

Daly's, Newsom's laws let developers off easy

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Metropolitan Transportation Authority and the Department of Public Works get \$350,000 for a mid-block crossing signal across from Victoria Manalo Draves Park at Folsom and Russ streets, a safety measure for youngsters and others who use the park and Gene Friend Rec Center at Sixth and Folsom.

The response to requests for proposals was disappointing to the Stabilization Fund advisory committee.

"Thirty nonprofits applied," del Rosario said. "They weren't as strong as we wanted. They didn't address stabilization as expressed in the strategic plan. But it was a good process and we consider it a pilot round. The committee made some difficult decisions — it was hard to say no sometimes — but they stuck to the criteria and were pretty conservative."

Most of the nonprofits that didn't get funded didn't satisfy the strategic plan's aims to serve SoMa residents only, or didn't estimate enough people the project would serve, according to Jazzy Collins, the five-year committee chair who stepped down at the May 30 meeting when Ada Chan was elected.

"How many people are served in SoMa was very important to the committee," Collins said. "But we did not put a specific number in the plan — that would blow up in our face."

FUNDING ON HOLD

The seven-member committee has \$2.8 million left, according to the Mayor's Office of Housing, and there's no indication when Rincon Hill area construction will resume, which would trigger additional fees. Even so, the committee is holding off on funding more projects because it wants to rewrite the strategic plan that the supes approved in 2008.

"The committee wants to take the next two months to revisit the strategic plan, taking into account the current economic climate, before releasing new RFPs," del Rosario said. Coming cuts affect-

ing all agencies might suggest different criteria.

The committee will look at whether to scrape off funds to help ailing agencies.

"We haven't had that discussion yet," said Collins. "But we do need to tweak the strategic plan."

In an effort to kick-start construction, Mayor Newsom recently announced a plan to ease the developers' fee burden.

And an Oct. 27 ordinance by Daly that clarifies when the \$14 per square foot stabilization fee is due ("before" issuance of the final Certificate of Occupancy) also enables developers to escape a major cost. Developers can apply for a waiver from all or part of the Community Improvements Impact fee if a Community Facilities District is formed. The fee, \$11 per square foot, pays for infrastructure such as roads, sidewalks and open space within the district.

(Proposition 13 in 1978 cut property taxes and local governments' ability to pay for needed public facilities and services. To offset the diminished revenue, the state passed a law [Mello Roos] in 1982 that allows communities to tax themselves by creating special districts. A majority of property owners within a district must okay its formation. The upshot is that in such a district all owners are taxed, as opposed to just the developer paying the impact fee for improvements.)

Legislation the mayor backed in May allows a developer to defer 80% of the impact fees that go to the Stabilization Fund for up to three years. It passed 10-1, Daly dissenting.

GRANTS TO NONPROFITS

The grants to nonprofits ranged from \$10,000 to \$120,000; most (11) were \$75,000.

The largest grant to a nonprofit was \$119,879 to the San Francisco Community Land Trust to find a SoMa site for a co-op to create permanently affordable, resident-owned housing for low- and moderate-income people.

"We'll do an analysis of SoMa's housing stock and market conditions," says Amy Beinart, the trust's organizational director. "We want to ID residential buildings of a size that would lend themselves to conversion in the long run as a cooperative."

The goal is to find a good building with renters who want to buy and live in a cooperative. The land trust would secure the financing, conduct workshops with residents, and create a limited-equity housing cooperative with residents buying shares.

"In the model we've used," Beinart said, "the land trust would own the land and the co-op would own the residential building."

The project has two years from the contract date to come to fruition. If no building is found or financing is not forthcoming, the land trust would continue working with the committee until conditions improve.

The other nonprofits and their grants:

- Asian Neighborhood Design, \$75,000, for one year green construction training for SoMa residents.
- Bar Association of San Francisco, Volunteer Legal Services Program, \$75,000, for stabilizing low-income SoMa families and individuals over



The developer of One Rincon Hill's South Tower paid his fees in full; the North Tower construction is on hold.

two years through the Homeless Advocacy Project; individuals with legal problems contact lawyers who assist them for free.

