

Re: Wires being put up in HV merchant corridor

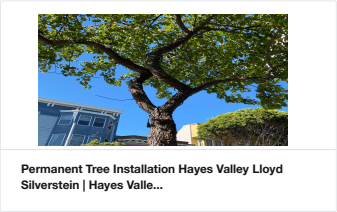
Subject: Re: Wires being put up in HV merchant corridor
From: RICHARD JOHNSON <rlj415@sbcglobal.net>
Date: 6/24/21, 9:28 AM
To: "DPW, Urbanforestry (DPW)" <urbanforestry@sfdpw.org>, Lloyd Silverstein <lloyd@opticalunderground.com>, Mich <hvsfcaus@gmail.com>, "dean.preston@sfgov.org" <dean.preston@sfgov.org>, "kyle.smeallie@sfgov.org" <kyle.smeallie@sfgov.org>, "jennlaska@icloud.com" <jennlaska@icloud.com>
CC: "info@hvsafe.com" <info@hvsafe.com>, "BSMpermitdivision (DPW)" <bsmpermitdivision@sfdpw.org>

Supervisor Preston, Kyle, Susan Nawbary, Lloyd & Jen,

First for the record I am fully on board for lighting the HV merchant corridor. That being said I do have the following concerns regarding the process (and lack thereof) which has unfolded to date:

Lloyd: thanks for your reply. First off, it should not take multiple email inquiries to get a simple yes or no on whether a permit was pulled. Second, you state in your original reply that planning has been ongoing. For the record, I as a HVNA member attended a HVNA merchant meeting led by you back in October 2020. Lighting was discussed which included a discussion on wrapping lights around trees for the holidays & honoring individuals who had died of Covid 19. It was presented as a temporary installation. Subsequently after that meeting it was conveyed to me that I was no longer allowed to attend the merchant committee meetings (which is counter to what the HVNA bylaws specify, but par for the course with HVNA leadership since 2020) so that was the last update on the 2020 lighting project that I heard beyond being solicited to make a donation.

Fast forward to early June 2021 when I and other residents noticed wiring being attached to poles, street lights and wrapped around tree trunks, branches and through canopy of trees. The wiring was present on 300,400,500 blocks of Hayes Street, Gough between Fell & Ivy and Octavia between Linden and Grove. That action initiated this original email thread. You also cite in first reply that the HVNA had dumped the original contractor who installed lights in the fall of 2020 and that they did not remove wiring. **Susan Nawbary, Urban Forestry Inspector**, my concern about this is as with the current lighting it was installed with total disregard to the health of the trees and not properly installed following electrical & SFTD safety codes. The first round of lights, with green wiring was stapled to trunks, wrapped around branches, and is still present and was not removed by the recent HVNA efforts led by Lloyd. Please see pics of examples [here](#). I also welcome going on a walking tour with you to point to the poor installation work.



Supervisor Preston & Kyle as an active community member I am accustomed to navigating through city hall bureaucracy to find solutions to issues. These days City officials and departments move slowly to respond to citizen concerns. To date I have not heard back from either of you acknowledging my inquiry. If I take the time to contact your office I feel it is only respectful that you take time to reply to a constituent's concern.

Once again I want to state my support of street lighting for a merchant corridor to increase both safety and encourage shoppers to patronize small businesses. Small businesses are the heart and soul of San Francisco and I agree with all that we need to do everything in our power to assure they continue to exist. This last year, due to Covid 19, has been a tough go for merchants of all sizes. Both contractors ushered in by the HVNA have installed lighting with blatant disregard for fire & electrical codes, and have violated many rules enacted to protect our urban forest. Lloyd has explained that his current contractor is a city approved vendor. That being the case, they should be well aware of proper procedure and permitting requirements pertaining to wires and lighting being installed to street poles, street signs, street lights and the proper use of trees for a permanent installation. If I can take the time to research and read both SF Parks Alliance street lighting guidelines & DPW lighting guidelines why can't the HVNA leadership do the same? If you had we would not be having this conversation.

Susan and Supervisor Preston: I'm one to bend the rules to benefit community if it is done in a mutually beneficial way to all parties. In this case I feel the process has been hijacked by good intent and done with little respect to process, permitting, protecting our urban forest and liability of parties responsible for current and past lighting installations. As our elected official and city department it is your responsibility to protect the interest & safety of our community.

