

CBA era begins — tech firms pledge aid

Benefits flow under oddly fluid contracts

BY GEOFF LINK

COMMUNITY BENEFIT agreements between the city administrator and the six big tech companies that qualified for the payroll tax break were all signed by Jan. 31.

The CBAs are supposed to ensure that the community gets help and resources to mitigate the changes the wealthy companies are bringing to the long-suffering central city.

Zendesk was first with a CBA in 2012. Now all the agreements are operative and can be renewed annually for up to six years.

The hoped-for largess signals that a new era for the neighborhood has officially begun. The benefits pledged won't themselves be transformative, but if the process evolves into solid working relationships, a lot will change around here.

City officials refuse to reveal the value of the tax breaks, citing city and state laws requiring confidentiality, yet the lack of specifics makes the CBAs' bottom line a moving target.

Glide has already gotten hundreds of hours of volunteer time by Zendesk, Yammer and other firms' employees serving meals and working on Graze the Roof, Glide's commu-

nity garden.

Hospitality House received two grants — from Twitter and Yammer — to pay for arts projects to bolster its prolific community arts program.

Yammer made a show in the Chronicle in early April with 30 employees donning bright orange vests and picking up litter in the Tenderloin, but that same day also provided help to the YMCA, Boys and Girls Club, Glide and other groups.

Zendesk patronage is stabilizing Episcopal Community Services' CHEFS program training homeless in culinary skills.

More is happening now, and more is in the works.

The companies within the gerryman-

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PUBLISHED BY THE SAN FRANCISCO STUDY CENTER

MAY 2013

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PHOTO BY BELINDA WONG, YAMMER

Lines Ballet teacher Dexandre Montalvo leads Yammer employees in an in-house hip-hop dance class.

CENTRAL CITY

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COMMUNITY BENEFITS



PHOTO BY MARK DONEZA

Del Seymour, Tenderloin tour guide, takes a Zendesk group for a walk on the neighborhood's wild side with a stop at Boeddeker Park. Patronizing neighborhood businesses, such as Seymour's Tenderloin Walking Tours, is partially how Zendesk meets its CBA obligation.

PANEL IN DISARRAY

City administrator purges committee reviewing the CBAs

BY MARK HEDIN

THE CITIZEN'S ADVISORY Committee, a work in progress from the start, is now in complete disarray. The 11-member panel, appointed by the Board of Supervisors to be the community's voice in discussions between the city and tech companies moving into the neighborhood, is out of commission following the purge of four of its remaining eight members last week.

The CAC's chief responsibility has been to establish a framework for and to review the community benefits agreements required of the largest companies requesting the city's so-called "Twitter tax break."

Without at least six members, a quorum, the panel is barred from taking any action.

At the committee's May 2 meeting — which wasn't an official meeting since there were no longer six active members present, even though two of the recently deposed members sat at their usual spots on the dais — Bill Barnes, project manager in the city administrator's office, in his customary rapid-fire delivery, apologized for the surprising turn of events that had just unseated four members. Barnes recommended that they reapply for their seats through the Board of Supervisors Rules Committee, and said he would appeal to its chair, Norman Yee, to help restore order.

Two members, Brad Paul and Jesus Perez, said they intend to do so, but the process will

take some time, Paul said, in part because the positions must be publicly posted before they can be filled. The other two purged members are Felice Denia and Steven Suzuki.

Paul, who serves on a variety of committees in San Francisco, said when he can't make a meeting, typically it's enough to just inform the committee in advance. Barnes pointed out, though, that the city attorney's Good Government Guide regulations stipulate that absences be noted in the minutes of the meeting as approved by the fellow members. Otherwise, it's deemed to be unexcused. So because the unpaid members of the CAC did not follow these procedural rules, he said, the city attorney, which had launched a probe following an inquiry from "the public," had no choice but to deem the four resigned due to unexcused absences. And thus, the community's primary access point in the process has been shut down.

The committee was already short three members since the previously announced resignation, effective April 30, of Chair Dina Hilliard, who's a new mom, plus Daniel Hlad's resignation effective Jan. 24, and seat 11, which has been vacant since 2011.

Lack of a quorum has been a significant impediment to the CAC's work in the past. For instance, Twitter's CBA, the biggest of the six signed this year, slipped through the process from draft form to finalization with only minimal input from the public because the CAC could not manage to get together over the course of six weeks in December and January.

Typically, once the city administrator's office and the firm in question agree on a draft of a CBA, it's presented to the CAC for review. For Twitter, that review began at the CAC's

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GOOD NEWS for...

INDOOR FARMING Project Open Hand daily delivers 2,500 meals and 400 bags of food to homebound people in San Francisco and Alameda County. By fall, the group's 16 culinary staff will be able to pick fresh-as-can-be herbs and greens for those meals by simply walking from their ground-floor kitchen at 730 Polk St. to an adjacent room that will be transformed to an indoor greenhouse. The 285-square-foot room will be a "truly 21st century" kitchen garden, says Maria Stokes, director of communications. Open Hand is purchasing four hydroponic Volksgarden units — large upright mechanized wheels, each with 80 built-in planters that rotate around special lights. The online publication Gizmag calls Volksgarden a "hi-tech Ferris wheel." Because the wheels are upright, the units take up little space, and plants grow evenly and quickly as they rotate around the lights. "We know this garden isn't going to offset the costs of providing food to our clients," Stokes says, "but it will contribute, and it gets us all in touch with knowing where our food comes from." Open Hand's Room to Grow campaign was seeded with \$10,000 from PricewaterhouseCoopers and its funding goal reached through Indiegogo, an online crowdfunding tool. "We raised \$22,000 in just 37 days," Stokes says. "Everyone here's excited about it. Tim Hathaway, our staff accountant, started his own indoor, hydroponic garden in his work area and is growing cherry tomatoes, chili peppers and basil." ■

MENTAL HEALTH CONSUMERS Cats have nine lives, and Hyde Street Community Services has two. The Tenderloin agency has been serving San Franciscans for 37 years, yet just celebrated 10 years of life No. 2, this one as an independent entity. Hyde Street opened in October 1975 as Tenderloin Outpatient Clinic under the Bayview-Hunters Point Foundation. Ten years ago come July, the program incorporated under its address, then the next year moved to 134 Golden Gate Ave. The clinic has a drop-in center, offers peer-run groups, a bank of computers and teaches the art of microwave cooking. Many people remember it for its popular Clubhouse experience, but that got cut out of the city budget in 2006, when Behavioral Health adopted a medical model that frowned on such standalone socialization services. Now 600 clients a month avail themselves of Hyde Street's menu of help. But board President Roy Crew is looking forward: "The last 10 years was only the beginning." ■



PHOTO COURTESY OF VOLKSGARDEN

Open Hand is growing herbs and greens inside hydroponic wheels.



