



The 2004 Sixth Street Fair drew more than 2,000 people.

NAPPY CHIN

Free haircuts at Sixth Street Fair

BY MARJORIE BEGGS

Positively Sixth Street — the fourth annual Sixth Street fair — promises five hours of lively entertainment by local performers and plenty of games for kids and adults. Plus, if you're willing to do something positive for yourself, there also are free hot dogs and haircuts.

The colorful neighborhood celebration, which drew more than 2,000 people last year, will be Saturday, June 25, 11 a.m.-4 p.m. Because of DPW repairs on Sixth Street, the fair this year will be on Minna from Sixth to Mary, and on Mary between Natoma and Mission. (For setup and cleanup, those streets will be closed from 8 a.m.-6 p.m.)

Performances are scheduled throughout the day, starting on stage one, at Sixth and Minna, with the cool sounds of jazz guitarist and Sixth Street resident Tennessee. He's followed by the all-girl SoMa Hip Hop Group from Gene Friend Rec Center; KPOO radio personality Bobbie Webb with the Smooth Blues group; hot Brazilian, Afro-Cuban and West African dancing and drumming from Poco Loco, the teen offshoot of Loco Bloco, a three-time Carnaval winner; Khevan Lennon-Onaje jazz quartet; the traditional Filipino folk ensemble Likha; and an open mike for spoken-word performers.

During the day, police Capt. Denis O'Leary and fellow officers from Southern Station will be grilling 1,000 hot dogs, and the San Francisco Food Bank will give away bags of produce.

3 spots still open on Daly's west SoMa planning group

THE Board of Supervisors' new 22-member Western SoMa Citizens' Planning Task Force has three spots unfilled. Two are for youths. One is to be selected by the Transportation Authority—which is composed entirely of the supervisors sitting as a transit committee of the whole.

A transportation spokesman blamed its vacancy on the City Clerk's Office. "We hadn't been notified about the appointment," the spokesman said. Transportation Authority Director Jose Luis Moscovich was apprised of the oversight while vacationing in Spain after The Extra contacted his office early in May. Moscovich had never heard of the appointment, the spokesman said, but it would be made upon his return.

Two members under age 18 were not appointed by the board because no youth applied, according to Supervisor Daly's office. Daly's legislation created the committee in

November to advise the board and the Planning Department of the District 6 neighborhood land-use concerns. "We called several youth organizations but no one was interested," a spokesman said.

The Board of Supervisors had no problem selecting its other assigned 15 members. Daly, the District 6 supervisor, gets three appointments; Planning and the Transportation Authority each get one.

Appointed to terms expiring Nov. 23, 2007, are: Jim Meko, Nicholas Rosenberg, Antoinetta Stadlman, Karen Nolan, Jim Berk, Frank McGrath, April Veneracion, Judy Carman, Terrance Alan, John Elberling, Charles Breidinger, Marc Salomon, Sharon Kim, Jeremy Nelson and Richard Kempis. Daly appointed Jazzy Collins, M.C. Canlas and Toby Levy. Planning appointed Paul Lord.

The triangular area is bounded roughly by Ninth, Market, Division and 13th streets. ■

— TOM CARTER

First family housing in 6 years

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Architects David Baker and Peter MacKenzie, in collaboration with the TNDC team, designed Curran House with families in mind — and included architectural features meant to offset street stress.

At the entrance, for example, residents and guests will be greeted by a "decompression" garden of lush foliage. Soft, natural textures of green plants will provide a buffer to the hard street surfaces, say the architects. From the entry garden there is a direct view through the lobby of a courtyard garden and fountain at the rear. The gardens were planned in accordance with feng shui principles — greenery, glass, water and open space.

There is another garden on the roof, adjacent to an enclosed laundry facility, served by two elevators. The roof garden will include planting beds where residents may grow vegetables and flowers.



A construction worker looks out from Curran House.

In addition to providing a sweeping view of the city, the roof garden will include tables and benches intended for family gatherings. A six-foot parapet serves as a windbreak while citrus trees in large planter boxes provide an ornamental touch. Some apartments have walk-on balconies attached. And all the windows are double-paned to keep the cacophony of outside street sounds from coming through.

There will be a community room for residents and an office for a full-time social worker.

