$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.”

“RFPs are ready to go,” Del Rosario said. “But if there’s no building and no money, there’s no impact.”

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 576 luxury condos and 14 townhouses are 79% 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 by 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

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 Tomaqia 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 are 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
By Heidi Swilling

TNDC seeks state bond money for family housing

GROUPS BEING RECRUITED FOR TAYLOR ST. ARTS DISTRICT

BY HEIDI WILLINGER

FUTURES COLLABORATIVE

TNDc is applying for state bond money to finance a 114-unit affordable housing development at the corner of Taylor and Eddy streets, the project manager said, though the start and finish dates could fluctuate with the funding cycle.

Shannon Dodge and Nick Griffin told the Tenderloin Futures Collaborative at its March 11 meeting that TNDC is after funds from Proposition 3C, 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 $1,142 for three bedrooms. Studio and one-bedroom units would be $675 to $814. Dodge said 31 units will be for formerly homeless individuals, 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 undersized 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 much 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 800 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 even 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 considerable.

Oddly, parking is an issue for Walgreens, which has expressed interest in developing the site, 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

Elin Padilla discussed the Taylor Street Revitalization, a project to turn a three-block stretch of Taylor Street from Golden Gate to Leavenworth 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 art 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 new 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 five floors of the Golden Gate Theatre into artists' studios and office space for nonprofits, and Warfield building owner Michael 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 the street."

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 makes it a great place to do something like this," he added.

CAL PAC'S BEHEMOTH

The meeting wrapped up with a presentation from Vincent Brown, a Hastings student, who urged members to consider the impact of California Pacific Medical Center's plans to build a 35-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 spokes person 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 CPASS 2008 IMP.

Nulty urged the group to get up to speed on the plan, saying he's attended several CPASS 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 would save lives and be worth the inconveniences to the neighborhood. He suggested interested residents attend a future collaborative meeting to address the group.
WHERE THERE’S SMOKE, THERE’S FIRE.

There’s something smoldering at City Hall — the politicians are talking about budget cuts that would shutter neighborhood firehouses throughout San Francisco on a daily basis.

In 2005, we voted to keep our neighborhood firehouses open. Now it’s time again to tell the Board of Supervisors: “Don’t let politics get in the way of our neighborhood safety!”

Help us put out the fire by joining our coalition today to keep our neighborhood firehouses open.

Sign up at www.SaveOurFirehouses.com or join us on Facebook ☑

Firehouses in our neighborhood are in danger of being shut down. Act now to protect our neighborhood firehouses.

YES! I WANT TO JOIN THE THOUSANDS OF SAN FRANCISCANS WHO ARE PART OF THE COALITION TO PROTECT OUR NEIGHBORHOOD FIREHOUSES.

NAME

ADDRESS

CITY

STATE

ZIP

PHONE

EMAIL

Please clip and send this card to: 1139 Mission St., San Francisco, CA 94103
tossed into the river of time and space to be eaten. They're created — here today, gone tomorrow — grains of colored sand that are destroyed soon after.

This exhibit includes 150 paintings, sculptures, textiles and two monks from a Bhutanese monastery who do sand paintings on the floor. Outside the museum are crack addicts, hustlers, and punks from the Tenderloin, where it has flown and roosted.

Art without ego: Sand paintings of Bhutan

BY ED BOWERS

"The Dragon's Gift: The Sacred Arts of Bhutan" at the Asian Art Museum is hot. The art was created out of an ancient, nontheistic spiritual path labeled under the huge umbrella of Vajrayana Buddhism, or Tantra. It's believed to transform behaviors and desires into wisdom, compassion and bliss. The exhibition will be at the Asian Art Museum at 200 Larkin St. until May 15.

Those are the facts. Now I have to do some translating to make it understandable in the context of the Western world: Their art projects originate from the spiritual than walking on water, the warmest, most spiritual path one can choose.

"The purpose of these sand paintings is to do good in the moment, then go the way of all things, to vanish without a trace. We continue to do good in a billion invisible subtle bodies we carry around with us. We are the lovers in San Francisco staring at them and pretending they're the spiritual economy and ecology of an art without ego.

Neten Dorji, who has a passable command of English, talked about how being around people like that and I felt disoriented. He is a genuinely happy human. I'm not used to being around people like that, and I feel dis-oriented.

He told me the mandalas represent "the Palace of the World" and that the original sand painters were the Buddha and Padmasambhava, a yogi who came to Tibet, defeated evil demons, and turned a vicious bunch of barbarians into peaceful Buddhists.