PHOTO BY TOM CARTER

Mattresses are found often on Ellis, making the cobblestone solution questionable.

Uncomfortable answer to park's wedge problem

BY TOM CARTER

BOEDDEKER PARK construction workers will lay uneven cobblestones along an indentation in the park's northern fence running next to the Ellis Street sidewalk, a ploy to discourage derelicts and drug dealers from hanging out there.

The granite cobblestones are to make it "uncomfortable to stand or sit," Alejandra Chiesa, Trust for Public Land project engineer, explained at the Friends of Boeddeker Park meeting in April.

The thin triangular wedge of space, about 60 feet long, starts as a mere point near the Youth with a Mission building to the west, widening as it goes eastward. It's 7 feet across as it nears the park's emergency rear gate, big enough to invite trouble. The fence indentation is necessary to accommodate an emergency side door out of the park, a fire department requirement.

At the Friends' March meeting, activists pointed out that the wedge would create a haven for street people to congregate, relieve themselves and throw garbage over the fence, for dealers to sell drugs and for some homeless to sleep. The design had been in the blueprints since 2010, Chiesa said, and couldn't be changed. But she promised to announce some solution at the next meeting, asking for suggestions.

The cobblestones were the suggestion of Tim Svoboda, Chiesa said. He is director of Youth with a Mission, which is next to the park. But other ideas from the public were unworkable, "and would have made things worse."

It won't work, said Trevor Long, the youth worker who had first identified the problem with the wedge in the fence. The cobblestones may be effective during the day, Long said, but they won't stop overnighters. The homeless

will just toss a mattress down. There's a constant encampment on this block of Ellis anyway, so mattresses are easy to come by.

"I think the cobbles will help to discourage this type of behavior," Chiesa said later, "but this problem is not new and it is not going to be completely solved overnight with the cobbles."

Another vulnerable design aspect, but one that drew little comment, was the ADA accommodation at the gate. As the cobblestone wedge flares out going west to east, it ends abruptly 6 feet from the emergency gate and becomes a smooth concrete pad 7 feet across, perfect for wheelchair egress but also ideal for hanging out, while the gate offers some cover.

COSTLY SAW RIPPED OFF

In other park business, Rec and Park's Jake Gilchrist announced that in March, a \$2,000 concrete saw weighing several hundred pounds was stolen in broad daylight from under the noses of workmen.

The foreman was just a few feet away from the saw, Gilchrist said, "and when he turned around it was gone."

The theft was reported at once at the police station across the street.

"We sent someone out right away," Capt. John Garrity said. "But we couldn't find it."

Someone obviously planned the heavy-duty heist well in advance, Gilchrist said.

The \$6 million redo is on schedule, Chiesa said. TPL and Rec and Park plan two public outreach meetings and invite other organizations, besides the Friends, to join an advisory committee to consider future park programming and other topics. The first meeting will be in July. No date is set. ■

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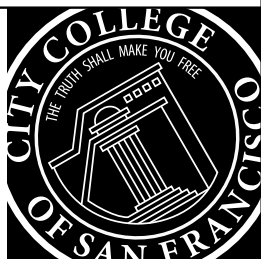
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CENTRAL CITY EXTRA is published monthly by the nonprofit San Francisco Study Center Inc., serving the community since 1972. The Extra was initiated through grants from the S.F. Hotel Tax Fund and the Richard and Rhoda Goldman Fund. The contents are copyrighted by the San Francisco Study Center, 944 Market Street, Suite 701, San Francisco, CA 94102.

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CENTRAL CITY EXTRA is a member of the
SAN FRANCISCO NEIGHBORHOOD NEWSPAPER PUBLISHERS ASSOCIATION,
SOCIETY OF PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISTS, NORTHERN CALIFORNIA CHAPTER,
AND SAN FRANCISCO/PENINSULA PRESS CLUB

HOW WE GOT HERE

Twitter's threat triggers tax break

Value of community benefits unknown — firms held to fraction of their pledge

BY MARK HEDIN

IN EARLY APRIL, 2011, the Board of Supervisors approved what has become known as the “Twitter tax break.” It was the first piece of legislation presented by District 6’s new supervisor, Jane Kim, who’d been elected in Nov. 2010.

Kim credited former Mayor Gavin Newsom for inspiring the effort. Under Newsom, the biotech tax break of 2004 had exempted the Mission Bay industries from the city’s payroll tax, similar to Kim’s legislation.

In early 2011, Twitter was looking for new headquarters, having outgrown its space at the beehive-looking building at Fourth and Folsom. The company had about 375 employees at the time, and was expecting to double that number in each of the next several years, to reach 3,000 by 2013. Among the sites it was considering were locations in South San Francisco, Brisbane and the Furniture Mart building at 1355 Market St.

In a March 15, 2011, letter to Mayor Lee, Kim and Supervisor David Chiu, Twitter wrote: “Twitter has signed a letter of intent (LOI) with the Shorenstein group to lease a large block of space at the historic Furniture Mart building on Market and 9th Streets. This LOI is contingent on the Board of Supervisors’ approval of the payroll tax exemption as part of the revitalization efforts, without which Twitter would not be able to justify the cost burden of staying in San Francisco.”

San Francisco is the only city in California that has a payroll tax.

Mayor Lee signed Kim and Chiu’s tax exclusion ordinance on April 20. Two days later, Twitter finalized its lease of several floors in Shorenstein Properties’ recently acquired block-long Market Street property. Shorenstein would spend \$80 million rehabilitating the landmark art-Deco building before Twitter moved in last July, with much fanfare over the splendid rooftop garden, sumptuous cafeteria and many other amenities.