On the ground floor there eventually will be two commercial business lessees — the "family-friendly kind," says Project Manager Do, "like a café or coffee house." Many of TNDC's offices will be relocated from the building at Taylor and Eddy to the lower level of Curran House.

Curran House will stand out among neighboring structures in more ways than one. Its look is strikingly contemporary — in contrast to nearby buildings that represent a past era of bricks and mortar — but also the sound of children's laughter will be heard. ■

Commissioners ask builders for \$50,000

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first-time developers showed up, seeking approval of their three-unit R-3 project at 33-35 Moss, en route to appearing before the Planning Commission on June 2. Attorney Brett Gladstone and engineer and architect Patrick Buscovich did the talking for the Irish brothers Martin and Donnie O'Donovan, the developers there in work clothes.

The brothers wanted to demolish the rundown single-family dwelling they bought a couple of years ago in probate for \$300,000 and build three market-rate family units. In dispute with City Planning at the time, though, was whether the house was a single- or double-family dwelling. It had been both. Built in 1922, it had permits to build both as a single- and double-family dwelling, according to Buscovich's research. It had two addresses and two front doors, though one was boarded up decades ago. The last resident, an elderly man, had lived there alone before going to a nursing home. It had clearly been a single family dwelling for 30 or more years, he said. As such, it would not be subject to rent control. But it would cost more to fix up than to raze and rebuild.

The house was so filled with trash that it would take "six figures" to clean it up, Buscovich said. Earthquake damage in 1989 tilted the wooden structure but it wasn't red-tagged. It would cost \$200,000 to fix the sinking foundation, a process that would crack all the walls.

The miserable profile concluded with the rehabbing cost, \$400,000, not including interiors, or \$400,000 to build a new structure. Those economics, he said, meant the brothers "couldn't rent it as a home." Three family units, on the other hand, would fit right in with the neighborhood and he hadn't found anyone objecting, he said.

Looming over the project was a specter raised by the Planning Department. When Gladstone talked with Planner Matt Snyder the month before, Snyder said the department might recommend that one of the three proposed units be affordable. He cited a 10-year-old department demolition guideline suggesting that rent for the replacement unit be no more than the unit it supplanted. In this case, rent at the old house was undoubtedly lower than rents to be charged in the new three units.

"If you tear down affordable, you have to replace it with the same," Buscovich said at the Alliance meeting. "That's easier when you do it in bulk. But the developers can't afford to build if one (of the three) goes to affordable. We want your support for no units affordable."

They wouldn't be at this meeting, he added, if the house was determined a single-family residence and not subject to the guideline. But Planning lawyers hadn't yet made a determination.

Alliance members sensed that though this project was smaller than 10 units, some sort of quid pro quo seemed appropriate.

"If you can't do one for three, what can you do?" asked Alliance board member Susan Bryan.

The project people exchanged looks. Perhaps some amount could go into a fund, Buscovich suggested, but it wouldn't be much, and it couldn't be settled then. They'd have to consult a financial planner.

Tenderloin entrepreneur and member of the city's Entertainment Commission Terrance Alan laid it on the line.

"No one here is going to vote to overturn affordable housing," Alan piped up from the audience. "We won't waive that. You're at the wrong meeting."

"Be more creative! You need to develop a buy-in with another builder elsewhere to help make a fund. I know a guy who's building 500 units. I'll give you his number."

Gladstone said charging market rate is an "economic necessity."

A motion by Marvis Phillips to support the project passed 4-3. But it stipulated the developer must contribute some sort of pro-rated affordable housing credit.

Moss is a quiet, narrow, blocklong street that starts on a lazy downhill incline at Howard, levels out gracefully and ends at Folsom with the Feel Good Café on one side and the Soma Inn Café on the other. The street feels old, but not tired or neglected. It's lined with older two- and three-flat buildings, a couple of newer ones, and a few small businesses.

The two-story wooden structure at 33-35 with dirty, peeling yellow paint is between a spiffy wooden, brick-front work-live building and a two-flat Edwardian, and it is the last single-family dwelling in the enclave.

A seven-foot-high chain link fence at the sidewalk keeps squatters out. A 15-foot-wide swath of blazing bougainvillea swarms up out of a patch of weeds to overrun the front porch. Above, the forlorn top of the house wears plywood over a window like an eye patch.

