

Economy puts nonprofit housing projects on hold

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ver, gold and platinum — are based on points achieved for sustainable green building and development practices.

But Nagrai was less sanguine about when construction might start.

"It is unclear where we'll fall in the timeline because of the city's budget woes," he said. "Much of our funding comes from the Mayor's Office of Housing, and though we're budgeted for 2009, we don't know yet if they've frozen new projects. MOH will probably prioritize the various projects it has in the pipeline."

A couple of blocks away at 1036 Mission, between Sixth and Seventh streets and right next to Lucky Tours Check Cashing, TNDC wants to build a two-tower building with 100 units for very low-income and homeless families. It would rise 13 stories on the Mission Street side and step down to 10 stories on Jessie Street.

The proposed mix of units is 15 studios, 13 one-bedrooms, 64 two-bedrooms and eight three-bedrooms. The rent for the affordable units would range from \$732 to \$974 a month; the 20 "homeless" units, the majority of which are two-bedroom, would rent for from \$300 to \$533.

The aim is for it, too, to be LEED silver-rated, said Project Manager Renu Madan, "though we hope to do even better than that."

TNDC has submitted an environmental evaluation application to Planning and expects a preliminary neg dec in March, Madan said.

TNDC Executive Director Don Falk told The Extra in an email that he's confident the projects will materialize eventually.

"Both will certainly go on hold for a while, once we finish getting them entitled," he said. Entitlements include land use approvals such as conditional use and variance applications. "We're talking about the projects being delayed, not terminated."

Falk said the federal stimulus bill has little housing money in it, and the state's affordable housing financing is nearly depleted.

"The biggest problem we face in these projects is the defeat in November of Proposition B," he added. "If it had passed, there's a really good chance that the city would have enough money to keep feeding projects [like these]. Basically, the city has more projects in its pipeline than it can identify funding for right now."

Feb. 20, the S.F. Business Times reported that the Planning Department is proposing time extensions for high-profile developments that already have their "coveted city entitlements" — now they're required to start building within 18 to 24 months of getting approvals. An extension could prevent years of paperwork and a quicker start to construction once the economy turns around. Among the projects cited in the article that would benefit are Crescent Height's project at 10th and Market Street and 12,000 units of already approved housing. ■

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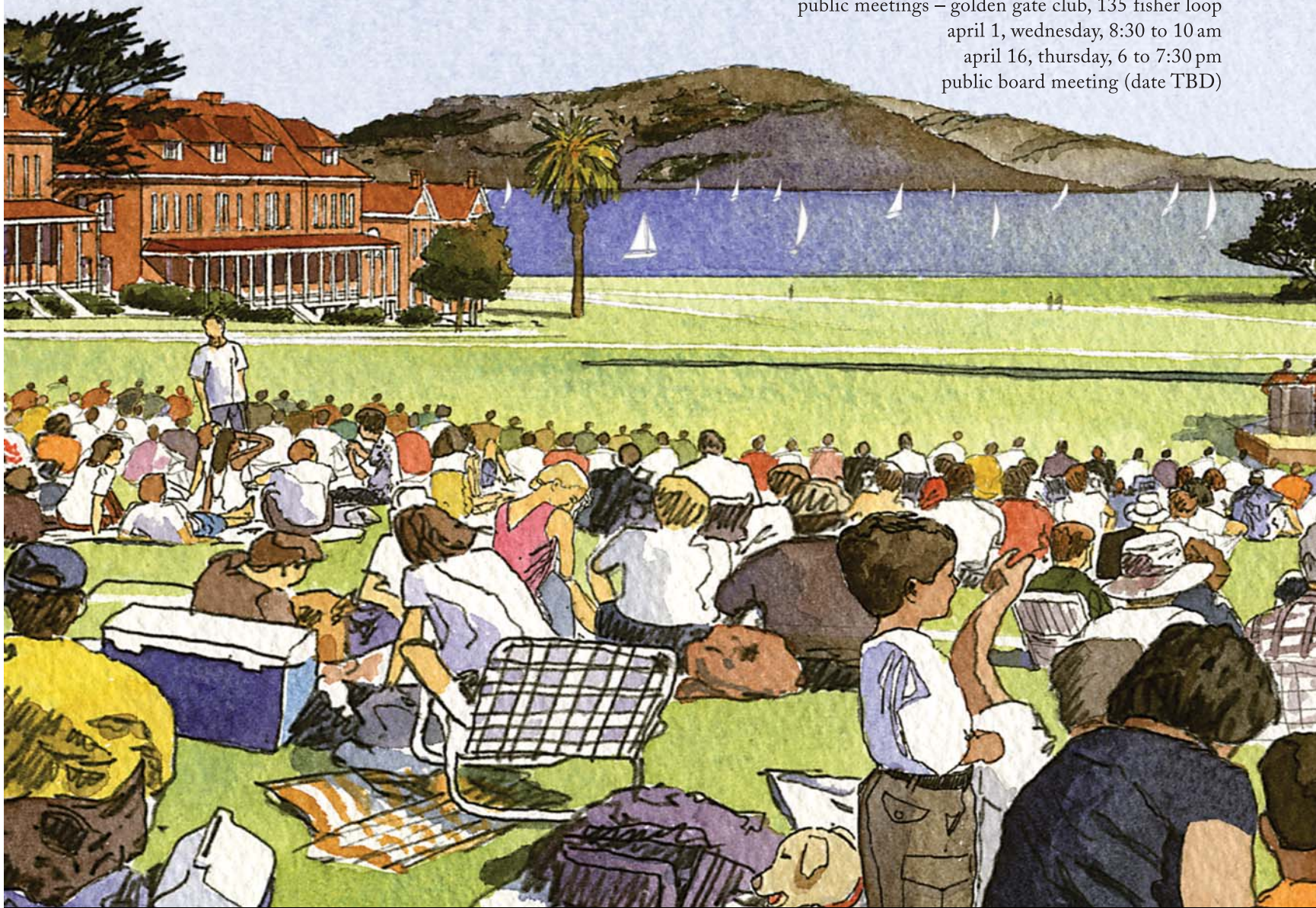
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