

Well, it's been awhile since we last published an issue, but we haven't been taking a vacation by any means. Most importantly, we've become a 501(c)3 organization, so any funds you donate to us (which we really would like you to do) are tax deductible! We've also started a new website, and actually we are still working on it to make it more readable and friendly.



Photo by Daniella Thompson

From the very beginning BNC's purpose was to give a voice to Berkeley's neighborhoods. We believe that neighborhoods where people actually know each other, speak with each other, and look out for each other are the foundation on which livable cities are built. Not so long ago, the city of Berkeley proclaimed it was a "city of neighborhoods." Well, as you know, times change and all of a sudden Berkeley dropped that saying, and little by little, the neighborhood voice was being lost. That's when BNC came into being.

Our Purpose: BNC was formed to provide safe harbor in which neighborhoods could discuss their issues and join together, as each chooses, to achieve the goal of giving neighborhoods a voice while respecting each other and the environment we all live in. We know that change is inevitable, but we also know that each of us has the obligation to shape that change for those that will follow by today helping resolve problems through calm and accurate information and the civil exchange of ideas.

Our Work: Our last issue listed five areas at the local level that are central to every neighborhood's concerns. That list is repeated below, but not in a ranked order. They are all essential and all must be built on the firm foundation of transparency and accountability that extends to officials who are elected and appointed, and includes those who serve as staff. The five areas are:

1. Land use issues from the flats to the hills that are significantly changing both the appearance and functionality of our City.
2. Deterioration of our infrastructure, parks and City facilities.
3. Public safety, including issues around crime and natural disaster.

4. Lack of recognition by the UC Berkeley campus that they exist within our City.
5. Lack of overall long-term financial planning.

These will be the areas on which BNC will concentrate.

Your Work: Each and every one of you can help in this effort by:

- Spreading BNC's eNEWS by Sending an e-mail to bnc50@berkeleyneighborhoodscouncil.com with the word "subscribe" in the subject list to ensure you receive your own personal copy, **and** Forwarding the eNEWS to every List Serve you're on and every personal e-mail list you have with the same request about forwarding.
- Attending BNC's General Meetings and Forums and participating in the discussions and decisions. *You are the most important part of this*, and YOU are needed to help plan what comes next. BNC will send you notice of all meetings and events and we understand you can't attend everything, but please, try to make as many as possible.

Together, with your experience and knowledge, we can find a way to meet the challenges around the State taking away land use decision-making from locally elected governments and the impacts of climate change, while still maintaining and preserving urban biodiverse habitats, green open space, historic sites, diversity, and neighborhood values and neighborliness. Not an easy task, but we can do it, if we are united.

This issue is full of the kind of information we all need. Please read all about...

[What We're Thinking About](#)

Hopefully everyone has heard something about the defeat of SB 827, the bill authored by State Senators Scott Wiener and Nancy Skinner that would have done away with local zoning controls in order to build apartment buildings along bus lines and stations. But do you know about the idea of getting rid of single family zoning, and the plan to come back with another bill similar to SB 827?

[Neighborhood News, Round and About](#)

There is the good news about Council-approved changes to the R1-A Zoning District. Then there is the bad news about how the fine for violating the Berkeley Election Reform Act law that occurred in the November 2016 has been stalled for about a year and a half! Lastly there is the pending news about what is happening around the question of development on the North Berkeley BART Station's two parking lots.

[Neighborhood Forum](#)

Find out about "Berkeley Considers" and how the Council supported Nancy Skinner's bill, SB 1227 that requires the City to give a bonus, such as a height increase, to private developers who

will build dorms for full-time students that include a portion of the beds for those with lower-incomes.

[Featured Neighborhood](#)

There is no denying that UC Berkeley has a profound effect on our City. That relationship is once again being called into question. Read about the current lawsuit against the UC Berkeley campus. Cal is being sued for not responding to increasing enrollment over what they had previously agreed to with the City and the impact on that increase on neighborhoods. Plus, what happened to the effort to landmark Campanile Way and its westerly view toward the Golden Gate. Is that view the very symbol of both the City and the University or is the fight to preserve that view just another attempt to stop the development of yet another 18-story plus building in downtown Berkeley?

[On the Neighborhood Food Prowl](#)

We say goodbye to two mom and pop food places that have each served Berkeley for around 100 years - The Elmwood Cafe on the south side, one that holds a place in Berkeley's past political history, and The Virginia Bakery on the north side, a place that made custom cakes for well-known local clients. Who and what will take their place?

[The Cultural Corner](#)

Spenger's Parking Lot, 1900 Fourth Street, is the site where probably the largest group of the first inhabitants around San Francisco Bay lived for 4,500 years! Should it be preserved as a sacred site or should a new 260-unit apartment building, with ground-floor retail be built there? That's the question that the City will soon have to decide. The developer is trying to get around the fact that this area has cultural significance for the Ohlone people by asking for an over-the-counter permit which he claims is allowable under State law SB 35.

We hope you will enjoy and learn from what's in this issue. There is always much more to tell, but we just couldn't fit everything in, so there will be much more to come. Please let us know how we are doing -- what did you like (we always want to hear about that), but don't forget we also *need* to hear about what you didn't like, or where we made a mistake. We are also happy to hear your suggestions for articles on subjects that haven't been covered, or articles/statements written by you, so please don't hold back.

Contact us at bnc50@berkeleyneighborhoodscouncil.com. We're always open!