

New group on disabilities

Plans to tackle pedestrian safety first, then a list of gripes

BY PHIL TRACY

THE Community Leadership Alliance has formed a seven-member Tenderloin Disability Council, Edward Evans announced at the May Tenderloin Futures Collaborative meeting.

"We're going to be focusing first on pedestrian safety," Evans said. "We have a problem with people riding bicycles and skateboards on the sidewalks."

Another issue is homeless people monopolizing bus shelters, denying their use to the elderly and disabled. "We also have concerns about conditions of the sidewalks in the neighborhood and the condition of our crosswalks," said Evans, TL resident and former member of the Mayor's Disability Council.

Evans also said the group would try to improve access to health care for seniors and disabled people. And he complained about the scarcity of accessible housing. "Some of the SROs, the way they were constructed, do not permit wheelchairs and persons with big walkers to have access." He cited the need to widen the aisles in Tenderloin stores, too.

David Villa-Lobos, Community Leadership Alliance director, added that the Tenderloin Disability Council would work with the Mayor's Office on Disability, reporting to it monthly. Susan Mizner, director of the Mayor's Office on Disability, later told The Extra: "I was not aware of any scheduled reports, but we certainly can work with the Tenderloin Disability Council if that seems a good way of communicating."

REC & PARK'S MAN IN TL

Next up was Karen Mauney-Brodek of Rec and Park. She identified herself as a member of the year-old Rec and Park planning group, currently trying to estimate how many gardeners it takes to properly maintain all the city's parks.

Mauney-Brodek said that the recreation staff and the maintenance staff previously were managed by two different groups. "What we have started to do really is manage on a

geographic level," she said. "We've divided the city into zones and we have a neighborhood service area manager for each zone." She identified the Tenderloin as Steven Cismowski's district. She said if there is a problem at any of the Tenderloin parks, he's the man to contact: 831-6358 or steven.cismowski@sfgov.org.

COLLABORATIVE'S FUTURE

Tomiquia Moss of TNDC, who also serves as the Futures Collaborative recording secretary, said she'll send a survey to the people who've attended the meetings over the years to find out if the Tenderloin Futures Collaborative concept "still works." She cited concern about the drop in attendance in recent months.

"We want to find out if this is still serving its purpose and if not, what we want to do. We want to be sure we are maximizing the use of this time," Moss said. "Mostly it's been a place where community members can come and hear about projects and different things happening in the neighborhood."

Mark Aaronson, director of Hastings Law School's Civil Justice Clinic, cast a hopeful light on the Collaborative's future. "Don't underestimate the impact we can have on such projects as the California Pacific Medical Center – the environmental review and permit review is up now. What should be the role of a major medical facility in this neighborhood? The developers have addressed this group. They are inviting input. They don't want community opposition. There really is an opportunity."

"It's a good time, actually," Aaronson continued. "I'm going on 25 or 30 years involved in the Tenderloin. There's no real fault that I can see for the decline in attendance. We know what should be done – we need more outreach to residents as well as community organizations."

Aaronson sees the Collaborative as providing an important function: "I continue to come and want my law students to continue to come because this has been the best place to figure out what's really going on and what our priorities should be." ■



Michael Nulty (left) and his brother, John, flank Alan Klaum, former MHA board president, at the Mental Health Association's Awards Luncheon.

Michael Nulty honored as mental health champion

Other TL awards to Zamora, Rev. Hope

BY TOM CARTER

THREE Tenderloin movers and shakers received awards in May from citywide organizations for their longtime work in the neighborhood.

The Mental Health Association of San Francisco bestowed its Champion Award on omnipresent neighborhood activist Michael Nulty at its 60th anniversary Awards Luncheon. Safety Network, in honoring individuals from 12 neighborhoods, recognized community benefit district Manager Elaine Zamora. And the Tenderloin Neighborhood Development Corp. presented its second annual Kelly Cullen Community Service Award to the Rev. Glenda Hope of Network Ministries.

Nulty graduated from one of MHA's early Tenant Leadership Training programs and went on to co-found the Tenant Associations Coalition. Based in the Tenderloin, TAC is a support organization for tenant leaders in SROs and apartment buildings. It meets monthly to grapple with quality-of-life issues. TAC also has sponsored two community leadership summits.

Zamora, a lawyer and property owner who is the salaried manager of the Tenderloin-North of Market Community Benefits District, was honored at a May 9 reception in the State Building for her work to improve public safety.

The Rev. Hope created San Francisco Network Ministries in the TL in 1972 and ministers to the poor, sick and dying. She has been conducting memorial services in TL SROs since the late 1970s. Hope was recognized at TNDC's 26th birthday celebration and fundraiser at the Hilton Hotel on May 22. Her award is named for Cullen, the former executive director and founder in 1981 of the nonprofit housing builder and manager that serves 2,400 tenants, most living in the Tenderloin.

Nulty, TAC's executive director, told the MHA luncheon crowd of more than 300 at the Merchants Exchange Building that the award was the most prestigious he has received in 30 years of community service.

In those years, Nulty counts 56 organizations, projects and campaigns he started or helped initiate, 22 of them in the Tenderloin where he has lived in SROs the last 10 years. The organizations include the Larkin Street Youth Center and the Mayor's Office of Children, Youth and Family. He is president of the Alliance for a Better District 6, which he founded eight years ago, and is on the benefit district board, having served on the committee that founded it. Last year he received the Mayor's Disability Council Award for Excellence.

As a result of the MHA award, Nulty also received a congressional commendation from House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, two state Senate commendations and one from the State Board of Equalization.

Nulty and his twin brother, John, appear frequently at Board of Supervisors' and committee meetings to lobby for neighborhood improvements and often share organizing chores.

MHA Executive Director Belinda Lyons introduced Supervisor Bevan Dufty, who presented her with a state commendation for the organization's accomplishments since 1947.

"And I am thrilled that Barbara Garcia and Michael Nulty are being honored today," he told the crowd. "Michael and his brother don't see the Tenderloin as a dumping ground."

Garcia, the deputy director of Public Health, received the Public Policy Leader award. She spearheaded San Francisco's 40-member task force to determine the county's mental health needs under state Proposition 63 — the 2005 Mental Health Services Act — and how to use the funds. The group conducted 70 community outreach meetings.

Also honored were Wells Fargo Bank as Corporate Leader and the California Endowment as Foundation Leader. Through the bank's Team Member Giving program, scores of employees donate and volunteer at MHA-SF. A bank employee, Stacy Fisher, serves on the MHA board and the bank was a sponsor of the luncheon. The California Endowment awarded the MHA a three-year grant to help educate mental health consumers on preventive care, and is a leading funder of mental health programs in the state. ■

John Goins contributed to this story.



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