Microsoft subsidiary Yammer signed a lease for space in the same building, and has since been joined

there by One Kings Lane, which sells high-end home furnishings online.

Here’s the deal: Twitter’s tax break is available to any company operating in precisely prescribed areas of Market Street, the Tenderloin and western SoMa. (See map.)

The measure exempts companies whose annual employee compensation, including stock options, tops \$250,000 from paying the city’s 1.5% payroll tax on any new employees hired during the next six years. They have to pay payroll taxes at the level they were paying when they moved into the designated area, or, if they were already here, at the level they were paying in the last year before they applied for the tax break, their so-called “base year.”

Companies whose payroll exceeds \$1 million also must enter into a community benefit agreement with Naomi Kelly, the city administrator, obligating them to provide goods and services to the neighborhood.

Kelly told the first company to sign a CBA, Zendesk in 2012, that the itemized benefits are expected to be worth roughly a third of the value of their tax break, Zendesk community liaison Tiffany Apczynski told The Extra.

Jason Rodrigues, community liaison for Yammer, Twitter’s downstairs neighbor, told The Extra his understanding was that the CBAs are meant to be worth about 30% of the value of the tax break. The tax legislation has no specific guidelines on that point, but the CBAs themselves say that if, upon review, the signatories are deemed to have completed 80% of the itemized benefits, the CBA will be considered to have been satisfactorily executed.

If a company were to only do that requisite 80% of what it had pledged, that would result in a CBA worth only a quarter of the tax break it accompanied. Apczynski and Rodrigues both said their companies have already or will exceed their CBA obligations.

Kim, Bill Barnes of the city administrator’s office and Rodrigues all emphasized a perspective that the actual dollar amount of the companies’ contributions is less important than the agreements’ simply fostering a spirit of



SOURCE: OEWD

MAP: LISE STAMPFLI, SAN FRANCISCO STUDY CENTER

Central Market-Tenderloin area designated as the payroll tax-exclusion zone.

community and good corporate citizenship.

“We wanted companies that wanted to be good neighbors, improving the neighborhood for everyone,” Kim told The Extra.

For the Office of Economic and Workforce Development to approve applications for the tax break, the companies must participate in the city’s First Source Hiring Program, file regular reports with the Tax Collector and re-apply for the exclusion annually.

In 2011, Zendesk and two other companies sought and were granted the “Twitter tax break.” Citing local ordinance, Greg Kato of the city tax collector’s office, declined to name the smaller companies that, by virtue of their size, weren’t required to file CBAs, but in its annual report to the Board of Supervisors on all tax exclusions, the office of the Treasurer and Tax Collector said last year that these three companies had exempted \$2,737,617 of payroll expenses. At the rate of 1.5% taxation, the cost to the city was \$41,064. The next such report is due at the end of May.

Apczynski, of Zendesk, the only \$1 million-plus-payroll company to avail itself of the break last year, told The Extra that its tax savings were \$32,000 and that the company spent \$140,000 on satisfying the terms of its CBA, which included a pledge to spend locally whenever possible.

Twitter’s own savings from the tax break have been estimated at approximately \$22 million over the life of the legislation. Twitter, however, refuses to discuss the matter, and city officials cite confidentiality issues in discussing the matter.

When asked about the \$22 million figure, Kim said, “We have no idea. Tax documents are confidential, so I can’t find out the tax exclusion for Twitter, but it’s possible. Maybe over six years.”

But a March 23, 2011, Budget and Finance Subcommittee document analyzing the legislation estimated that Twitter would save \$1,759,500 in its first year of claiming the tax exclusion — 1,150 non-excluded employees at \$102,000 average salary taxed at 1.5% — and \$4,054,500 annually on a total of 2,650 new hires in the next five years that Twitter would be eligible for the tax break, which a company can only claim for up to six years before it expires altogether after 2017. Add those up and you get \$22,032,000.

Assuming Twitter stays in place, San Francisco could then collect that \$4 million-plus in payroll taxes from the company every year after that. Down

in South San Francisco, Twitter’s tax obligation would have been \$15 per employee per year.

That analysis, submitted by Ted Egan of the city controller’s office in March 2011, before the tax break was approved, estimated that Twitter’s coming to the neighborhood would foster so much economic growth that the city would come out \$2.7 million a year ahead, on average, over 20 years in payroll tax collections.

“That’s kind of the way these companies operate,” he told The Extra, in explanation of the “clustering” anticipated by the arrival of other such firms in the neighborhood.

For the city to realize \$2.7 million growth in the city’s 1.5% payroll taxes would require companies to add \$180 million in new payroll.

Tech salaries are generally calculated to average \$100,000 annually. That translates to 1,800 new jobs at companies not availing themselves of the Twitter tax break.

At the time of the tax’s passing and consideration, Twitter had 375 employees South of Market. Those employees already on board are not subject to the tax exclusion; instead, they are part of the “base year” calculation on which Twitter’s continuing tax obligation is based. At 1.5% of 375 \$100,000 estimated salaries, that’s \$562,500 already.

But if the city winds up coming short of those projected increased tax revenues, Egan said, “I don’t know what recourse the board has.” In California, he explained, “Once you cut someone’s taxes, you need a vote of the people to raise them again.”

Egan and Kim pointed out that the neighborhood has seen the arrival of some large companies in buildings excluded from eligibility for the tax break, such as the former State Compensation Insurance Fund building at 1275 Market St., which Dolby bought, and space that Bank of America vacated at 1455 Market, which Square, having outgrown offices it leased in the Chronicle building at Fifth and Mission, is moving into. As these buildings are not included in the tax exclusion zone, their new occupants thus will be paying payroll taxes on all their workers.

San Francisco is the only city in California with a payroll tax, and it’s the second-largest source of revenue in the city’s general fund, but it’s on the way out. In November, voters passed Proposition E, which will phase out the payroll tax in favor of a tax on businesses’ gross receipts. This will not affect the payroll tax exclusion program, Kato told The Extra. ■

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The CBAs

are under way. Benefits are being given, and received. Paid volunteers are serving in the soup kitchens, teaching tech and tutoring in the schools. These stories hint at what the process is like for the tech firms, and for some of the community beneficiaries. They are the tip of an iceberg emerging from a sea of plenty in an ocean of need.

