

Bike shop pushes out 25-year merchant

Huckleberry Bicycles replaces hip-hop clothing store

BY TOM CARTER

FIVE empty newsstand kiosks on Market Street would house small businesses, under a plan the Central Market Community Benefit District is negotiating with the city and JCDecaux, the firm that owns the kiosks.

The first kiosk business will be a free bicycle repair station at Seventh and Market streets, scheduled to open this month.

"We are finalizing (negotiations) now," said CBD Executive Director Daniel Hurtado at the May 10 Central Market board meeting. "JCDecaux would be providing these (kiosks) to the CBD free and we would take care of liability insurance."

The bicycle kiosk would operate weekdays 7:30 to 9:30 a.m., run by Huckleberry Bicycles, a commercial shop that will replace Midtown Rag's, a going concern for 25 years on this rough block of Market Street. Huckleberry Bicycles will be "on the busiest bicycle street west of the Mississippi," said Huckleberry owner Brian Smith. "It (the kiosk) will be for simple repairs and chain adjustments," he said. "Hopefully, we'll open in June." The store opens in July with a five-year lease.

Smith, formerly a lawyer in Nixon Peabody LLP's commercial litigation department, has two partners, he said. Huckleberry Bicycles shop will supplant a store that sells affordable hip-hop and with-it apparel whose owner said he was willing to pay up to \$700 a month more, but the building owner rebuffed him.

Sam, Midtown Rag's owner, who didn't want his last name used, said he wonders why Smith couldn't open his shop in a vacant storefront rather than force out a street stalwart.

"When somebody puts in their time, it's worth something," he said.

Of the 88 storefronts between Fifth and Eighth Streets, 31% were vacant, according to a count last year by The Extra, and not much has changed in the meantime.

The 1073 Market St. building is owned by 1067 Market Street LLC. Its point man is

Terry Bogart of Woodside, who is part-owner of the old Food Corner building being renovated at Sixth and Market for a new Pearl's Deluxe Burgers.

Smith, a neighborhood newbie, is a candidate for the merchant seat on the CBD board.

JCDecaux owns 113 of the 17-foot-high advertising kiosks, most located downtown, and 60 were meant to replace scruffy wood newsstands. They were

part of the deal with the city in 1995 to put 26 public toilets on the street.

The other four businesses to qualify for kiosk leases with Central Market CBD, Hurtado said, haven't been chosen but all would be located within the CBD's boundaries, Fifth to Ninth streets on Market.

Hurtado said vendors need approval from JCDecaux and the Department of Public Works. But the CBD hasn't decided whether it would charge rent.

"We'll see how the first one works," Hurtado said. Other kiosk uses, he said, might be a ticket booth or for artists to show their stuff.

In other action, the board addressed



PHOTOS BY LENNY LIMJOCO

Midtown Rag's will make way for Huckleberry Bicycles, which will use the nearby kiosk (inset) as a two-hour-a-day free bike repair shop.

problems that the Mayor's Office of Economic and Workforce Development, which oversees CBDs, had highlighted in an April 6 letter to the board. The directors asked Hurtado to prepare an action plan for joint projects that they could review monthly. It also asked OEWD to email each board member its prioritized list of projects that need assistance.

To help attract new business to Market Street, Hurtado said he would work with the Tenderloin CBD to create a video tour of Central Market.

OEWD's Lisa Pagan suggested that a list of Market Street vacancies be posted on the CBD's website. ■

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