

21Tech names Silicon Valley crony as local group it helps

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“a godsend for us.” Although Regroup is 21Tech’s poster child for providing tech help to the community, DiPasquale conceded: “I don’t know what a CBA is.”

Regroup’s Website lists no street address, and The Extra’s attempts to contact the company, just like all of our attempts to reach 21Tech, failed to get a response.

Michael Anderer-McClelland, vice president for mission at De Marillac Academy, in reply to a question from CAC member Brad Paul, said that on Twitter’s and Yammer’s “Days for Good” events, dozens of volunteers swarmed his school but only a handful ever returned.

What a school needs from its volunteers, he said, is “consistent, regular, long-term relationships” for sustained after-school programs, tutoring and workshops.

The one-day events, he told the CAC, “are more orientation for them than volunteering.”

Raymon Cancino, program director at Catholic Charities, and Joe Wilson, community building program manager at Hospitality House, also addressed the committee.

“The issues of jobs, housing, displacement and affordability for non-profits remain,” Wilson said. “We are concerned with the significant development that’s going to affect nonprofits.”

“Our organization has benefited, but we’re only one organization, there are only two companies,” he said. (Hospitality House has received benefits from Twitter and Yammer.) “We need to make sure that happens in as many organizations and companies as possible.”

“From our perspective, the CBAs are about ensuring public benefit for

public resources,” Wilson said. “The city needs to be more actively engaged.”

Hospitality House Development Director Daniel Hlad, a member of the CAC until his organization got \$10,000 from Twitter for its art program — forcing him to step down to avoid violating the CAC’s conflict-of-interest rules — told The Extra that Twitter had also provided some training workshops on how to use its technology to promote Hospitality House, and had vowed to encourage staff to support a fundraising event Oct. 24 at Arc Gallery on Folsom Street.

Hlad criticized how the city administrator has handled the CBA process — for example, not responding to CAC members’ repeated requests to reconsider the conflict-of-interest rules — and he thought the May purge of four CAC members over an unusual and complicated attendance rule was extreme because it was based on a “technicality.”

The city’s lack of active oversight of the benefit agreements was also cited by Cancino, who pointed out that Twitter’s quarterly report lists providing 30 laptops for a new Catholic Charities youth program, dubbed Laptops for Success. However, he said, the computers “have not happened yet.”

A few days later, he told The Extra that Twitter had told him the laptops awaited only identification stickers before being delivered. He said he’d simply been trying to drive home his impression that Mayor Lee and his staff “have not been invested in making sure that we’re taking advantage of the situation.” Twitter “dictated” who got computers, he said, and “that’s been the whole process. They dictated terms to the city administrator’s office, in my opinion. The CAC doesn’t have much” say-so with the deals.



PHOTO BY MARK HEDIN

Microsoft subsidiary Yammer offered training sessions at its Westfield mall store.

(Twitter provided Catholic Charities six MacBook Pro laptop computers, with the stipulation that they go to families, thus leaving out the organization’s many senior clients.)

The committee elected Marquez of S.F. Mental Health Clients’ Rights Advocates vice chair, and added an Oct. 3 meeting to its calendar in hopes of reviewing this year’s CBAs and providing feedback for next year’s agreements before the city administrator and the tax break companies get too far along in negotiating them.

“We’re not in on the negotiations, we’re in the pre-discussions. If we’re going to evaluate, it’s going to take a few months,” Marquez said, recalling how little public or CAC input went into fine-tuning the six CBAs being executed this year. “That opportunity to really engage in discussions wasn’t there.”

The city administrator is responsible for negotiating the CBAs with the companies seeking the Twitter tax break, and for taking CAC input into consideration when doing so.

Two representatives of the city administrator’s office were present. One, project manager Bill Barnes, gave a cursory review of the firms’ first quarterly

reports and said he expects all six firms currently enjoying the tax break and executing CBAs to reapply for 2014 and be joined by the music-sharing Website Spotify, which is moving into the Warfield Building.

Barnes said the companies, in general, were making “good progress” toward meeting their commitments, but he also fired a warning shot across their bows.

“If you complete less than 80% we’re not going to even discuss a CBA next year, or the tax break.”

(The 80% completion figure is written into all the CBAs as the threshold companies need to meet to be compliant.) Unofficially, the companies are expected to spend approximately 30% of the value of their tax break on their CBA commitments, two community liaisons have told The Extra.

Barnes also told the panel it had the option, but not the requirement, to make a six-month progress report to the Board of Supervisors and said that he would work with District 6 Supervisor Jane Kim to request a hearing if the CAC wished. The panel voted to make the report, with the expectation that the hearing would likely be scheduled for mid-October. ■

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