Nonprofits: Snapshot of aid

BY MARJORIE BEGGS

What neighborhood groups have gotten from the tech firms won't be known until the companies' quarterly reports come in, due to the city administrator this month.

Meanwhile, The Extra reached a handful of nonprofits whose benefits from their new tech neighbors range from modest grants and equipment donations to patronizing their activities.

Episcopal Community Services' 16-year-old CHEFS program at (Canon Kip Community House, 705 Natoma St.), which trains homeless and low-income people in culinary skills, then places them in internships at restaurants and other food services:

"Zendesk has been working with us since 2011," says Sandra Marilyn, head of CHEFS. "They call us as much as once a week to cater events for them, and they've been just great, supporting and promoting us all along. We're just starting to talk to Yammer and Zoosk, but I don't know what will come of that. The best thing they can do is sample our wares, meet our students and encourage internships."

Hospitality House Community Arts Program, the only free fine arts studio for homeless and poor artists (1009 Market St.), and annual auction, the May 9 fundraiser for the arts program.

"We never put in a specific proposal to any of the companies — but Twitter and Yammer called us," says Executive Director Jackie Jenks. "Twitter gave us a \$10,000 grant to support the arts program, and Yammer is one of the major sponsors of this year's auction."

Central YMCA's community garden and after-school youth program (387 Golden Gate Ave.):

Leslie Truong, director of programs, has contacted most of the companies' community liaisons, but only one has come through with a viable benefit. "Yammer was here on April 12 as part of their Day for Good, helping with our after-school youth," Truong says. "We also had set up a day for Twitter employees to come and work in the garden, but it was right around New Year's and only one person showed up."

Alonzo King Lines Ballet (26 Seventh St.), performance company and school:

A CAC member suggested that Lines put in a one-page proposal to the city administrator's office to get in on the benefits, recalls Co-Director Robin Anderson. "I sent the proposal in November for our new outreach marketing program, and this April we're doing hip-hop classes on-site at Yammer for its employees." About 10 people have been coming to the hourlong weekly classes, she says. "Yammer's paying for the classes, of course, but the hope is to generate interest among all its employees in our classes and performances." Anderson's efforts to connect with Twitter, she says, have been "difficult" and, so far, unfruitful. Yammer says it also bought 40 tickets for Lines Ballet's season opener at YBC.

The Arc San Francisco (1500 Howard St.), supports independent living, trains for employment and encourages creative expression for adults with autism, Down syndrome, cerebral palsy and intellectual and developmental disabilities.

The Arc is not in the mid-Market area designated by the tax exclusion and benefit agreements, but many of its clients reside there, says Stacy Trager-Carls, Arc community resource manager. "Our job developer, Gary Gregerson, attended a CAC meeting last fall and then met with One Kings Lane to talk about employment possibilities for our clients," Trager-Carls says. "We're waiting now to hear if we have one placement with them starting in May."

Stephanie Pettinati, One Kings Lane community liaison, says it has discussed "opportunities" with Arc but is not now working on any "specific placements."

Tenderloin Technology Lab (150 Golden Gate Ave.), operated by St. Anthony Foundation and S.F. Network Ministries, established in 2008 to promote technology training and access to Tenderloin residents.

In March, Yammer donated 40 large-screen computer monitors with keyboards and accessories to the Lab, which operates as a drop-in site for casual computer users and offers month-long classes, from bedrock basics to sophisticated software applications.

"The monitors are great," said Karl Robillard, communications manager for St. Anthony Foundation. "People love working with the new equipment." ■



PHOTO BY NIKKI MEHTA, YAMMER

EDITORIAL

You're being gentrified — make the most of it

This is a critical moment for the neighborhood. The city signing the CBAs with the tech firms signaled that gentrification of the central city is officially under way.

These agreements with the six Internet companies obligate the city to ensure that an untold amount in grants, goods, services and volunteer hours accrue to the area that the big guys have invaded is. Traditionally, when the haves move in, the have-nots are pushed out. That's gentrification.

The largess is meant to mitigate the irreversible effects of gentrification, though the G word is never mentioned in the CBAs.

Gentrification here and now is like the warming climate. Globally, it's already way too late to halt the catastrophes sure to ensue as the Arctic melts. Locally, with City Administrator Naomi Kelly's John Hancock affixed to these contracts, the central city's future has been formally sealed; we're being gentrified. So we might as well make the most of it, because they're not going to go away.

Each company has pledged to ease the trauma to the neighborhood that their dominant presence presents. Each agreement calls for the big guys to bestow item upon beneficial item to mitigate the personal and social pain.

Some firms have vowed to help

preserve affordable housing — and that means SROs, too — so as not to displace residents. The most important help they could give would be to ensure that all who live here now will remain. But no one can assure that. Rents in central city offices and storefronts already are spiraling. Soon that will render this place unrecognizable. No CBA offers a blueprint for stopping the inevitable, though all vow to try.

The neighborhood can get lots of other things out of these agreements, help that's more likely to happen, such as: Patronizing our businesses, training us in tech and outfitting us in state-of-the-art hardware and knowledge, ensure that we have more to eat and healthier food, hire our residents so they can provide for themselves, increase the perks to the community as these agreements to mature.

The hiding of information about the tax break and the unresponsiveness to community contact by some of the firms encourages suspicion among neighborhood players.

The firms and the city must be clear: We are very needy and vulnerable, and our social fabric is fragile. So be generous. We want to land on our feet for a change. ■

— Geoff Link,
Editor & Publisher

THE COMMUNITY BENEFITS



PHOTO BY MARK DONEZA



PHOTO BY ADAM WOOLEY, YAMMER



PHOTO BY GABRIELLE WAGNER, ONE KINGS LANE

Companies giving back, from left: Yammer tutors at DeMarillac Academy, Zoosk washes dogs for PAWS clients, Yammer serves meals at Episcopal Community Services, and One Kings Lane helps green the Tenderloin People's Garden.

Tech companies: Sampler of neighborhood assistance

Companies that do something good for the community usually call local newspapers to tell all about it. But, as the community benefits agreements officially got under way, persistence didn't always pay off as The Extra sought the tech companies' side of the story.

