

Nevermind tweets — at CAC you can almost hear the crickets chirp

Citizen's Advisory Committee seats kept vacant, city ignores sunshine laws

By MARK HEDIN

IF THERE WERE ANY doubts about the extent to which City Hall has turned its back on the Tenderloin, look no further than the neglected state of the Citizen's Advisory Committee for the Central Market & Tenderloin Area, the group of volunteers cynically put in place as community watchdogs fighting for a fair shake under the terms of the Twitter tax break.

Of its 11 seats, one has been vacant since 2013. City Hall knows about that one. But, equipped with the knowledge that Vice Chair Robert Marquez had resigned back in February, and thus did not attend the most recent CAC meeting, in mid-March, The Extra called the clerk of the Board of Supervisors' Rules Committee, which vets applicants to the panel.

Alisa Somera took the call. She said she was unaware of a vacancy in the seat Marquez occupied for four years as a representative of the neighborhood's community-based organizations. She referred us to Tim Ho in the city administrator's office, which holds the actual power in negotiations with companies claiming the Twitter tax break. Their \$1 million-plus payrolls require them to sign community benefit agreements pledging givebacks to their new neighborhood.

But Ho has not worked for the city for at least three months, said Michael

Pawluk, who answered Ho's line and said he works there as media coordinator. Ho, he believes, is working on Mayor Lee's re-election campaign and no longer on the city payroll.

The Extra is thus confident in reporting that there will be no new faces on the committee at its May 7 meeting. Somera did say that the terms of five seats — those of Eva Perring, Steven Suzuki, John Bogacki, Brad Paul and Antoinette Stadlman — expire Aug. 2.

As for the committee's ongoing work, the CAO apparently has adopted a more hands-off approach than early on. Just when the CBA process was getting rolling, about a year into the process, the administrator abruptly sacked four panel members, thus denying the committee a quorum and the ability to act. These days the city no longer posts CAC minutes or agendas, despite city and state laws requiring that it do so.

On May 1, 2013, Bill Barnes, then the city administrator's liaison to the CAC and the six tax break companies, informed four CAC members that they had been deemed resigned from the panel because of "unexcused absences." The loss of those four seats, combined with three vacancies at the time, meant the panel no longer had enough members — six — to officially meet, and thus whatever CBA activity, or lack thereof, that occurred that year was largely off the radar.

Barnes is currently on leave from the city and working Mayor Lee's re-election campaign.

Of those purged, two, Paul and Suzuki, were reappointed in time for the August meeting that year along with several newcomers. But, in the meantime, the first CBAs of five of the companies — Twitter, Yammer, Zoosk, One King's Lane and 21Tech — proceeded with no community input or review.

The state's Ralph M. Brown Act on public records and the city's Sunshine Ordinance both apply to the CAC, as stated in its bylaws. Under the terms of those regulations, meeting agendas are to be posted 72 hours in advance, draft minutes available within 10 days of the meeting, and approved minutes within 48 hours of approval — which usually occurs at the following meeting. But, as of April 27, the only minutes or agendas posted for any of the CAC meetings this year is the agenda for Feb. 5.

Violation of the Sunshine Ordinance or Brown Act is considered willful misconduct and grounds for termination. City Administrator Naomi Kelly did not return The Extra's request for comment on this story, just as she had declined every request from the Extra to discuss the CAC or the five CBAs she signed in 2014 despite the CAC's near-unanimous rejection of them all.

Perhaps, given what original CAC

member Nella Manuel said when she resigned last fall: The CAC "doesn't do anything," it doesn't matter if the city posts its documents or not. Nonetheless, the CAC will meet May 7 at 5:45 p.m. in Room 416 at City Hall — we think. ■

EDITOR'S NOTE

Mark Hedin has been covering the Twitter tax break's effects on the central city since Supervisor Kim's ordinance established the Citizen's Advisory Committee. The stated rationale was to give the community input into the benefits that the largest tech companies were required to return to the neighborhood. But Kim fashioned a committee without teeth, denying its members a seat at the negotiating table or veto power over deals the city administrator crafts with the companies. Serving as window dressing leaves the dedicated committee members selected for their proven commitment to the community feeling powerless. They are cynically used by the city administrator so the city can say the hood has a voice in the process. No wonder the CAC members are resigning in frustration.

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The Tenderloin Community Benefit District invites qualified community members to apply for a Board of Director's seat!

Serving on the Board of Directors is a rewarding volunteer opportunity. Members help navigate and oversee the organization's mission and goals to initiate and implement improvement projects and services for the district and community.

To qualify, applicants must be a Tenderloin property or business owner representative, or resident (within district boundaries).

To learn more about board membership, contact our office at: info@nom-tlcbd.org or call: 415-292-4812

Application deadline:
May 15th, 2015, 6 PM

The Tenderloin Community Benefit District (TLCBD) exists to facilitate the transformation of the Tenderloin into a cleaner, safer, more vibrant neighborhood.

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The Knox



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Building	Size & Amenities	Max/Min Household Income Limits	Rent as of Feb. 1, 2015
The Knox SRO located at 241- 6th St. & Tehama is accepting applications and has an OPEN WAITLIST	SRO – 1 Person or Couple Room size: 10 ½ x 18 (Semi-Private) bathroom 7 x 7 Unit amenities: sink, microwave, refrigerator, 2-burner stove, closet, single bed Building amenities: small gym, library, private lounge, roof top garden, community kitchen, laundry facility, 24 hour staff & surveillance	1 person \$34,600/year 2 person \$39,520/year Minimum income of \$1,374/month	Move-in deposit \$687 Monthly rent \$687 plus utilities
Hotel Isabel located at 1095 Mission CLOSED WAITLIST	SRO – 1 Person Shared bathroom Unit amenities: sink, microwave, refrigerator, 2- burner stove, closet and single bed	1 person \$34,600/year No minimum income Closed	30% OF INCOME Requires a Certificate of Homelessness
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