

# Heads-up to merchants precedes crackdown for code violations

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cer Miguel "Mike" Torres, leaves Tenderloin Station to visit neighborhood sites that Purvis' research indicates are out of compliance. Armed with a printout of sites Purvis developed from Google street view, he's going "to give the merchants a heads-up."

"We're still in the educational stage," he explains.

Less than a half-block from the station, they come upon a woman passed out on the sidewalk, her feet dangling on the curb. Torres stops. He knows her.

"Celia," he says gently, tapping her forearm. "Celia, are you all right? Wake up for me, dear." Celia wakes, greets Torres and sits up. "Good," Torres says, "you watch out now, and get into some shade."

He and Purvis proceed a block to Aunt Charlie's Lounge. From his Google footage, Purvis thought he saw graffiti covering plywood over the front window. Standing in front, however, the area is clearly stucco and cement attractively painted with a rainbow flag-colored abstract. "No problem here," Purvis says, and the pair walk west to G&H Market at the corner of Jones and Turk streets.

It's busy at G&H, people lined up at the cash register to buy sodas and cans of beer. Purvis notes that the store's security gates and the large refrigerator cases and lottery ticket machine backed against the Turk Street store's windows block any view into the interior.

He and Torres talk with proprietor Sal Saleh. Purvis suggests ways in which Saleh can comply with the rules by relocating the cases and lottery machine to the store's inner walls, thus creating a compliant sight-line, and leaves a Planning Department pamphlet describing the storefront transparency regulations.

Saleh barely acknowledges the suggestions and remains focused on ringing up his customers' purchases. He's clearly displeased at the thought of rearranging his small store's interior and doesn't bite on Purvis and Torres' efforts to keep the conversation light and nonconfrontational.

As they leave G&H, Purvis states the obvious to Torres that this store needs a massive readjustment to satisfy the Planning Code.

Later, Saleh laments the cost of moving the refrigerator cases. "They're

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Jonathan Purvis  
CITY PLANNER

built in. You can't just put a dolly underneath them and wheel it across the floor," he says.

And he doesn't buy Planning's pitch that a lot of people have been complaining. He sees that as a far-fetched excuse to institute "another way to make it difficult for business owners."

City Planning wants Tenderloin merchants to voluntarily remove impediments and create "street frontages that are pedestrian-oriented," as the code envisages. Purvis notes that if the changes are not made voluntarily, citations and hearings will follow, and ultimate failures to comply could result in daily fines of \$250 for offending merchants.

## WINDOW SIGNS TOO BIG

Across Jones Street, Purvis sees advertisements for S.F. City Impact and S.F. City Academy completely covering the street-level windows of the old Musicians Union building, former site of the Rescue Mission. He and Torres go inside and observe that behind the advertisement signs are a long, narrow commercial kitchen and the entrance to City Impact offices. Again, Purvis leaves the descriptive pamphlet and suggests to City Impact office personnel that the signs be reduced to a third of their size.

Progress on the route is leisurely. Purvis carefully scans each storefront they pass while Torres greets passersby and street denizens, always inquiring about their current well-being. He's been at Tenderloin Station his entire 23-year police career and seems to know everybody in the neighborhood.

They stop at New Star Restaurant tucked into the corner of Leavenworth and Eddy streets. One street-level win-

dow is smudged with dirt, but the real problems are security gates and plywood and paint covering the rest of the windows. No customers inside, only the proprietors, who struggle to understand Purvis' comments about the need to restore visibility to the space.

At the corner of Ellis and Leavenworth streets, Purvis enters Amigo's Market. Here, visibility is impeded by stands of produce at the entrance. But the owner, Nageeb Quraish, explains the stands are portable and he can move them aside, if needed. Purvis says that would help, but he also points out the problems of security gates covered by soft drink posters and paint-covered windows that wrap the storefront and block all sight into the interior.

## "IT'S BORDERLINE"

Quarish has been at the corner since 2003. He inherited the graffiti-marred windows and the security screens. "We don't even have keys for the screens. We'll have to pry them away from the windows," he says.

Quarish wants to keep the city happy. He's scheduled a general cleaning of his windows and is considering installing colorful posters of fruits and vegetables to mask the back of his refrigerator cases, but there's a limit to what he can spend. "I got to look at my lease, you know. I mean this sticks right here," he says pointing to his throat. "I can't swallow and I can't cough it up."

A block away Purvis is pleased to see that the Anh-Sang Sunshine Express, formerly Sunshine Video Rental now a facility accommodating money transfers between the U.S. and Vietnam, has opened up its frontage and the street-level windows are clear. Torres asks about a refrigerator meat case

that stands empty inside the store's entrance and learns the owner is storing it for a friend.

