

San Jose mayor touts homeless record



Thien-An Truong/For the S.F. Chronicle

Kendra Greer and Chiquito soon will leave a homeless encampment in San Jose for a tiny home community for the unhoused.

Critics say gubernatorial candidate's solution isn't sustainable

By Sara DiNatale
STAFF WRITER

Kendra Greer's eyes were trained on her puppy as it ran circles around a makeshift campfire stove on the bank of Coyote Creek in San Jose.

Chiquito, a tiny black dog, is Greer's shadow, following the 32-year-old wherever she goes. Soon that means leaving the encampment on the creek for a small room across town.

On April 15, the campsite Greer has known as home — on and off — for the last three years will be torn down by the city. Most residents are being pushed to leave their tents for what San Jose Mayor Matt Mahan calls "tiny homes communities."

The city's newest shelter, located in northern San Jose, has a fleet of 70-square-foot rooms ready for about 100 people. Each factory-built dwelling has white walls and faux hardwood floors. Installation is fast and cheap.

"It didn't feel homey," Greer said after a tour. "But as long as I'm on the streets, I can't really complain."

The tiny homes are part of Mahan's plan to expand the city's transitional housing stock, which has grown by 1,200 beds since February

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Yalonda M. James/S.F. Chronicle

San Jose Mayor Matt Mahan, left, speaks with fellow Democratic gubernatorial hopefuls Betty Yee, center, and Tom Steyer, right, and Beatriz Ramos of HomeFirst in December during a tour of a tiny homes village.

"He is not investing in the people. He is investing in a short-term solution. ... You can't blame people for not cooperating with a system that invests so little long-term in them."

Shaunn Cartwright, a homeless advocate in Santa Clara County

Report on ski deaths faults guides

Avalanche center: Riskiest path taken

By Matthias Gafni
STAFF WRITER

The guides in the deadliest avalanche in modern California history led a group of backcountry skiers below avalanche terrain during dangerous conditions and traveled in a group large enough to potentially trigger the large slide, investigators concluded in a report released this week.

Several members of the group wore avalanche airbag backpacks, but none of the life-saving equipment deployed during the Feb. 17 tragedy near Castle Peak, according to the report authored by the Sierra Avalanche Center and published on the National Avalanche Center site.

The report also confirmed a Chronicle story that first disclosed that the guides led the group through a more ava-

Avalanche continues on A9

Spingola hides face as Davis enters plea

By Michael Barba
STAFF WRITER

A man who showed up to a once-powerful San Francisco city official's first criminal court appearance Thursday disguised in a surgical mask and balaclava was none other than her co-defendant in a case that centers around their furtive relationship.

James Spingola, the former director of the nonprofit Collective Impact, attended the hearing where ex-San Francisco Human Rights Commission Executive Director Sheryl Davis pleaded not guilty during her arraignment on felony charges.

Spingola wore a sweater and leather jacket along with a light-colored mask over his nose and mouth and the close-fitting black balaclava that covered his head on a warm, sunny day in

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JOHN ELBERLING 1946-2026

Affordable housing advocate, nonprofit leader shaped SoMa development with combative style

By J.K. Dineen
STAFF WRITER

John Elberling, a controversial San Francisco power broker who wielded his position at the helm of a housing nonprofit to bankroll progressive ballot measures and bedevil everyone from mayors to real estate developers, has died of leukemia. He was 79.

As the executive director of TODCO (Tenants and Owners Development Corp.), which owns about 1,000 low-income housing units in eight buildings in the South of Market, Elberling dedicated his life to carving out a place in the neighborhood for the low-income families and artists

threatened by the gentrification and real estate speculation that, for decades, has ebbed and flowed across the district that lies in the shadow of downtown.

Along the way, the man some called "Elbo" ruffled the feathers of mayors from Dianne Feinstein to Willie Brown to London Breed and became a supervillain to members of the YIMBY movement who regarded him as an obstructionist representing everything that was wrong with how San Francisco approached land-use decisions.

With his signature porkpie hat, the scruffy Elberling, a dive bar aficionado and former rock

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Santiago Mejia/S.F. Chronicle

John Elberling was the longtime executive director of Tenants and Owners Development Corp., known as TODCO.