Richard Johnson
Co-Founder HVSafe

On Thursday, June 24, 2021, 09:10:46 AM PDT, Mich <hvsfcaus@gmail.com> wrote:

Susan: thank you for your insight. It validates our understanding. It would be most helpful to get confirmation on your part that Lloyd's lighting installation is up to code once reviewed/permited. Please see some (not all) [examples of concerns with current set up here](#).

Lloyd: the 2019 HVNA tree lighting project you cite did not include any discussion by the Board on the permitting front (per emails and board minutes). Perhaps therein within lies the problem? To your point, back then the focus was on "tree wrapping" — your current permanent tree lighting installation is a distant ways from that - according to DPW's permit guidelines. Since last year's setup by your own admittance was flawed - I'm sure that while we all agree lighting is a positive enhancement the HVNA's tendency to slack on process continues to trigger community concern and inquiry. It's also perplexing IMHO that it took multiple attempts to question you on the status of a permit (which is clearly applicable to your project requirements) — before you provided a somewhat ambiguous explanation.

M

Lloyd Silverstein

Fri, Jun 18, 9:34 AM (4 days ago)

☆ ↶ ⋮

to me, RICHARD, Dean, Kyle, Jennifer, urbanforestry, info@hvsafe.com

Mich-

My apologies for the delay in responding... Lots going on trying to get ready for our celebration tonight.

We have been working with the SF Planning Department, DPW, SFFD, and SFMTA on this project since April. Initially we were referred to the Planning Department on this matter. They responded to our permit inquiry by telling us that a permit was not necessary because we would be plugging into existing private outlets. We didn't question this because, if you'll recall, this was the same condition under which HVNA discussed and approved the light-wrapped trees in 2019 when you were still on the Board.

With this consistent information, we went forward with scheduling the new lighting in time for our Reopening Celebration. During a conversation with DPW's Bureau of Street Use and Mapping in late May (on another project we are evaluating), we learned that we indeed needed a permit for the street lights. (As with many processes in the City, multiple departments, and even divisions within the same departments sometimes have overlapping and/or conflicting authority). By this time, work on the lights had already begun.

As you know, the City encourages these types of projects. DPW has acknowledged and has been sympathetic to the misinformation we received. They know the lights are already up, and have been more than helpful to work with us to process the appropriate permit application. The lights installation will of course conform to the proper requirements for this permitting.

I'm sure you agree that these lights are a welcome and much needed addition to our pandemic-ravaged commercial corridor. They add not only charm, but provide the "human scale" street lighting recommended as a crime deterrent by our SF Safe audit last year. If we are to rebuild our merchant corridor, we need to do everything we can to make it safe and inviting.

Thank you for your concern.

Best,

On 6/16/21 10:46 AM, DPW, Urbanforestry (DPW) wrote:

Please contact the Bureau of Street Use and Mapping for light installation permits. Please re-send plans for lighting for Urban Forestry review– no screws, nails, bolts, or items that puncture tree. All fasteners must be loosened annually to allow for annual tree growth.

Final permit to be issued by Bureau of Street Use and Mapping in the form of a DPW Order.

for EMAIL

CERTIFIED

Susan Nawbary

Urban Forestry Inspector

ISA Certified Arborist

Bureau of Urban Forestry | San Francisco Public Works | City and County of San Francisco

49 S. Van Ness Ave Suite 1000 | San Francisco, CA 94103 | (628) 652-8733 | [sfpublicworks.org](#)

From: Mich <hvsfcaus@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, June 15, 2021 6:25 PM
To: Lloyd Silverstein <lloyd@opticalunderground.com>
Cc: RICHARD JOHNSON <rlj415@sbcglobal.net>; Preston, Dean (BOS) <dean.preston@sfgov.org>; Smeallie, Kyle (BOS) <kyle.smeallie@sfgov.org>; Jennifer Laska <jennlaska@icloud.com>; DPW, Urbanforestry (DPW) <urbanforestry@sfdpw.org>; info@hvsafe.com
Subject: Re: Wires being put up in HV merchant corridor

This message is from outside the City email system. Do not open links or attachments from untrusted sources.

