

Corner store moneymaker may help schools — or not

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equally divided between sale proceeds and redemption commissions.

Sal Saleh, who works at G&H Market at Turk and Jones streets, downplays the money that lottery ticket sales bring to the store. “What, six cents on every dollar? We’ve got to keep these computers and screens running 24/7,” he says, sweeping his hand over the lottery ticket terminals. “Costs \$200-\$300 every month for electricity for these alone,” he noted.

A large Scratchers vending machine sits at the entry of G&H. You can buy Scratchers up to 20 bucks a pop. “That’s nothing,” Saleh said. “You can see those at every Safeway.”

Still, Saleh’s a fan of the lottery. “I got kids in the schools. I used to think it was a fraud, but I know the schools get money from the lottery. They’d be closing schools without that money,” he said.

In 1984, voters amended the state Constitution to allow for a state lottery, ostensibly to raise supplemental money for all public schools — from kindergarten through high school, adult education and trade schools and the state university systems.

Since it started in 1985, through 2012 the lottery pulled in more than \$70 billion in ticket sales, according to Lottery Commission data. Nearly half was paid to prize winners and \$25 billion-plus distributed to school districts and educational institutions. The rest — more than \$9 billion — covers the state’s lottery operation. The more than \$4 billion in statewide lottery sales for the 2011-12 set a new record.

The commission’s last public report noted that San Francisco schools have received more than \$333 million from the lottery in the 27 years, the unified school district getting the lion’s share, more than \$192 million, averaging about \$7 million a year.

How much the neighborhood’s only school — Tenderloin Elementary on Turk Street — got as its share of lottery funding can’t be determined, because state lottery distributions aren’t made to individual schools, but to school districts.

San Francisco Unified lumps lottery money together with sales tax revenues, lease revenues and state apportionments into its Weighted Student Funding allocation. Schools get these funds based on student enrollment and student body needs. For example, for students whose home is not English-first, funding for special textbooks or tutors might be allocated.

Average daily attendance is the key to the district’s allocation: The more students attending classes daily, the more funding the district gets. Last year, with an average daily attendance of 96,059 students in K-12 schools, including 15 charter schools and San Francisco City College, the result was nearly \$16 million in lottery distributions. San Diego County — with four times S.F.’s population — had an average daily attendance of 637,430 students — seven times the city’s ADA — and received more than \$100 million from the lottery.

Money can’t always buy success. Five years after the lottery started, California ranked 41st among all states in



PHOTO BY JONATHAN NEWMAN

Eldor Togaymurotov awaits the next customer’s ticket choice from a wall of lottery games at Lucky One Mini Mart near the corner of Market and Taylor.

the rate of high school graduations. In the last figures from 2012, California ranked 42nd. And San Francisco, graduating 82% of high school students, was

eight points above the state’s 74%, and four percentage points better than San Diego. ■

The torch is passed at TL forum Futures Collaborative gets new leaders after moderator Rev. Glenda Hope retires

BY MARJORIE BEGGS

ANAKH SUL RAMA, TNDC organizer, admitted he had big shoes to fill when he moderated the Oct. 16 Tenderloin Futures Collaborative meeting. “And I am nervous,” he told those attending. “This is the first time I’ve ever done anything like this.”

Except for a handful of times in more than 12 years, it’s been the Rev. Glenda Hope sitting at the front, leading the monthly Collaborative with her unique style of warm but tough fairness. When she retired Oct. 1 from S.F. Network Ministries after 41 years at its helm, she also bowed out of other regular gigs, including chairing the Collaborative.

Network Ministries is closing its doors at the end of the year. Its director of operations, Susie Wong, coordinated the Collaborative’s agendas for several years, so that job needed to be filled, too. Michael Nulty, veteran community activist, and David Elliott Lewis, co-chair of the Mental Health Board of San Francisco, volunteered to share the duties.

Attendance at the October Collaborative was good, about 20 people, who came to hear about two important changes to the neighborhood.

“We’ve been at 55 Taylor for a year and have been presenting concerts since March, about 80 so far,” said Adam Fong, executive director of the Center for New Music. “The Tenderloin and SoMa have traditionally been friendly places for artists, and we hope to provide that too.”

At the Center’s 4,400-square-foot site — the former location of Gray Area Foundation for the Arts — the new nonprofit hosts low-cost and occasionally free concerts and workshops three nights a week. Its main gallery can accommodate solos to quintets and can

seat up to 100 people. Fong says that funding, increasing but not yet robust, comes from board contributions, rental of rehearsal and event space to musicians, and memberships — 80 members so far: composers, performers, critics, administrators, educators, engineers, individuals and organizations.

Katie Lamont, TNDC’s director of housing development, introduced the second agenda item: the S.F. Housing Authority’s proposal to RAD, HUD’s new Rental Assistance Demonstration project. Over two years, the embattled Housing Authority would retain ownership of the land for about 40 of its properties but transfer their titles to nonprofit or other private developers. RAD allows public housing to be converted to long-term Section 8 rental assistance and tenant-based vouchers that have expired to be converted to project-based assistance, meaning a tenant couldn’t take a Section 8 voucher to another Housing Authority property.

“HUD placed the Housing Authority on its ‘trouble list’ last year,” Lamont explained. “If it doesn’t fix the listed problems, it could go into receivership” — that is, be taken over because it failed to meet its obligations to needy residents. The list of its problems is long, she says: slow response to work orders, slow to fill vacant space, unstable revenue sources, deferred maintenance and much more.

On Sept. 26, the Housing Authority Commission approved the HUD application that, if accepted would affect 4,362 of its 6,000 units. Three Housing Authority properties are in the Tenderloin: 89 units at 430 Turk, 350 units at 350 Ellis and 100 units at 666 Ellis.

Hatty Lee, TNDC community organizer, said the city convened three working groups on public housing issues

related to the conversion. Participants included residents, nonprofit service providers, affordable housing developers, local labor unions and private-sector development experts. “The goal was to get all those affected to work together on solutions, not just leave this up to the Mayor’s Office of Housing,” Lee said.

If HUD accepts San Francisco’s proposal, the city will send out an RFQ to developers. TNDC will respond to the RFQ, Lamont said, but may or may not be chosen to do the work. She and Lee presented today because the conversion, affecting many in the community, is a perfect fit for the Collaborative.

At meeting’s end, Rama, Nulty and Lewis got a hand, a spontaneous “thanks” from people glad to have the Collaborative continue as a forum for sharing information about what’s what in the Tenderloin. ■

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DISTRIBUTION: Mark Hedin

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