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City finally reports on Twitter's givebacks

Officials refuse to say how they rate CBA compliance

By Mark Hedin

IT WON'T BE KNOWN till the assessor's office issues a report in September what the Twitter tax break cost San Francisco in 2013. But, as far as the city is concerned, the five biggest companies getting the payroll tax exclusion, Twitter among them, did their part to earn another year's eligibility for it.

At the Citizens Advisory Committee meeting March 6, the city administrator's office presented five final progress reports on how the community benefited from Twitter, Yammer, Zendesk, One Kings Lane and Zoosk.

> "I don't have an answer for that, but I can get back to you."
> Tim Ho
> CITY ADMINISTRATOR'S OFFICE

The deal is that the companies must complete at least 80% of their community benefit agreement (CBA) pledges to qualify for another year of the tax break. The 2014 CBAs were signed in January, but this early March meeting marked the first time the CAC and the public got a look at the companies' 2013 reports to the city administrator. Although these are public documents, they have not been posted to the city's website, where CAC minutes and agendas and the CBA agreements are typically available.

The reports don't rate each company's level of compliance with its pledges, but city project manager Bill Barnes previously told The Extra that he wouldn't "begin to consider" a renewed tax break for any company that didn't meet the 80% threshold.

All five companies are back this year (and joined by Spotify), so presumably they got passing marks. Barnes didn't attend the March CAC meeting and neither he nor anyone else in the city administrator's office responded to The Extra's inquiries about how they measure compliance.

CAC Chair Peter Masiak noted that the panel also is kept out of the loop — it got the 2013 reports in March, though the city administrator in early January had already deemed the five renewing companies compliant. It made Masiak "question the worth of this body," he said. His concern was echoed by Vice Chair Robert Marquez.

Masiak said the city administrator is giving the companies a pass on compliance by allowing late reporting that nonprofits don't expect or ever get from the city and other funders. "Any nonprofit, there's no leeway," Masiak said. "You have to get your reports in on time or you lose your grant."

"I don't have an answer for that, but I can get back to you," Tim Ho of the city administrator's office replied.

The Extra emailed Barnes in early January to ask how he scores CBAs, but is still awaiting a response, though on Jan. 9 Barnes told The Extra that he would answer "all your questions" once he'd completed the work of drafting new CBAs for 2014.

The Extra also asked City Administrator Naomi Kelly, who signs the CBAs for the city, to discuss them, but she refused.

The CBA progress reports are skimpy

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SENIORS: SURPRISING MINORITY

Tenderloin residents die 20 years younger

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MODEL OF A HEALTHY MOM-N-POP

1st corner store to get makeover

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A TASTE OF HOME FOR ELDERS

'Mama Tess' serves good Filipino food

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SPECIAL REPORT

PHOTO BY PAUL DUNN

Brenda Washington, *64, has lived for four years at the Raman Hotel on Howard Street. Like many central city seniors living in SROs, she is alone, suffers from depression and spends a lot of time watching television.* ***Story on pg. 5.***

Old, poor in SROs

Studies focus on seniors, disabled

By Tom Carter

> SPECIAL REPORT — PART 2
> *This is the second of a two-part special report concerning the plight of seniors in the central city, a collaboration between New America Media and Central City Extra.*

SENIORS AND THE DISABLED are the most vulnerable people in the city's poorest neighborhood. They hang on economically by their fingernails. Indeed, The Extra's stories last month demonstrated their paltry, shrinking dollars. Faced with this, they must stay the grim course and keep their wits about them.

In the last five years, two studies have attempted to determine the needs of residents living in single-room-occupancy hotels, the first and often the last refuge the dispossessed call home. The first, done in 2009, focused on SROs and contains key information about Tenderloin seniors. The second, a smaller study, was completed in 2010 and addresses seniors and adults with disabilities in Tenderloin SROs.

SROs originally were for the low-income workforce, migrant and maritime workers, single, footloose men, staying in a room typically 10-by-12 feet with a sink and common toilet and shower down the hall. The 1906 earthquake and fire and redevelopment projects of the 1960s and '70s wiped out huge numbers of them. But many new replacement and renovated buildings have updated the old blueprint, often with a private bath and a kitchenette.

The city has about 500 SROs, according to the Department of Building Inspection, although the Planning Department identified 530 for Aimee Fribourg's 2009 report, "San Francisco's Single-Room Occupancy (SRO) Hotels: A Strategic Assessment of Residents and Their Human Service Needs." The study was conducted for the Human Services Agency. It was part of Fribourg's master's degree work in Public Policy at UC Berkeley.

There are 208 SROs in the Tenderloin, 145 in Chinatown, 60 in the Mission and 50 in western SoMa, the remainder scattered around town. The study looked at three SRO populations: seniors, adults with disabilities and families with children. Back then, about 50 of the hotels contracted with the city to accept the destitute and formerly homeless. Five years later, there are likely more contractors.

Fribourg matched SRO addresses against city caseload data to find 11,000 "unique" clients, as opposed to a grand total of 18,500 residents. Put another way, 63% of all SRO residents then were HSA clients, or are receiving SSI. More than 5,000 of the clients were over age 60; another 3,000 over 60 were not receiving SSI. The report points out Fribourg's figures are "speculative but reasonable."

"Seniors in SROs are exceptionally poor" and "have none of the rental protections of seniors in public housing," a report memo says. Two-thirds of the seniors in the database relied on $991 SSI monthly checks. The average SRO rent, $589, was about 60% of their income, leaving $402 for expenses. By con-

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