

# City's new agenda for mid-Market: clean and safe

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to the value of the benefits they provide, the extent to which they follow through on their promises and on how the firms determine who in the community they will work with and how.

An analysis in the December 2013 Extra, aided by CPA Jim McHale using information that Twitter made public for its initial public offering of stock, estimated the tax break's value to Twitter alone at way more than \$100 million. As for the value of each CBA relative to the tech firms, in a memo to The Extra in 2013, Barnes confirmed that the initial expectation was that companies would return almost a third of the value of their tax break. He mentioned a 2012 Forbes article and said, "They got it right." And there it is in the article: "As part of the tax break, companies must pledge to give a portion of the tax break — 30% has been suggested, but is not required by law — to support the local area through the CBA."

Although the city — officially — continues to play lip service to the CAC's role in the mitigation process, the priorities for the CBAs as described on the new Website bear little resemblance to the discussions at monthly CAC meetings, the public's only opportunity to comment.

That new Website, however, links to a site dubbed "Neighborland," at which users are invited to sign up to express "ideas and insights on how to improve our neighborhood."

"Let's make Central Market a cleaner, safer, more vibrant neighborhood," the headline at the top of the home page says. CAC members were outraged.

"This is not a good foot to get off on," Chairman Peter Masiak told Barnes at the October meeting. "When the sole public body that hears this is cut out, you're not only cutting out the CAC, you're cutting out the community."

"There needs to be some way for us to be included in the conversation," committee member Julian Dash concurred.

"What is the CAO's commitment to this body?" member Steve Suzuki, asked. "You're not including us. I had no idea."

## COMMITTEE OVERULED

City Administrator Kelly's disdain for the role of the CAC is hardly news, however. In January, after the committee overwhelmingly voted against all but one of the six CBAs she'd negotiated, she signed them all anyway. In 2013, the largest of the six CBAs — Twitter's first — was rubber-stamped before the hoodwinked CAC could vote on it.

"With respect," Barnes replied to Su-

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Robert Marquez  
CAC VICE CHAIR

zuki, "the purpose of the CAC is to advise the mayor and city administrator." Then he told a whopper: "Naomi's door has been open to anyone who wants to have a conversation." The Extra, for one, persistently asked to discuss the CBA process with Kelly earlier in the year and was rebuffed each time.

Barnes has consistently pressured the CAC to accelerate its approval of the CBAs, saying on Oct. 2 that 2015's need to be finalized by year's end. Late in the process of reviewing this year's deals, that deadline was moved up to Jan. 10 for CBA renewals — that is, all but Spotify, once Advсор dropped out — though the CAC had been acting under the impression that Kelly had until Jan. 31 to sign them as in previous years.

Although the CAC was created in legislation District 6 Supervisor Jane Kim introduced following the enactment of the Twitter tax break in 2011, and although its unpaid members are vetted by the Board of Supervisors, the panel has no statutory authority in the CBA process. So it's a weak voice that Kim gave her poorest constituents in the negotiations for community benefits.

When Zendesk, in June 2012, was the only company executing a CBA — later joined by Twitter, Yammer, One Kings Lane, Zoosk and 21Tech in 2013, and this year by Spotify after 21Tech dropped out — the CAC hammered out some priorities for the companies and city administrator to consider when negotiating their CBAs.

Among them are: affordable housing; supporting locally owned small businesses, nonprofits and arts organizations; creating jobs and hiring from within the community; providing educational and job opportunities to local youth; improving access to healthy, affordable food; reducing the "digital divide"; and developing strategies to address community safety concerns, the latter of which, CAC Vice Chair Robert Marquez told The Extra, was at best a low priority for the CAC.

"Cleanliness, safety, sure, we can talk about that," Marquez said at the meeting, "but there's nothing about

nonprofit displacement or housing ... we have stabilization issues."

The emphasis on cleanliness and safety, he said, implies that the city's priority has shifted to "making the companies that moved in more comfortable in this neighborhood where they've recently arrived."

"I'm concerned," Masiak said, "that 70 key leaders have identified these things, creating a faux sense of universal anguish over cleanliness and safety. There's no mention of nonprofit displacement, education, bridging the digital divide ..."

In response to Barnes' defense of the data Neighborland had provided, Masiak also pointed out that Web access is far from universal among those who live in the neighborhood.

## STABILIZATION EFFORTS

Nonprofit stabilization has been a recurring topic of concern at CAC meetings, especially in 2014. Market Street for the Masses, a coalition of almost 30 neighborhood organizations, urged, in meetings held at Twitter and in presentations to the CAC, creation of a \$25 million Community Stabilization and Acquisition Fund.

At the October meeting, Hospitality House Executive Director Jackie Jenks detailed the plan: "We're really requesting two things in the CBA process," she said. The first is that the tax-break companies "be partners with us in the stabilization fund" and among them contribute a total of \$60,000 to it. Secondly, she asked for "four hours a month of senior-level management time to help us to open these doors" of potential corporate donors who could provide additional funding in the effort to help neighborhood nonprofits threatened by the overheated real estate market.

But there's no mention of any such effort on the city administrator's new Website. Its home page features a photo of the intersection of Seventh and Market streets, including the still-boarded-up Grant Building.

"Welcome to Central Market Street," reads the wording superimposed on that image. The next picture that appears is of a helmeted bicyclist wearing shades, with the words "Building a safer Market Street." Finally, there's a brightly colored cartoon image of City Hall, a streetcar, a few trees, a couple of bicy-

cles and waste bins and assorted blocky buildings.

"Since 2011," reads the text below, "Central Market Street and Tenderloin Area Community Benefit Agreements have helped connect new, innovative businesses in the neighborhood with the vibrant community that long considered the Tenderloin and Central Market home."

Those new, innovative businesses, of course, would be the tech companies that have signed CBAs.

"In negotiating these agreements," the Website continues, "the City Administrator has made community engagement a top priority, and this website continues that effort."

But the CAC is scarcely mentioned and neither are any of the framework items for CBAs suggested by the CAC.

Suzuki arrived at the meeting with a list of "five points I want to make sure are embedded in the CBAs," including the stabilization fund.

"The Companies engaged in the CBA's have immense creative talent and skill," he wrote. "We need to engage this talent." Each company should focus on one specific issue per quarter, for instance, "crime, housing, hunger, arts, displacement, etc.," Suzuki wrote.

"Can you folks help us solve some of these problems, a solution that actually works for us, the community? When you do community work, you do it on the terms of the community. I want to get to a solution, not just a dialogue."

Barnes also informed the panel that the Board of Supervisors' Rules Committee earlier that day had endorsed John Bogacki and Rob Gitin to fill two of the three currently vacant CAC seats, pending full board approval — which came on Oct. 21.

Bogacki's application cites his 25 years of living and working in the city, experiencing homelessness and disability along the way. Gitin is the co-founder and executive director of At The Crossroads for homeless youth and young adults in the TL and Mission

No acceptable candidate has emerged for the seat reserved for a person with commercial real estate expertise.

Also, Barnes announced that the CAO had recently hired University of Michigan Law School graduate Andrew Dayton as a policy aide. Barnes told The Extra that Dayton would be helping to draft the CBAs in consultation with the city attorney.

Dayton was not in the room at the time of the introduction, and neither he nor Barnes were there for the public comment portion of the meeting when Jenks took a moment at the outset of her allotted three minutes to thank the CAC "for its volunteer efforts" and the companies' community liaisons and then said, "I'm sorry that Bill and Andrew have left, because I was going to thank them for being in the dialogue." ■

## CENTRAL CITY EXTRA

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