# **Executive Summary Planning Code Text Change**

**HEARING DATE: SEPTEMBER 18, 2014** 

1650 Mission St. Suite 400 San Francisco, CA 94103-2479

Reception: 415.558.6378

Project Name: Arcades in the Haight Street Neighborhood Commercial District

*Case Number:* 2014.1193<u>T</u> [Board File No. 140804]

Initiated by: Supervisor Breed / Introduced July 15, 2014

Staff Contact: Diego R Sánchez, Legislative Affairs

diego.sanchez@sfgov.org, 415-575-9082

Reviewed by: AnMarie Rodgers, Senior Policy Advisor

anmarie.rodgers@sfgov.org, 415-558-6395

Recommendation: Recommend Approval with Modification

Fax: **415.558.6409** 

Planning Information: 415.558.6377

#### PLANNING CODE AMENDMENT

The proposed Ordinance would amend Planning Code Section 719.69B to principally permit Amusement Game Arcades on the first and second stories in the Haight Street Neighborhood Commercial District (NCD) and amend Section 790.4 to update references to the Police Code within the definition of Amusement Game Arcade.

#### The Way It Is Now:

The Haight Street NCD prohibits Amusement Game Arcades on any story.<sup>1</sup>

Planning Code Section 790.4 defines Amusement Game Arcades as a retail use providing eleven or more amusement game devices and further references Police Code to clarify the use.<sup>2</sup>

#### The Way It Would Be:

The proposed Ordinance would principally permit Amusement Game Arcades (Mechanical Amusement Devices) on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> stories within the Haight Street NCD.

The proposed Ordinance would also update references to the specific Police Code sections within Planning Code Section 790.4 to reflect forthcoming changes to the Police Code.<sup>3</sup>

A retail use which provides eleven or more amusement game devices such as video games, pinball machines, or other such similar mechanical and electronic amusement devices, in a quantity which exceeds that specified in Section 1036.31 of the Police Code as accessory uses. Mechanical amusement devices are further regulated in Sections 1036 through 1036.35 of the Police Code.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Planning Code Section 719.69B prohibits Amusement Game Arcades on all stories.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> The Planning Code defines the Amusement Game Arcade use as follows:

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Board File 140776 is companion legislation to the proposed Ordinance (BF 140804) and is proposing to amend Police Code Section 1036. Amendments would update Police permit review procedures, lessen

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#### ISSUES AND CONSIDERATIONS

Existing Regulatory Environment. The existing controls on Amusement Game Arcades and Mechanical Amusement Devices (MADs) date back to the early 1980's. In that era there was concern about the rapid proliferation of Amusement Game Arcades and the potential nuisances created by the use including the number of mechanical amusement game devices in any one location, increased congestion on sidewalks around Arcades, the accessibility to Arcades by minors during school hours and the occurrence of crime and other anti-social behavior in areas near Arcades.

Controls in the Planning Code and the Police Code exist to address these concerns around nuisance. For example, the Planning Code considers a use with up to 10 MADs an Other Entertainment Use and is allowed in the vast majority of NCDs.<sup>4</sup> However, a use with 11 or more MADs is considered an Amusement Game Arcade and is not typically allowed in the NCDs.<sup>5</sup> Further, all NCDs prohibit Amusement Game Arcades on the second story.

The Police Code regulates MADs chiefly through Section 1036. Section 1036 controls the number of MADs allowed in a location based on the square foot area of retail floor area, and also prohibits establishments in neighborhood commercial districts from having 11 or more mechanical amusement devices.

<u>Proposed Changes to Existing Controls.</u> Companion legislation (BF 140776) to the proposed Ordinance is seeking to loosen Police Code regulation on MADs and arcades in a modernization effort responding to the current perceptions and realities. Proposed changes include the following:

- Eliminating the Police permit requirement for up to 4 MADs in a bar and up to 10 MADs within any other premise;
- Eliminate the Police Code minimum area requirement for MADs in retail establishments; and
- Eliminate the Police Code prohibition on arcades within areas zoned neighborhood commercial.

It is important to note that the changes to the Planning Code in the proposed Ordinance would principally permit Amusement Game Arcades and would not require Section 312 neighborhood notification but would maintain the requirement of Conditional Use Authorization for uses with 10 or fewer MADs. This would create a counterintuitive permitting process as a less intensive use would be subject to a much more robust process.

permitting restrictions, and remove obsolete provisions including Police Code Sections 1036.31 and 1036.35.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Only five NCDs (West Portal, Pacific Avenue, SOMA, Folsom and RCD) prohibit Other Entertainment uses. In all other NCDs Other Entertainment is allowed either as of right with Section 312 Notification or by Conditional Use Authorization.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Only five NCDs (NC-3, NC-S, Broadway, Mission St and Excelsior) allow Amusement Game Arcades with Conditional Use Authorization.

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Last, the forthcoming reorganization of Article 2 will incorporate the existing Amusement Game Arcades use into the broader General Entertainment use category. This change will establish uniform, modernized controls across the city for Amusement Game Arcades and is anticipated to be adopted and effective by mid-year 2015

Pinball Resurgence. In recent years, pinball has enjoyed a resurgence of interest, as evidenced by the opening of new pinball venues, a pinball museum and new commercial pinball manufacturers of varying sizes. The demographic groups leading this resurgence are not adolescents. This current wave of popularity is driven by Baby Boomer and Gen-X hobbyists, collectors and nostalgists. <sup>6</sup> These are groups that have the disposable income to purchase vintage and new machines and the desire to form peer networks spanning metropolitan regions.

In the US, the interest in pinball is supported by the Professional and Amateur Pinball Association (an industry trade organization), by multiple local, national and international pinball tournaments and by, as mentioned above, the reemergence of arcades and other locations to play pinball.

In the Bay Area, there are five competitive pinball leagues including one that meets at the Free Gold Watch (1767 Waller Street), an establishment in the Haight Street Neighborhood Commercial District.

#### REQUIRED COMMISSION ACTION

The proposed Ordinance is before the Commission so that it may recommend adoption, rejection, or adoption with modifications to the Board of Supervisors.

#### RECOMMENDATION

The Department recommends that the Commission recommend approval with amendment to the proposed Ordinance. Department Staff recommends the following:

- 1. Principally permit Amusement Game Arcades in the Haight Street NCD on the 1st and 2nd stories.
- 2. Add a Specific Provision to the Haight Street NCD Zoning Control Table to clarify that in the Haight Street NCD that portion of an Other Entertainment use comprising of MADs will be considered an Amusement Game Arcade Use. This change would ensure that smaller complementary MAD uses with 10 or fewer devices are not given more rigorous review than larger principal MAD uses. The Specific Provision to the Haight Street NCD Zoning Control Table would be as follows:

Article Code	Other Code Section	Zoning Controls
Section		

following internet sites and articles document pinball resurgence: http://loriengreen.com/portfolio/pinball-documentary/, http://keepingmycool.blogspot.com/2012/10/thecase-for-pinball-resurgence.html, http://pinballbayarea.com/ http://www.sfgate.com/bayarea/article/Enthusiasm-over-pinball-at-full-tilt-in-Bay-Area-2477358.php

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§719.48	§§790.4, 790.38	Within the Haight Street Neighborhood
		Commercial District, that portion of an Other
		Entertainment use comprised of mechanical
		amusement game devices will be considered an
		Amusement Game Arcade Use.

3. Revise Planning Code Section 790.4 to update references to Police Code Section 1036 in light of the forthcoming revisions from the companion legislation (BF140776).