"You can hear the rats moving around in the basement," says Chuck Mignacco, taking a break from his Captive Sparks metal fabricating shop a few doors down at 49B.

"The homeless were in there for a while. But they got rid of them with the fence. They sure left a mess, though. I'm surprised the place hasn't burned down."

He goes back to work.

Planner Matt Snyder confirmed that he told Gladstone he was considering recommending that one unit in three be affordable. He got the idea from a section of City Planning's April 1995 Residential Conversion and Demolition Guidelines, which suggests that when one unit replaces another the rent, on first occupancy, can't exceed the previous rent.

So if the Moss place was a two-unit dwelling, the rent paid on the decrepit house, say, three years ago and in the "affordable range," would have to be matched somewhere in its replacement.

But this couldn't apply if the building was deemed a single-family dwelling and not under rent control. Snyder said that after the conversation department lawyers found it was in fact single-family. "So we decided it didn't apply," he said.

Snyder, one of 30 department planners, said he favors some sort of pro-rated arrangement for affordable housing, as was called for in the Alliance meeting.

"We'd support the off-site idea or a fee," he said. "But it's up to the commission. We go with the commission. We're not policy-makers."

The Extra asked Snyder if he knew of any other case where the conditional use had been applied, such as 1-in-3, for a replacement building of fewer than 10 units. "I don't think in any cases I've handled," he said. "I can't think of any others."

Appearing before the Planning Commission on June 2, the developers' representatives gave a profile of the "derelict building" on Moss Street with its dying foundation on "liquefiable soil" and sky-high restoration costs. The old man with a cane who lived there wasn't evicted, they said. He left on his own to go to a nursing home and the owners bought the place in the Stella Cavaglia estate probate.

Self-described preservationist Jim Meko said it was too bad that the owner had let it deteriorate. "But it should never be easy" to raze the homes of working-class people South of Market, long a refuge for immigrants and longshoremen. He worried that the area's ethnicity would change.

Before the hearing, Meko conceded the vote to approve the project was a foregone conclusion. But he wanted to alert the commission that hereafter he would be a demolition watchdog. He was recently sworn in as a member of the newly appointed Western SoMa Citizens Planning Task Force that advises Planning and the Board of Supervisors. He said saving residential enclaves would be a committee priority. If owners repaired some of the 1989 Loma Prieta damage and cleaned up a bit, many places would stay "affordable by nature, but not if they are replaced."

"When a 40-foot building supplants a house," he said, "there's no affordability there. And two units or more ought to make some sort of contribution to affordability."

Buscovich's name for it was an "impact tax" — for tearing down and replacing small buildings — to go into a housing fund.

Doing something to preserve the nature of quiet enclaves South of Market and in the Mission was a palpable sentiment on the commission as the meeting ran beyond 5:30 p.m. in front a dozen others and the SFGTV camera. And one thing they wanted to do was similar to Buscovich's impact tax.

Planning President Sue Lee was curious about the 10-year planning guideline and Section 315 and wondered what could work when multitenants are replaced with something a little larger. "Sometime we need to revisit these guidelines," she said.

Meko told the commission that five years ago, when a two-unit building was demolished for six units, he proposed that the developer contribute

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Family housing a years-long wait

BY MARJORIE BEGGS

WHEN Curran House opens in September, it will become part of a rare breed of housing in the central city — apartments, rather than studios or SROs, built or renovated by nonprofits specifically for low-income families.

Besides Curran House, there are only a handful of others in the Tenderloin.

The oldest is Community Housing Partnership's renovation of the Senator Hotel, 519 Ellis, in 1991. Formerly homeless adults and families pay 30% of their income for the 69 studios and 17 one-bedroom apartments.

CHP Director of Property Management Brett Vaughn said families pay from \$45 to \$692 to live at the Senator. "Sometimes families have to split up to live here, because of the occupancy requirement — no more than four people in a one-bedroom apartment," Vaughn said. The Senator has 223 families on its waiting list, a number that has changed little in 14 years.

Tenderloin Family Housing, 201 Turk, is the largest and oldest new construction development. Built by Chinatown Community Development Center and A.F. Evans in 1993, it has 175 units, most of them for families: 81 one-bedroom apartments, 45 two-bedroom and 37 three-bedroom. One-bedrooms start at \$567 and three-bedrooms go as high as \$1,077; 124 people are on the waiting list.

