

GOOD NEWS for...

ELDERLY OR DISABLED RENTERS, who may be eligible to have smoke detectors, handrails, grab bars and raised toilet seats installed in their apartments for free. The home-safety gear is offered by Rebuilding Together San Francisco whose volunteers have helped more than 1,000 low-income residents and nonprofits with home repair and renovation projects since 2000. Renters must fill out an application and get a formal okay from their landlord. Once approved, the safety improvements can be done within a month. Rebuilding Together welcomes volunteers experienced in carpentry and handiwork, and will train unskilled volunteers to install basic safety equipment. For an application or to volunteer: 905-1611 or www.rebuildingtogethersf.org.

LONGTIME TL ACTIVIST For 25 years, resident Marvis Phillips has been a Neighborhood Watch block captain, helping to keep the 200 block of Eddy and the Eddy and Taylor intersection safe. At a glittery March 12 fundraiser and award ceremony in the Veterans Building's Green Room, Phillips received a San Francisco SAFE certificate of recognition for his work. "It was moving," he said. "I've received a lot of awards, but I cried for the first time." Neighborhood Watch is one of the best-known programs of



Marvis Phillips at the S.F. SAFE award ceremony.

SAFE, which provides security and safety services to residents and businesses. The 200 block captains citywide sometimes work solo, as Phillips does, or with neighbors to be eyes and ears for problems in their neighborhoods. "Marvis' main role has been keeping a close partnership with the police and with SAFE, and it is unusual to have someone be a block captain for so long," said Cindy Brandon, SAFE executive director. Phillips said he was "shocked" to receive the SAFE award. "I feel very good about a quarter of a century of my life having been used to improve the lives of the people in my neighborhood, and I think I'm good at what I do." Besides being a block captain, Phillips is co-founder of Alliance for a Better District 6 and Central City Democrats, and has held positions with those organizations, NOMPC, Alexander Tenants Association and Tenant Associations Coalition.

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

TNDC seeks state bond money for family housing

Groups being recruited for Taylor St. arts district

BY HEIDI SWILLINGER

TNDC is applying for state bond money to finance a 14-story apartment building at the corner of Taylor and Eddy streets, the project managers said, though the start and finish dates could fluctuate with the tanking economy.

Shannon Dodge and Nick Griffin told the Tenderloin Futures Collaborative at its March 11 meeting that TNDC is after funds from Proposition 1C, a 2006 state bond measure. If the money comes through, construction could start within two years and the building be habitable by 2013.

The project would create 153 apartments, most for working families, with rents from \$591 to \$1,016 for a two-bedroom apartment, and from \$652 to \$1,124 for three bedrooms. Studio and one-bedrooms would be \$675 to \$814. Dodge said 31 units will be for formerly homeless residents, who will pay less.

Michael Nulty of Alliance for a Better District 6 questioned how the project will affect the typically low-income Tenderloin. "Your plan would change the income level of the Tenderloin. How do you justify that?" he asked.

Griffin said many Tenderloin families crowd into undersize apartments, and the new development would ease the cramping. "We don't think it will displace anyone; it will actually attract families that don't have many affordable housing opportunities."

The Rev. Glenda Hope of Network Ministries, who ran the meeting, backed him up, saying her organization has a wait list of more than 300 for its housing units. "Most of them are families," she said. "There is a great need for more housing."

The ground floor has been set aside for commercial use. Dodge and Griffin said TNDC is "committed" to finding a grocer to sign on, but every one they've contacted has declined. If the development fails to attract a grocer within two years, Griffin said, the commercial space will be subdivided into smaller retail units.

Activist Ed Evans said there will be no parking at the new structure, and suggested that might be why no supermarket is interested. But Griffin said that grocers they approached "weren't worried about parking. They were more interested in (population) density." He added that the Tenderloin's concentration of people within easy walking distance is considered a plus.

Oddly, parking is an issue for Walgreens, which has expressed interest in the development, but Griffin said a deal with the chain retailer is a "fall-back" and that TNDC will continue to pursue grocers.

Griffin and Dodge also told the Collaborative they were

meeting in March with the City Planning and Rec and Park commissions, which must sign off on various aspects of the development, including the fact that it will cast shadows on the northern area of Boedekker Park in the morning during some fall and spring months.

ART ON TAYLOR

Elvin Padilla discussed the Taylor Street Revitalization, a project to turn a three-block stretch of Taylor Street from Market to Ellis into an arts district. Padilla is executive director of the North of Market Neighborhood Improvement Corp., which is spearheading the plan.

Padilla said he's looking for arts organizations willing to become part of the neighborhood's arts community, which includes well-established groups such as EXIT Theatre and the Luggage Store Gallery and the newbie Gray Area Foundation for the Arts, which in June plans to open an art gallery, new-media lab and studio space for artists at the site of the former porn theater at 55 Taylor St.

There are also plans to convert floors above the Golden Gate Theatre into artists' studios and office space for nonprofits, and Warfield building owner David Addington says he's discussing ideas for his property as well.

"We want to generate positive foot traffic in the neighborhood," said Padilla. "We think that's going to make a huge difference in terms of activity on that block."

One neighborhood resident said he worries that an arts-district designation could wind up gentrifying the neighborhood, but Padilla said he is committed

to protecting its integrity. "We're seeking arts organizations that are interested in engaging with community" — those that will offer free and low-cost workshops and other art opportunities to residents, for instance.

"The strong presence of housing developments like TNDC's make it a great place to do something like this," he added.

CAL PAC'S BEHEMOTH

The meeting wrapped up with advice from Vincent Brown, a Hastings student, who urged members to consider the impact of California Pacific Medical Center's plans to build a 15-story, 555-bed hospital and other medical facilities at Van Ness and Geary. If approved, construction will begin next year, he said.

Brown, who is following the project as part of his studies, said the master plan has recently been filed with the Planning Department. A hospital spokesman said he expects Planning Commission hearings to start by the end of this year. To read the master plan, visit <http://cpmc.org/plans/links/> and click on CPMC 2008 IMP.

Nulty urged the group to get up to speed on the plan, saying he's attended several CPMC outreach meetings and been the only one there representing the Tenderloin. Some residents are concerned that the new hospital will mean more emergency vehicles and blaring sirens in the Tenderloin, said Nulty, but others think quicker access to medical care could save lives and be worth the inconveniences to the neighborhood. He suggested inviting CPMC representatives to a future collaborative meeting to address the group. ■



CENTRAL CITY EXTRA is published monthly by San Francisco Study Center Inc., a private nonprofit serving the community since 1972. The Extra was initiated through grants from the S.F. Hotel Tax Fund and the Richard and Rhoda Goldman Fund. It is now assisted by the Kosbland Program of the San Francisco Foundation, which funds the Southside coverage. The contents are copyrighted by the San Francisco Study Center, 1095 Market Street, Suite 601, San Francisco, CA 94103.

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Central City Extra is a member of the SAN FRANCISCO NEIGHBORHOOD NEWSPAPER ASSOCIATION