Lloyd:

Specifically, please point us to the permitting process you have followed.

M

String Lighting – San Francisco Parks Alliance

Richard Johnson

to Lloyd, Jennifer, Dean, kyle.arsallie, mo, Hayeevalleyd

Lloyd, Jen, Supervisor Preston & Kyle,

Thu, Jun 10, 11:47 AM (5 days ago)

☆ ↶ ⋮

First Lloyd thanks for your reply yesterday to my inquiry. As you I have a long history of working with HV merchants. Ask Magie, Ramiz & Theresa about my involvement. As you I have been a strong proponent of building a sustainable business community. That being said I feel we have a similar goal but different paths.

In my original email to Lloyd, Jen, Super Preston & Kyle I inquired of all if proper procedures had been followed for this permanent installation. I did some research on the issue of string lighting and found this helpful information. I asked about permitting & public process and received no response from Lloyd or others on email.

So before Supervisor Preston flips the switch I suggest you read this:

<https://sanfranciscooparksalliance.org/string-lighting/>

As with all recent initiatives HV Merchants, HVNA & Supervisor Preston's office have launched one common thread runs through them all. Community engagement is done after the fact. If you are going to impact our community please be both mindful & respectful of our input. We live here, give time to better our community and are actively involved in neighborhood concerns.

Thanks for offer of attending event but I'll be in Colorado at a family reunion.

Richard Johnson
HVSafe Co-Founder

On 6/9/21 6:57 PM, Lloyd Silverstein wrote:

Richard,

I'm happy to give you some historical background and to answer your questions.

Starting in 2019, and following the lead of many other commercial corridors, HVNA organized a campaign to raise money from the merchants and residents of Hayes Valley to light our trees during the holidays. This was done to add a festive element to our neighborhood, and additionally to follow the advice of our SFSAFE audit recommending more "human scale" lighting in our merchant zone as a deterrent to crime.

This lighting was so well received that in 2020, we decided to make it permanent. Again, we raised funds entirely from our community (both merchants and residents) to install what were supposed to be tamper and vandal resistant lights around the City trees. Unfortunately, the installer did not provide the types of lights we contracted for, and as you may have seen, they were immediately tampered with creating a potential hazard. We put the installation company on notice to either replace these lights with what we had contracted for, or we would have them removed and not pay for them. They chose the latter.

Recognizing both the safety aspects that this supplemental lighting provided, as well as the beautification that it added, and with my lead, HVNA decided to install string lights higher up (and out of reach) running down both sides of our main corridors. This installation is similar to others installed throughout the City, most recently on Valencia Street. We hired the same contractor used by Valencia Street, (as well as many other Merchant Associations). Because they are a City approved and insured vendor, HVNA was able to secure a matching funds grant from the Civic Center CBD to cover the additional costs of these lights. We are very grateful for their assistance and support in making this happen. We have kept our merchant community updated on this good news during our monthly merchant calls. Additionally we highlighted that we were looking at a better solution to the original lights in the HVNA newsletter a couple of months ago.

Regarding your photos, the wire that is visible is a non-electrical support wire that will be used to hang the strings lights from. We plan to have at least Hayes Street completed by our June 18th Reopening Celebration. Supervisor Preston is planning to be on hand to say a few words honoring our heritage businesses, our community resiliency, and to "flip the switch" on our new lights. I hope to see you out on the street to celebrate and enjoy this wonderful (and much needed) addition to our recovering merchant corridor.

Best,

On Wed, Jun 9, 2021 at 2:41 PM RICHARD JOHNSON <rj415@sbcglobal.net> wrote:

Lloyd,

HVSafe has received multiple inquiries about the wire installations seen overhead along & amongst trees and attached to government property on the 300–500 blocks of Hayes and on Gough & Octavia Streets. Attached are photos.

