

**Auction**

from page 7



McCormick & Schmick's Sous Chef Frank Mendoza, serves Brenda Bush, a first-time MB Wine Auction attendee, fresh oysters on the half shell. Photo by Christopher Barnes.

like Il Fornaio and Fleming's Steakhouse, there were a number of new establishments as well. One of the newest exhibiting that evening was Fresh Brothers, a Chicago-style pizzeria with California flair, owned by Adam and Michael Goldberg. They opened last June in Manhattan Beach and are thriving, according to Councilman Mitch Ward. "Manhattan Beach is a great place for new businesses," said Ward. "Even in this challenging economy, we work to provide a business-friendly environment for new businesses."

The gala featured both live and silent auctions. Thirty-two live auction lots included American Airline vouchers, tickets to the Grammy awards, trips to Hong Kong and Sydney, and a vertical of wines from Château Latour and other wine lots. The live auction started at 7:30 p.m. with spirited bidding for a special VIP night at the final *American Idol* tapings which went for \$3,200. The silent auction consisted of lots featuring the best collectible wines as well as art, dining, travel and spa opportunities.

The Manhattan Beach Wine Auction is put on by the Wine Advisory Board. It was started in 1998 and has created a forum

where wine aficionados could meet on a bi-monthly basis and share their interest in wine while supporting the annual Manhattan Wine Auction. The Manhattan Wine Auction is a key fundraiser for the Manhattan Beach Educational Foundation (MBEF). Over 98 percent of the wine donations come from members of the Wine Advisory Board. This year, that represented over \$130,000 in donated wine.

Through the generosity of local individuals and businesses, MBEF funds critical education programs at each of Manhattan Beach's seven public schools. These programs are not mandated and would not be possible without private funding. They pay for teachers and other educators whose positions the state of California does not fund or require but local parents and educators consider necessary for a quality education. Examples include librarians, physical education teachers, health assistants, computer teachers, music teachers and assistants, educational advisors, college and career counselors, and a portion of high school elective courses.

MBEF's role has evolved from providing limited educational enhancements at a cost

of tens of thousands of dollars to funding critical educational programs at a cost of more than \$2 million annually. MBEF's board of directors consists of parents, community members and PTA presidents from each of the district's seven schools.

"We come each year to support this wonderful event as well as to cross-promote our similar event called 'Hearts of Hermosa,' which raised \$180,000 last year for Hermosa Beach schools," remarked Susie Fraley, VP

of Hermosa Beach Educational Foundation. This year's Hermosa Beach event was held in March at Saint Rocke's and consisted of a dinner/dance with a silent auction.

The MBEF holds monthly meetings on the second Tuesday of every month at 7:30 p.m. in the MBUSD Office Board Room at 325 South Peck Avenue. Visitors are always welcome. For more information, please go to [www.mbef.org](http://www.mbef.org) or call 310-303-3342.



Lisa Conrad, Kim Carey and Celin Miller. Photo by Christopher Barnes.



Councilmember Wayne Powell, State Assemblymember Ted Lieu, Mayor Pro Tem Mitch Ward, Councilmember Richard Montgomery. Photo by Bruce Siebs

**City Council**

from front page

The ordinance was drafted by the Building Subcommittee of the city's Environmental Task Force and the council will give it final approval at the next meeting. The certification, Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED), was created by the U.S. Green Building Council. City staff wrote that, "LEED is the most universally recognized non-residential third party green building rating system."

The four levels of Certified, Silver, Gold and Platinum can be reached by attaining a certain level of points from seven categories. The seven categories include water efficiency, energy efficiency, and conservation of materials and resources used in construction.

New public buildings of 5,000 square feet or more will have to have a Gold Rating or higher, which the sub-committee said was similar to the standard set by other municipalities.

"In our last presentation we had found about forty-four cities in the state of California that were doing very similar programs and were doing similar levels of requirements for both their private and public buildings," subcommittee member Chris Conaway said.

Non-residential construction projects of 10,000 feet or more would have to have the equivalence of a less costly Silver rating or higher.

"We also felt that showing LEED equivalence without necessarily having to do the full documentation was also the best path to go," Conaway said. "Again, we didn't want to put too much, anything onerous on the private sector."

Conaway said the committee researched the question of whether LEED buildings cost more and found that older studies show a cost premium of 2 percent for Silver and 2-6 percent for Gold certifications. He said that more recently, the sub-committee has found the added cost factor to be largely indistinguishable, but that the public still perceives the costs to be higher. "The public perception has not always caught up with market conditions," Conaway said. Conaway said that some aspects of construction, such as the direction the building faces and the materials used for its exterior "skin," can bring long-term savings in utility costs. He said buildings built to Silver and Gold LEED standards would eventually save enough money in gas, water and electricity over time to pay for the added construction costs. "The payback that you get over a life of a building is significant, especially if you hold on to your buildings," Conaway said.

The sub-committee looked at several Gold-level LEED construction projects currently being developed by two local businesses. Conaway said their decisions to go green have little to do with a return on investment. "Their decisions are primarily based on their commitment to sustainability, the social responsibility aspect of it, and the public relations that they get out of it," Conaway said.

In order for the new regulations to affect construction for remodeling of commercial buildings greater than 10,000 gross square feet, the alteration or rehabilitation costs have to exceed the total building valuation of 50 percent, as defined by the municipal code.

Estimated construction and reconstruction costs will be determined by the Community Development Director, in the same way as valuations are determined for building permit fees.

Members of the Council thanked the volunteers of the environmental task force and sub-committee for their research and findings. "For me definitely, green is the new gold," Councilmember Mitch Ward said. "Because as we see here that if you invest in these sustainable buildings, you get substantial return on investment over the life of that building."

Tell said the ordinance showed that the city wanted to help the environment, but in a way that would not burden businesses or taxpayers. "I like the case studies because they show that green is green, and it really does result in savings," Tell said. "That's one thing we really wanted to focus on, and show the community that we're doing this for the right reasons but that we're looking at the bottom line."

**Audience Participation Period**

Residents wishing to speak to the Council during the audience participation portion of the meeting will no longer have to wait for hours before getting to speak. The Council voted to move audience participation to the beginning of the meeting at the request of Powell and after lengthy discussion over two meetings.

Powell said seniors would benefit from the change, and that neighboring cities have public comments at the beginning of the meetings. "We're for some reason, one of the very few

[cities] that force their residents to wait until the end of the meeting," Powell said. "I've been told by a number of individuals and particularly seniors that that they just can't wait until the end of the meeting."

Montgomery, the only councilmember to vote against the change, said the Council has tried it before without seeing any real benefit. He said if members of the public don't want to wait until the end of the meeting, they can call and e-mail Council members, or speak for a minute during community announcements. "No one's limiting the democratic process here...we're not limiting the right to speak one way or the other," Montgomery said. "If it's not broken, why do you want to fix it?"

**Sepulveda Traffic**

The Council directed City Traffic Engineer Erik Zandvliet to study the parking restrictions along the southbound lanes of Sepulveda Boulevard at the intersections of Manhattan Beach Boulevard and Marine Avenue.

Zandvliet studied parking restrictions along Sepulveda Boulevard to find ways to improve traffic flow during peak periods, which usually has heavy northbound traffic in the morning hours and heavy southbound traffic in the evening hours.

Business owners were concerned with the impact of losing on street parking, which is used by many of their customers. Residents were concerned with the impact of increased parking and traffic on residential streets if any changes were made.

The Council will revisit the Sepulveda Corridor issue at a later date. •