



Councilmember Wengraf  
District 6

CONSENT CALENDAR  
January 21, 2014

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council  
From: Councilmember Susan Wengraf  
Subject: Urging the Hearst Corporation and the SF Chronicle to Continue Publishing the Stand Alone “Food and Wine” Section of the Newspaper

RECOMMENDATION

Adopt a Resolution urging the Hearst Corporation and the SF Chronicle to continue publishing the stand alone “Food and Wine” section of the newspaper and send it to the Hearst Corporation and the SF Chronicle Editorial Board.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

None

BACKGROUND

The news coverage that helped put Berkeley and the Bay Area on the world map as an important culinary destination is under threat. The New York Times reported that the SF Chronicle plans to cease the publication of the stand alone “Food and Wine” section and integrate coverage into an all-encompassing “lifestyles” section. The loss of the “Food and Wine” section comes during a golden era of Northern California cuisine. One of the keys to a thriving food economy is the spread of information such as recipes, trends, critiques and reviews. The Chronicle’s “Food and Wine” section has played a vital role in that effort, particularly in documenting an historic farm-to-table movement in our region that promotes healthy eating and sustainability. As a vital information source for Berkeley and Northern California’s vibrant food economy, the in-depth coverage that helped inspire a growing movement and has created a thousands of jobs in the Bay Area’s agriculture and hospitality industries, needs to continue to be published.

CONTACT PERSON

Councilmember Susan Wengraf Council District 6 510-981-7160

RESOLUTION NO. XXXX

REQUESTING HEARST CORPORATION TO HALT PLANS TO ELIMINATE THE SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE'S FOOD AND WINE SECTION

WHEREAS, the San Francisco Bay Area, and the City of Berkeley in particular, has played a leading role in the creation of California's pioneering food and wine industries, including the movement toward healthy, organic and sustainable foods; and

WHEREAS, the City of Berkeley supports a vibrant food and wine industry in Northern California that attracts scores of visitors and creates thousands of jobs in the agriculture and hospitality industries; and

WHEREAS, the spread of information is a key ingredient to a progressive food movement, and the newspapers play a vital role in that effort; and

WHEREAS, the San Francisco Chronicle's stand-alone Food and Wine section, winner of four James Beard Foundation awards for best food coverage, has been a leader in informing the world about innovations on Northern California's farms and vineyards and in its kitchens; and

WHEREAS, the Chronicle's Food and Wine section provides important commentary and information, such as recipes, critiques and reports on trends, with help from top writers and chefs and through its test kitchen, rooftop garden and extensive wine cellar.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the City of Berkeley that the Council states publicly that the San Francisco Chronicle's stand-alone Food and Wine section plays an important role in a growing culinary economy and urges the Hearst Corporation and the San Francisco Chronicle to cease its plans to shut its test kitchen, reduce real recipes, eliminate columnists and curtail independent food coverage for the betterment of the Bay Area and the state of California.