

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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SF Mayor Newsom Rebuked for Endorsing Proposed Presidio Art Museum

A resolution* criticizing San Francisco Mayor Gavin Newsom for endorsing the controversial Fisher Art Museum proposed for the historic Main Post of the Presidio of San Francisco was passed unanimously yesterday by members of a newly created advisory group.

The Presidio Neighborhood Representative Work Group was created in June by the San Francisco Board of Supervisors to study and comment upon the Presidio Trust's proposals in cooperation with the City Planning Department and City Attorney's office. Members include representatives of various neighborhood associations and the Sierra Club.

On July 9, Mayor Newsom and Director of Cultural Affairs Luis Cancel sent a joint letter/email** from "info@CAMPToday.org" on Fisher's Contemporary Art Museum of the Presidio (CAMP) letterhead, strongly endorsing the museum and asking recipients to "Join us in supporting CAMP" by promoting the proposal at a public meeting on July 14. Newsom's letter urged readers to "Visit www.CAMPToday.org and send an online letter to the Presidio Trust expressing your support for CAMP." The pro-CAMP website is registered to political consultant Alex Tourk, who told a Presidio Historical Association member that he is working for museum sponsor Donald Fisher.

Mayor Newsom was booed by hundreds of attendees at the Presidio Trust's open meeting on Monday, July 14 after he spoke in favor of the Fisher museum. Hundreds of people were locked out of that meeting by fire marshals due to insufficient seating capacity.

In its resolution, the Neighborhood Work Group said that, "Mayor Gavin Newsom has, by his [pro-Fisher Museum] letter, inappropriately exercised his influence on the City agencies, and undermined the Board of Supervisors' legislation creating the...Working Group by prejudging the issues they are to report and comment on, thereby jeopardizing the outcome of the otherwise independent report and comments by the City agencies."

Last night, the Presidio Trust's Chief of Planning Projects and Programs, Michael Boland, addressed members of the public at a meeting of the San Francisco Planning Commission regarding the Trust's plans for new construction. Attendees spoke to the Commission regarding alternative sites for the museum. Because the Presidio is a national park, the City and County of San Francisco lack jurisdiction over developments there. Adjacent neighborhood residents have expressed serious concerns over locating a large museum with no relevance to the historic Presidio nearby as well as negative impacts related to transportation, transit and parking for visitors.

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2 Attachments: Resolution, Mayor Newsom's CAMP endorsement letter

*RESOLUTION As passed 7/17/08 unanimously

WHEREAS, the Presidio Neighborhood Representative Working Group was established by Resolution of the Board of Supervisors to comment on and report to the Board of Supervisors and the Presidio Trust on the Trust's building plans for the Presidio, including its proposed construction of a contemporary art museum, an equally large hotel and a multiplex movie theater there; and

WHEREAS, that legislation also provides that the City Planning Department, with the City Attorney's Office's assistance, likewise comment and report, and assist the Presidio Neighborhood Representative Group in its report and comment; and

WHEREAS, on July 8, 2008, Mayor Newsom sent a letter stating his support and urging everyone else to support the Presidio Trust's building plans, notwithstanding that: (a) the public comment period set by the Presidio Trust has not yet closed, which comments would have informed a decision of whether or not to support the Trust's building plans, and (b) notwithstanding that neither of the City Planning Department, the City Attorney's Office nor the Representative Working Group has only just begun to work on their comments and reports.

IT IS THEREFORE RESOLVED THAT: Mayor Gavin Newsom has, by his letter, inappropriately exercised his influence on the City agencies, and undermined the Board of Supervisors' legislation creating the Presidio Neighborhood Representative Working Group by prejudging the issues they are to report and comment on, thereby jeopardizing the outcome of the otherwise independent report and comments by the City agencies.

**-----MAYOR GAVIN NEWSOM LETTER ENDORSING FISHER ART MUSEUM

From: "Mayor Gavin Newsom & Director Luis R. Cancel" <info@CAMPToday.org>
Date: July 9, 2008 10:51:14 AM PDT
To:
Subject: Join us in supporting CAMP!
Reply-To: Contemporary Art Museum of the Presidio <info@CAMPToday.org>
CAMPToday.org

Dear Friends,

This is a city that is struggling to provide enough support for our children, enough support for our parks and enough support for our artists.

Now we have a chance to support a tremendous new educational facility, museum and arts educational resource in the Presidio that will nurture our children while creating an exceptional new resource for our own urban national park.

That's why we are asking you to join us in supporting the Contemporary

Art Museum of the Presidio (CAMP). An extraordinary art museum and educational facility built completely through private funding, CAMP will house over 1000 works by some of the world's most noted contemporary artists and attract the very best traveling collections from around the world.

CAMP will be more than the world-class art collection inside the museum – it will be just as much about improving and preserving the rich tradition of the Presidio on the outside. From greening the parade grounds to rehabilitating historic buildings, CAMP will help transform the Main Post into a focal point for cultural and educational activities.

Ultimately museums are educational institutions – and they are designed to teach and inspire. This museum will include extraordinary hands-on art, ceramic and photography studios so families from around the city and the region will be able to come and not only see art – but make art and experience art, in one of the world's most beautiful settings. And this museum is exactly the kind of educational resource we need to help make sure all of our school children receive a complete arts and cultural education.

This is the type of cultural investment we need in San Francisco – an investment that continues to enhance our city as a capital of inspiration and innovation, an investment that reinforces San Francisco as a cultural tourist destination supporting thousands of jobs in the hotel, restaurant and retail sectors – but we need your help to make CAMP a reality:

1. On July 14 at 6:30 p.m. join us at the Presidio Officers Club to show your support for CAMP (Located at 50 Moraga Avenue, San Francisco).
2. Write a letter of support for CAMP and send someone to the meeting on July 14 to read the letter on your behalf.
3. Visit www.CAMPToday.org and send an online letter to the Presidio Trust expressing your support for CAMP.

CAMP is a world-class museum – our families, our city and our region will be enriched by a dynamic public space that offers opportunities to learn, participate and live the vibrant culture that defines San Francisco.

Sincerely,

Mayor Gavin Newsom Luis R. Cancel, Director of Cultural Affairs

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