

GOOD NEWS for...

HOMELESS AND SENIORS The number of new studios and apartments for the neighborhood's neediest residents took a huge jump in June with two ribbon-cuttings. The nine-story Arnett Watson Apartments at 650 Eddy St., a \$33 million project developed by Community Housing Partnership and TNDC, has 36 studios, 33 one-bedroom and 14 two-bedroom apartments for formerly homeless individuals and families. It's named for a Coalition on Homelessness advocate who died in 2003 and was an original CHP tenant. The 110 units at 990 Polk St. — 81 studios and 29 one-bedrooms, a \$36 million project — will house formerly homeless and seniors who earn less than the Bay Area median income of \$33,000. The nine-story building, on land purchased in 2000 for \$3.2 million, is a TNDC and Citizens Housing Corp. joint development.



990 Polk Street

Citizens Housing will manage the property; Lutheran Social Services and the city's Dept. of Public Health will provide tenant services. The new building is one of the first three in the state to use Proposition 63 housing program funds from the 2004 Mental Health Services Act to defray costs. The other buildings are in Rohnert Park and Santa Barbara. The 990 Polk developers got \$1 million in MHSA funds to build 10 units specifically for the mentally ill homeless.

MUSIC LOVERS People in Plazas' outdoor summer concerts in the Tenderloin, in years past held mid-day in Boeddeker Park, this year move to two new locations at later times, 6 p.m. Thursdays. The plaza in front of 83 McAllister, the former Book Concern Building just off Market Street, will be the venue for the July 16 concert — by the Celtic rock group Blue on Green — and, on Aug. 13, the bluesy jazzers Presence Felt. Dolmen Property Group, the new owner of the Hibernia Bank building at 1 Jones, will build a stage in front of the venerable landmark for the Sept. 17 Smooth Blues concert. Info: peopleinplazas.org

ERRATUM: Nominees for Alliance for a Better District 6's Women of the Year Awards can live or work in the community.

Boeddeker goes begging

It's become a park without people

BY TOM CARTER

THE Tenderloin community is staying away from reopened Boeddeker Park. Its children's playground area, which the Neighborhood Parks Council's annual report card gives a D, is going empty, as well.

Park leaders agreed at the June 11 the Friends of Boeddeker Park meeting that the new, shorter hours are being ignored.

"Unfortunately, the perception is the park isn't open when people are up and active," said Steve Cismowski, Rec and Park area manager. "And the word isn't out to the children. Rec and Park needs to do outreach."

But no solution came forth at the meeting, although CBD Director Elaine Zamora volunteered to "get the word out." She planned to write to after-school programs and other family and youth groups announcing the new hours and explaining the playground's security plan, she said later.

The hours were established May 26. The park is to be open weekdays 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. for adults and the playground from 1 p.m. to 6 p.m. for kids accompanied by adults. The park is closed weekends. Many residents have stopped going to the park for the past two months because it was usually locked.

Boeddeker Friends Chair Betty Traynor said she had applied to the San Francisco Parks Trust for a \$1,500 grant to open the park for "a couple of Saturdays" over several months. June 29 she said the Friends

were awarded \$1,300.

Park Director Rob McDaniels is there weekday mornings but leaves at 1 p.m. to run children's programs at Tenderloin Rec Center. Capt. Gary Jimenez reiterated his pledge that police would patrol the children's area twice an hour weekday afternoons.

Cismowski said the children's hours would expand to 7 p.m. during the summer. But, he added, "We're opening a place that nobody wants to come to," and referred to the playground's "failing grades" over the years from the Neighborhood Parks Council.

The citywide nonprofit's 2008 Playgrounds Report Card gave Boeddeker a D. The report, using national standards, was critical of the children's area for subpar play equipment conditions, cleanliness, sight lines for supervision, quality of surface fill such as sand and number of trash cans. Twenty-five others among the city's 125 playgrounds got Ds and Fs. Half the total got As and Bs.