"And then, after they're meditated on?" I asked.

"They're put on an altar and meditation on them continues for years in a cave alone meditating." Then Dorji answered.

He blew me off.

"Nobody can talk about that to anyone but someone who meditates, does the practice, and is trained to do it," he said. "It is not for show." "So you don't want to brag about your spiritual accomplishments?"

"No," he said, and smiled again.

I did, too. Every murderous religious nut, guru, politician and well-meaning powerful idiot in the world should learn to shut up and sit alone in a cave and smile.

Neten Dorji's colleague, Gyem Dorji, spoke little English, but he gave me a nice handshake, more spiritual than walking on water, the warmest, most sincere handshake I've ever received.

These two artists have much to teach the Western world: Their art projects originate from something deep within the mind, and they are confident that out of the inevitable destruction of their best accomplishments, something beautiful will be left behind. They don't take credit for their art and don't want to be famous. Fame embarrasses them.

Neten and Gyem are the real works of art, examples of how doing art can transform consciousness. They meticulously take tiny granules of sand between their fingers to create a solid, yet transient, representation of the Universe of Inner Space — the Big Mind — and create a map out of this time until the last patron has left; at least one guard will be quiet, peaceful and orderly, to not litter, loiter, disorderly conduct or involve the ventilating system of the building in any way.

Ventilation inside must be adequate so that windows are not left open with the noise blaring.

Receptacles for litter and cigarette butts must be at the entrance when the building is open.

Club operators must make every effort to prevent listening to the sidewalk during club hours, including using security to dispense crowds and to report loiterers to the police.

The club must employ a licensed and bonded guard company to provide security from opening time until the last patron has left; at least one guard for every 50 customers as well as one guard outside to enforce orderly behavior. The guards must not allow anyone in the building carrying a weapon.

By April 8, club operators must install a video camera to record the activities of all who are outside. Video recordings must be kept for at least three months in case the city attorney or police ask to inspect them.

Club operators must provide a cell phone on duty and within 100 feet who asks.

A copy of the court-ordered operating procedures must be available at 220 Jones during business hours for public viewing.

Violation of these court orders is considered contempt of court, resulting in a penalty of up to $5,000 for each violation. The court orders remain in effect for one year but can be extended for an additional year if the court finds a violation has occurred.

Damone Smith, operator of the self-styled "gentlenights" club, is working on a pay system that would allow anyone in the building carrying a weapon.

He is a genuinely happy human. I'm not used to being around people like that, and I felt disoriented. He is a genuinely happy human. I'm not used to being around people like that, and I felt disoriented.

The city's efforts to squelch the noise and violence at Pink Diamonds took a decisive turn March 24 when Judge Peter Busch approved the new rules for his clients: "They have no objection to doing all they can to maintain the cleanliness of the neighborhood.

"They're time bombs ready to explode in the minds of the bystanders."

The Disneyland of the Tenderloin is where it has flown and roosted.

But Neten Dorji is the sweetest guy I ever interviewed.

I started out by asking him how long it takes to create intricate mandalas: "Three and a half hours a day, six days a week for a month or two months," he answered. "And then?" I asked.

"They're put on an altar and meditation on them continues for years in a cave alone meditating." Then Dorji answered.

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April 18, 1906: Destruction of the Tenderloin

BY TOM CARTER

UNTIL April 18, 1906, San Francisco had a healthy entertainment culture and was aptly known as the Paris of the West. As one of the greatest cities on Earth and the capital of state, it was thick with a melting-pot population of more than 350,000. Well-heeled denizens sported the latest fashions and tortured around in handsome carriages. San Francisco craved the latest sensations from Europe and the East. It frothed with classical and popular entertainments. Live theater — from plays to minstrels, from opera to burlesque — was king.

A role in the city’s vast theatrical scene was the Alhambra Theater on the north-east corner of Jones and Eddy streets, where Boeddeker Paranoh sits. It eventually burned down, consumed by the fire, seen advancing in the accompanying photo.

Built in 1867, the first Alhambra was located at 325 Bush St., where it was called the People’s Playhouse, and simply Bush Street. The theater was the harbinger of the entertainment movement west of Montgomery and away from the old established district. About the turn of the century, the Alhambra moved to Eddy and Jones and opened March 11, 1900, with a flop called Have You Seen Snellman? The Chronicle’s reviewer wished he hadn’t. “The performance is not worth commenting on.”