Zoosk blew us off, and 21Tech wouldn't talk at all.

Zendesk, now in its second year with a CBA, was the most forthcoming. The others eventually responded to our reporters, but Twitter and Yammer — the two biggest CBA companies — took months.

TWITTER: \$70,000 IN GRANTS

In its seminal year of giving back, Twitter, the master monitor of terse tweeting and abbreviations, is spreading thousands of grant dollars around the neighborhood while enthusiasm to volunteer runs high, says Colin Crowell, Twitter's head of public policy.

"Employees are wanting to get into volunteer activities — and that's with no prompting from me or the company," Crowell says.

The social media giant's list of proposed CBA activities for 2013 runs to 26 goals. It's given \$10,000 each to Tenderloin Community School, Vietnamese Youth Development Center, Cutting Ball Theater, Heart of the City Farmers Market, Larkin Street Youth Services and Hospitality House Art Program. Twitter employees voted to give \$5,000 bonuses to their top picks, Larkin Street and the Community School.

Another outreach has been coaching in the Tenderloin Tech Lab every Friday and at the Main Library's tech lab, too.

Volunteers have been tutoring students in the Tenderloin Community School on Eddy Street, Bessie Carmichael Elementary School, in SoMa outside the tax break boundaries, and the private De Marillac Middle School on Golden Gate Avenue. At Bessie, the focus every Wednesday has been on helping eighth-graders with algebra, though the school's Website posts a lengthy "wish list" of needs for supplies and equipment.

Employees also are volunteering at the S.F. Bar Association's Volunteer Legal Services Program on housing ad-

vocacy and negotiations. Cases are in the works, Crowell says, but he can't discuss them.

- 1355 Market St.
- 1,000 employees
- Community liaison: Jenna Sampson, sf@twitter.com

ONE KINGS LANE: DONATIONS

The 4-year-old online company that offers bargains on name-brand, vintage and designer items, has begun meeting its first-year CBA agreement. In February, three employees helped serve dinner at Raphael House, the shelter for homeless children and families. March 28, it donated money and beverages to Bold Italics and Yammer's annual Mid Riff Microhood party celebrating mid-Market arts, eats and drinks.

Volunteers helped celebrate Earth Day by getting their hands dirty, cleaning up and planting at TNDC's People's Garden.

In the works, says Stephanie Pettinati, community liaison, are product donations and design makeovers for Hamilton Family Center and Tenderloin Housing Clinic.

"We'll bring in tables and rugs and maybe artwork" to Hamilton's lobby, for example, to make the space "more welcoming," Pettinati says.

- 1355 Market St., Suite 400
- 200 employees in San Francisco
- Community liaison: Stephanie Pettinati, 489-9892

ZOOSK: FEW DETAILS

The Extra's repeated attempts to get details from the online dating service Zoosk about its CBA activities were fruitless.

"What I can say," wrote Melinda Perales, community liaison, in an email, "is that Zoosk is very excited to be in the community. We are new to the CBA so at this time I do not have much to report other than we are busy with volunteering and meeting our commitments per our CBA."

Tipped by PAWS, The Extra's photographer did get to snap Zoosk employees washing dogs on May 1.

- 989 Market St., 5th floor
- 130 employees
- CBA community liaison: Melinda Perales, 529-3020, melindap@zoosk.com

21TECH: MUM TO THE EXTRA

Technology and business consultants to local governments and some Fortune 100 companies, 21Tech, founded in 1996, has been in the neighborhood since before the mid-Market tech boom. It has a \$4.5 million contract with the city to develop an automated permit and project-tracking system for City Planning department and the Department of Building Inspection.

Beginning in February, two Extra reporters tried numerous times to contact Deborah Trette, community liaison, and 21Tech partner Dilraj Kahai for CBA details. Phone calls and emails were never returned.

- 1390 Market St. 12th floor
- Community liaison: Deborah Trette, 355-9090, Deborah.Trette@21Tech.com

YAMMER: BIG DAY OF GIVING

Five-year-old Yammer moved from its Townsend Street location into its Market Street digs in January. The cloud-based intranet computer system was acquired by Microsoft for \$1.2 billion last June.

In its April 12 Day of Giving, 30 employees in bright safety vests went to the Tenderloin to work with DPW's anti-litter campaign. The same day, 15 employees cooked lunch for Episcopal Community Services clients and played bingo with seniors.

During a monthlong, in-house clothing drive, employees donated 400 pounds of clothing, including \$1,000 worth of new underwear and socks, to St. Anthony's clothing program.

Jason Rodrigues, Yammer's community liaison, has been asked to join Hospitality House's Board of Directors.

Computers worth \$3,000 went to Project Homeless Connect for use at the Sixth Street Safety Hub. It also has 50 Plantronic wireless telephone headsets, Mac keyboards and four projectors to donate to interested organizations. Grants to local nonprofits have totaled \$41,000 so far to unidentified recipients.

And food? Yammer employees eat out at Show Dogs, Dottie's True Blue Café and Brenda's French Soul Food. Ma'Vealous, a coffee shop at 10th and Market, a block from Yammer's offices, reports a 30% increase in business

since the tech firm moved in.

- 1355 Market St.
- 300 employees
- Community liaison: Jason Rodrigues, 796-7453, jason@yammer-inc.com

ZENDESK: REACHES OUT

Zendesk, founded in 2007, specializes in customer service applications for its estimated 20,000 clients. During 2012, it made a financial investment in the central city neighborhood of approximately \$140,000, says Tiffany Apczynski, CBA community liaison.

Half of that \$140,000 went to local caterer Small Potatoes on 6th Street for its launch and holiday parties; \$10,000 more went to rent Great American Music Hall and Mezzanine for the two company events. Another \$33,000 was spent on on-site catering from Tenderloin restaurants during the year. Of Zendesk's 397 catered meals, including lunches, 176 were handled by neighborhood establishments.

When Zendesk needed AV equipment, it spent \$15,000 at World of Stereo. And two Tenderloin students scored paid summer internships, at \$5,000 each, at the tech company.

