

Tax-break tech hiring a bust in Tenderloin

Positions to date:
1 full-time job,
5 summer interns

By TOM CARTER, MARK HEDIN
AND GEOFF LINK

WHEN THE TWITTER tax break was signed, the mayor's office had high hopes that the expanding technology boom would explode with local hiring and that the incoming Internet companies could help make his dream of 2,500 new tech jobs come true.

So the first community benefit agreements that each participating tech company signed to mitigate the harshness of the ensuing gentrification of the neighborhood referenced local workforce development.

The 2013 CBAs all contain some allusion to hiring locals, few specifics, no grand goals or hiring promises. Much of it resembled Twitter's politically correct: "It is crucial that all people have access

to economic growth." But the expectation of jobs in the documents was palpable.

Zoosk and Zendesk pledged to hire interns from the neighborhood. Zendesk expected to hire at least two each in 2012 and 2013. Zendesk did hire a pair in 2012, but only one

last year. Zoosk executed its first CBA in 2013 and fulfilled its promise to hire two interns. All the interns got only summer jobs, and all came from the Vietnamese Youth Development Center. But recently, Zoosk put someone on full-time in an entry-level position.

That's it: One full-time hire and five summer interns out of the neighborhood's 30,000 population. So central city residents can only hope that they will be the 1 in 5,000 who snags some sort of job at Big Tech.

The companies say local hiring has lagged because they can't find qualified tech workers in the neighborhood. And they could have a point.

So in the 2014 CBAs, four of the six tax-break firms — Twitter, Zendesk, One Kings Lane and Zoosk — say they will train locals in the hopes that one day they can be part of a tech workforce from the inner city.

"The reason for the change in the CBA wording to 'training' had to do with the difficulties that arose in finding interns that live in the Tenderloin," Zendesk public affairs director Tiffany Apczynski wrote in an email. "It is difficult and often not possible to post for and vet interns based on specific geographies like a neighborhood."

"Zendesk also worked with community partners in the area, but even if a service provider may be located in the Tenderloin, the people they serve often live in other neighborhoods. We believe focusing on training will have a bigger impact and allow us to reach more people in the neighborhood."

The new emphasis on training is paying off for Community Housing Partnership's new Employment and Training Center at Fifth and Harrison streets.

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SEPTEMBER
2014

EDGY
TALENT
ON STAGE

S.F. Fringe Fest
starts annual
run

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MAPPING
BIG TECH
IN HOOD

The firms along
mid-Market St.

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ACTIVISTS
PUSHING
FOR MORE

Park not
enough — rec
center wanted

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OBITUARIES

Memorials for
3 in central city

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CENTRAL CITY

EXTRA!

S A N F R A N C I S C O

TENDERLOIN GREEN



PHOTO TOM CARTER

Boeddeker Park's renovation features an inviting layout for strolling, resting and recreation. The basketball court, top right, and the children's playground below it are larger than in the old park.

\$8 MILLION PARK

Redone Boeddeker ready to reopen — probably in October

By MARJORIE BEGGS AND TOM CARTER

ATINY ELDERLY WOMAN, bent over a walker and smiling broadly, found an opening in Boeddeker Park's temporary chain link fence and decided to take a look. She made it 20 feet inside before the hard hat who'd left the fence open spied her and gently escorted her out to the Eddy Street sidewalk, explaining that the park isn't open yet.

But soon.

Best guesses put completion of the \$8 million renovation at the end of September with a grand opening in October. Besides its all-new look, the park is expected to be open every day for 10 hours and its operation in all-new hands: The Tenderloin Boys & Girls Club will be Rec and Park's master tenant with a full-time site director and community liaison, responsible for coordinating all activities at Boeddeker Park.

The club will "have first dibs" on days and times for its own programs — like basketball with a professional coach — while overseeing those of other nonprofits and as many as 35 hours of Rec and Park activities,

Director Esan Looper told the 14 people at Friends of Boeddeker Park's Aug. 21 meeting.

He ran down some of what neighbors can expect: movement classes for youth from Alonzo King LINES Ballet and acting classes from ACT professionals, activities "that focus on making our neighborhood healthy" from Asian & Pacific Islander Wellness Center, and programs from Glide, S.F. Senior Center and City Impact (formerly the S.F. Rescue Mission). The scheduling process should ensure, he said, that the park doesn't get "overly programmed" during its 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. hours.

Betty Traynor, Friends coordinator, said amen to that. She's been bothered by a neighborhood rumor that the park will be "only programming" with no place for the casual visitor, she said. "Not true. We've always said it's a park for everyone. Please spread the word."

The amount of the Boys & Girls Club's lease agreement won't be public until Rec and Park commissioners vote on it, probably at their Sept. 18 meeting, according to Connie Chan, deputy director of public affairs.

Also undisclosed for now is what the Central YMCA, an anchor tenant at Boeddeker, will be paying.

The Y will move all its operations to the park and pay rent, but it will be lower than its current rent at 387 Golden Gate Ave. Program Director Leslie Truong told the Friends

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