

HOUSING

The
Portland
Observer

King Housing Plan Draws Fire

BY LEE PERLMAN

Debate over a new rental housing or home ownership is waging on Martin Luther King Junior Boulevard.

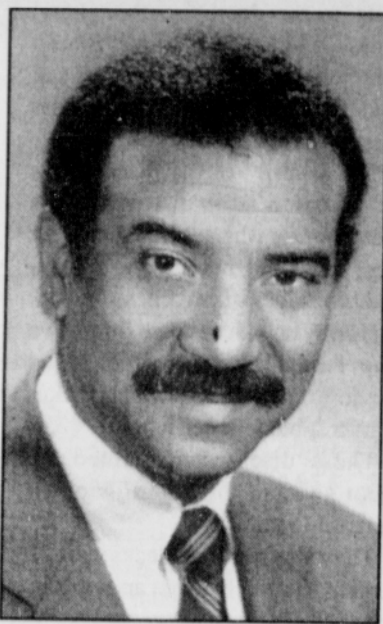
The Northeast Community Development Corp. and its partners are moving closer to a design for their proposed 55-unit housing project at Northeast MLK and Prescott.

At a meeting last week some of their closest neighbors showed more fundamental concerns about the project.

They were concerned about the project's size, its height, the amount of traffic and parking congestion it will generate, and the decision to use the site for rental housing at all.

Architect Don Stastny said that so far plans call for the structure to be divided into five "masses" ranging in height from two to four stories. There will be shared open space and a separate entry for each group of four or five apartments. Parking will be in the rear.

Jaki Walker, NECDC executive director, said the building's front will be designed to "look like it was there



Carl Talton

a long time and recently remodeled."

Lenora Jeanmarie, who said she has lived behind the site since 1969, was not impressed. "This will be nothing but a red light district with hookers flagging down Johns," she said.

Her neighbor, Carrie Spears, agreed. "Next door is a rental building where there are problems all the

time. If this was owner-occupied, it would be different," Spears said.

Rob Guill, another neighbor asked, "How was the decision made to make this a rental instead of condominiums? Tenants don't care, they expect the landlord to fix things."

Walker said that the decision was based in part on available funding. "It took us three years to get financing for our town homes on Roselawn," she said. "Condos are not popular in the Pacific Northwest. I don't think there's a bank in town that would want to finance 55 condos" on Northeast Martin Luther King Boulevard.

She added that prospective tenants would be screened for past problems, and that there would be a resident staff member to deal with problems in the complex.

Carl Talton, chairman of the Portland Development Commission and an NECDC board member, said, "During the Albina Community

Plan people said they wanted a diversity of housing here. At first we

concentrated on home ownership, and we've been a little too successful. People are being forced out of the area by rising home prices, and there's a need for low-income rental housing," he said.

Guill, Jeanmarie and Eugene Gora, owner of a nearby welding shop, were also concerned about traffic and parking congestion the building might generate. "There's traffic galore on Prescott now," Jeanmarie said, "and what do you think 55 units will do to that? I don't appreciate that." Guill and Gora also said they wanted fewer units in a lower structure.

Walker said the project will have 1.5 parking spaces per unit, as compared to .5 spaces for the Albina Corner project now under construction at Northeast San Rafael Street. Channa Grace of the Los Angeles-based ONE Corporation, a partner in the project, said planners have deliberately kept parking access off Northeast Martin Luther King Boulevard

so as not to disturb traffic flow.

Guill said this didn't address the parking needs of retail businesses that may occupy part of the ground floor, particularly since the boulevard has no on-street parking.

Stephen Foust, chair of the King Neighborhood Association's land use committee, said he liked the project. The association agreed to allow high density zoning on Northeast Martin Luther

King Boulevard during the Al-

bina Plan in order to get the city to preserve the single family housing behind it, he said. If the community won't accept the higher density, the city might reconsider this arrangement, he said.

Talton said, "No matter what you put on this site, someone will be unhappy. I think this will be successful. It won't be without problems, but we'll be able to handle them."

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Adapt-A-Home Program Wins National Award

The county of Multnomah, Oregon has been named the First Place winner in the category of counties in the 1995 N.O.D./UPS Community Awards Competition. The county will receive an award of \$3,500. Nine other communities nationwide received awards ranging from \$1,000 to \$10,000. The awards recognize the most creative programs across America which increase opportunities for people with disabilities to participate in the life of their communities.

The county was recognized for addressing the shortage of accessible, affordable housing for people with disabilities by funding the Adapt-A-Home Program created Unlimited Choices Inc., which offers grants to persons with disabilities of up to \$2,000 to be used to make houses or rental units accessible. Adapt-A-Home focuses on the needs of low-income and elderly residents, and on foster home and institutionalized housing. The grants are funded by Community Development Block Grant funds. The independent panel of judges commended the effective, professional evaluation of need and the bid process. The judges also noted the additional services offered by Unlimited Choices, Inc., the non-profit sponsor of the program, including independent living skills training, personalized counseling,

and education for program participants.

Program Director, Brenda Jose explains, "Adapt-A-Home is a program that is both fiscally conservative and socially responsible. By keeping people out of institutions, we save taxpayer dollars while preserving an independent quality of life. Integrating people with disabilities into our communities enriches us all."

Multnomah County Chair Beverly Stein, who accepted the UPS award at the Open House ceremony, praises the efforts of the staff of Unlimited Choices and the County's Community Development program. "This award and the opening of this new office are the icing on the cake for a program that has been providing an indispensable service to the community for over two years.

Senator Mark Hatfield adds, "Because of this creative program, many individuals with disabilities are benefiting from accessible, affordable housing, and those individuals involved should take great pride in their efforts."

The 1995 Community Awards Competition is sponsored by the United Parcel Service, which has underwritten a total of \$30,000 in cash awards for the ten winning communities.

Low-Income Energy Assistance Funds Still Available

Funds are still available through the Albina Ministerial Alliance (AMA) for residents of inner-North and Northeast Portland who need help paying their energy or water bills.

If you have not received "LIEAP" energy-assistance funds since October 1, 1995 or if you think you might qualify for a discount on your water bill, call AMA's Energy Hotline at 240-0828.



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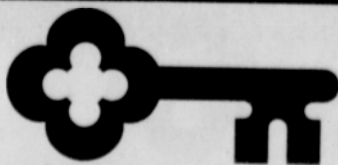
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