

Meet the Press—neighborhood newsies grill mayoral hopefuls

6 candidates' solutions to homeless, housing, city government woes

BY MARJORIE BEGGS

THE irony probably wasn't lost on the six mayoral candidates: Every 45 minutes or so, another one strode confidently into the hushed, carpeted mayor's conference room, across the marbled hall from Mayor Brown's office, and took a seat at the head of a heavy oak table.

In just a couple of months, one would likely be sitting in the same spot as the new mayor of San Francisco — with all-too-real city problems testing her or his campaign promises.

Angela Alioto, Tom Ammiano, Matt Gonzalez, Susan Leal, Gavin Newsom and Tony Ribera fielded questions from nine reps of the San Francisco Neighborhood Newspaper Association.

Most of the candidates sounded confident about their chances and were passionate about their politics. Some were even funny. All knew how to talk and talk. Here's some of what they said:

Newsom: "I'm not a smart politician. I should have said I was going to do Care Not Cash, and not have done it before the election."

Ribera: "I told my wife, 'I'll be elected for who I am, not for my bullshit.'"

Alioto: "There's no police accountability. I'd require 50% of police — and firefighters, too — to live in the city."

Gonzalez: "Newsom's unity message is really about supporting monied interests in the city."

Leal: "I have the reputation as being a fiscal tightwad, but not on school issues — hell or high water, we have to help the schools."

Ammiano: "Politicization of the problem dooms the issue of homelessness."

Each candidate was asked more or less the same questions, which touched on a range of issues.

HOUSING

A new state law allows greater housing density along busy transit corridors by adding in-law apartments, and pending legislation by Supervisor Aaron Peskin pushes the concept locally. The housing element of the Planning Department's revised master plan, not yet adopted, favors this and also recommends raising building height limits and reducing parking requirements to increase transit-corridor housing density. The candidates had strong opinions about this.

"I support the idea of secondary housing units," Gonzalez said, "but it probably would be best for neighborhoods to decide for themselves — I support decentralization."

"I don't think the density issues have been well thought-out," Leal said. "I am for increasing density along

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CENTRAL CITY

EXTRA!

SAN FRANCISCO

DEFENESTRATION



PHOTOS BY LENNY LIMJOCO

This mural by Emilio Rolando is a recent addition to the building that features Defenestration.

Checkout time?

Wacky hotel art set for spruceup — but future iffy

BY TOM CARTER

YOU won't find groovier eye candy in the city than the southeast corner of Sixth and Howard. If you remember looking up for the first time at all the wild furniture and appliances stuck on the walls of that abandoned hotel, well, you couldn't pull your eyes away.

Imagine, a mirrored armoire hanging 95% out of a third-story window, and stuck

all over two sides of the decrepit Hugo Hotel lamps and clocks and chairs, an open refrigerator no less—an iron in midair!—and a telephone (that used to ring).

The art project, called Defenestration, is a brilliant bit of public humor by artist Brian Goggin that adds a priceless dignity to soiled Sixth Street. Goggin, in Thailand now working on two sculptures, will return in a month to refurbish the nearly three dozen suspended household items and to change some light bulbs, too. And maybe he'll subliminally stimulate some midnight snacking by getting that light in the refrigerator going again.

But for all its fun and fame, the art work's days may soon be numbered. The building is blighted and just the kind the city would like to see replaced. An amendment to the Redevelopment Agency's plan for South of Market may change things in a couple of months.

Defenestration means the act of throwing a person or thing out of a window. And people get it right off.

"It looks like the furniture is running away from the building," says Antonella Cordovani, peering up from the corner diagonally across the intersection at Maikins grocery. An architect from Florence, Italy, she and her husband, Marcello, and another Italian couple were visiting last month. On a gray, midweek morning the intersection was nearly deserted as the other couple, restaurant owners in Florence, smiled and trained a camcorder on the hotel. "We were here yesterday and we came back to



Defenestration turns the old Hugo Hotel at Sixth and Howard inside out.

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