

January 2023 Member Newsletter from:  
Beresford/Hillsdale  
Neighborhood Association  
Box 6764 San Mateo CA 94403

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## Beresford/Hillsdale Neighborhood Association

[www.beresfordhillsdale.org](http://www.beresfordhillsdale.org)

January 2023

### What is Ethics San Mateo?

Launched last fall, Ethics San Mateo (ESM) is a grassroots organization promoting ethical conduct by our city government and leadership, those seeking leadership roles, and businesses and organizations conducting transactions with or seeking to influence city government. “Our mission is to lead and support efforts by the residents of San Mateo to ensure our city is served according to the highest level of ethical standards and behavior.” Find out more at our January Member meeting as speaker Dave Cohen talks about the positive impacts ESM hopes to have in our city. We’ll also be providing other updates and whatever news is current for our BHNA area. So, join us and stay updated on current events!

**BHNA Member Meeting  
January 17<sup>th</sup>**

**7:30 p.m. via ZOOM**

**Introducing  
Dave Cohen  
&  
Ethics San Mateo**

**ZOOM LINK for January BHNA Meeting at 7:30 p.m.:**

**<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81823318735?pwd=U1BsT0hoRTF3Z3JhMkZUOVJ4YUplZz09>**

Meeting ID: 818 2331 8735; Passcode: 904402; Dial by your location  
+1 669 900 6833 US (San Jose) or +1 408 638 0968 US (San Jose).

**Getting Back to Normal:** Those banking at Bank of America will be happy to know that the San Mateo branch at 2900 S. El Camino finally re-opened in mid-December after being closed since the start of Covid.

**Change of Guard:** Before swearing in 3 newly elected councilmembers December 5<sup>th</sup>, we bid adieu to outgoing councilmembers Rick Bonilla, Eric Rodriguez and Joe Goethals. (Diane Papan was not present, as she was being sworn in for the State Assembly.) Many plaques were given, but Rodriguez received special recognition by resident leaders as San Mateo United (SMUHA) presented him with their own award.

### **Did You Forget to Renew for 2023?!**

We hope not! You may have signed up for an automatic renewal on our website, but otherwise, BHNA Membership renewals are overdue, so please renew (or join) by sending this form and your check, payable to “The BHNA” to: BHNA, P.O. Box 6764, San Mateo CA 94403, or pay online TODAY at: [www.beresfordhillsdale.org](http://www.beresfordhillsdale.org). STAY IN THE KNOW!

### **BHNA 2023 MEMBERSHIP**

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Send newsletter by ( ) US Mail Only or ( ) Email Only

**Teen Task Force – Community Service Hours:** 8<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> graders: Join Teen Task Force and earn community service hours by helping at the Main Library. Teens will be assisting library staff with various projects and planning future teen programs at the library. Teen Task Force meetings are on the 3rd Thursday of every month from 4-5 PM. Come find us on the 1st Floor in the Laurel Room at the Main Library. Any questions? Please email: [cavitabile@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:cavitabile@cityofsanmateo.org)

**Protect Your Catalytic Converter:** The San Mateo Police Department is offering free etching kits called CATGUARDs, on a first come, first served basis, which residents can obtain FREE to personalize their converters, making them identifiable in a crime. This is done with the hope of deterring those thefts when criminals see the markings. (Further, new laws will take effect in January to make it harder for criminals to sell these stolen goods.) Sign up to get yours while supplies last: Go to [www.cityofsanmateo.org](http://www.cityofsanmateo.org) and search “Catguard” to find the Catalytic Converter Theft Prevention Program online form.

**Speak Your Wishes at the Blue Sky Meeting:** Tired of that broken light or graffiti on your street? Think a park needs a Pickleball court? Worried if enough money is being set aside to mitigate more traffic? The City hosts a goal-setting/budget meeting annually and the public is welcome to attend and comment on their own list of desires/priorities for the Council to consider. This meeting, called Blue Sky, is planned for Saturday, February 11<sup>th</sup> at the College of San Mateo, with a start time of 9 am. Parking is easy in Lots 8 & 9A and the meeting is held inside Building 10 (on the east side of the campus near the softball field).