#### BASIS FOR RECOMMENDATION

The Department supports the proposed Ordinance, with the amendment, because it updates regulations on mechanical amusement devices to correspond to how the devices are currently perceived and used. Existing controls on Amusement Game Arcades are based on older notions of pinball and other MADs as games of chance and extensions of gambling and arcades as magnates for vandalism, petty crime and drug use. Today MADs complement home video game consoles as well the games available on personal mobile devices. This context places MADs and the Amusement Game Arcade within a purely recreational niche.

### Recommendation 1: Principally permit Amusement Game Arcades in the Haight Street Neighborhood Commercial District on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> stories.

Beyond modernizing the controls on Amusement Game Arcades, the loosening of restrictions on their establishment satisfies a number of policies within the Commerce and Industry Element of the General Plan that look to attract and retain commercial activities that serve neighborhood residents, that look to enliven and distinguish neighborhood commercial districts and that create an atmosphere of interest in the City of San Francisco as a whole.<sup>7</sup>

In this current wave of interest, Amusement Game Arcades are seen as venues for social interaction and for forming community around friendly competition. Popular support for Amusement Game Arcades is evident in the growth of pinball leagues and venues across the US. The support for the easing of restrictions within the Haight Street NCD is also evident by the number of letters of support received by way of Supervisor London Breed's office.

While there may be concerns about an increase of nuisance as a result of loosening the controls on Amusement Game Arcades, multiple controls exist to address these. For example, past concerns about smoking in the Amusement Game Arcades are now addressed by the prohibition on indoor smoking

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> Policy 1.1: Encourage development which provides substantial net benefits and minimizes undesirable consequences. Discourage development which has substantial undesirable consequences that cannot be mitigated; Policy 2.1: Seek to retain existing commercial and industrial activity and to attract new such activity to the city; Policy 2.3: Maintain a favorable social and cultural climate in the city in order to enhance its attractiveness as a firm location; Policy 6.1: Ensure and encourage the retention and provision of neighborhood-serving goods and services in the city's neighborhood commercial districts, while recognizing and encouraging diversity among the districts

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found in the San Francisco Health Code.<sup>8</sup> Concerns that the use will attract alcohol consumption are addressed by the restriction on new Bars or Liquor Stores in the Haight Street NCD.<sup>9</sup> Concerns that the loosening of controls will facilitate the spread of gambling are allayed by the fact that San Francisco Police Code prohibits the operation of or any machine or device upon which money or any other article or thing of value is staked, bet, hazarded, won or lost upon chance.<sup>10</sup>

Finally, the loosening of restrictions on the establishment of Amusement Game Arcades within the Planning Code goes hand in hand with the current updates to the Police Code articles dealing with MADs. These changes look to modernize permit review processes, and eliminate obsolete provisions.

Recommendation 2: Add a Specific Provision to the Haight Street NCD Zoning Control Table to clarify that in the Haight Street NCD that portion of an Other Entertainment use comprising of MADs will be considered an Amusement Game Arcade Use. Without the addition of the Specific Provision clarifying that the portion of an Other Entertainment use comprising of MADS is to be considered an Amusement Game Arcade use, the Planning Code would be amended to streamline the approval process for a use proposing 11 or more MADs while maintaining the current Conditional Use Authorization requirement for a use proposing 10 or fewer MADs. This amendment would prevent more strict control of less intensive uses.

This recommendation is also in line with the intention of Recommendation #1, which is to ease controls on the use of MADs.

Recommendation 3: Revise Planning Code Section 790.4 to update references to Police Code Section 1036 in light of the forthcoming revisions. Given that the companion legislation (BF 140776) is eliminating the Police Code sections referenced in the Planning Code and that as of the date of this report the companion legislation had passed the first reading of the Board of Supervisors, it is necessary to the integrity and accuracy of the Planning Code to update Section 790.4. The updates would also be in conformity with the efforts of this Ordinance to modernize the regulations on Amusement Game Arcades.

#### **ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW**

The proposal to amend Planning Code Sections 719.69B and 790.4 would result in no physical impact on the environment. The proposed amendment is exempt from environmental review under Sections 15378 and 15060(c)(2) of the CEQA Guidelines.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> San Francisco Health Code Article 19F Section 1009.22(a) prohibits smoking in buildings containing business establishments, among other uses.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> Planning Code Section 719.41, 719.45 and 781.9 prohibit alcohol sales without a bona fide eating place.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> Article 3 of the San Francisco Police Code broadly prohibits the use of machines for the purpose of gambling.

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#### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

As of the date this report, the Planning Department received multiple letters from members of the public, by way of Supervisor London Breed's office, expressing support for an Amusement Game Arcade use within the Within the Haight Street Neighborhood Commercial District.

RECOMMENDATION: Recommendation of Approval with Modifications

#### **Attachments:**

Exhibit A: Draft Planning Commission Resolution Exhibit B: Board of Supervisors File No. 140804

Exhibit C: Letters of Support for Amusement Game Arcade use within the Haight Street NCD

### **Planning Commission Draft Resolution**

**HEARING DATE SEPTEMBER 18, 2014** 

1650 Mission St. Suite 400 San Francisco. CA 94103-2479

Project Name: Arcades in the Haight Street Neighborhood Commercial District

Case Number: 2014.1193<u>T</u> [Board File No. 140804]

*Initiated by:* Supervisor Breed / Introduced July 15, 2014

Staff Contact: Diego R Sánchez, Legislative Affairs

diego.sanchez@sfgov.org, 415-575-9082

*Reviewed by:* AnMarie Rodgers, Senior Policy Advisor

anmarie.rodgers@sfgov.org, 415-558-6395

Recommendation: **Recommend Approval with Modifications**  Reception: 415.558.6378

Fax: 415.558.6409

**Planning** Information: 415.558.6377

RECOMMENDING THAT THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS ADOPT A PROPOSED ORDINANCE THAT WOULD AMEND PLANNING CODE SECTIONS 719.69B, 790.4 AND 719.48 TO PRINCIPALLY PERMIT AMUSEMENT GAME ARCADES ON THE FIRST AND SECOND STORIES WITHIN THE HAIGHT STREET NEIGHBORHOOD COMMERCIAL DISTRICT, TO REVISE REFERENCES TO THE POLICE CODE WITHIN PLANNING CODE SECTION 790.4 AND TO ADD A SPECIFIC PROVISION TO THE ZONING CONTROL TABLE FOR THE HAIGHT STREET NEIGHBORHOOD COMMERCIAL DISTRICT INDICATING THAT THE PORTION OF AN OTHER ENTERTAINMENT USE CONSISTING OF MECHANICAL AMUSEMENT DEVICES WILL BE CONSIDERED AN AMUSEMENT GAME ARCADE USE; ADOPTING FINDINGS, INCLUDING ENVIRONMENTAL FINDINGS, PLANNING CODE SECTION 302 FINDINGS, AND FINDINGS OF CONSISTENCY WITH THE GENERAL PLAN AND PLANNING CODE SECTION 101.1.

WHEREAS, on July 15, 2014, Supervisor Breed introduced a proposed Ordinance under Board of Supervisors (hereinafter "Board") File Number 140804, which would amend Planning Code Sections 719.69B, 790.4 and 719.48 to principally permit Amusement Game Arcades on the first and second stories in the Haight Street Neighborhood Commercial District (NCD), revise references to the Police Code within Planning Code Section 790.4 and add a Specific Provision to the Zoning Control Table for the Haight Street NCD indicating that the portion of an Other Entertainment use consisting of Mechanical Amusement Devices will be considered an Amusement Game Arcade use;

WHEREAS, The Planning Commission (hereinafter "Commission") conducted a duly noticed public hearing at a regularly scheduled meeting to consider the proposed Ordinance on September 18, 2014; and,

WHEREAS, the proposed Ordinance has been determined to be categorically exempt from environmental review under the California Environmental Quality Act Sections 15378 and 15060(c)(2); and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission has heard and considered the testimony presented to it at the public hearing and has further considered written materials and oral testimony presented on behalf of

Department staff and other interested parties; and

WHEREAS, all pertinent documents may be found in the files of the Department, as the custodian of records, at 1650 Mission Street, Suite 400, San Francisco; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission has reviewed the proposed Ordinance; and

MOVED, that the Planning Commission hereby recommends that the Board of Supervisors approve with **amendment** the proposed ordinance.