- Catholic Charities/CYO, \$75,000, for no-cost child care for 5- to 18-year-olds from low-income families living at 10th and Mission streets and nearby.

- Filipino-American Development Foundation, \$100,000, to prepare Filipino immigrant youth for financial independence, and an additional, \$40,000 to designate a Filipino Cultural Social Heritage District in West SoMa.

- Nihonmachi Legal Outreach, \$75,000, for housing services ranging from legal advice to eviction prevention for low-income SoMa residents.

- Northeast Community Federal Credit Union, \$75,000, to fund a new SoMa branch for financial services for low-income residents.

- Renaissance Entrepreneurship Center, \$75,000, to train low-income ex-offenders — men and women — in SoMa to become self-employed and self-sufficient.

- United Playaz, \$75,000, for job skills training and employment referrals for at-risk SoMa young adults, 18-25.

- Chinatown Community Development Center, \$94,394, for outreach to low-income SoMa families to improve access to affordable housing through its SRO Family Collaborative.

- Bindlestiff Studio, \$35,000, for needs assessment and organizational planning, fundraising and public relations strategy.

- GP/TODCO Inc., \$75,000, to renovate Alice Street Gardens, a community garden.

- Oasis for Girls, \$35,000, strategic planning for youth development and a financial literacy program for girls in SoMa.

- San Francisco Filipino Cultural Center, \$75,000, to hire staff to develop a new cultural center space, including a job-readiness program for SoMa youth.

- Senior Action Network, \$75,000, for technological upgrade and staff training.

- South of Market Business Association, \$10,000, to host quarterly community exchanges at which SoMa businesses and residents share neighborhood concerns.

- South of Market Child Care Inc., \$35,000, to develop and implement a strategic plan with an emphasis on fundraising and board development.

- Veteran's Equity Center, \$75,000, to develop the Bill Sorro Housing Program to help Filipino veterans and their families secure housing. ■



PHOTOS BY TOM CARTER

Kids at the Judith Baker Child Development Center, run by South of Market Child Care Inc., enjoy a day in the sun. The nonprofit will develop a blueprint for fundraising and board development.

Broccoli burglar steals free food from TL garden

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Ingleside Community Center.

As Cheung meticulously circled the square plot, bending to examine plants and picking up leaves, others began to enter through the gate for the announced harvest and cleaning day, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. The garden, though, is open daily for an hour or two at various times. A half dozen mostly Chinese women seniors from TNDC buildings were expected.

A man dressed in khaki arrived and began mowing the long grass outside the plot. A chatty woman walked in, saying she wanted her own space to grow angelica keiskei (an Asian plant also known as ashitaba) and aloe vera. Two more women entered and immediately began pulling weeds.

Lorenzo Listank, a TNDC staffer who has visited the plot Saturdays since April, walked in and went

to Cheung.

"The door was wide open Friday," he told her. Cheung frowned. "I don't know how they are able to open it," he added.

Cheung resumed walking around. In the northeast corner she found another picket fence section pulled aside. Two women were weeding nearby.

"Look," Cheung said, pointing at limp beet leaves that had been trampled.

"How can they break the fence when they can easily step over it?" another gardener asked irritably.

Cheung's fingers were crawling over the handsome broccoli leaves — "They look like elephant ears," said one woman. Cheung pointed to the top of a plant: the florets had been sheered off, leaving a shiny, 4-inch-diameter stem.

"Why?" Cheung asked no one, looking puzzled. "They could have just asked me. My phone number

was here."

"Must've been hungry," one woman said.

There was no other damage. Within 45 minutes the fencing had been reassembled, the hoses realigned and the noisy mowing finished. Another man had come in too, a friendly senior who gave Cheung \$40 in cash for seeds, he said. He refused a receipt and left.

Twenty people showed up that day, Cheung's new log shows. Eight were volunteers who got 3 pounds of vegetables each. The rest were neighbors who dropped by. Cheung gave them 30 more pounds, a lot more than the broccoli burglar got.

Word of mouth has spread the news about the garden largesse, but it's certainly no secret, Cheung says: The first Wednesday of the month is work and harvest day.

It's worth the trip. ■