

# Mayor's office challenges the Central Market benefit district

Blunt letter details CBD shortcomings in revitalization effort

BY TOM CARTER

THE mounting pressure to resurrect Market Street was evident in a critical April memorandum the Mayor's Office of Economic and Workforce Development mailed to the Central Market Community Benefit District, accusing it of foot-dragging and being uncooperative in collaborative efforts to make timely neighborhood improvements.

The OEWD, which oversees all nine CBDs in the city, sent a single-spaced, nine-page memo to the CBD board April 6 that shocked at least one board member at the April 12 meeting at the Whitcomb Hotel. The memo reviewed the office's overview of the CBD and its projects through February. Major areas were found lacking.

OEWD "is very concerned," the memo said, that the inaction jeopardizes a \$50,000 grant for an expansion of the community guides program to north Market Street for a six-month pilot because the CBD didn't raise the \$25,000 necessary for full funding. OEWD worried this would jinx future fundraising for a permanent expanded guides program.

"The CBD did not meet its contractual reports requirements for 2008 and 2009" and didn't submit its 2010 annual report on time, either, the memo by Lisa Pagan, manager of CBD Technical Assistance, and Amy Cohen, Neighborhood Economic Development director, said. The letter said they had "received periodic complaints and requests for assistance from several OEWD and Art Commission staff working with the CBD on a regular basis."

CBDs are self-drawn districts whose property owners voted to pay an additional tax to support

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NOT ALL MERCHANTS ENTHUSIASTIC

Market St. revival gets mixed reactions

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PACS BET BIG BUT LOSE IN DISTRICT 6

Sparks, Walker get 93% of contributions

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Police have yet to issue citation

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# CENTRAL CITY



SAN FRANCISCO

## 'CREATIVE ENERGY'



PHOTO BY LENNY LIMJOCO

Mona Caron, above, is the artist who painted the mural that has become a community magnet and inspired a colorful film documenting the daily work and the people who became part of it.

# MURAL MANIA

New film shows Zamora legacy a rallying point for community

BY TOM CARTER

WHEN artist Mona Caron got the job from the Tenderloin CBD to paint a mural at the gritty intersection of Golden Gate Avenue and Jones Street, she thought the city's poorest neighborhood didn't need a work of art, assuming it was too snarled in survival struggles.

"Maybe it's the last thing they need," Caron said.

But then-CBD Manager Elaine Zamora, who chose Caron, believed a mural would bring something positive. Zamora was right.

The making of the mural was like a light to moths, drawing hundreds of people throughout the year it was in production, helping to prime the walls and serving as ad hoc technical advisers until finished in March 2010. For TL habitues, it was and is an enduring source of identity and pride, defining the neighborhood as never before.

Videographer and journalist Paige Bierma captured its creation and the lively interaction of its motley supporting cast in a 22-minute film, "A Brush with the Tenderloin," a project that took her nearly

three years to finish.

Bierma spent a year filming on the street, a "heartening" experience, she called it, with what outsiders consider invisible people, "the homeless folks you step over or cross the street to avoid" and poor ones barely keeping it together.

A print journalist for 15 years, five as an Associated Press stringer in Mexico, Bierma turned to video five years ago. In 2010, she came to film Caron's sidewalk work a bit apprehensive because of headlines about crime in the rough and tumble Tenderloin. She worried about being mugged and her \$5,000 Panasonic camera stolen.

But the opposite happened.

"Nobody threatened me or tried to steal my camera," she said. "And I was surprised at how much creative energy there is: street poets, political revolutionaries, artists and musicians. Rappers came and sang to us one day. It's a strong community with a richness and action every day. It was an eye-opener for me, and I hope it is for the viewers."

In the mural's expansive streetscape panels — one a serene scene of the future — are nearly 300 figures. One of them, "Indian Joe" Plamondon, with his cascading, below-the-shoulder black hair and trademark stovepipe hat, shows up twice.

"You see a lot of garbage graffiti around," Plamondon says, standing in front of where the mural shows him lounging under a street sign; elsewhere he is pushing a cart across Golden Gate Avenue. "But this shows what the neighborhood is like and can be — so people can see it and enjoy it. It tells a life story. And it opens up friendships when people see it and start talking to

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PHOTO BY LENNY LIMJOCO

The Furniture Mart, 1355 Market St., future home of Twitter.