The Commission recommended amendment would add a Specific Provision to the Zoning Control Table for the Haight Street NCD indicating that the portion of an Other Entertainment use consisting of Mechanical Amusement Devices will be considered an Amusement Game Arcade use.

Specifically, the Commission recommends the Specific Provision as follows:

Article Code Section	Other Code Section	Zoning Controls		
§719.48	§§790.4, 790.38	Within the Haight Street Neighborhood		
		Commercial District, that portion of an Other		
		Entertainment use comprised of mechanical		
		amusement game devices will be considered ar		
		Amusement Game Arcade Use.		

#### **FINDINGS**

Having reviewed the materials identified in the preamble above, and having heard all testimony and arguments, this Commission finds, concludes, and determines as follows:

- 1. Existing controls on Amusement Game Arcades are based on older conceptions of pinball and other mechanical amusement devices as games of chance and extensions of gambling and arcades as magnates for vandalism, petty crime and drug use.
- 2. Today mechanical amusement devices complement home video game consoles as well the games available on personal mobile devices. This context places mechanical amusement devices and the Amusement Game Arcade within a purely recreational niche.
- 3. In the current wave of interest, Amusement Game Arcades are seen as venues for social interaction and for forming community around friendly competition. Popular support for Amusement Game Arcades is evident in the growth of pinball leagues and venues across the US.
- 4. Loosening Planning Code restrictions on where Amusement Game Arcades may locate meets the popular demand for this use, expands small business opportunities, diversifies the breadth of available services within neighborhood commercial districts, enhances the unique character of the

City's neighborhood commercial districts, and complements the modernizing of controls on this use occurring in the Police Code.

- 5. Concerns about an increase in nuisance as a result of the spread of Amusement Game Arcades are allayed by the number of existing controls in place to address such issues.
- 6. **General Plan Compliance.** The proposed amendments to the Planning Code are not addressed in the General Plan; the Commission finds that the proposed Ordinance is not inconsistent with the Objectives and Policies of the General Plan.

#### COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY ELEMENT

#### **OBJECTIVE 1**

MANAGE ECONOMIC GROWTH AND CHANGE TO ENSURE ENHANCEMENT OF THE TOTAL CITY LIVING AND WORKING ENVIRONMENT.

#### Policy 1.1

Encourage development which provides substantial net benefits and minimizes undesirable consequences. Discourage development which has substantial undesirable consequences that cannot be mitigated.

The proposed Ordinance will facilitate the establishment of a retail use that provides net benefits in the form recreational and community gathering spaces. Any potential undesirable consequences may be addressed through existing regulatory controls.

#### **OBIECTIVE 2**

MAINTAIN AND ENHANCE A SOUND AND DIVERSE ECONOMIC BASE AND FISCAL STRUCTURE FOR THE CITY.

#### Policy 2.1

Seek to retain existing commercial and industrial activity and to attract new such activity to the city.

#### Policy 2.3

Maintain a favorable social and cultural climate in the city in order to enhance its attractiveness as a firm location.

The proposed Ordinance will allow the commercial activity to locate on the first and second stories within the Haight Street NCD. This will help maintain a favorable social and cultural climate in San Francisco as it adds to the number of recreational activities available to employees and hence enhances San Francisco as a location of firms.

#### **OBJECTIVE 6**

MAINTAIN AND STRENGTHEN VIABLE NEIGHBORHOOD COMMERCIAL AREAS EASILY ACCESSIBLE TO CITY RESIDENTS.

#### Policy 6.1

Ensure and encourage the retention and provision of neighborhood-serving goods and services in the city's neighborhood commercial districts, while recognizing and encouraging diversity among the districts.

The proposed Ordinance will allow the provision of a neighborhood-serving retail establishment that can add to the diversity and distinction of the Haight Street NCD.

- 7. Planning Code Section 101 Findings. The proposed amendments to the Planning Code are consistent with the eight Priority Policies set forth in Section 101.1(b) of the Planning Code in that:
  - 1. That existing neighborhood-serving retail uses be preserved and enhanced and future opportunities for resident employment in and ownership of such businesses enhanced;
    - The proposed Ordinance will allow neighborhood serving retail uses to locate on the first and second floors of the Haight Street NCD.
  - 2. That existing housing and neighborhood character be conserved and protected in order to preserve the cultural and economic diversity of our neighborhoods;
    - The proposed Ordinance will allow retail uses that conserve and protect the unique character to locate in the Haight Street NCD and as such will preserve the diversity of the Upper Haight neighborhood.
  - 3. That the City's supply of affordable housing be preserved and enhanced;
    - The proposed Ordinance is exclusively concerned with the establishment of retail uses and will not have an adverse effect on the City's supply of affordable housing.
  - 4. That commuter traffic not impede MUNI transit service or overburden our streets or neighborhood parking;
    - The proposed Ordinance will not result in commuter traffic impeding MUNI transit service or overburdening the streets or neighborhood parking.
  - 5. That a diverse economic base be maintained by protecting our industrial and service sectors from displacement due to commercial office development, and that future opportunities for resident employment and ownership in these sectors be enhanced;
    - The proposed Ordinance will not result in the displacement of any industrial or service sector establishments due to commercial office development because the proposed Ordinance is concerned with the regulations on retail uses.
  - 6. That the City achieve the greatest possible preparedness to protect against injury and loss of life in an earthquake;

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The proposed Ordinance will not have an impact on City's preparedness against injury and loss of life in an earthquake.

7. That the landmarks and historic buildings be preserved;

The proposed Ordinance will not have an impact on the City's Landmarks and historic buildings.

8. That our parks and open space and their access to sunlight and vistas be protected from development;

The proposed Ordinance will not have an impact on the City's parks and open space and their access to sunlight and vistas.

**8. Planning Code Section 302 Findings.** The Planning Commission finds from the facts presented that the public necessity, convenience and general welfare require the proposed amendments to the Planning Code as set forth in Section 302.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Commission hereby recommends that the Board ADOPT the proposed Ordinance as described in this Resolution.

I hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was adopted by the Commission at its meeting on September 18, 2014.

Jonas P. Ionin
Commission Secretary

AYES:

NOES:

ABSENT:

ADOPTED: September 18, 2014

#### Blackstone, Cammy

From:

Matthew Henri FGW <matt@freegoldwatch.com>

Sent:

Monday, February 10, 2014 1:36 PM

To:

Blackstone, Cammy

Subject:

Fwd: Letter of support.

Matt,

Here is a letter of support:

To whom it may concern,

I am writing this letter to affirm my full support for the Free Gold Watch establishment to be allowed to continue to operate their array of video and pinball machines at their location on 1767 Waller Street.

I am a professional currently employed at UCSF in a position of some import, and I very much enjoy relaxing at Free Gold Watch on occasion after my often very busy days. Furthermore, I have not nor have I ever seen any elicit activities occurring during my visits, and indeed I have made several new friends during these times. And I think it is terrific that these sorts of arcades are making a mild comeback in SF and other Bay Area localities as it can give the younger generation a place to visit beyond just staying at home and playing games on a home system.

