

\$30 million SoMa fund has \$0 in it

Rincon Hill towers sales slow, drying up developers' fees

BY TOM CARTER

FIVE of the six approved luxury condo projects on Rincon Hill are on hold, stopping \$30 million in fees that the developers are required to pump into SoMa programs to ease the impact on the neighborhood.

The committee set up to advise the Board of Supervisors and the mayor on how to spend that money is stuck after working more than three years on operational details.

In February, the committee put the finishing touches on its request for proposals that was to be distributed to hundreds of neighborhood nonprofits and interested parties. Meetings were planned to explain the guidelines so they can tap into the money and create beneficial programs.

"We canceled the March meeting," said liaison Claudine Del Rosario of the Redevelopment Agency, which now oversees the SoMa Stabilization Fund Committee. "There's nothing to discuss.

"The RFPs are ready to go," Del Rosario said. "But if there's no building and no money, there's no impact."

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Claudine Del Rosario
REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY

The developers' fee is due at the controller's office when a Rincon Hill building gets its final certificate of occupancy. The committee had expected the first major payments would arrive in early fall 2007. But the first completed building fell behind the expected sales schedule and isn't sold out yet.

The 55-story South Tower, the first of Rincon One's \$290 million twin spires, didn't open until last year. Its developer, Urban West Associates, reports that the tower's 376 luxury condos and 14 townhouses are 75% sold.

A Planning Department spokesman figures the South Tower will likely get its final certificate of occupancy sometime this fall. The city then will be due about \$5 million. An Urban West Associates spokesman said there is no start date for the North Tower, which the developer expected to be ready in mid-2009, and the Planning Department said other projects on the hill haven't broken ground.

Full payments for condos from buyers go into an escrow fund. And since last year Del Rosario has been hounding Urban West for a \$2.5 million advance to move things forward in the neighborhood. But at each Stabilization Fund meeting she reports: No dice.

"I'm trying to negotiate," Del Rosario said in an interview. "But (Urban West Associates) is not obligated to do it. They've set aside

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CENTRAL CITY



SAN FRANCISCO

65% NO-SHOWS



PHOTO BY HEIDI SWILLINGER

Community Justice Center Judge Ron Albers bears the case of a cited defendant, among the 1 in 3 who show up at the Polk Street courtroom. Next to her is Public Defender Jeff Adachi.

What would N.Y. do?

Brooklyn head of Justice Center tells why violators there show up

BY HEIDI SWILLINGER

GETTING defendants to show up in court proved a hot-button issue for the Tenderloin's new Community Justice Center, which opened in March.

Defendants cited for misdemeanors and nonviolent felonies in the neighborhood failed to appear in 55 of the more than 90 cases processed at the court in its first month, a no-show rate of 65%.

CJC Coordinator Tomiquia Moss is quick to point out that that's better than the 80% no-show rate typical of misdemeanor cases processed at the Hall of Justice.

But the city's no-show figures are jaw-dropping to James Brodick, director of the Red Hook Community Justice Center in Brooklyn, which served as the model for San Francisco's new court. Brodick says no-shows aren't an issue there because those who commit misdemeanors and nonviolent felonies — such as shoplifting, prostitution and drug-related crimes — are arrested, not merely cited and given court dates as in San Francisco.

"Once we opened up, we were able to get defendants immediately, because they were arrested, held and brought to (the court) within 24 hours," says Brodick. "Any

time you give a citation in lieu of an arrest, you're going to have no-shows. That to me is a major flaw (in San Francisco's criminal justice system), but that involves changing policing."

Holding cells are being built at the San Francisco CJC. Moss expects them to be finished by August. Then defendants who are arrested within the Court's jurisdiction — an area bounded by Gough, Bush, Kearny, Third and Harrison streets — will have their cases addressed quickly. But that won't put a dent in citation-only no-shows.

Presiding Judge Ron Albers has the power to issue a bench warrant when a defendant has been cited and fails to appear in court, if the district attorney agrees the case is worth prosecuting. Police can then arrest the defendant — assuming he or she can be found.

Brodick told The Extra that in Brooklyn, citations are issued only for extremely low-level crimes such as public urination. A "warrant team" goes after the 35% of cited defendants who don't appear before the court. Because the jurisdiction is relatively small, it's easy for cops familiar with the neighborhood to spot or track down wanted defendants. He says the concept could work for San Francisco's CJC, whose jurisdiction, though tiny, accounts for between a quarter and a third of crime reports in the city.

Moss says the Justice Center "is working very closely" with neighborhood police to figure out how to deal with those who qualify for a bench warrant, but notes that none was issued in the court's first month.

Brodick says police buy-in with the groundbreaking Red Hook project was

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