

# San Francisco Yacht Club Project Update 11/22/16



**November 22, 2016:** As has been reported, The San Francisco Yacht Club's application to replace the Cove House with a new Regatta Center went through an initial hearing before the Belvedere Planning Commission last month. Contrary to recent news articles, the meeting was productive, and it resulted in good feedback from the community and the Commission. The Commission did not take a vote other than to agree to the Club's request that the Commission continue the hearing to its next meeting to consider revised plans.

**On 11/15/16 The SFYC received full Planning Commission approval for the project. There are 2 items in the approval that require City Council approval and it is expected these items will go before the Council in early December. Once approved The SFYC can then submit to BCDC for approval of the bridge portion of the project.**

**What has changed?** The Club was informed on the date of the October 18 Planning Commission hearing that the City had given the Club incorrect information on FEMA flood elevation requirements that the Club had relied upon in developing its plans, and that the FEMA required building base elevation actually is 11' above sea level rather than 13'. Two feet may not sound like much, but when coupled with additional modifications to our plans, it allows us to reduce the overall building height significantly, as well as to avoid what would have been costly site preparation work to raise the foundation and adjoining areas above the present grade level.

The net result is a building that is 3 to 4 feet lower than what was in last month's plans, as well as a lower fence and a softer transition between the new building and the street. The building and decks are oriented toward the Club and harbor to minimize exposure to light and noise, preserve existing view corridors, and to meet flood zone requirements.

**Does the city benefit from this project? Yes!** As noted previously, our plans include removing the high hedge along the Beach Road corner and replacing it with a public sidewalk – on the Club's land and at the club's expense – that will be dedicated to the City of Belvedere upon completion. The City of Belvedere Traffic Safety Committee unanimously approved and endorsed our plan as "a big improvement to traffic and pedestrian safety." We want to make this happen, but it can't get done without the new building.

**The Club is not expanding.** A handful of objectors have claimed that the Club is planning to expand and to pay for it by hosting more weddings and other social events for non-members. That just isn't true, and those claims have no basis in fact. Our membership numbers have been stable for many years, the Club is financially strong, and we have no plans to grow or to change our orientation as a yacht club. The Club does not intend to hold more events, bigger events or different kinds of events, and by agreement with the City we will actually be reducing our overall event capacity upon approval of this project. We simply want a better place to do what we already do. Local residents are improving their homes, and we want to improve our home as well. The yacht club is an integral part of our community; approximately 50% of our Regular Membership consists of Belvedere & Tiburon households, and our project benefits all.

**What about parking?** Two separate parking and traffic studies commissioned by the Club and by the Belvedere Land Company have concluded that the Club's parking capacity and parking management are adequate. The San Francisco Yacht Club has the largest parking lot in Belvedere, we are the only facility in town with code-compliant parking capacity, and when we host a significant event we arrange for additional off-site parking to meet demand. The Club's own operational rules mandate that each event at the Club include a parking plan to handle anticipated parking needs, and earlier this year we were proud to host a national championship youth regatta for more than 300 young sailors with a parking plan that went flawlessly.

**The Cove House is not a historical building.** It's just an old house that's outlived its usefulness, and the cost of needed repairs exceeds the value of the structure. The Belvedere Historic Preservation Committee studied the building and concluded that it has no historic significance and is not eligible for historical listing. And contrary to popular rumor, the building was not barged over from the Panama-Pacific Exhibition; an independent investigation confirmed that it was built on-site with scrap lumber, and it has been remodeled many times over the years such that it lacks any integrity that might make it eligible for historical listing.

**About the design.** Our new building will be up to date, but its architectural features include elements of the First Bay Tradition exemplified by the Farr Cottages and Belvedere Land Company buildings, and its size and scale are compatible with the other buildings in the neighborhood. The highest point of the Club's proposed new building is 28 feet above grade, as compared to the Land Company building and apartments across the street (40 feet), the Pacific Motor Boat Club building (40 feet), and the Farr Cottages (30 feet).

**Want to know more?** The San Francisco Yacht Club is proud to have been an integral part of the Belvedere community for ninety years, and we want to work with the entire community in continuing to maintain Belvedere as one of the best places in the world to live. The complete planning file is open for inspection at City Hall, but please contact us and we'll be happy to show you around and answer your questions. Please feel free to contact Ed Lynch, [Commodore@sfyc.org](mailto:Commodore@sfyc.org) or General Manager Steve DePetro, [steve@sfyc.org](mailto:steve@sfyc.org) or by calling 415-435-9133.