

GOOD NEWS for...

BOEDDEKER PARK It was plain luck that the biggest volunteer work crew in years showed up at Boeddeker Park on Saturday, Aug. 19. Otherwise, Betty Traynor, used to a small handful of helping hands, would have been standing there by herself. "Sometimes groups call the Neighborhood Parks Council looking for somewhere to work," said Traynor, who formerly worked for NPC and now chairs Friends of Boeddeker, faithfully showing up for weekend cleanups. "This group was referred to us." Fifteen "Youth Care" young adults from the Muslim American Society in Santa Clara drove up in four cars. From 9 a.m. to noon, they weeded in the children's area and by the Eddy Street gate, then planted Rec and Park flowers brought from Civic Center Park. "This just came out of the blue," Traynor said, "and they did a wonderful job. We haven't had many volunteers lately." Indeed, the last big turnout for Boeddeker maintenance was a couple of years ago, students from the city's Gateway High School, she said. "But their teacher left and we never re-connected." The young Muslims said it was the first park in the city they had worked at and they would come back because it was just what they wanted to do. "The youth thanked us for the opportunity to work at Boeddeker Park!" Traynor said, mightily impressed.

If you have some good news, send it to marjorie@studycenter.org or tom@studycenter.org.



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Glide's \$62 million project

Seeks financing for 2 apartment buildings on Mason Street

BY TOM CARTER

THE two Mason Street apartment buildings that morphed through a downsize of the failed \$250 million Tenderloin Pavilion project will break ground a year after financing is secured, project manager Paula Collins told the Futures Collaborative in August.

"We want them both funded separately, preferably at the same time but our goal is within six months of each other," said Collins, who handles the project for Glide Economic Development Corp., the nonprofit created in 2000 to develop the Pavilion. "We expect construction to start in August of 2007 and it will last 14-18 months. But financing sets the deadlines."

The building at 149 Mason is to be eight stories high and have 56 studios to house the formerly homeless; it will cost \$40 million. The other is a \$22 million, 14-story apartment house at 125 Mason for 81 low-income families. Funding is expected to come from the Mayor's Office of Housing, tax credits, deferred loans from the state Multifamily Housing Program, tax-exempt bonds and, in the case of the studios, the Tenderloin Neighborhood Development Corp., a partner in that venture.

Glide will provide the support services for both projects, she said.

YMCA Director Carmela Gold had concerns about sidewalk security. But she was assured that Mason was in the Tenderloin/North of Market CBD district and that its sidewalk cleaning will help keep things clear. Plus, the buildings will have security cameras. Gold was also concerned that the formerly homeless "see their responsibility" indoors.

"One failure I see," said Jim Thompson, property manager at 165 Turk, "is people not saying that responsibility extends to the curb. They're good inside but not outside. It takes a mind-set to concur on the outside so it doesn't take a lot of manpower to handle it."

The Rev. Glenda Hope, the diminutive 70-year-old Presbyterian minister who moderates the Collaborative meetings, shrugged. For years, she has faced loitering and worse outside her SF Network Ministries office at 559 Ellis.

"I just go outside and look at them, and they move," she said.

Collins had appeared at the April Tenderloin Futures Collaborative to announce the projects on three of the four lots purchased for the Pavilion project. GEDC had sought 12 parcels that would span the block and give rise to 400 apartments, 10,000 square feet of retail space, parking for 500 cars, a small convention center and create hundreds of jobs. But the Pavilion's \$67 million estimate 11 years ago had ballooned to \$250 million. And the remaining parcels couldn't be purchased. With Collins' announcement, the Pavilion was a dim, unmentioned memory.

After the Collaborative's minute of silent remembrance for

former Supervisor Sue Bierman, who had died three days earlier in a car crash, Collins reviewed the projects but added few new details. The night before, Collins was in the same room with architects from both projects and TNDG representatives at the Alliance for a Better District 6 meeting. The next day, she and the entourage plus the Rev. Cecil Williams, a GEDC board member, were to appear before the Planning Commission for code approvals.

BRINGING UP BOEDDEKER

On another agenda item, Betty Traynor, acting chair of the Friends of Boeddeker Park, reported that the committee will launch a "serious campaign" to raise money for a children's area project. A pricey structure in the \$25,000 range is what the kids who use the park chose when polled on what improvement they wanted. A recent \$5,000 grant from S.F. Beautiful is the "seed" money, Traynor said.

The committee needs to raise funds from local merchants and others, plus find a nonprofit "to take us on" and match the money. "The Trust for Public Land has shown an interest in us," Traynor said, adding that a representative of the trust has been attending recent Friends meetings.

As for other projects, Traynor

also reported the committee wanted a farmers' market at the park once a month, and to paint the fence surrounding Boeddeker rainbow colors as at the Civic Center.

But Daniel O'Connor, the St. Anthony neighborhood liaison, questioned the need considering that Heart of the City Farmers' Market operates nearby at U.N. Plaza twice a week.

Traynor invited volunteers to the monthly park cleanups on each third Saturday morning. Help has been scarce. But for some it brought up the park's repelling image and questionable safety.

People stopped coming into it because "the park is scary," said Debbie Larkin, who does public relations for the Hilton Hotel and serves on The Extra's Editorial Advisory Committee. "I walk around it."

Despite maneuvers last year that moved drug dealers out of the park and onto the sidewalks, drug activity continues. Police foot patrols only walk through the park if they aren't busy elsewhere. So the park usually gets ignored, failing to stabilize long enough to inspire public confidence.

"The park has a long history of problems," said Thompson, "and the perception lags that it's always dangerous. I don't know what we can do to change it. It's a cyclical Tenderloin problem." ■



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