

Good Neighbor takes hit from City Planning

Commission won't allow liquor-sale transfer to new grocery store nearby

BY TOM CARTER

AFTER 17 years of doing business as Grand Liquors in the Tenderloin, owner Karim Rantisi faces a survival test after the Planning Commission stopped him from selling liquor across the street where he is relocating his grocery business.

The commission Sept. 10 voted 6 to 1 to deny the "liquor store" transfer from 67 Taylor St., while encouraging him to proceed with the new business about 60 feet away at 90 Turk St. as Tip Top Market.

The commission cited the saturation of liquor stores in the special use district and the need to stem problems from alcohol abuse. The commission has jurisdiction over liquor store transfers, but not licenses per se.

But a technical point over the commission's jurisdiction might send Rantisi's lawyer, former District Attorney Terence Hallinan, to a higher authority. When The Extra discovered that 90 Turk St. is outside the North of Market Residential Special Use District, we informed Hallinan. It is "a serious issue" that he'll look into, he said.

"There appears to be a mixup over the neighborhood versus the SUD and it has led to some confusion," Hallinan told The Extra. "It seems like an expansion

of the commission's powers and a good basis for appealing to the supervisors or maybe going into court."

The commission, by city law, considers liquor store relocations within the SUD to control them. The SUD boundaries are Taylor, Post, Polk and Golden Gate Avenue. Grand Liquors is at the SUD's edge at 67 Taylor St., but there's nothing in Section 249.5 of the City Planning Code that gives the commission control over stores transferring outside those boundaries.

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CATHEDRAL HILL



Rendering of California Pacific Medical Center's proposed new Cathedral Hill Hospital, which covers a city block, is shown here from the corner of Van Ness and Post.

HOSPITAL-IZED

Central city gears up for battle with giant med center

BY MARJORIE BEGGS

CALIFORNIA Pacific Medical Center wants to build a 555-bed hospital on Van Ness between Geary and Post. Neighbors, nurses and some city officials think that's way too big.

"We want something the neighborhood can handle," says Melinda LaValle, a board member of the Cathedral Hill Neighbors Association, formed to oppose CPMC's plans for an even bigger hospital at the site three years ago.

CPMC also wants to demolish its 140-bed St. Luke's Hospital in the Mission and rebuild it with 86 beds. Neighbors, nurses and some city officials think that's way too small to be viable.

St. Luke's nurse Mary Michelucci wonders how a rebuilt hospital could meet community needs if it has only six intensive care beds. In July, reported Mission Loc@l Web news, she told a community meeting that she'd recently had 12 patients in intensive care, eight of them on ventilators.

Many believe building two 250-bed hospitals makes sense, an idea that CPMC rejects. It wants to put most of its acute care and its women's and children's inpatient programs — now pieced out at its California Pacific, Pacific Presbyterian, St. Luke's and

Davies campuses — in a single location on Cathedral Hill.

"Going to a 250/250 bed scenario would necessitate dismantling one or the other of these programs and moving them in parts," seriously compromising the quality of the specialized care, says Geoffrey Nelson, CPMC director of enterprise development.

CPMC's Institutional Master Plan has as many supporters as opponents, and discussions are reaching fever pitch. But both sides are climbing a steep path, littered with slippery statistics, looming deadlines, and issues as critical as how CPMC's plans fit into the entire city's health needs and as relatively mundane — but real — as how much construction dust is likely to settle on neighbors' windowsills.

The clock is ticking for CPMC. Like hundreds of hospitals around the state, it has six years to meet strict seismic standards mandated by the state. The California Pacific, Pacific Presbyterian and St. Luke's hospitals are out of compliance. Davies Hospital has been partially retrofitted.

Retrofitting all the others isn't an option, CPMC insists. It started doing studies in 2001, Nelson says, and found retrofitting was as expensive as replacement and service disruption was a nightmare.

"Where do all the 6,000 expectant mothers go while the California campus is shut down?" he asks, rhetorically.

Plus, under SB 1953, retrofitted facilities can't be used for inpatient care after 2030. So CPMC has to get moving: Hospitals had to be upgraded by 2008 or close; hospital owners that chose to rebuild now have a deadline of 2015.

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PHOTO BY TOM CARTER

A workman carries supplies into the Turk street grocery before it has opened.