After pitiful box office sales, the Alhambra closed two weeks later. It reopened Sept. 6 with a smash hit called Ship Ahoy! with a cast of 40. The entrance was on Eddy Street and the stage faced south. Tickets were 15, 25, 35 and 50 cents. A box seat cost six bits. The Alhambra Café on the main floor sold Wieland’s Lager for 5 cents a draught. Nearby, at 211 Eddy, the Paris Restaurant served meals for 15 cents, with a cast of 40. The entrance was on Eddy and Jones site before Boeddeker Park was established in 1878, and that assassin Jack Ruby once lived across the street.

Entertainment has ruled the northeast corner since its recorded history, beginning in the 1840s when it was a picnic site dotted with dwarf oaks and blackberry bushes, according to Peter Field, who leads historical City Guides’ tours in the TL.

“In 1893, it was actually The National Theater,” Field said. “Then it was School’s Auditorium and from 1898, up to the fire, The Alhambra.

As the Tenderloin was being rebuilt, a two-story entertainment hall went up at Eddy and Jones from the time it was a—”

During the earthquake...
That year he received a commendation from the International Human Rights in conjunction with Amnesty International. He also produced and directed "Morning and completing its apprentice program. He also served on the North of Market Planning Coalition and the Community activist, radio pro...
Panel puts SoMa RFPs on hold — no money yet

money from sales and this (request) is based on what they’ve been.

In March, she assured the committee: “As long as buildings get built, we’ll get the money.” It is probable that all the projects that went through the RFP process and approval process will eventually get built, added Benjamin McCloskey, the Mayor’s Office of Community Investment’s fiscal and policy officer. A city who knows how long it will take?

Early on, South of Market Community Action Network and Asian Neighborhood Design received $50,000 in Walter & Elise Haas Fund grants to spread the word about the project funds that would be available. The committee held three town hall meetings in SoMa — only two — to hear from residents about the neighborhood. A youth center was a high priority. Committee suggestions have ranged from affordable housing to buying land to establish a loan fund of up to $20,000 for struggling small businesses, but not startups.

The seven-member committee, created by Supervisor Daly’s legislation that established the Rincon Hill Plan fees, researched the neighborhood’s infrastructure needs over three years while developing a strategic plan for how best to benefit SoMa. A year ago the committee expected that the SoMa Urban West Associates’ study and Pre-development, and Workforce and Economic Development.

The commission’s 2005-12 Brookline Rincon Hill Area Plan decided how to use an undersized industrial site and downtown parking lots in 2005, and began to reclassify it as an open space. The committee now has $2 million of the $6 million property owner-approved Mello Roos funds. It favors installing peckinbreath traffic signals at Victoria Manalo Draves Park on Folsom and Harrison streets. The committee also wanted to ren-ovate the former Fireman Recreation Center at South and Folsom. But the money “isn’t enough for what we want to do,” Del Rosario says. And Rec and Park staff cuts and budget problems make the center’s operations uncertain.

In recent months, the committee’s oversight authority has gone to www.sompac.org as the city-companies and combines agencies to diminish a $576 million budget shortfall. The committee, which met last year, continues to work with the city’s department, has been passed from the Mayor’s Office of Community Development to Community Investment, which then merged with Economic Workforce and Development, and now it’s under the Redevelopment Agency, switches that didn’t require the superintendancy’s approval. The supervisor, who was on a board and Blackstone president, announced the transfer to the Stabilization Fund committee’s Feb. 19 meeting, saying there was no opposition to the proposal. “Conceptually, it makes a good fit and we’ll have a greater level of coordination throughout the area,” he said.

The South of Market Project Area Committee advises Redevelopment.

Central City Democrats, meets four times a year, 301 Eddy St. Community Room. Addresses District 6 residential and business concerns, voter education forums. Information: 309-VOTE (8663)

Central Market Community Benefit District, board meets 2nd Tuesday of the month, 989 Market St. 3rd Fl., 3 p.m. Information: 850-3998, http://central-market.org

Friends of Boeddeker Park, 2nd Thursday of the month, 3:30 p.m., Boeddeker Rec Center, 240 Eddy. Park plan events, activities and improvements.

Gene Friend Recreation Center Advisory Board, 3rd Thursday of the month, 5 p.m. Board works to protect SoMa resources for children, youth, families and adults. Gene Friend Recreation Center 206-778-2102.


North of Market/Tenderloin Community Benefit District, Call District Manager Elaine Zamarra for times and dates, 295-4812.