Please work with Free Gold Watch to allow them the necessary permits/licenses/etc. that will be required so that they may remain open.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Jonathan Koolpe



**Division of Experimental Medicine**Department of Medicine, San Francisco General Hospital

Dr. Louise Swainson, PhD Assistant Professional Researcher Division of Experimental Medicine

Shipping Address: 1001 Potrero Avenue Building 3, Sixth Floor, Room 801 San Francisco, CA 94110

Campus Address: Box 1234 San Francisco, CA 94143-1234

tel: 415.206-8013 fax: 415.206-8091 louise.swainson@ucsf.edu February 6<sup>th</sup>, 2014

To whom this may concern,

I am writing in support of Free Gold Watch, located at 1767 Waller St, San Francisco. As a pinball fan I have been a regular customer and visitor at this arcade during the last year and have been delighted to watch the space evolve into what is by far the best location in the city to enjoy my hobby. There is nowhere locally that has a collection of games as expansive, diverse, or well maintained as FGW, and this location has made a tremendous contribution to the community.

FGW has encouraged a friendly and respectful atmosphere where all are welcome, and I have made many friends there. I sincerely hope that FGW will be given permission to remain open and continue to operate with its outstanding collection of games. It would be a sad loss to many people if this were not to be the case.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Dr. Louise Swainson

To whom it may concern,

Free Gold Watch is a terriffic resource in the Upper Haight. As a father, I've taken my daughter there to share my love of pinball and arcade games with her. It's great to have a clean, fun, safe space that the whole family can enjoy not far from our house. Losing it would be a tragedy for the community.

Jon Drukman Corona Heights

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Dear\_City Hall,

As a 10-year resident and homeowner in the Cole Valley/Upper Haight neighborhood, I respectfully urge you not to close or change Free Gold Watch. In a city with increasing tensions over income disparity, real estate development, and a perceived divide between small, local business and Silicon Valley giants, Free Gold Watch represents precisely the type of business San Francisco needs to encourage.

Aside from providing local businesses and organizations with quality screen printing, Free Gold Watch serves as a rare and vital social center for people all over the San Francisco. While I suspect some seedy perceptions of arcades from the 70s and 80s may be bundled up in this complaint against Free Gold Watch, they're unfounded.

Pinball is one of the few affordable, casual, low-commitment social recreation opportunities in the city. Whether you're a tech executive catching the Google Bus just up Stanyan or a homeless kid bumming change on Haight, two quarters grants you equal access to a little entertainment and conversation. Regardless of age, status, income, or race, all it takes is a little pocket change, a set of electronic rules, and simple physics level and balance our stratified city.

As we wait for MUNI, we stare into our phones. At coffee shops we work on our laptops. Bars exclude the young and restaurants exclude the poor. Who does Free Gold Watch exclude? I have met my neighbors, I have watched a small business thrive as others disappear. What justification is there for punishing an enterprise so fundamentally good for the people of San Francisco?

Please free Free Gold Watch from the burden of this complaint.

Sincerely,

Eric Raymond 47 Carl St., San Francisco, CA 94117 (415) 794-7129 eric@ericraymond.com Hello my name is Nate Robinson and believe it or not Free Gold Watch Pinball Arcade helps me

be a better person. Playing pinball is a huge stress reliever and is the only competitive hobby/sport I have ever joined a league in. That isn't completely ruined by people's ego's. Just people doing what they enjoy with others with the same interest. Which builds culture and community that only exists at FGW in SF. Please help us keep the place that keeps are pinball culture alive.

Nate Robinson			
		-	
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I wanted to tell you why I think FreeGoldWatch is important. Having recently moved here from Boston, I found myself in a predicament that many 30-somethings who uproot their lives to begin again in another city find themselves in. It is difficult for adults to ingratiate themselves into a community. Arcades have always been a passion of mine, and due to Boston's blue laws, it was incredibly hard to find a community of like-minded individuals with whom I could share my hobby and passion. On my sixth day as a California resident, my wife and I swung by FreeGoldWatch, and was welcomed instantly by Matt and the FreeGoldWatch team. I was able to subsequently join their spring pinball league night, and my sense of San Francisco community has been strengthened immensely due to their efforts with others who love pinball. Without this venue, quite a few passionate people would not have this outlet to express themselves, share ideas and experiences, and undergo communal bonding. We really have FreeGoldWatch to thank for this, and would be at a huge loss without them. Please strongly consider this testimonial, and thank you for your time.

-Russ Sweetser

To whom it may concern,

I have been a member of the SF pinball department league at free gold watch since summer of last year and a regular of the arcade since discovering it one weekend walking around the haight. I am proud to be a part of a happening and scene that for a tech town isnt in cyberspace. I have met new friends and acquaintances i would have never known if not for FGW's existence. All of our lives are richer because of the fun we share playing a game we love. FGW effects all of my fellow league members lives in a deep and positive way and furthermore our communities and lives outside of it. As a city we must also consider FGW's rapidly growing reputation on a national and international pinball community level. And lastly, an actual pinball arcade is a rarity in the 21st century so we must consider FGW something of an endangered species and as a city committed to cultural heritage we must accept the responsibility of preserving it as best we can. I thank you for your time and sincere consideration regarding this matter.

Yours truly, Anthony Rocco 3018 mission st. Apt 39 SF CA 94110 To Whom it May Concern,

Free Gold Watch is an important part of San Francisco culture. Not only does it enhance the silk screen - shirt and poster culture that is part of the roots of San Francisco it brings back the historic culture of Pinball.

Pinball is a culture not easily found across the country anymore. For San Francisco to have a collection of machines for entertainment and that documents history benefits the cities integrity for a diverse and unique culture.

An establishment such as Free Gold Watch is an important ingredient to this city.

Sincerely,

David Hermanas 2130 Post Street #103 San Francisco, CA 94115

To whom it may concern.

My Name is Donny Gillies and I'm a local SF artist living in West Portal for the past 12 years. FGW has become an upper Haight and SF destination spot for myself and family and friends. I also bring guests from out of town there to check out the print shop and play pinball when ever I can.

Pinball is a fun, safe family pastime and is also something that brings unity amongst the neighborhood and city for people of all race, language and cultures. Pinball at FGW is Something that allot of locals can share a common interest with and a great place to bring your family.

That said we should be proud to have a place like this that ads to the vast diversity of our beautify city.

Donny Gillies SF, CA 02 06 2014

http://www.dirtydonny.com http://dirtydonnyart.tumblr.com/ http://www.dirtydonnyart.blogspot.com Hi Matt.

I am writing to express how important FGW has become for me and others who I am friends with. I live around the corner - about a five minute walk.

I moved to the city last year. I didn't know anyone. I participated in a tourney one weekend last year and met Lianna and Mickey. We became friends and they encouraged me to frequent FGW.

Since then I have met well over fifty people through FGW and count 5-10 good friendships as a result including Zac, Richard, Tony, John, Jody, Walther, Lianne and yourself. I get together regularly with people I have met there and have also introduced several of my friends to FGW and they have in turn participated in events such as the recent ladies tournament.

FGW has been instrumental in helping me make smooth transition to a new life and community. I visit several times a week. The friendships I have made and the enjoyment I have and continue to experience there have been very important in my personal growth and development.

I am proud supporter of our local community and contribute significantly to it through my living expenses, personal and entertainment dollars.