Rec and Park's Maintenance Standards evaluation last year from 2008 July to Sept. 30 gave the Boeddeker children's area a slightly higher grade of 72.86%.

Cismowski said he hoped the unattractiveness of the park's Eddy Street gate leading to the children's playground could be made more inviting for kids.

"Parents' top concern is safety, and they are reluctant to release them to here," said Jimenez. "We need volunteers and parents from the neighborhood and I don't know

how to reach them."

Volunteer monitors for the children's area would have to be screened by Rec and Park and, by law, fingerprinted. A Glide Methodist Memorial Church representative, Paul Blaney, who has offered volunteers before, said he had "nine members ready to volunteer now." But no plan was in place by June 30.

Jimenez urged quick action to get kids into the park because street people move in if it's open and no one's there, and claim territorial rights, despite the gate's posted restriction for children's use only. "They get embedded and it's hard to get them out," he said.

Another item of disappointing news was that Koret Foundation had not renewed its grant for Boeddeker Park to be included in the People in Plazas summer music program. Traynor said she didn't find that out until too late to fundraise for it.

People in Plazas Program Director Lynn Valente told The Extra later in an interview that she got Koret's news just before the July-August-September schedule for 145 downtown concerts went to press.

"We knew it wouldn't last forever but this came as a surprise," Valente said. "We didn't have time to do anything about it. We're grateful for the eight years Boeddeker got the directors' grant and already I'm working to get it back for next year."

Boeddeker's Friday concerts were staged at noon over the three months. Each cost about \$1,000 to produce, Valente said. ■

OBITUARIES

ANNA PRILL Restaurateur

The Europa restaurant, just outside the Presidio's Lombard gate, was a popular destination for Czech and German fare in the 1970s and '80s. Besides the food and the atmosphere, a big draw was Anna Prill, "a cute waitress in her blue-and-white apron," recalled Marge Angelo, Ms. Prill's longtime friend.

Ms. Prill not only owned the restaurant with her husband, they had a house on Diamond Heights and other property in the city.

Ms. Angelo was among the 20 people who came to the Cambridge Hotel June 2 to honor Ms. Prill, who died May 23 at age 64. She had moved into the hotel a year before, directly from the shelter that housed her when homelessness became too difficult — she was in a wheelchair, one leg lost to diabetes.

Many Tenderloin residents, like Ms. Prill, have had precipitous declines in their lives. Her divorce

brought hard financial times that were complicated by physical ailments. She refused treatment for her infected toe; then, to save her life, the county had to get durable power of attorney to amputate her leg.

"I feel so sorry for all the reversals in her life, but it still was a blessing to know her," Ms. Angelo said. "She was my daughter's and my grandson's godmother, always a kind person and very generous."

Another friend, Sue Eldredge, who met Ms. Prill 32 years ago in a Bible reading group, remembered how she "walked into a room and lighted it up — and she always had flowers in her hair."

Those whose acquaintance with Ms. Prill dated only from her stay at the Cambridge knew her as a compassionate, smiling, devilish extrovert, despite her physical disabilities.

"She spent a lot of time in this community room and was involved in all our activities and went to City Hall protests," said Natalie Swenson, the hotel's tenant services supervisor. "But she also told hilarious jokes — sometimes inappropriate — and she just loved to eat, three big meals a day."

"And more," piped up a man at the back of the room. "And she sometimes pinched men's butts."

Ron Santos, 13 years at the Cambridge and president of its tenant council, said Ms. Prill loved to play bingo at the hotel's monthly and even cooked some for fellow residents. "She cooked Slavic-style, with lots of vinegars and fermented vegetables. When I visited her in the hospital and asked what I could bring, all she wanted was pickles and sauerkraut."



Ms. Prill's deep faith was well-known to her friends and service providers. Her memorial ended with a spiritual, sung by resident Mama Tracy, eyes closed and swaying. ■

—MARJORIE BEGGS



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