

Money in early for \$6 million park makeover

Boeddeker will close 18 months; construction to start in August

BY TOM CARTER

CONSTRUCTION on Boeddeker Park's \$6 million renovation will start in August, months earlier than expected, a Trust for Public Land spokeswoman announced at the park Friends' May meeting.

The Trust got the \$500,000 it needed to reach the \$6 million goal for renovation, so bidding and permitting can begin, said Trudy Garber, project associate. The Trust, a partner with the Rec and Park Department on the project, got the millions from the state and private donors.

The park will close for construction for 18 months.

Alejandra Chiesa, Trust project manager for the renovation, said at the Friends meeting in January that "a changed permit process" was holding things up. She hoped then to have the permits in April. The bidding process, she said, would take at least four months, putting construction in the fall, but unforeseen circumstances could push it to 2013. In May, Garber was more optimistic.

"There's no exact date," she said. "But we are fully funded now and can move forward. We think the park will close Aug. 1."

That would cancel plans to make the park the central gathering place for the neighborhood's annual National Night Out, Aug. 14, police Capt. Joe Garrity said, adding that another venue will have to be found.

The renovation will rid the park of its much-criticized, prison-like fencing. The park will be reconfigured on four tiers and get a new, glassy clubhouse.

Carol Marie Daniels, Arts Commission spokeswoman, said the park's outdoor sculptures will be removed in June and stored in the East Bay, to be returned after the renovation. The



PHOTO SAN FRANCISCO ARTS COMMISSION

Artist Johanna Poethig, who created the clubhouse mural, is seen in 1988 with Recreation Center children who conceived and designed the mythical creature, "Flying Dragon-Snake-Monkey-Bird." This work will not survive the park demolition.

sculptures are: "Ark," by Bruce Hasson, "Redding School, Self Portrait," by Ruth Asawa and "Untitled," by Anthony Jerome Smith.

"Ark" and "Untitled," bronze pieces weighing 700 and 800 pounds, respectively, went into the park in 1986, a year after it opened. Each artist was paid \$20,400. "Ark" shows chiseled animals. "Untitled" is a sphere held by a pair of hands. The sphere has 14 life-size, inset faces of neighborhood notables, including Smith, who the commission is trying to find to alert him that his work is being moved.

The Asawa piece is a tribute to Father Alfred Boeddeker, the Franciscan priest who founded St. Anthony's Dining Room and is the park's namesake. The 4- by 16.5-foot bas relief wall mural is a portrait of Boeddeker surrounded by children and San Francisco scenes. Assisting Asawa

were 100 schoolchildren from nearby Redding Elementary. Installed in 1985, it consists of glass fiber reinforced concrete that can be moved and reinstalled.

Not so fortunate is Johanna Poethig's popular and colorful "Flying Dragon-Snake-Monkey-Bird" mural inside the clubhouse on the east wall. Park children conceived the mythical creature, then helped Poethig color and glaze the tiles. The \$15,000 project went up in 1988.

Because of exorbitant removal and reinstallation costs (\$46,000), the 11- by 14-foot piece "will not survive the Boeddeker Park renovation," Daniels said.

Rec and Park's Steve Cismowski asked at the meeting what hours people wanted the park to be open until construction begins. Now, it's open to all from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. weekdays,

with the children's playground open until 5 p.m. for kids accompanied by an adult.

"I can only afford 15 hours a week," said Cismowski, referring to the city's ability to pay an on-site Rec and Park director.

The group of a dozen favored noon to 3 p.m. Cismowski said he would try for that.

Earlier he'd said the park's custodians have discovered a rash of needle dumping, up to 20 needles daily in the last two months, tossed over the permanently closed Ellis Street gate and over the Eddy Street fence, near the children's play area. "But no injuries that we know of," he said.

Weekend volunteers' work has been suspended, said Betty Traynor, Friends chair. But performers can register for the July 14 Talent in the Tenderloin show until the end of June.

GOOD NEWS for...

CAMELOT RESIDENTS Thirty Charles Schwab employees, clad in jeans and blue-T-shirts emblazoned with "Together for Good" and "Aspire Higher," brought cleaning and painting equipment to the Camelot Hotel May 22 to spruce up the DPH master-leased SRO, which houses 55 formerly homeless tenants and is managed by Delivering Innovation in Supportive Housing (DISH). The makeover was part of Schwab's annual Volunteer Week, where 2,600 of the company's employees put in time on 118 projects in 45 cities. Two days after the Camelot gig, another 20 Schwabbies gathered at the Tenderloin Boys & Girls Clubhouse on Jones Street.



PHOTO BY QUANG NGUYEN

Volunteer Week Schwabbies sprucing up the Camelot Hotel.

They cleared surfaces, sorted educational materials and scrubbed everything clean, including the windows. "The community service gives us a unique opportunity to team up with colleagues and pitch in for organizations that do great work," says Schwab Foundation President Carrie Schwab-Pomerantz. "It's no secret

that the event is a lot of fun, too." Since Volunteer Week began in 2003, St. Vincent de Paul, San Francisco City Impact, the Salvation Army, Glide Memorial Church and Compass Children's Center have benefited.

THE TENDERLOIN Give TNDC credit for putting the emphasis in the right place. It awarded popular Mimi Yee, owner and manager of the Manor House restaurant on Jones Street, its Brother Kelly Cullen Community Services Award for 2012. It's given to "an individual who shows extraordinary community spirit and compassion in providing services to San Francisco's poorest and neediest residents." Mimi serves good food at low-cost — hearty breakfasts for \$2.95, balanced luncheon meals that fill you up for \$4.95. Manor House, especially to SRO dwellers, is a meeting place like an oasis where Mimi greets everyone by name. For the 16 years that she's had the restaurant (the anniversary is June 25), her warmth, generous spirit and fairness have endeared her to customers. "But I had to earn everybody's respect," she says. She's assisted six days a week (closed Sundays)

by her "strong team" of two sisters, her husband and brother-in-law. TNDC's Executive Director Don Falk dropped in one day to offer personal congratulations after the May 9 awards ceremony in the Hilton Hotel, which Mimi had missed.



PHOTO BY MICHAEL NULTY

Mimi Yee gets kudos from TNDC's Don Falk for Brother Kelly Award.

If you have some good news, send it to tom@studycenter.org or marjorie@studycenter.org