Its importance to me and many, many others should not be understated. Sincerely,

Jay Goldlist

San Francisco, CA 94117 415/422-0411

Supervisor London Breed
District 5
City Hall
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place, Room 244
San Francisco, Ca 94102-4689

Dear Supervisor Breed:

I am a longtime resident of the Haight Ashbury. I moved here 14 years ago and worked for area non-profits. I now work for Educational Access Television, where I operate 2 channels and produce content for television, film, radio and the web.

As a longtime Haight Ashbury resident, I have watched with fascination as the character of the neighborhood has changed. 14 years ago most of the people you would see around the neighborhood were hippies, gutter punks; tourists and low-key residents. Gradually that mix has changed and now you most often see families and tech industry people who work from home or ride the large commuter buses to destinations south. I myself have changed with the neighborhood, my partner of 17 years and I now have a 4 year old son. He has his own radio show with over 50 thousand listeners and he is

probably the most well-known kid around the neighborhood. You can listen to A Cup of Coffee with Thomson anytime at <a href="http://whaddyagonnadoaboutit.podbean.com/">http://whaddyagonnadoaboutit.podbean.com/</a>. On many episodes Thomson talks about our favorite place in the neighborhood- Free Gold Watch.

Free Gold Watch started as a print shop, making very creative shirts and hoodies for businesses and for sale to the public. Eventually they began to put a few classic pinball and video games in their location on Waller St, and that's how my son and I discovered them. Over the last year or so, they have added more pinball machines and pinball lovers like me have joined a league that plays there approximately every 2 weeks. This has been a great opportunity for an overworked Mom like me to get out of the house and have some good clean fun.

On many Saturday or Sunday afternoons my son and I go into Free Gold Watch and for a few dollars we can have an afternoon of fun. There is rarely a large crowd there except on league nights, so it's easy for my 4 year old to be a 4 year old without upsetting anyone. We see other families there, too; along with adults, anyone who just enjoys playing games in a fun, relaxed atmosphere. Free Gold Watch is a credit to the neighborhood, a great place to have some fun that does not involve spending a lot of money on food or drink. In all my times being there, I've only once seen a problem- it was an obviously drunk homeless person that came in and tried to play someone else's game. I and another woman asked him to leave repeatedly until he did. We handled it well, the man didn't even get upset and there was no need to call the police.

The owners and people who work there are friendly and helpful. They know my son, husband and I and treat us with respect, the same way I've seen them treat everyone who comes through their doors. I feel certain that if any of their neighbors had concerns about noise or anything else, the neighbors could speak to the owners and they would listen and do their best to make this neighborhood spot a joy for everyone.

Unfortunately, I understand that one of Free Gold Watch's neighbors filed a complaint against them. I have no idea what the particulars of the complaint are, but I wish I did. I feel certain that whatever their concerns are, they can be addressed to everyone's satisfaction. However, I have seen over the years many great places in San Francisco closed because of 1 neighbor that complained incessantly. In San Francisco, the squeaky wheel definitely gets the grease.

So... I plan on being a squeaky wheel, too. I am a longtime resident of the neighborhood, and Free Gold Watch is a reputable neighbor. They have done nothing but add to the attractiveness of the Haight Ashbury by providing inexpensive entertainment. I have already spoken to many people about this awesome place and I can easily use all of my media resources to fight to keep this place running. If it's a good place for a 4 year old to discover the joys of playing pinball (and Mrs. Pacman and other video games), then it's good for the neighborhood. I hope that as the District 5 Supervisor that you will take a special interest in this situation. Please know that there are MANY people that support Free Gold Watch. Perhaps you can act as a mediator

between this neighbor and this business, surely a meeting could smooth things over and find a common ground that everyone can live with.

I would be happy to speak with you about this at your convenience. Perhaps you would like to be a call-in guest on A Cup of Coffee with Thomson!! Have you ever been interviewed by a 4 year old?! He doesn't know much about politics yet, so I don't think he would have any hard questions. I would also be happy to take you over to Free Gold Watch and treat you to a game of pinball! You can reach me during business hours at Educational Access Television- 415/239-3887.

Thanks for reading, and thank you in advance for keeping the pinballs rolling! Jody Yvette Wirt

Its easy to see what is wrong with the world, but whaddya gonna do about it?

http://www.whaddyagonnadoaboutit.com/			
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Hello,

I am writing in hopes to petition for Free Gold Watch. This is a wonderful family owned business that really has something for everyone. Whether you are shopping in the Haight, or on your way to the food trucks, Free Gold Watch is a great spot to stop and flip through the clothes racks, admire some local art, or play a quick game of pinball. A cool arcade like this is quintessentially San Francisco, and is a great spot for a first date or entertaining your kids.

But this place is not just a store to stop at while one is in the neighborhood. It draws people into the neighborhood from all around. The popularity of pinball was waning since the mid 1990s, but has been in a major upswing in the last 5 years and is quickly regaining a following. FGW has become a central player in this community, and brings players from around the state. I live in San Francisco, but rarely went to the Haight until the shop gave me a reason to visit regularly. This is where I learned how to play pinball! I have friends from around the bay area who often drive into town to spend an afternoon playing here. Recently, I met a man who comes all the way down from Reno once a month to play pinball in the bay area, and always makes FGW his first stop. And when I was playing in southern California last month, several people had already heard of the shop and were asking about it.

The San Francisco pinball league just finished its first year. We gather twice a month on Wednesday evenings. This league is a great place to meet new people and make friends. There is a real sense of community in the league, and I have spent time outside of league with dozens of people I have met there.

With all that Free Gold Watch has to offer to San Francisco, the Haight neighborhood, and to pinball lovers everywhere, it deserves backing from the city. The owners are very considerate

people who would gladly do what they could to make everyone happy. I plea that you allow this business to continue to thrive.

Best Regards,

James Squires

318 3rd ave

SF, CA 94118

(510)299-8598

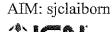
Like the Musee Mechanique, Playland-Not-at-the-Beach and the Pacific Pinball Museum, Free Gold Watch is dedicated to preserving the gameplay of the past. And there is no more important place than the Bay Area, and San Francisco in particular, to preserve classic games, because this is where the American video game industry took root and began to thrive.

San Francisco is the Hollywood of video games, with companies like Atari and SEGA paving the way for modern game companies like Electronic Arts, Zynga and Square-Enix that all operate in the Bay. Video games have a recent history, with a golden age that began not 40 years ago, but it began in arcades like Free Gold Watch, which preserves the experience of classic games, before there were home consoles and smart phones. Not all arcades are museums, but Free Gold Watch is -- it's a museum of play, and San Francisco should be proud to host it, and work to preserve it.

#### Samuel Claiborn

Executive Editor, IGN.com

625 2nd St. 4th Floor San Francisco, CA 94107



About IGN:

IGN, based out of San Francisco, is ranked as the world's #1 gaming site by independent tracking service comScore, with a reach of 20.7 million users. <u>IGN.com</u> reaches more than 45 million users across our desktop and mobile web sites and applications, providing reviews of video games and coverage of the video game industry and gaming culture.

\_\_\_\_\_

Free Gold Watch provides an invaluable resource for the San Francisco community. It has become a safe place on one of the worst blocks of the Upper Haight for families and friends to gather to enjoy wholesome video games and pinball. We have held fund raising tournaments for local charities, and hope to continue to be a positive influence in the neighborhood. Free Gold Watch is one of only two remaining arcades in San Francisco, the only other alternative are games located in bars. It would be a terrible shame to lose such a wonderful fixture of our great city.

#### MATT WILLMARTH

Lemme know wha	t I can do to	help! Not	trying to lose	what is undoul	btedly the coole	st place in
town.						