For this year, Zendesk plans to donate \$10,000 to a Tenderloin community garden, and continue it in-house "lunch and learns" where invitees come and present to employees during lunch. Guests so far have included Episcopal Community Services, and two documentary filmmakers, muralist LisaRuth Elliott and photographer Darcy Padilla, all from the Tenderloin.

Zendesk recently bought 30 tickets for employees at the Cutting Ball Theater, and sent tech experts to a May 2 City College event. Employees gave TechSF feedback on its latest curriculum. The company plans to place TechSF graduates as interns, costing an estimated \$10,000, and to host a Nerd Underground networking event for new TechSF graduates at its offices.

- 989 Market St. 3rd Floor
- 200 employees
- Community liaison: Tiffany Apczynski, 987-5643, tiffany@zendesk.com ■

— Mark Hedin, Tom Carter, Marjorie Beggs and Jonathan Newman contributed to this story.

Cops open up shop on 6th Street

New Safety Hub adds services to police presence on tough block

BY JONATHAN NEWMAN

GAWKERS CROWDED the sidewalk at 72 Sixth St. midday on March 8, bulging into the traffic lanes as a happy gathering of elected officials, bureaucrats, SFPD brass, local residents, media reps and the simply curious gathered to watch the unveiling of the Sixth Street Safety Hub.

With a comic flourish — Mayor Ed Lee and District 6 Supervisor Jane Kim wielding a hilariously out-sized 4-foot-long pair of scissors — a bright blue ceremonial ribbon was cut and the facility that Lee dubbed “a new form of participatory public safety” officially opened.

The high-spirited fun, unusual on one of the city’s more beleaguered streets, reflected relief that a 10-year struggle to fill a vacant storefront below the Baldwin House Hotel had ended and the Hub, originally planned as the city’s first police substation, had blossomed to life as a multiservice platform, not only housing police officers, but the city’s community ambassadors,

an Adult Probation Department officer, Project Homeless Connect workers, and a Neighborhood Courts prosecutor as well.

For 20 years residents and business owners had talked of the need for more police on the street. Nothing took hold, not even the phone booth-size police kiosk at Minna and Sixth streets called for in the early '90s.

Jenny McNulty, the executive director of Urban Solutions, a nonprofit that recruits and advises small businesses in the area, said the Baldwin House owners were struggling to rebuild after a fire. Residents were displaced and the old Grand Cafe and self-service laundry flanking the hotel’s entrance closed. “We had hoped those spaces could again become small retail business locales,” McNulty said.

But the spaces sat empty as the economy dipped and Sixth Street remained a chancy venture for new businesses.

In 2009 the SFPD and Redevelopment Agency began looking for a suitable space on Sixth Street for a police substation — a place where bicycle and foot patrol officers from Southern Station could check in and write reports without having to return to 850 Bryant. The substation was to provide a visual deterrent to crime and to further the city’s goals to increase community policing and revitalize South of Market.

In December 2011, the Redevelopment Agency proposed to forgive a \$500,000 loan to the Baldwin House owner in exchange for his agreement to rehabilitate 72 Sixth as a police substation.

Two months later the state Supreme Court upheld Gov. Brown’s dissolution of redevelopment agencies and the deal was off.

Urban Solutions and SOMPAC, a neighborhood-elected group formed to voice residents’ views on redevelopment projects, pitched the Sixth Street site to the city Office of Economic and Workforce Development, which



PHOTO BY JONATHAN NEWMAN

Mayor Lee and Supervisor Kim wield unwieldy scissors to cut the ribbon for SFPD’s new substation beneath the Baldwin House.

brought it to Lee.

The mayor found the funds — the cost had risen to \$775,000 — by transferring \$125,000 from the SFPD budget and using \$600,000 from the Department of Real Estate. Sam Devdharma, owner of Baldwin House Hotel, agreed to cut the rent to \$1,449 a month, and with Kim spearheading legislation, the SFPD on board and Department of Public Works overseeing construction, the Hub got built.

Twenty-four police officers, including eight new police academy graduates, work out of the Hub daily from 6:30 a.m. to 10:30 p.m. Wednesdays are full-service days. From 9 a.m. to midafternoon probation officers, homeless outreach workers and an assistant D.A. are there so people can drop in to talk with them.

Kara Zordel, executive director of Project Homeless Connect, says: “The

police are on foot along Sixth Street and the neighborhood every day. They know the homeless and they’re getting people to come in for services.”

At the ribbon-cutting, Chief Greg Suhr acknowledged the long struggle. “It took tenacious vision to accomplish this.” Standing in front of the bullet-proof, one-way glass entry to the Hub, Suhr gestured to the bevy of assembled community ambassadors in their bright yellow-and-black jackets ringing the crowd, and added, “With our bumblebee brothers and sisters, we’re committed to changing the atmosphere.”

Antoinetta Stadlman has lived at the Baldwin House Hotel for 24 years. She sees a difference already: “There’s fewer people loitering, less of the small-time drug peddling. It’s good. It’ll help break the link between the peddling in the hotels and the street-crawling for the next hit.” ■



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Bayanihan House (Non-Assisted Units) Located at 88 – 6th Street & Mission OPEN WAITING LIST	SRO – 1 Person, Couple Shared Bath Single 10 ½ x 12 – Double 12x12 In the unit there is a sink, microwave, refrigerator, 2-burner stove, closet, single bed, community kitchen, 24-hour staff & surveillance, laundry facility	1 person \$30,275/a year Couple \$34,580/a year Minimum income of \$866.40/month	Starting 1-2013 Move in Deposit \$545.00 Rent \$545.00 Utilities included

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Community input bypassed in Twitter CBA

➤ CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Dec. 6 meeting, three days after the draft was finalized. Normally, after an initial discussion of a company's draft CBA, the panel holds a second meeting to hear public input.

There was some public comment on Dec. 6, as at all CAC meetings, but the panel scheduled another meeting for Dec. 20, to allow the community time to weigh in more fully. As the CAC discussed that date, Hilliard cautioned that she would be unable to attend, but didn't want to discourage others from meeting without her.

Over the course of the following 10 days, however, Hlad and Paul informed the city administrator's office and fellow CAC members that they could not make the Dec. 20 meeting after all. On Dec. 17, the city administrator's office announced the meeting was canceled. The committee's next regular meeting was scheduled for Jan. 3, but it, too, was canceled for lack of a quorum.