In 1995, S.F. Network Ministries and Asian Neighborhood Design jointly developed 555 Ellis — 10 two-bedrooms, 19 three-bedrooms along with nine studios, all units considered "affordable."

Rents there start at \$332 for a two-bedroom apartment. To qualify for that rock-bottom rate, a family can earn no more than 25% of the area median income. (The AMI for San Francisco, set by HUD, is now above \$80,000.) A family with earnings up to 50% AMI also qualifies to live there, paying \$800 for two bedrooms and \$962 for three.

A 15-YEAR WAIT

Raul Escareno of Caritas Management Corp., a subsidiary of Mission Housing Development Corp. that manages 555 Ellis, said the waiting list for 555 Ellis is "manageable" — 136 families for the two-bedrooms and 58 for the three-bedrooms.

"We update the list twice a year to see who's still interested and who still qualifies," Escareno said. "If someone asks what their chances are, say for one of the three-bedrooms, I tell them one to 15 years."

The renovated 421 Turk Street Apartments, which opened in December, was developed and is managed by Asian Inc. Among its 29 one-, two- and three-bedroom apartments, seven are subsidized by Section 8 vouchers and 22 are affordable housing — tenants' incomes must be between 30% and 50% AMI.

The building has 147 families on its waiting list. Asian Inc. Property Manager Wing Yung calls listees' chances of getting in "slim."

Cecil Williams House, 333 Taylor, was built in 1999 by Glide Memorial Methodist Church. Besides its 30 one-, two- and three-bedroom apartments for poor families, it has 22 studios reserved for Care Not Cash referrals. To qualify to live there, says

Willie Stevens, Williams House building administrator, a family of five can earn only up to \$42,735. Their rent rate, subsidized by project-based Section 8, is set at one third of their income.

"The lowest rent anyone pays here right now is \$73 a month," Stevens said. "The highest is \$1,029 a month. And sure, we have a waiting list — it has 1,200 families and individuals on it. In my three years here, only 12 families have left, so you know that list will stay long."

The movement toward building more low-income family housing isn't glacial, but especially in the Tenderloin, it can't keep up with the need, said Don Falk, TNDC's director of housing development.

"There's much more South of Market, existing and being built," Falk said. "Here in the Tenderloin, there's an absence of vacant land to get the economies of scale."

MUCH MORE IN SOMA

Compared with the Tenderloin, SoMa has a glut of apartments for low-income families or those who can afford modest rents. A sampling: Rents at Asian Inc.'s 535 Minna — 25 one-, two- and three-bedroom units and one four-bedroom — range from \$405 to \$1,534. Asian Inc. also developed 518 Minna with 12 two-bedrooms and 12 three-bedrooms, and 479 Natoma, 30 units, mostly two- and three-bedrooms, all at 50% AMI.

TNDC has 12 two-bedrooms at 1607 Howard, and 76 one-, two- and three-bedrooms at 1166 Howard. Episcopal Community Services has Canon Barcus Community House on Eighth Street, one- to four-bedroom apartments for 47 homeless families.

Craig Edelman, former TNDC associate director of housing development and now director of affordable housing for A.F. Evans, a for-profit real estate development and property management company, agrees with Falk about the reasons for the dearth of family housing in the TL.

"The major setback is appropriate sites," Edelman said. "Besides more vacant sites, SoMa has lower height limits. In the Tenderloin, you have to go up eight stories [to be viable], and that costs the developer more."

Edelman also points to larger problems in providing family housing for poor families. "There's little government commitment to it as a social issue, on the state and the federal level," he said. "There are Section 8 cuts, Block Grants under attack and the ever-dwindling HUD budget — decades of declining commitment." And, he added, there's the escalation in real estate and construction costs that dampens enthusiasm for building anything but market-rate housing.

Edelman said A.F. Evans has no immediate plans for low-income family housing here North of Market.

Falk said he knows of only one in the pipeline: TNDC's own joint venture with Community Housing Partnership at 650 Eddy, now a vacant lot. It will have more units than Curran House but proportionally fewer apartments — about 60% of the 81 units will be one- and two-bedroom apartments, and 40% will be studios, Falk said. All units will be for homeless families.

"We take possession of the property this month and expect to start construction in about a year and a half," Falk said. The opening target date is 2008. ■