

# Collaborative catching on

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invited to the January meeting to explain how \$45,000 in grants was being spent, but they were no-shows. They made it in February, but when SLUG landscape architect Steven Patton tried to explain that there were two grants — a smaller block grant to develop the children's garden and a larger one from Park and Rec that hadn't been touched yet — tempers flared.

"What was promised by SLUG didn't happen," said Jose Toledo, another Boedeker advisory committee member. "We could have done what you did with axes."

The meeting was running long and Hawkins, the chair that day, called a halt and asked SLUG to schedule a separate meeting with Collaborative members who were looking for answers, fiscal and floral.

Also continued at the February meeting were the ongoing sagas of 50 Mason St. (see p.4) and Hastings College of the Law's proposed parking garage at Golden Gate and Larkin.

Hastings' presentation at the Collaborative's December meeting had gone badly: Objections ranged from too many cars to too ugly to accusations that Hastings was trying to ram through the project without

public input.

In 1989, Hastings had demolished two SROs with 85 units on the site. Now Hastings wants to build an 84-foot-high, 875-slot garage with partial first-floor retail that will replace the existing 200-car surface lot.

The Collaborative formed a committee to push for greater community scrutiny of the plans, enlist the aid of state officials, and come up with an alternative plan. Mostly the committee succeeded.

Hastings has delayed the hearing to take public testimony on the draft EIR until March 6 (2 p.m., 455 Golden Gate Ave., hearing room 9). The North of Market Planning Coalition and the Central City SRO Collaborative have scheduled a Feb. 26 Town Hall meeting to bring their members up to date on Hastings' plan.

The Collaborative's committee asked architect Tom Jones, an urban planner with the Oakland-based California Futures Network, to redesign the garage to meet their concerns. His rendering brought it down to 80 feet with two floors of retail and parking — 229 parking spaces — and added 185 apartments on floors three through eight.

Hastings' income would be less with the redesigned

project, Jones calculated. If filled full time, the 875 spaces would generate \$109,000 a month; the 229 spaces plus housing would bring in about \$75,000. But the Collaborative believes their redesign is a much better fit for the community.

Jones and the Rev. Glenda Hope from SF Network Ministries made a presentation on Hastings' plan and the Collaborative's alternative at a Feb. 13 SPUR meeting. "They correctly maintained a neutrality during the presentation," Hope told *The Extra*, "but they also asked a lot of questions, and many were clearly on our side."

Finally, some committee members met with state Sen. John Burton. But he said he was still exploring the controversy and hadn't firmed up his position, though he supported a fair hearing for the alternative plan, Mullin said.

The election hasn't occupied much Collaborative meeting time, but at the January meeting, Tamar Cooper from San Francisco Beautiful made a strong pitch to support Proposition G, which would ban the construction of new billboards in the city. S.F. Beautiful estimates that as many as 80% of the city's 1,500 billboards are in District 6. ■

# Watchdog calls it quits because of poor health

## Adopt-A-Block out of picture, too

At the Tenderloin Police Station's January community meeting, Capt. Stephen Tacchini dropped a bombshell: There had been two homicides in the district in the previous three days, both by gunshot and both, he believed, by assailants who knew their victims. He referred to the acts as "cold-blooded murders."

Nary a gasp nor a shudder could be detected from the 25 Tenderloin citizens in attendance. These hardened locals were more concerned with what the cops planned to do about quality of life than loss of life. Murders might be good fodder for headline writers, but sidewalk urine you have to smell every day.

Tacchini then countered his homicide report with some good news. "For the last reporting period (October 2001), overall crime in the Tenderloin was down 8% from the same period the previous year, while the citywide crime statistic for that period went up 11%," he said. Among others, credit Aspen Apartments property manager and Tenderloin Community on Patrol founder Jim Thompson for this change in climate.

"We started out as a walk-around patrol group, but we found that wasn't very fruitful," says Thompson, a retired probation officer from Marin who moved to the Tenderloin in 1993, then founded TCOP in 1996, "so we became more of a sounding-board group, a forum."

"Even though we were a small ad hoc group with no formal membership rolls or dues—we couldn't even buy a postage stamp—we were directly responsible for the passing of three laws here in the city. The first was a moratorium on new smoke shops [in the area bounded by Van Ness Avenue and Post, Powell and Market streets]. The second and third, which we got with the help of Supervisor Leland Yee, were moratoriums on new massage parlors and liquor stores in the area."

When the 63-year-old Thompson looks past his collection of model cars and out the window of his office at 165 Turk St., he also reflects on the changes he's helped make just on his own block.

"There are no longer dealers and people hanging out with shopping carts here because we got up and said, 'There are certain standards of behavior that we're going to expect. You're not going to be crapping in our doorways. You're not going to be sitting here drinking all day. You're not going to be standing here selling drugs. In 1995, we had drug dealers three deep, all up and down this street. Okay, some of these people are homeless, but if the Queen of England came along today and pulled her pants down and peed on the

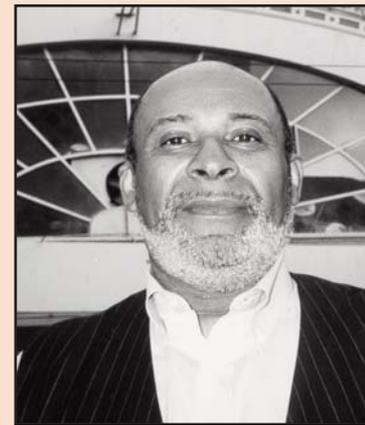
street, she should be arrested, too."

Due to a recent diagnosis of diabetes and high blood pressure, Thompson announced in January that he is taking a hiatus from running his community watch group. Although meetings have been attended, in varying numbers, by a diverse group of residents and area service providers, organizationally TCOP is a one-man show. That means when Thompson goes out of commission so does TCOP.

And TCOP is not the only area watcher to leave its watch. The neighborhood group Adopt-A-Block, founded in 1994 and best known for its small-claims lawsuits against business owners who fail to rid their properties of drug dealers, is also seemingly out of commission. Calls to Adopt-A-Block co-founder and president Nevio Mosser, were not returned by press time. The organization's office, at 455 Eddy St., has been shuttered for months.

"Adopt-A-Block is pretty much gone," says Thompson. "I'm on the board of that. There have been a lot of personnel changes. The last executive director, Nicholas Rosenberg, left to go to USF law school. Another former director, Ana B. Arguello, has turned her attention to Sixth Street. A lot of the same core people you'd see at TCOP, you'd see at Adopt-A-Block. And it has reached a

PHOTO: BILLY LUX



Jim Thompson

point where we're seeing a lot of our work pay off."

With TCOP and Adopt-A-Block dropping their guard, the question now seems to be whether the new Futures Collaborative will fill the void in community policing.

"When the Futures Collaborative first got going," says Thompson, "I was going to head their Environmental Concerns department. We called it that because not only is it supposed to be about crime and drug dealing but also street cleanliness, the whole package. But then my doctor lowered the boom and said, 'You're headed for a stroke,' so I had to back out. I haven't said that I'm permanently out of it—I'm still interested in civic affairs—but until I'm sure my health is under control, I'm going to be learning to fly model airplanes." ■

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