Here is my letter for SF in support of FGW:

Free Gold Watch is an important pinball location for San Francisco. The bi-weekly league there draws upwards of 60 to 70 players on a regular basis to San Francisco. These players travel from all over the Bay Area and also from within the city. Many players buy food, drink and other items in nearby grocery stores. They also purchase meals in local San Francisco restaurants. This results in extra business and tax dollars being spent within the city. As we all know, the local economy and employment can always benefit from extra local business transactions and taxes.

The other benefit is as a social meeting place for pinball players. The typical social activity would be going to a bar or nightclub. Free Gold Watch offers an alternative to the standard activity. Bars and nightclubs can be dangerous, whereas Free Gold Watch offers a safe and fun alternative for adults to socialize. Safe locations for adults to socialize should always be encouraged and allowed to prosper within the city.

John Lautmann	
	·

Here are some words for the cause.....

FreeGoldWatch is one of the best things to happen to San Francisco in years. People visit from all over the world, with lives steeped in pinball, and remark how extraordinary it is. Yes, there are pinball machines from every era -- most considered collectors items -- that anyone can play. Yes, they are lovingly maintained beyond typical standards, and the room is artfully decorated. Yes, it's a drug-free and alcohol-free building. But most of all it is the nucleus of a smart, passionate, and friendly community. With zero marketing, each season our league membership

fills to capacity on start day. Every night we play, we are grouped with new people, and new conversations and connections arise. We talk, we play pinball, and then we usually laugh at ourselves. Losing FGW would be tragic for this burgeoning community that feels so true to -- and at home in -- San Francisco. FGW is an absolutely good thing.

Jeremy Williams

To whomever it may concern.

FreeGoldWatch has recently evolved into the premier spot for both casual, and competitive pinball in San Francisco. Young and old, good and bad, everybody who sets foot at this wonderland does so with good reason. The owner, Matt Henri, has worked to create a safe, fun environment not only for the hardcore pinball player, but for families and casual players alike. To close down such a positive spot would leave a permanent scar on the San Francisco city scape.

Personally, I organize a bi weekly pinball league, with over 80 members who use the FGW facilities with tremendous success. We would have no alternative to FGW than to go to the Pinball Museum in Alameda, were FGW to shut down. We think San Francisco need this pinball haven to stay open as long as possible, because it fills a need in the City.

Sincerely,

Per Schwarzenberger Commissioner, San Francisco Pinball Department



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February 13, 2014

San Francisco Entertainment Commission City Hall, Room 453 1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place San Francisco, CA 94102

Dear Commissioners:

I write in support of Free Gold Watch's application for Mechanical Amusement Device, specifically, pinball, at the location of 1767 Waller Street. Free Gold Watch (FGW) is an active member of the business community and a responsive neighbor. FGW's pinball operation enhances the vibrancy of the Waller Street corridor. We have not experienced any concerns or problems with the pinball operation since its inception. We agree with FGW's requested hours of operation from Monday, Tuesday, Friday 10:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.; Wednesday and Thursday 10:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.; Saturday and Sunday 10:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.. Should any future concerns arise with the operation of the pinball machines, we would first work with FGW directly on resolution.

Please let me know if I can provide any further information; my contact information is katie.albright@sfcapc.org or 415.213.7401.

Very truly yours,

Katie Albright

Executive Director

Cheryl Jennings Isabelle Lemon James Lee Suzanne Maloney Suzy Pak Wes Sen Catherine Topham To whom it may concern,

As a 61 year old retirie I have enjoyed pinball for decades and was pleasently surprised by the arrival of pinball machines at 'Free Gold Watch'. As the revival of pinball has grown I have witnessed it's popularity at this location. From fathers with 3 year olds to senior citizens pinball provides a low cost means of entertainment for young people as well as a healthy and friendly social environment.

For these reasons I support and encourage the continuance of pinball at this location.

Yours trully,

Jeffrey Scott

3844B fulton St.

S.F., ca. 94118

Rolf Skar 473 Frederick Street San Francisco, CA 94117

February 13, 2014

#### A statement about Free Gold Watch:

I have lived at Shrader and Frederick for seven years. I love my neighborhood, and don't want to live anywhere else in San Francisco.

Free Gold Watch is one of the things I treasure most about the few blocks around my home. It's quirky, creative and fun. It's the kind of thing that makes San Francisco different from other cities or suburbia. It's also inclusive. Stop by Free Gold Watch on any given day and you'll see a cross-section of people: from suited businessmen and hoodied hipsters to tourists taking a break from their rental bikes.

Plenty of kids too. It's great to see girls and boys discover the simple pleasure of pinball alongside parents in a world where fewer and fewer children experience leisure activities without pixels. There is something real about a pinball machine. It actually exists, and you have to leave the house to play it. Many of the older machines offer kids a view into cultural histories they'd otherwise never know. Sometimes they're playing machines their parents (or even grandparents) played years ago. Pretty neat.

Everyone is friendly and well-mannered. Conversations start easily because we're sharing something – a game – and around that, community builds.

I suspect the complaint against Free Gold Watch from someone in my neighborhood is, in part, a result of a break-down of community. It's all too easy to not know your neighbors these days. It's all too easy to replace relationships and trust with suspicion and official complaints. If I could, I'd move Free Gold Watch into the building next to my apartment. They're respectful neighbors. They're not open late (I often don't make it back from work in time to plunk in a quarter and unwind). They're not loud like the bars or popular restaurants in the neighborhood. And, they're adding to, not taking away from, the diverse social fabric of our community.

I hope Free Gold Watch is a part of my neighborhood for a long time, and will do what I can to ensure it is!

Sincerely,

Rolf Skar

#### Hi Matt,

My name is Elise and I live in the neighborhood. I've lived in the Haight for 5 years now. I love Free Gold Watch so much! For so many reasons. One being, as a nonprofit worker living in a changing (and ever expensive) San Francisco FGW is one of the only pieces of local entertainment I can afford.

Over the years I've watched fancy coffee shop after fancy restaurant pop up on Haight Street (Stanza, Sparrow, Second Act...). With anticipation, I check out each new spot- but then realize "Oh, this must be for tourists or techies-- someone who can pay \$4 for a cup of coffee or \$15 for a cheeseburger."

I've been playing games at FGW for almost 2 years now. It's one of my favorite community spaces in the neighborhood. Something that recruits a diverse group of people that isn't steeped in alcohol. In the changing culture of this city, FGW is a beacon of authenticity, community and group games. Plus, lets be honest-- you have the best maintained machines in the city of San Francisco.

It would be such a shame to lose this precious spot. Please let me know if there's anything I can do to help keep it open.

Here's hoping for a replay,

Elise Nabors 1650 Haight Street 828.216.0000

#### To Whom it May Concern:

Hello and Good Day. My name is Challisa Parisi and I am a member of the San Francisco Pinball Department. I have been a member of this wonderful pinball league since Season 1 and Day 1. Here follows a short story about my wonderful pinball family at Free (the) Gold Watch.