**Kudos to BHNA Board Member Mike Ragan:** With Diane Papan vacating her Council seat early, candidates to fill that at-large, two-year seat could apply from anywhere in San Mateo. Kudos to BHNA Board member Mike Ragan for throwing his hat in the ring. Ragan has the unique experience of living for many years in two different San Mateo districts, providing him with an in-depth knowledge of both. He’s also served on boards for the accompanying neighborhood associations. Mike completed the San Mateo Citizen’s Academy, headed the Hillsdale Traffic Action Plan Steering Committee, and served on San Mateo advisory boards for both the bicycle master plan and the 1990 update to the City’s General Plan. While Mike wasn’t chosen to fill the Council seat, the BHNA feels very lucky to have him as our Board member!

**Future of 2020 Building Height Limit Measure?:** San Mateo’s updated Draft General Plan is targeted for publication in May. There will then be another round of community outreach. Pay attention, too, as there will be a ‘study session’ with the new City Council to discuss Measure Y and the draft land use map in March or April. Remember, they now have the power to do away with the 2020 resident voter-approved Measure Y building height limits. Recently, Councilmember Amourance Lee strongly defended the City Charter due to it being resident voter approved, so it will be interesting to see if she stands by Measure Y with equal conviction.

**Not Proud of New San Mateo Record:** San Mateo City Hall had two cases in two months referred to the San Mateo County District Attorney. The first case, nicknamed ‘Sign Gate’ involved alleged council election campaign tampering by Planning Commissioner, Adam Nugent. Social media platform Nextdoor was buzzing with images backed up by video of Nugent, who finally admitted to illegally removing campaign signs when KCBS aired the story. On November 7<sup>th</sup>, councilmembers Rodriguez and Papan responded to public outcry by agreeing to pursue a fact-finding investigation, but that was not agreeable to the Council majority (Lee, Goethals and Mayor Bonilla), whose stony silence closed the matter. However, the San Mateo Police department found there was “sufficient evidence” to refer the case to the District Attorney’s office. *Status: Unknown*

The second referred case was announced December 13<sup>th</sup> via City email notification. Earlier in the month, three City Council meetings occurred in quick succession, with the business at hand resulting in Councilmember Amourance Lee alleging that she had been approached with two “back door deals” pressuring her to choose a particular candidate to fill the empty 5<sup>th</sup> council seat. These deals were allegedly made December 3<sup>rd</sup>, with no mention by Lee at the December 5<sup>th</sup> Council meeting. Lee first touched on the subject at the December 7<sup>th</sup> Council meeting, and when asked if she had reported it, she stated she was reporting it right then, but gave no further details. Fast forward to the all-important Council meeting on December 12<sup>th</sup>, where candidates made presentations to be considered to fill the 5<sup>th</sup> council seat. It was obvious to anyone following these contentious meetings that councilmembers Diaz-Nash and Newsom would be split with councilmembers Lee and Loraine. But it was widely felt among community leaders that a compromise could be found in Cliff Robbins, a current commissioner. However, toward night’s end, Councilmember Lee brought forward an envelope she said held the name of the person given to her in the back door deals, and therefore could not consider the applicant: Cliff Robbins. Lee’s first choice, Rich Hedges, gained the seat.

This surprise move brought public pressure on the City to look into Lee’s allegation. On December 13<sup>th</sup>, the City reported, “During the meeting Lee alleged she was previously contacted by unnamed individuals leading up to the council appointment in a way that may have violated the brown Act and other state law, and after she declined to provide further details, the City Attorney’s Office referred the matter to the District Attorney which is responsible for these types of investigations.” *Status: District Attorney is now actively investigating this case.*

All referenced Council meetings may be viewed via a date search at: <https://www.cityofsanmateo.org/3971/Agendas-Minutes-Public-Meeting-Portal>

**Recall in Motion for Councilmember Lee:** In advance of the December 5<sup>th</sup> City Council meeting, Councilmember Amourance Lee was served by a resident member of the public to notify her of an effort to recall her based on dereliction of duty and behavior unbecoming of a councilmember. The recall effort will require 9,000 resident-voter signatures to place this item on the 2023 ballot. More information can be found at [www.RecallAmoLee.com](http://www.RecallAmoLee.com).