

STATEMENT OF CONSENSUS
Bernal Heights Library Mural Mediation
March 17, 2010

Beginning in January of this year, a group of residents of Bernal Heights participated in mediation to seek resolution to controversies surrounding the mural on the walls of the Bernal branch library. The mediation was sponsored by Supervisor David Campos and led by Bernal resident Beth Roy. With a shared commitment to principles of equity, respect and justice, and through a process of deep dialogue, exploration of meanings, and respectful relationship building, the group produced the following recommendations:

PRINCIPLES OF AGREEMENT

The Bernal community is committed to principles of inclusion, social justice, and creativity.

- The Bernal library mural is meaningful to many members of the community:
 - o It exemplifies respect for people with deep roots on the hill, especially for those whose lifestyles have been altered by economic forces changing housing patterns over recent decades.
 - o It is a legacy of Arch Williams, a pioneer of the San Francisco mural movement.
 - o It represents the long reach of Bernal's history, from Native American occupants to the early 1980s when it was created.
- The Bernal library building is a significant landmark in the community:
 - o Its architecture is aesthetically excellent.
 - o It was built as part of the WPA program of the 1930s, a tribute to the principle of collective responsibility during hard times and to the ability of responsive government to promote creativity, beauty, and support for the public good.
 - o The renovation of the interior exemplifies a lush and inviting presence for the many programs and resources offered by the library.

In an effort to honor all these principles, a mediation among twelve representative members of the community, offers a resolution to the mural dispute, arrived at through a process of consensus that itself manifests the principles of respect and equity we hold in common.

WHAT WE PROPOSE DOING:

REVITALIZING THE MURAL

- Inaugurate a new community mural project at the Bernal library, to produce an updated art work in accordance with the following priorities:
 1. Themes of social justice and community will continue to be central to the art work.
 2. The art work will give voice to and be representative of the whole community.
 3. The art work will honor the history, meanings and content of both the existing mural and also the WPA building, telling the story of both in its portrayal of the history of the community, a history that has evolved to include newcomers with diverse lifestyles. Specific elements of the existing mural have importance for members of the community; every effort will be made to identify and retain those images in the new art work.
 4. The art work will be visually pleasing to the many cultural sensibilities within the community.
 5. The art work will be accomplished through a collaborative, inclusive community process, designed and led by a diverse team of artists selected by a task force formed from among the mediation group. Criteria for selection will be developed by the task force and will include the following: the artists should represent a wide range of experiences in community art and collaboration; they should have a thorough understanding of the complexities through which these processes and visions have developed. Priority will be given to Bernal artists.
 6. The art work will engage the building on the south and east facades, including vital elements on the Cortland façade (as determined by the artists' team leading the new public community art project). The art work will be designed so as to respect the lines and intentions of the architecture by leaving a significant portion of the façade (at least half) bare of adornment. Balance will be accomplished through the community design process.
 7. If funding permits, the design process will include consideration of a variety of sites, forms and structures on and around the library building, with understanding that the mural walls of the library be the first priority and secondly the library environment.
 8. The new mural will use media that require little or no maintenance, such as painted tile and mosaic.

PRESERVING THE ORIGINAL MURAL

- Images of the existing mural in its original form will be put on permanent display inside the library, along with text explaining the meanings of the visual elements and, through the story of the making of the mural, does honor to Arch Williams.

HOW WE PROPOSE TO DO IT:

COMMUNITY PROCESS

- The intention of the mural process is to contribute to greater understanding and cooperation among diverse members of the multicultural, multi-class Bernal community. Therefore, under the leadership of artists experienced both in the creation of public art and in processes of design and implementation involving community participation, decisions will be made through a respectful, patient, and creative effort to embrace the visions of everyone concerned.

QUALITIES AND VALUES

- In the end, the mural will visually recount history with emotional integrity, promote a vision of social justice on the hill and in the world, and bring to the library campus images of beauty that invite the fullest and most joyous uses of the library itself.
- In the words of a mediation participant: “We have an opportunity to create a significant event in the neighborhood. When the library was built, that was a significant event. When the mural was painted, that was a significant event. This is the time for a third significant event, revitalizing the mural. Fifty years from now, people in the community will look at what we do today and honor it.”

Signed:

Susan Cervantes, Supervisor David Campos, Larry Cruz, Monique Jaquez, Darcy Lee, Dan Martinez, Terry Milne, Ellen Morrison, Brandon Powell, Beth Roy, Johanna Silva Waki, Giulio Sorro, Amy Trachtenberg, Mauricio Vela