SoMa Leadership Council, 3rd Wednesday of the month, 6 p.m., The Arc, 1500 Howard St. at 11th. Emphasizes good planning and good government to maintain a diverse, vibrant, complete neighbor-

SOUTHSIDE

City Hall, room 400. Call: 554-6719. Open to the public.


SoMa Leadership Council, 2nd Thursday of the month, 3:30 p.m., Tenderloin Police Station Community room, 301 Eddy. Information: 931-1126.

Friends of Boeddeker Park cleanup, 6 p.m., 230 Eddy. Contact Michael Nulty, 820-1560 or sf_district6@yahoo.com, a districtwide improvement association.

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The early March announcement that housing developer AF Evans had filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy seemed to be more bad news for people in the central city already jumpy about the economy. The Oakland company has been a big player in affordable housing in San Francisco, partnering in property acquisition and management with nonprofits, among them Asian Inc., Chinatown Community Development Center, Citizens Housing Corp. and Mercy Housing.

But the bankruptcy filing shouldn’t alarm, said President and CEO Art Evans, who founded the company in 1977: “We plan to become even more active in affordable housing, even though the market-rate part of our business has really collapsed.”

AF Evans also pulled out of the Central YMCA project. We didn’t want there to be duplication.”

AF Evans still is actively managing the 81-unit Lassen Apartments at 444 Ellis, which it built with Asian Inc. as affordable senior housing in the late 1970s and renovated in 2002. “(But) we have little to do anymore with our two joint ventures with Mercy Housing — Marlon Manor at 240 Jones and 201 Jones,” Evans said. “And at 201 Turk, we’re only tangentially involved now.”

AF Evans built the 175-unit 201 Turk in 1993 with Asian Inc. and renovated in 2002. “It’s my favorite project in the Tenderloin,” Evans said. “I still go in periodically, just to see how things are.”

Evans worries that the slipping economy bodes ill for affordable housing, even as he says his company will try to partner with others in that market. “(This country) is planting the seeds for huge rent increases because so little is being built,” he said. “When the economy does turn around, and especially on the two coasts, there will be an enormous shortage of rental housing.”

One idea he’s promoting is an old one: Get HUD back into the housing business for apartment stock. He’s encouraged, he said, that Carole Galante, president and CEO of BRIDGE Housing — a large-scale San Francisco developer of affordable housing — was tapped by President Obama in March to be deputy assistant secretary for multifamily housing programs at HUD.

Art without ego: Sand paintings of Bhutan

Western religions don’t have any holy representa-
tive to compare to these sexy girls.

But of course the Dakinis are not real. They do not suffer. They are empty of ego. They are invisi-
ble and exist only in the mind. The only man who painted them is more invisible. The heroin junkie
was full of self. She was suffering.

My mind is a wild horse. I am not interested in anything elite. I cannot be depended on to believe
anything that you do, they do, or even I do. But I do pay attention to my mind. It is full of lively and
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Go to the show and let it affect you in your own way. I am not a preacher. I don’t care about convent-
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benefit all, even you.

The Asian Art Museum is open free to the pub-
lcil the first Sunday of every month.

Bankruptcy won’t affect AF Evans’ affordable units

CEO predicts ‘huge rent increases’ throughout U.S.

BY MARJORIE BEGGS

BY M ARJORIE B EGGS

The use of the main Y building had shifted to housing the site for affordable housing. Part of the deal TNDC joined shortly after as a partner in renovating but the condo market has dried up,” Evans said. Tenderloin Housing Clinic’s Central City SRO ket-rate part of our business has really collapsed.”

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er Community Development Center, Citizens Housing Corp., and Mercy Housing.

Evans ran down the list of its property involve-
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The Asian Art Museum is open free to the pub-
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VOICE VOTE

STATEWIDE SPECIAL ELECTION
TUESDAY, MAY 19, 2009

The Last Day to Register to Vote is May 4, 2009.

You must re-register if you move, change your name, or want to change your political party.

Your Polling Place May Have Changed!
The Department of Elections is combining polling places for the May 19, 2009 Statewide Special Election. Make sure to confirm the location of your polling place before going to vote.

Become A Permanent Vote-By-Mail Voter.
When you become a permanent vote-by-mail voter, a ballot will automatically be sent to you before every election. Voting by mail is convenient, easy, and secure.

Visit sflections.org to download a voter registration form, a vote-by-mail application or to confirm the location of your polling place, or call the Department of Elections at (415) 554-4375.