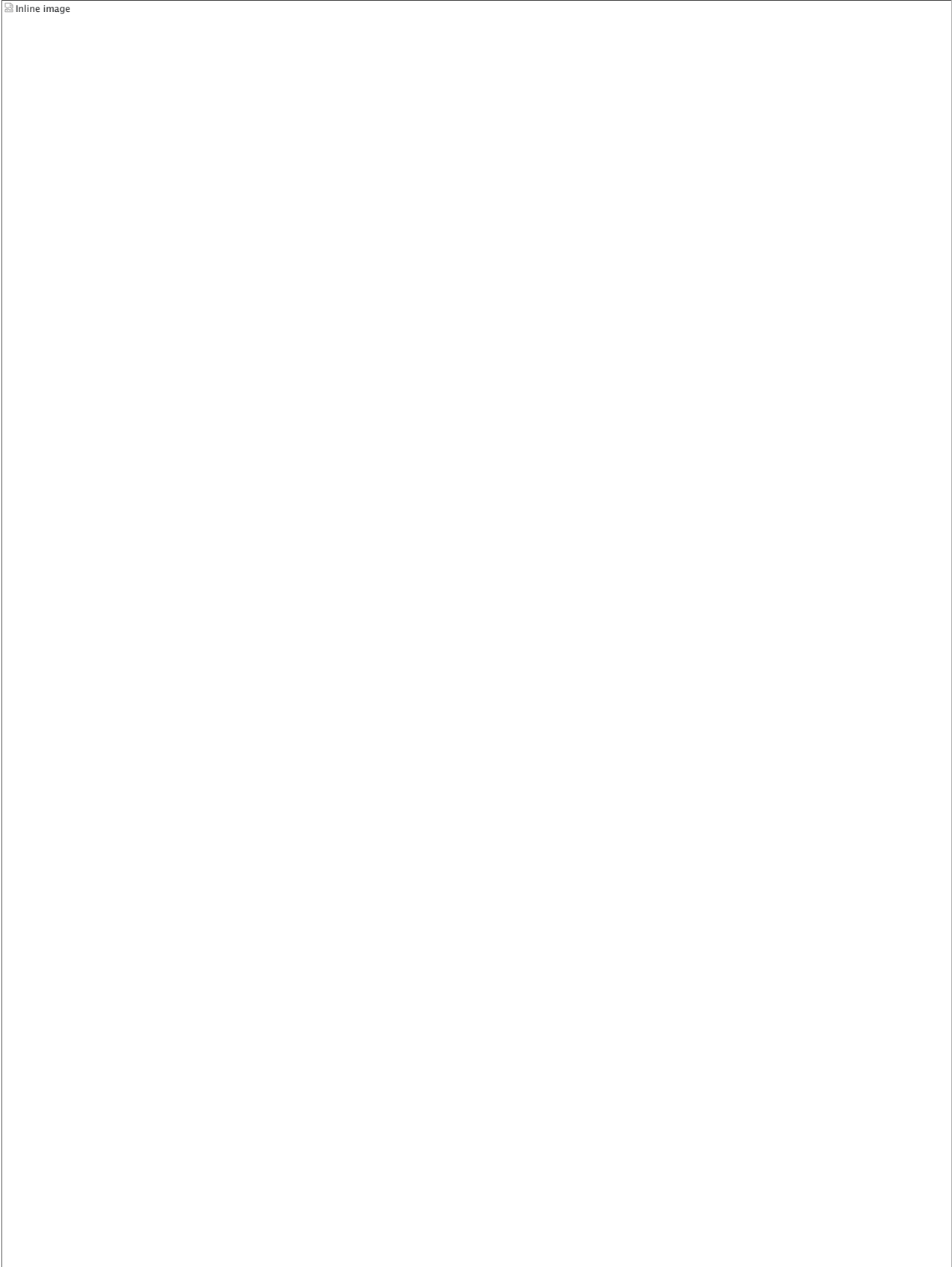
A few neighbors explained that they spoke to workers installing wires and were told you have them under contract and any questions should be posed your way.

Since there are concerns about the potential safety hazards that these wires present it would be ideal if you can explain what steps have been taken on the city permitting front. To date the community has not received notification of your intent or plans for the wiring. No businesses on Hayes that I spoke to in the last 48 hours are aware of what is going on.