I moved to Northern Cali. to go to College at the Culinary Institute of America in St. Helena. After graduation I decided to move to San Francisco. I obtained a great job working for Chef Michael Mina and Chef Berthold at RN74, located in your financial district. I spent about 6 months in the city before I started to feel lonely. Moved there alone and I had no friends or family to relate to. Found a few favorite bars with pinball in them to visit after work and on weekends. I found myself drinking way too much and making a lot of bad choices. I needed friends... I needed people to talk to and rely on and have intelligent conversations with. One

night I looked up my old Meetup Group profile and searched pinball. What do you know.. a pinball meetup group next week. Hoorray!! I exclaimed, mostly because I actually had the day off since it was mid-week. I took the bus down to upper haight and found this tiny hole in the wall spot with about 30 men and a few pinball machines in it. I walked in not knowing anyone and being very nervous. I walked up to what appeared to be where you would check in. The boys all seem to know each other and I felt like the odd one out, especially since I was the only girl present at the moment. I stood by the counter for a brief moment. A wonderful man, named Per S., said hi there and are you here for the pinball league. I said Well yes, I guess I am. He explained how it worked and was very nice and welcoming. I started to feel less nervous and more comfortable. At the start of the league we always go through rules or let others speak to advertise any other pinball related information happening in the bay area and this night I got to introduce myself to everyone. With a meek hi and a waive of my hand, I said hello.. to hear a wonderful hello back. I hadn't felt so welcomed by a group in a very long time. We played the night through and then went and hung out for a bit afterwards at a local tavern. I made some great friends that night, but little did I know it was just the beginning of friendships with people who today are my mentors and best friends. As the season progressed I, being a chef by trade, started to cook for league nights. Spinach artichoke dip, cookies, 7 layer bean dip and such. Every league night we had something different to eat and everyone chipped in. Some people brought drinks, others, plates, others chips and such. We were making a family out of our league, conviviality! As the season progressed I got to know some of the best people I had ever met in my life. As most of them back then were men, you would think they would look at a lone lady as meat. Oh contraire my dears! They were honest and helping and supportive and FRIENDS! At the end of the season my job had changed, new management. I hadn't been home to Las Vegas in a few years. I decided to leave San Francisco and return home. I was heart broken to leave everyone and thought I would never see them again. Which I dreaded because they were the best friends I had ever made my entire life. I have lived in 5 states, been to 4 or 5 countries and been bounced around my whole life. So when I say the best friends I have made my whole life I mean this out of experience! On the last league night I made a beautiful 3 layer multi-flavor pinball machine cake. I created a backglass image from 5 of the machines we had on site using a common theme. For the playfield I used Space shuttle, which by conincidence was the last game played by the final two in the Match to decided Season 1 league Winner. I put the finalists names on the playfield and credited a special thanks to those who had made it possible for me to have such a wonderful pinball family. At the awards ceremony, Per called me up., for what I wasn't sure. He presented me with a very special S.F. Pinball Dept. Silver Fork award. It is a wooden plaque with engraving, a silver fork with bow and my league Chip glued onto it. He also wrote a lovely poem to read to me to say thank you for always cooking and such. It hangs on my wall right now and is in view as I type this. That night, Shon( local operator and mentor) also gave me my very first pinball, which was much heavier then I thought it would be and has been in my purse with me since. Matt (FGW owner), gave me a sweatshirt he had made for league to take with me back to Las Vegas so that I would always remember them, like I would ever forget! My best friend, Darren, who I met through this SF pinball family nicknamed me Pinball Dame. I added them all on Facebook and exchanged number with a few of them. I was sad to go.. but glad to be back to Las Vegas. What I was shocked to see, and a first for me. Was that after I moved a

few of my league friends came to visit. We still constantly talk and I still demand, not that I have to, to recieve the league update emails. I return to SF quite often to visit all of these people. I returned last season for the last league night and was welcomed with hugs and love and just darn welcomed! The people I met in the Bay area, solely due to being able to have such a wonderful pinball league are to this day my best friends, my mentors and those that keep me on a path of achievement and away from failure and sadness. I learned so much from all of them that when I moved home I started operating on pinball machines myself and learning the trade. I now own 7 machines and have gotten two of them working. I can not do this and could not do this if it wasn't for the help and mentoring of the whole league. You see it is not just one person. We are a family and everyone helps out! Everyone shares advice and everyone shows support to everyone! There was no fighting or arguing or mean players. Just wonderful people willing to share their experiences and knowledge. Now in season 3 the league is up to 70 plus players. Which means we need to have the pinball machines to accommodate this amount. By forcing us to reduce the amount of pinball machines on property you will be forcing us to break up our family. As a league night takes 3 to 4 hours to complete with the machines we have on premisise. Many players will quit or go find other leagues. It will seperate a good and positive family. We aren't meeting to ponder thoughts of world domination or any other negative means. For the first time, at least in my life, there is a group of people from all walks of life. All ethnic backgrounds, all ages, sizes, male and female and we all get a long and have a similar interest... In the Silver Ball we Trust! To seperate us by forcing us to reduce the amount of joy (pinball machines) we have on location will only be tearing down what makes San Francisco, San Francisco... CULTURE! Soon you will be limiting the number of bikes allowed in an area at a time, as it is no different for a bicycle group to gather and ride or pet owners or chess players or a Nightclub! So Free the Gold Watch! Lets come up with a way to work together. To keep our family together. To make San Francisco stand out even more then it does as a place that is welcoming and supportive! To everyone no matter their interest! Pinball is not a crime! It is a gathering of like minded individuals who are literally the most supportive people I have ever met.

Challisa Parisi Pinball Dame

Please feel free to contact me at any time at 7027389131 or by email at challisap@hotmail.com

Aloha - I saw an article today about Free Gold Watch needing help and I just wanted to let you know my feelings on the matter.

I found out about FGW about 5 months ago & it has provided me and my son(single mom here) a great destination for our Sunday outings.

We are able to walk over from our house, play a few rounds of pinball in a

safe and clean environment (bathroom too - HUGE bonus) or have a few good laughs over Frogger or Willow video games. I am able to share with him games I enjoyed as a child and this brings me joy to no end. He even has a few classmates he sees there with their parents. He just turned 8 on Feb 1st and he asked to bring a handful of friends to play pinball before we walked them over to share his garden plot at the new community gardens right around the corner.

I can't express enough how much I love Free Gold Watch - the staff is incredible, the pinball games are a blast from my past that I can share, it's within walking distance from my home, and I would be so sad if they were not able to provide this to me and my son.

I hope I haven't gushed too much. Please let Free Gold Watch stay as is & let my son enjoy pinball for as long as there is electricity to power those awesome games.

Mahalo,

Rachel & Oscar Cohen

To whom it may concern:

Free gold watch is a gem in the upper haight/cole valley neighborhood. As a three-year resident of the neighborhood, I've been to free gold watch many times and will continue to support this great business. I'm urging you not to shut down or change free gold watch in any way.

#### - Phillip

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Lianna Lopez and I am writing on behalf of Free Gold Watch. I have been a resident of the Bay Area for the last 5 years. I am an Early Childhood Educator at Children's Day School here in San Francisco.

I discovered Free Gold Watch about a year ago, and it has been a safe haven for me during my hectic work week. When I first arrived to one of the SF Pins League Nights I was greeted by 70 other pinball enthusiasts and was in awe of the space and the sense of community. Folks were welcoming and the space was perfect! To have twenty plus pinball machines in pristine working condition at one's fingertips is a DREAM COME TRUE! I am currently part of the SF Pins League, and I have attended several tournaments that Free Gold Watch has hosted for world pinball points, charity events and women only events (which are super rare in this field of competitive play).

I rely on Free Gold Watch once a week to be a space that is welcoming and warm as well as an outlet to relieve my work week's stress. It would be devastating to loose this space as a pinball haven and a venue for community events and gatherings.

I feel that Matt is extremely considerate and responsible individual who is dedicated to creating and maintaining this space for us.

I appreciate your time and consideration.

Lianna M. Lopez liannalopez@gmail.com

To whom it may concern,

As a San Francisco resident and active pinball player I would like to express my strong support for Free Gold Watch as a place for pinball in the city of San Francisco.

