

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Mirkarimi takes aim at neighborhood papers

THE following letter is a response to Supervisor Ross Mirkarimi's repressive proposal to harass community newspapers that he introduced to the Board of Supervisors on March 18. Within 30 days, it goes to the City Operations and Neighborhood Services Committee. Paul Kozakiewicz, the letter's author, not only helped form and continues to tirelessly advocate for the San Francisco Neighborhood Newspaper Association, of which the Central City Extra is a member, his Sunset and Richmond district newspapers help to give all of us credibility for professional, often hard-hitting neighborhood news coverage.

EDITOR:

Another lame-brained supervisor with nothing better to do than propose a solution for a nonexistent problem. Supervisor Ross Mirkarimi last month proposed a \$100 to \$500 penalty for every instance where a free newspaper is delivered to a home on a newly created "do not deliver" list.

I've been publishing community newspapers in the Richmond and Sunset districts for almost 20 years. Of the 50,000 newspapers I deliver door-to-door monthly, I have seven people on my "do not deliver" list. That's how big this problem is.

It is up to my delivery service to do the job and not deliver to people who do not want a paper. It usually works, but sometimes a new "walker" will accidentally deliver to a home that does not want it. Am I to be fined \$100 to \$500 every time this happens, even though I have no control over the dozens of delivery people walking door-to-door with the local paper?

Many of the "walkers" my service uses are from South and Latin American countries and do not speak English. They are humping their butts off here doing menial work to support families back home. Are we going to fine them, or their employer, for an honest mistake? Will they be fired or retaliated against? Are publishers to be held responsible for the actions of a subcontractor, even though we have no direct supervisory control over the delivery service's employees?

As well, I've had apartment managers who did not want the paper delivered to their buildings because they didn't want to pick up the extra copies. They would deny every tenant in the building a copy of the neighborhood newspaper because of their own personal reasons. Do I deny 30 families a community newspaper because one does not want it?

There are First Amendment issues here, and the 18 neighborhood newspapers that comprise the San Francisco Neighborhood Newspaper Association (SFNNA) have a stake in the outcome of the proposed legislation, yet we were not even consulted before this Draconian measure was introduced. It's hard enough for publishers to serve their communities without the supervisors giving a hammer to anyone who has an ax to grind with their neighborhood scribes.

I say kill this misguided legislation before it takes one thin dime from our city's budget to hire more lawyers or create a new bureaucracy at City Hall. ■

Paul Kozakiewicz
Editor, Richmond Review
and Sunset Beacon
Trustee, SFNNA



2005 three-story rendering of 121 Golden Gate Ave.



2008 rendering of 121 Golden Gate at 10 stories.

New St. Anthony offices open in May

Senior housing in the works now soars 10 stories

BY MARJORIE BEGGS

IT'S been more than five years since St. Anthony Foundation announced it would raze 150 Golden Gate Ave., the former Knights of Columbus building, which it bought in 1999, and put up new administrative digs on the site. The five-story building opens in mid-May, Daniel O'Connor, St. Anthony's community liaison, told the Tenderloin Futures Collaborative in March.

All St. Anthony's offices and services from 121 Golden Gate — except the dining room and clinic — will move across the street.

St. Anthony now can start the second phase of its major project: demolishing and replacing 121 Golden Gate. But it will be far different from what was proposed just a couple of years ago.

As plans for both buildings were gestating, 121 was going to be three stories: food prep in the basement, dining room on the first floor, 17 units of permanent senior housing on the second and 17 respite units for people just discharged from the hospital on the third.

At the Collaborative meeting, O'Connor introduced Sharon Christen, housing developer with Mercy Housing California, which became a 121 project partner last year. Christen ran down 121's latest 10-story incarnation:

The dining room on the first floor and respite units on the second remain as planned. The third floor will be a community room for tenants. The building then rises another five stories, stepping back on its southern side to match the height of the Boyd Hotel next door, and going up another two stories. On floors four through 10 will be 90 one-bedroom and studio apartments for seniors, which Mercy will manage.

"The dining room is going to be 25% bigger than it is now, and there are other improvements," Christen said. The arcade — a covered walkway around the building's perimeter — will shelter people waiting to eat and will keep them off the sidewalk. The arcade's openings have roll-down closures for nighttime. Security cameras and lights are planned. People with disabilities waiting to eat will have a special room where they can relax until a place is available.

"We're applying to Planning for entitlements — conditional uses —

right now," Christen said. "We're going above the 40-foot height limit and there will be no parking."

The project will cost \$66 million, \$42 million of that for the housing and \$24 million for the rest of the building. Mercy will apply for federal Section 202 HUD grants, funding to assist very low-income elderly, she said.

Francis Aviani, St. Anthony's media and communications manager, told The Extra in an email that the foundation is still searching for funds for both buildings.

"We'll finish out our capital campaign for 150 and then launch the campaign for 121," she wrote of the Golden Gate addresses.

If there are no snafus with money or the Planning Department, 121 demolition is expected to start next year, construction on the new building in 2010 and completion in 2011.

St. Anthony's free medical clinic, which serves 12,000 poor people annually, will move permanently to 150 Golden Gate. The dining room, which serves 2,600 meals a day, will move there temporarily while 121 is under construction.

Before it's even opened, the new building at 150 has some environmental bona fides, according to Aviani.

"We believe 150 Golden Gate will be the first LEED-certified green direct service social services building in San Francisco," she

said. LEED — Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design — is a trademarked rating system of the U.S. Green Building Council, a nonprofit that encourages energy efficiency and responsible use of natural resources.

"This was important to the foundation," Aviani said, "both in terms of our Franciscan approach to environmental sustainability, and our understanding of the role that environment plays in the health of the community."

Almost 95% of the demolition waste was recycled, and much of the concrete and steel in the building contains recycled materials. An evaporative cooling system on the rooftop and other efficiencies will reduce annual energy use by 30%. Water use will be cut 20% by low-flow and low-flush plumbing fixtures. And carpet, paint and adhesives in the building contain compounds that emit only low levels of volatile organic compounds (VOCs) such as benzene and formaldehyde, which, as they evaporate, contribute to smog and may harm people with allergies.

Green is likely to be a consideration for 121 as well.

Meanwhile, Mercy and St. Anthony want to know what TL residents think of the new design for 121. Put in your 2¢ and more at a community meeting, April 8, 6-7 p.m., in St. Anthony's Poverello Room, 109 Golden Gate. ■



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