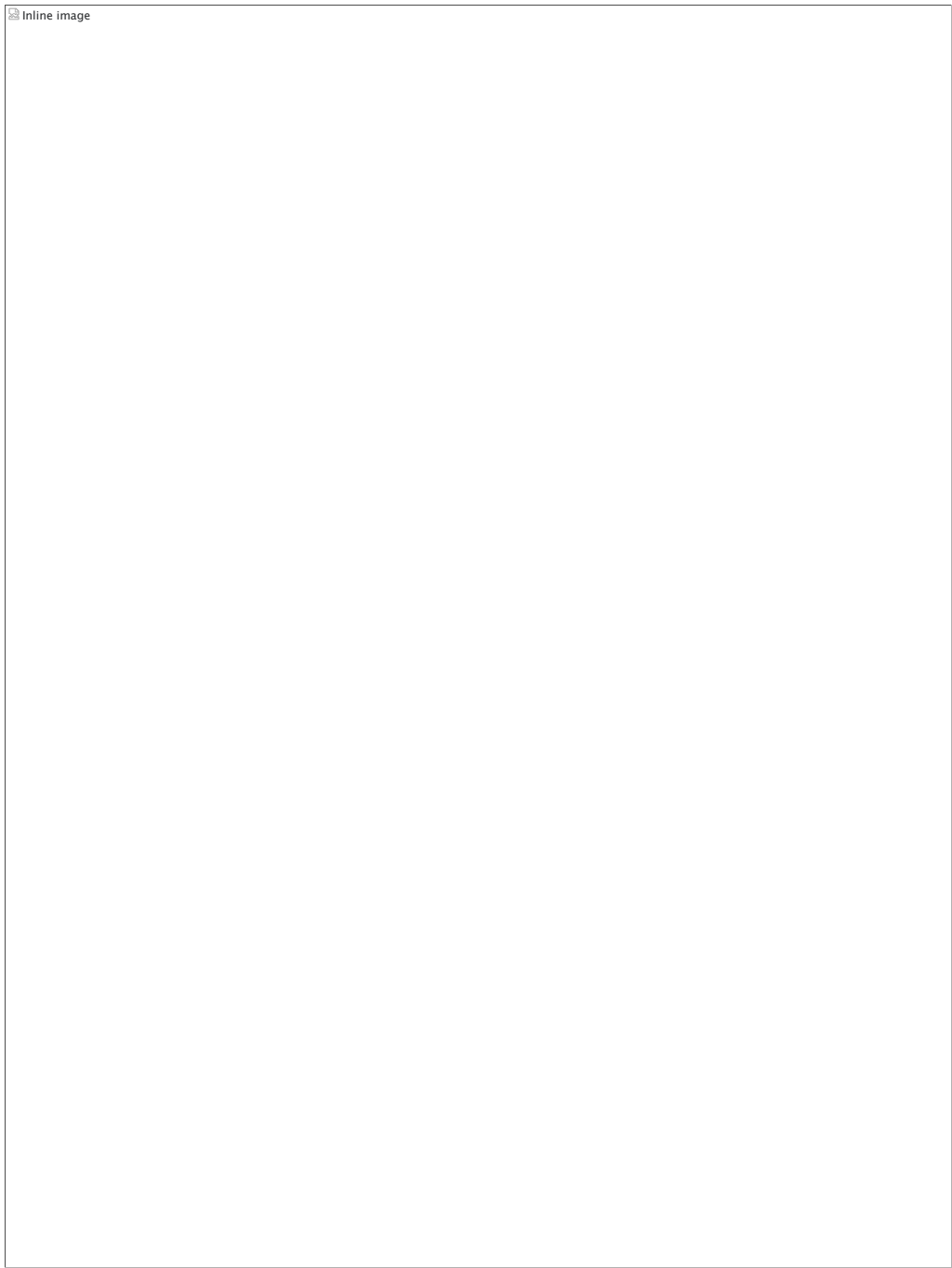
I look forward to your prompt reply.

Richard Johnson
Co-Founder HVSafe





Re: Wires being put up in HV merchant corridor



[Sent from AT&T Yahoo Mail for iPhone](#)


Lloyd Silverstein
Optical Underground
333 Linden Street
San Francisco, CA 94102
(415) 982-5106 Work



— Attachments: —	
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bieecmehliabilil.png	331 KB
image004.jpg	941 KB
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image006.jpg	535 KB

Re: Wires being put up in HV merchant corridor

image005.jpg

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