Three other CAC members, Eva Pirring, Nella Corpuz-Manuel and Jesus Perez, were asked collectively after May 2's meeting if they, too, had been unable to attend the planned Dec. 20 or Jan. 3 meetings. Although they seemed to struggle to understand the question, they ultimately confirmed that they had been busy.

The CAC finally convened on Jan. 17. Among the crowd at the hearing room expecting to weigh in on the Twitter CBA process were dozens wearing Market Street for the Masses T-shirts. To everyone's surprise, however, Barnes, citing a four-week window of opportunity for review that had run its course, announced he would be finalizing the Twitter CBA after the meeting, and it was no longer up for discussion. A CAC member asked if anyone from Twitter

was present. No one stepped forward.

"We had hoped to see more specificity on workforce development, job training and job placement, strengthening local hires of non-IT from the community," TNDC community organizer Hatty Lee told The Extra. "But there was very little, almost nothing on that, and it was really disappointing. We had voiced that in December, and not seeing any changes was pretty disappointing."

The legislation Barnes cited in finalizing the Twitter CBA also says that the city administrator may, at her sole discretion, extend this time.

Asked why this discretion was not exercised, Barnes said that it had been, that the four-week window had actually closed Jan. 3. "I think," he added, "in Twitter's case, people have had a lot of input through a lot of different forms. The CAC is one way to provide public input, but I would say for Twitter, everyone's known about it since 2010."

Even without a quorum, available CAC members could have assembled at the appointed times and taken note of public comment for inclusion in a future meeting, Barnes said, but they didn't pursue that option.

Hlad, development director at Hospitality House, said he resigned to avoid the appearance of a conflict of interest after Twitter gave the group a \$10,000 grant. Hlad said he enjoyed serving on the CAC, as it serves an important role.

"I don't think it was perfect," he said about the work. "But it did give a voice."

But some of the 11 CAC members express frustration with having to evaluate the CBAs without any sense of how much each firm should be contributing to the community.

The committee members are kept in the dark about the amount of each tech firm's tax break, so when the

agreements come up they don't know if the benefits should amount to thousands of dollars or hundreds of thousands or more maybe.

"The information is a bit sparse," said Suzuki, executive director/architect at Asian Neighborhood Design.

Committee member Robert Marquez, director of S.F. Mental Health Clients' Rights Advocates, said that without knowing the value, it's impossible to know what a fair contribution is.

Paul, speaking with The Extra after the Jan. 17 meeting, said that the committee "was forbidden" to ask the value of either the tax break or the CBAs themselves. Hilliard, who is head of the Tenderloin CBD, told The Extra in a sep-

arate phone interview that "we asked Twitter multiple times" about the value of its tax break and CBA, and were told nothing.

"It's frustrating," she said, "for the committee and public because we can't really tell if the CBAs are offsetting their impact. We have no way of knowing what that is. We can't really gauge our effectiveness without those numbers."

That information is confidential under city ordinance and state law. ■

— Eric Louie, Geoff Link and Marjorie Beggs contributed to this report

CBA era begins — firms pledge aid

➤ CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

dered tax-break boundaries that have payrolls of \$1 million or more, which must sign a CBA, are: Twitter, Yammer, Zendesk, 21Tech, Zoosk, One Kings Lane.

The CBAs they entered into are formal contracts but unusually fluid and vague. The value of the benefits is not included in the agreements, though the assistance is expected to total around a third of what the tax break is worth to each company. And they state that the city expects only 80% of the benefits listed will be provided. Not a typical city contract.

And, each CBA states, the benefits are expected to become more "robust" in succeeding years, presumably as the companies prosper — and possibly because they will find new ways to help.

The supervisors formed an 11-member Citizen's Advisory Committee of people who live and/or work in the

neighborhood to frame the types of benefits needed to maintain the integrity of the hood, then review and put the community's stamp of approval on the CBAs when brought before them by the city administrator negotiated the agreements with the tech companies. The benefits framework was designed based on a series of community meetings where residents, nonprofits and others categorized the needs.

But the CAC members were kept in the dark about the amount of the tax break or given any way to measure the value of the benefits in these contracts without a bottom line. Nor is there any enforcement mechanism in the documents. If the benefits aren't provided — then what?

These are strange agreements, indeed. The looseness could make them more valuable in the long run. It all depends on the tech companies. ■

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COMMUNITY CALENDAR

SPECIAL EVENTS

Successful interviewing class May 25, 10 a.m.-noon, Main Library, lower level. Presenter Mangala Meridian covers how to get an interview with your top picks, build your self-esteem, find out what employers want to see in an employee, present the right attitude, practice interview questions and more.

ART EVENTS

Summer of Art, May 14, noon, U.N. Plaza, arts fest previews from KUNST-STOFF Dance Company and La Alternativa (Kathleen Hermesdorf/Albert Mathias). May 21: The Cutting Ball Theater and The Center for New Music/ROVA Saxophone Quartet. May 28: LEVYdance at LEVYstudio. Info: summer-art.org.

Hospitality House 28th Annual Art Auction, May 9, 6-9 p.m., White Walls & Shooting Gallery complex, 886 Geary St. The auction, which raises funding for the Community Arts Program, features works by poor and homeless artists from the program that hang alongside those of 150 notable artists represented by prestigious galleries. Info: hospitalityhouse.org/auction2013.htm. To order tickets: 749.2184.

Step to Poetry, literary art installation of nine poems by youth 12-19, Main Library main staircase, May 10-June 10, and WordStorm, open mic where youth will read from newly published books, May 21, 3:30-6 p.m., presented by the San Francisco Public Library and WritersCorps. Step to Poetry launch event, May 17, 6 p.m., features a stair crawl from the first to fifth floors with WritersCorps youth performing their poems along the way. Space is limited for the launch, and RSVP is required as the event takes place after library hours: hello@writerscorps.org or 252-2546.

COMMUNITY: REGULAR SCHEDULE HOUSING

Tenant Associations Coalition of San Francisco, 1st Wednesday of each month, noon, 201 Turk St., Community Room. Contact Michael Nulty, 339-8327. Resident unity, leadership training.



