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Resolution Opposing Any Fee to Enter the Arboretum/Botanical Gardens in Golden Gate Park

Whereas, the Mayor's Director of Partnerships, Rich Hillis, and the director of the Botanical Gardens Brent Dennis, propose to charge a fee to enter the gardens, which for 68 years have been a free and integral part of Golden Gate Park and an important part of the commons enjoyed by all and available to all; and

Whereas, the fee is justified as providing for sustaining the gardens, which in fact have been sustained for its 68 years by tax dollars plus contributions from the Arboretum/Botanical Society; and

Whereas, the budget for the Arboretum/Botanical Gardens for this year was not cut from the previous year's budget; and

Whereas, a Power Point presentation by Rec & Park on April 6, 2009, given by Brent Dennis and Rich Hillis, revealed that instead of "sustaining" the gardens, the proposed fee is part of a development plan to convert the gardens into a revenue producing tourist attraction, removing it from the commons space and restricting current casual use; and

Whereas, the development plan calls for spending \$1.3 million on gating, fencing, kiosks, security and hiring toll takers; and

Whereas, Botanical Director Brent Dennis acknowledges that there will be an estimated drop of about 50% attendance once a fee is imposed; and

Whereas, this plan is one of several privatization schemes at Rec & Park, including the leasing of recreational facilities to private entities such as Rec Connect and possibly YMCA, and the corresponding layoff of up to 67 recreational directors, members of SEIU 1021; and

Whereas, these privatization schemes have been proposed after the voters passed Prop. B in 2008 to give Rec & Park \$185 million for park improvements and after the Rec & Park is just finishing spending the money the voters passed in 2000 for improvements; and

Whereas, it appears that tax payers dollars are used to improve the park and recreational facilities, such as Harding Golf Course, only to be followed by Rec & Park proposing to lease out such facilities,

Therefore Be It Resolved that the SFLC go on record supporting the Arboretum/Botanical Gardens as part of the commons, and opposing any fee at all to visit the Arboretum/Botanical Gardens; and

Be It Further Resolved that Rec & Park should spend more money on full time gardeners and its recreational and park workers than on gates, fencing, kiosks, security, toll takers, tickets, and revenue producing tourist attractions in our parks, and

Be It Further Resolved, that SFLC opposes public-private partnerships in Rec & Park facilities where public property and facilities intended for public use and service and staffed by public employees are leased to private entities for management and control, and

Be It Finally Resolved, that the SFLC shall forward this resolution to the Mayor's Office, the Rec Park Commissioners, the Board of Supervisors, and to its affiliates.

Submitted by Denis Mosgofian, GCC-IBT Local 4N, and adopted unanimously by the San Francisco Labor Council on May 11, 2009.

Respectfully,



Tim Paulson
Executive Director

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