Free Gold Watch is an important place for me personally as well as the local community. Pinball has experienced a large resurgence in recent years as a hobby and competitive sport and it's an important piece of distinctly American history. Free Gold Watch is one the only places in San Francisco where adults and children alike can enjoy a wide range of machines from the 1960s to the present. Most pinball machines in San Francisco are located in bars where Free Gold Watch serves as one of the only family-friendly alternatives.

Additionally, Free Gold Watch serves to strengthen the local community by hosting a bi-weekly pinball league and occasional tournaments that raises money for charities. These events bring people together that would not usually find themselves in the same place. At Free Gold Watch, people as different as corporate vice presidents and school teachers get to connect over their common passion. (That's not an exaggeration; that's an actual example.) It's an open and welcoming space, providing a clear value to an area otherwise defined by smoke shops and bars.

I strongly support Free Gold Watch and hope that the shop owners will continue to be able to provide entertainment and an inviting community space to others in the city and wider Bay Area in the future.

Best Regards, Andreas Haugstrup Pedersen San Francisco, CA

This is an open letter about Free Gold Watch Pinball.

To whom this letter may concern. My name is Jeff Ponder. I am a local Haight Ashbury resident and new Pinball player. I stumbled across Free Gold Watch on my way to do my laundry one day and something special caught my attention. It was the voice of Jean Luc Picard of Star Trek the Next Generation. Being a Star trek fan I had to investigate and I found the voice coming out of this wonderfully bright, flashing, beautiful Pinball Machine. Luckily I had a few quarters rattling around in my pockets and I played a game, and I was hooked. I started coming around every now and then and spend a few quarters on my days off when I would have probably just stayed inside my house. I found my self looking up different machines at home

finding out the rules and other tricks on YouTube. Asking frequent questions to other Pinball players and staff fixing the machines. I found out that a few of my co workers were also Pinball players one being in his thirties and the other almost sixty. Even my friends Boss was in the same league I joined shortly after discovering this hidden gem. I became a small scale Pinball advocate telling everyone of my friends and new acquaintances that I was in a competitive Pinball league and how I was progressing as a player. Quarters are no more one fourth of a dollar, they are now a couple of minutes playing as a Knight or a Solider and even a Doctor with my tools a couple of flippers and some silver balls shooting across the play field. Free Gold Watch is a inexpensive escape that especially in San Francisco is a welcome sight. The fact that they have a number of different machines makes all the difference! Usually the only place where you can play a game is at a bar or movie theater that are both expensive and a bar not being kid friendly. Losing this place as a Pinball Haven would be a true tragedy to the Upper Haight and San Francisco in general. Theres is no place in San Francisco with this many machine to play on and thats Family friendly as Free Gold Watch. Please keep this Pinball Palace in the Neighborhood!

Thank you for your time Jeff Ponder Pinball player

#### To Whom It May Concern:

I'm a pinball enthusiast living in the Lower Haight and I have been frequenting the Free Gold Watch (FGW) for approximately a year now. The news that the operation of the FGW is somehow being questioned came a shock and a surprise to me. This is because the FGW has provided me with a community of like-minded people who share a common interest: the game of pinball.

Pinball as a game has been gaining popularity all over the Bay Area. And there are very few places, especially in the city, that cater to people who enjoy playing the game. Mostly, pinball games are found in bars around the city. But because of misuse of the machines, and lack of adequate maintenance, a lot of the those games are not in proper working condition and not much fun to play. And the good games in proper working condition are usually busy and there can be substantial wait times.

FGW has provided people like me a unique and welcoming place to go and indulge my interest of purely playing pinball with my friends without having to deal with the bar atmosphere and crowds. It is the ONLY place in the city that I can think of that provides this opportunity. There are no strings attached and I'm not nudged to buy anything or spend any more money than I want to spend on the games. And that is because the very intent of Matt and Leann is to provide such a haven purely for the enjoyment of the game. They are both avid pinball players and that is a major reason why FGW is such a great place to go to. Towards this end, the machines at the FGW are all kept in excellent working condition and are always a pleasure to play. I cannot remember a single time when I did not have fun playing pinball with my friends at the FGW.

Whenever I've been at FGW, I have not seen anyone misbehave or be loud in any way. Even when there is a large group of us playing, there are no loud discussions or interactions. All the people I have interacted with at FGW been very mellow and not aggressive or loud in any way. There may be the occasional cheering for a high score on a game but its more on a personal level than like a group of people cheering (like at a game on TV at a bar for eg.).

Given the reasons stated above, I must say that the FGW has my full support in continuing to be the unique place that it is. It provides me and all the other avid pinballers in the city a very special place to pursue our shared passion.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Anish Adalja, Pinball Enthusiast

Lower Haight, San Francisco. Feb. 2014

Hi Matt,

I don't think we've met but I've come into your store in the past and wanted to voice my support of Free Gold Watch in the neighborhood. I live only a few blocks away on Rivoli Street and love poking my head in to see what you are up to.

I think it's great to have a shop like yours that not only creates amazing, custom designed t-shirts but also has a fun place to hang around. This is truly the spirit of what makes the Haight area so special. It's not smoke shops, retail chains or McDonald's. It's shops and owners like you that make living in the area so cool. It's one of the reason's I've stayed in this neighborhood ever since I moved to the city 8 years ago.

Hope this letter of support is helpful. I'll make sure to share on Twitter as well. Good luck!

Best, Shane	
Shane Tobin	•
m: 415-317-1291	
e: shane.tobin@gmail.com	
www.twitter.com/shanetobin	

Hello London,

I'm one your constituents in the Upper Haight and have lived here (upper and lower) for the last 8 years.

I'm writing you in support of a favorite local business, The Free Gold Watch that has received some <u>complaints</u> and is in danger of having to remove what has become much loved (neighborhood pinball) or face legal reprimand. This place is not another head shop, it is a uniquely interesting and fun locally owned business with a positive community influence. In my mind we need to do everything we can to support them.

This situation depressingly reminds me of another neighborhood business (Bacon and Bacon) that faced similar complaints from a faction of neighbors, was shutdown, went through political hell and has yet to reopen in the Haight.

Anything you can do to help resolve this situation without having to cause undue restrictions on this local business would be appreciated.

A small few have managed to take away our bacon bouquets, please don't let them take our pinball machines too.

Thanks for your help and hard work, Steven Gemmen 29A Downey St Upper Haight, SF

I'm a 3 year resident of San Francisco, and have lived in the Upper Haight the whole time I've lived here. I'm hard pressed to think of a business in the Upper Haight that offers an experience quite as awesome and unique as Free Gold Watch. I love pinball, consider myself a pinball enthusiast, and even met my girlfriend on a pinball date, you could say I found love \*in\* pinball. So, for me, having a place so close to where I live offer pinball really makes me happy to live there. I'm also a huge fan of the apparel Free Gold Watch offers, and have gifted quite a number of their shirts to friends and family. Many of these people have since visited this beautiful city, and I can't help but think the appeal of Free Gold Watch attributed to them coming to visit. If anything, I implore whoever is reading this to come out to the Upper Haight some Thursday afternoon, get a burrito from the Upper Haight Off The Grid, and go to Free Gold Watch to play some Black Pyramid or Medieval Madness to see for yourself what Free Gold Watch is bringing to our community.

In support of Free Gold Watch,

Brian Butz 404 Cole St. Free Gold Watch is a great establishment and deserves its place in the neighborhood. Its collection of pinball machines are well maintained and brings back memories of the many years that these machines represent. I have also noticed families coming here to play the games. It brings me back to simpler times when playing games was more interactive than just pressing buttons and staring at a video screen.

-Randy Chung San Francisco resident

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