Summer of Art at U.N. Plaza, 2012. Photo by Leyya Tawil

HEALTH AND MENTAL HEALTH

CBHS Consumer Council, 3rd Monday of month, 5-7 p.m., 1380 Howard St., room 537, 255-3695. Consumer advisers from self-help groups and mental health consumer advocates. Public welcome.

Healthcare Action Team, 2nd Wednesday of month, 1010 Mission St., Bayanihan Community Center, 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Focus on increasing supportive home services, expanded eligibility for home care, improved discharge planning. Light lunch. Call James Chionsini, 703-0188 x304.

Mental Health Board, 2nd Wednesday of the month, 6:30-8:30 p.m., City Hall, room 278. CBHS advisory committee, open to the public. Call: 255-3474.

NEIGHBORHOOD IMPROVEMENT

Alliance for a Better District 6, 2nd Tuesday of each month, 6 p.m., 230 Eddy St. Contact Michael Nulty, 820-1560 or sf_district6@yahoo.com, a districtwide improvement association.

Central Market Community Benefit District, board meets 2nd Tuesday of month, Hotel Whitcomb,

1231 Market St., 3 p.m. Info: 882-3088, <http://central-market.org>.

Friends of Boeddeker Park, 2nd Wednesday this month, 3 p.m., Police Station Community Room, 301 Eddy St. Plan park events, activities and improvements. Contact Betty Traynor, 931-1126.

Gene Friend Recreation Center Advisory Board, 3rd Thursday of month, 5 p.m. Works to protect SoMa resources for all residents. Gene Friend Rec Center, 270 Sixth St. Info: Tim Figueras, 554-9532.

North of Market/Tenderloin Community Benefit District. Full board meets 3rd Monday at 4 p.m.. Call 292-4812 for location or check nom-tlcbd.org.

Safe Haven Project, 4th Tuesday of each month, 3 p.m., 519 Ellis St. (Senator Hotel). Contact: 563-3205, x115, or centralcitysafehaven@gmail.com.

SoMa Community Stabilization Fund Advisory Committee, 3rd Thursday of month, 5:30 p.m., 1 South Van Ness, 2nd floor. Info: Claudine del Rosario, 701-5580.

Tenderloin Futures Collaborative, 3rd Wednesday of the month, 11 a.m.-noon, Tenderloin Police Community Room, 301 Eddy. Presentations on issues of interest to neighborhood residents, nonprofits and businesses. Info: 928-6209.

Tenderloin Neighborhood Association, 2nd Friday of month, 842 Geary St., 5 p.m. Nonprofit focuses on health and wellness activities to promote neighborly interactions. Info: tenderloinneighborhood@yahoo.com.

SAFETY

SoMa Police Community Relations Forum, 4th Monday of each month, 6-7:30 p.m. Location varies. To receive monthly email info: 538-8100 x202.

Tenderloin Police Station Community Meeting, last Tuesday of month, 6 p.m., police station Community Room, 301 Eddy St. Call Susa Black, 345-7300. Neighborhood safety.

SENIORS AND DISABLED

Mayor's Disability Council, 3rd Friday of month, 1-3 p.m., City Hall, room 400. Call: 554-6789. Open to the public.

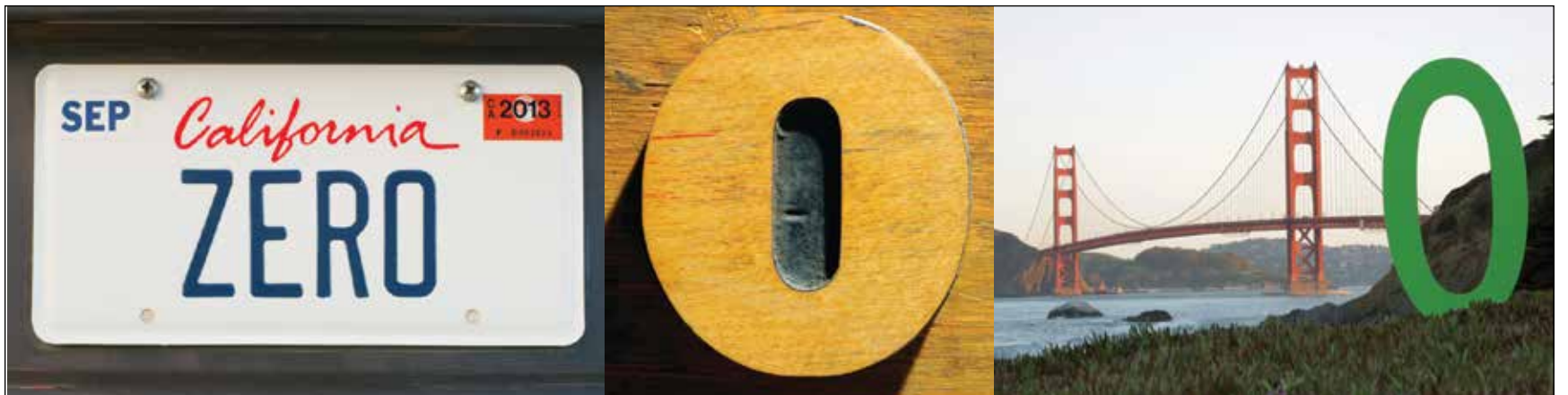
Senior & Disability Action (formerly Planning for Elders/Senior Action Network), general meeting, 2nd Thursday of month, 9 a.m.-noon, Universal Unitarian Church, 1187 Franklin St. SDA Housing Collaborative meeting, 3rd Wednesday, 1 p.m. HealthCare Action Team meeting, 2nd Wednesday, 1010 Mission St., (Bayanihan Community Center). For info about SDA's Survival School, university and computer class schedules: 546-1333, www.sdaction.org.

DISTRICT 6 SUPERVISOR

Jane Kim, member, Land Use Committee, School District, Transportation Authority; chair, Transbay Joint Powers Authority Board of Directors; vice-chair Transportation Authority Plans & Programs Committee

Legislative aides: Sunny Angulo, Ivy Lee and Danny Yedegar

Jane.Kim@sfgov.org 554-7970



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