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BAYVIEW/HUNTERS POINT COMMUNITY GROUP ASKS HENRY GEORGE SCHOOL FOR HELP

This past March, Wendell Fitzgerald, (President of the Henry George School of Northern California) received a call from Walter Maitz, a graduate of the Progress & Poverty course taught by Fitzgerald some three years earlier. Maitz invited Fitzgerald to a meeting taking place in Bayview-Hunters Point district of San Francisco. A community group had been meeting since the previous December to consider the question of how best to develop the Hunters Point Naval Shipyard and the whole south east part of San Francisco in general.

The Bayview-Hunters Point area is home to the Hunters Point Naval Shipyard which had been an important ship repair facility for the Navy since World War II. The Navy decided some time ago to withdraw from the Shipyard. The Navy proposes to lease the Shipyard to the City of San Francisco on a long term basis (60-70 years) and to give to the city, option to purchase the area at the end of the lease term.

Maitz had been meeting with the group since its inception. He remembered some of the ideas he had learned in the Progress & Poverty course taught by Fitzgerald, and Maitz thought that the group might be interested in hearing some of these ideas.

It turns out, that Harold Brooks, a long time resident and community leader in the Bayview-Hunters Point Community, had heard of the ideas of Henry George from Robert Scrofani (former Director of the Henry George School) on numerous occasions over the years. Brooks is more or less the elder statesman of the group which now officially calls itself South East Economic Development (SEED). When Fitzgerald made some suggestions based upon Georgist theory about what

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might be done with the shipyard, Brooks was impressed and has been promoting the ideas to the group, other organizations and individuals in the City.

In brief it was suggested that SEED recommend to the City upon its assuming a long term lease, that it rely solely on the collection of ground rents from sub-tenants for purposes of providing and maintaining infrastructure and services the area will need. At the same time it will be recommended to the City of San Francisco, that it not collect any property tax or possessory interest tax on buildings or improvements the tenants build or install in the Shipyard area. In addition, it will be recommended that the City not charge its payroll tax or any other tax within it's jurisdiction. In this way the City should have enough revenue to support the new services it will have to provide for the area, without burdening the rest of the City and at the same time provide a powerful incentive for private business to come

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in and make capital improvements and provide jobs. SEED also wants to include recommendations that insure local and minority hiring set asides and training. These recommendations are being drawn together in a proposal which is soon to be presented to the San Francisco Board of Supervisors, the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency and other concerned public and private groups and individuals. ❖