Next, Purvis and Torres stop to inspect Hong Market at 724 Ellis St. Purvis met with the owner a month earlier to alert him about the need to remove the plastic film covering the 20-foot-wide front window. Now, the security gate is locked across the storefront, the store is dark and a hand-lettered sign advertises the space for lease. The window remains covered. Beneath it a man is camped out. His bags of clothing are mounded on the sidewalk. "I did it. I did it and I want credit for it," he confesses to Torres. "Wait," Torres laughs, "you don't know what you're accused of yet."



**Top: At the Brown Jug Saloon,** boards cover the front. City planner Jonathan Purvis thinks there might have been windows at one time, but not since 1938 when it was a drugstore. **Above:** At New Star Restaurant, security gates, plywood and paint cover most of the windows. **Left:** Aunt Charlie's Lounge on Turk Street passes Purvis' muster because he mistook for graffiti Google's street view of the rainbow-colored stucco and cement side wall.

## City signs CBAs despite citizens committee's objections

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good to formalize the agreement." Twitter spokeswoman Karen Wickre's reply to The Extra's request for comment was that the company would have none.

At the CAC's meeting on Jan. 2, when the city administrator's special project manager Bill Barnes pressured the panel to approve draft agreements for Yammer, Twitter, One Kings Lane and Zendesk, saying that because they were renewals, he needed to conclude that stage of the process by Jan. 10 so they could be vetted by the city attorney and the Office of Workforce and Economic Development before month's end. So panel members agreed to reconvene on Jan. 9 to review those pacts.

Barnes said at the Jan. 2 meeting that he had previously informed the CAC of the stepped-up deadline, but he did not respond to an Extra request later that week for clarification as to when and where he had done so, and CAC Vice Chair Robert Marquez told The Extra he was unaware of any such request. Last there was any doubt about the

CAC's irrelevance in the benefit agreement negotiations, when some members objected to Barnes' attempt to speed up the approval process, Deputy City Attorney Marie Blits was on hand to put the panel in its place: "This body is an advisory body," she said. "It's the city administrator who signs off. What you're doing is providing comment. You may take formal votes if you wish on whether you recommend that she approve or not approve."

Comments at CAC meetings from the public and committee members themselves have consistently decried a lack of transparency in every aspect of the process — what the companies are saving in taxes, what they're spending on their CBAs and whether or not they're making good on what they do promise in those agreements.

Unless the companies choose to disclose the information — and so far, only one, Zendesk, ever has — the public is left in the dark as to what the value of the tax break is to the companies, and what they're spending on their CBAs. And the tech firms' self-reporting

on the fulfillment of promises made in those CBAs has been behind schedule and woefully inadequate.

At the Jan. 9 meeting, Zendesk community liaison Tiffany Apczynski answered Marquez's question about Zendesk's tax savings and how much it has spent on the agreement. The company saved \$380,000 in 2013, she said, and will spend \$120,000 to \$150,000 on its CBA this year.

Barnes didn't respond to a Jan. 6 email asking how he measures the companies' compliance with their CBA promises. All agreements state that the city administrator rates 80% compliance as acceptable. But Barnes won't discuss how he determines that condition has been met.

To date, the city administrator has given the CAC updates only on the first six months of 2013 CBA activity. Tim Ho of the city administrator's office said Jan. 2 that some companies had not met the Dec. 30 deadline for reporting on their third-quarter activity, so he had nothing new to report on their CBA compliance.

Even after last year's CBAs were signed, typically rushed through during the holiday season without any CAC review, efforts to more carefully draft and consider the agreements were frustrated again this year.

In November, the CAC was told that its chair and vice chair would be included in the city administrator's two December meetings with the tech firms to draft this year's CBAs. The first, Dec. 9, was hastily arranged and Twitter arrived empty-handed. There was no second meeting. Yet, on Jan. 2, Twitter and five other companies' from draft CBAs were on the table when the CAC meeting started. Much of their text was a direct lift from the previous year's agreements.

CAC Chair Peter Masiak took Twitter to task from the podium Jan. 9 when no one from the company showed up to discuss changes in its CBA.

"I wish they were here," Masiak said. "This is still a multibillion-dollar corporation. The fact that we can't get one person from senior management says a lot about how seriously they're taking this process." ■



**G&H Market,** with a passerby standing in front, needs major readjustment, Purvis notes, because of the security gate outside and large refrigerator cases inside.



**San Francisco City Impact,** a new nonprofit on Jones Street, has signs covering the front windows that Purvis says should be reduced to a third their current size.