She announced that they would be celebrating the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the HPS artists on Saturday, October 19, by lighting the crane with an illumination event from 6-10pm. Ms. Brackett announced that the HP Open Studios and artists would be holding their annual event as well.

Chair Brackett announced the opening of a new studio, Sunbelt Art Studios, on Third Street, with a master coffee roaster, Aftermath Coffee, and suggested everyone come by for a morning cup of coffee.

Chair Brackett announced the opening of a new café at India Basin. She stated that En2Action was selected to be the primary community development organization to operate the new café, which would be run by two different chefs and operators.

Chair Brackett announced that the previous week she had attended a gathering for Rev. Townsend at the Sheba Lounge and that there were about 100 people, including his daughter and son. Ms. Brackett wanted to adjourn this meeting with a minute of peace and silence in respect of the passing of Rev. Townsend.

#### **10. Closed Session - None**

Mr. James stated that he must have missed Item 6, but he wanted to announce the opening of a new park with a ribbon-cutting event to be held on Saturday, October 19, at the Old Chinese Boatyard from 11-4 pm, sponsored by SF Park & Rec. He described some of the activities at the event and invited everyone to come to support this. Mr. James was trying to put together a class for youth on the area history.

Chair Brackett asked Executive Director Kaslofsky to contact the SF Department of Park & Rec for more information on this event and for any written notice that could be distributed.

#### **11. Adjournment**

Chair Brackett called for one minute of silence in honor of the late Rev. Arnold Townsend.

Vice-Chair Scott motioned to adjourn and Commissioner Aquino seconded that motion.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:12 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

  
Jaimie Cruz  
Commission Secretary