



Metro/Religion

The New Columbia Villa

STORY CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE

If the grant is awarded, construction could begin by 2003. However, Columbo adds that the program is "highly competitive," and many cities that have applied, such as Seattle, failed to receive funding the first time they tried. "The advice we've been given is if that happens, we should keep planning and gear up for the next opportunity," she says.

HAP has already had meetings with the Portland Bureau of Parks, the Portland School District, Portsmouth Neighborhood Association, Peninsula Community Development Corporation and its own tenant council to discuss the project and see how it could meet each group's needs.

"We've had meetings about this almost weekly, and we're very excited about it," Susan Franks, president of the Columbia Villa-Tanarack Tenant Council, and a resident since 1989, told the Portland Observer. "Everyone's excited about moving into a new building, but also about the new services we could get - a small library, a child care center, senior assisted living, and a grocery store - which is a big if."

The new services, and a new street system, would help the villa integrate better into the wider neighborhood and "put a stop to the idea that we're a little isolated community of our own," Franks says. First constructed in 1941 as housing for shipyard workers, the Villa was later expanded and its structures placed on permanent foundations. However, Columbo says, "It's now nearing the end of its useful life."

Franks agrees, saying that buildings are "constantly needing repairs." Under HOPE VI, however, "It's not enough just to repair the buildings," Columbo says. "You must also do community revitalization." The end result should not fit "the stereotypical image of acres of low-income housing that's gone into disrepair."

That, unfortunately, is precisely the image many Portlanders have of Columbia Villa: a crime-ridden dumping ground for poor people. One long-time Portland resident told the Portland Observer, "You couldn't pay me to live there."

It conflicts with one of the prime goals of the program: to turn the project into a true mixed-income community. According to this concept, people could come in as low-income tenants and work their way up to home ownership within the same community.

Mixed-income developments are a new phenomenon for Portland.

Albina Corner, at Northeast Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard and San Rafael Street, was conceived as one, but financing for market rate housing failed to materialize. Rosemont Commons in the Piedmont neighborhood, now under construction, is planned as a mixed-income project, and so is the Union Station Housing Project.

In the latter, developers hope that expensive "view" units on upper stories will subsidize low income housing lower down. Lisa Horne, director of Peninsula Community Development Corporation, says the idea has worked in other HOPE VI projects in Atlanta and Dallas. "You couldn't tell by looking which housing was the low-income," she says. "It reflects what we have here on the Peninsula now."

As for the stigma of crime problems, Horne, whose office has been in Columbia Villa since 1995, says, "That goes away if you spend any amount of time here." Franks agrees, saying that major crime problems were dealt with long ago. Partially handicapped, she says, "I've never had a problem," even at night.

Although much site work remains to be done, plans so far call for the housing to be spread over the grounds, interspersed with greenspace, in structures ranging from three stories and eight units to detached homes. "We don't want it to seem as if it all came out of the same cookie cutter," Columbo says. The potential use of urban renewal funds for the project created controversy and aroused suspicion by other neighborhoods.

Some observers feared that the Villa could become a "money pit" for funds that other groups covet.

Columbo says that such fears are unfounded, and that the funds would be used five or ten years from now, after the construction of a new light rail line and other community priorities.

Obituaries

Jefferson Davis Dawson

A funeral was held at 10 a.m. Tuesday, April 3, 2001, in Killingsworth Little Chapel of the Chimes for Jefferson Davis Dawson, who died March 26 at age 70. Mr. Dawson was born Oct. 27, 1930, in Texarkana, Texas, and was raised in Portland. He served in the U.S. Navy and then in the U.S. Army. He was a repairman in the Portland shipyards and a wiper for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Survivors include his mother, Virger; sister, Leona Gatson; and brother, Jessie. Interment was at Willamette National Cemetery.

Olive Bell Manning

A funeral was held at 11 a.m. Friday, March 30, 2001, in Caldwell's Colonial Chapel for Olive Bell Manning, who died on March 27 at age 77. Mrs. Manning was born Sept. 26, 1923, in San Antonio. She received an associate degree from Maryallen Lawson College in the early 1940s and graduated from Southern University. She moved to Portland in 1943 and earned a bachelor's degree in education from Warner Pacific College and a master's degree from Portland State University. She was an early childhood education teacher and specialist for the Portland Public Schools, retiring in the mid-1980s. In the 1970s, she hosted an educational TV program, "Head Start." In 1942, she married Levi M. Manning; he died in 1983.

Survivors include her sons, Eugene V., Rickie L. and DeWayne L.; daughters, Martina M. Manning, Sonya I. Manning, Sheree J. Manning and Andrena Y. Morris; 12 grandchildren; and 10 great-grandchildren.

Interment was at Rose City Cemetery. Remembrances to Olive Manning Endowment Fund. Arrangements by Caldwell's.

The Rev. Arthur Gray May

A funeral was held at 11 a.m. Friday, March 30, 2001, in New Hope Missionary Baptist Church in Portland for the Rev. Arthur Gray May, who died March 23 at age 68. The Rev. May was born Aug. 2, 1932, in Myrtlewood, Ala. He served in the U.S. Air Force during the Korean War. He moved to Portland in 1961 from Omaha, Neb., and was a supervisor for the U.S. Postal Service, retiring in 1986. He was an associate minister at his church. In 1961, he married Rosa L. Webster.

Survivors include his wife; daughters, Tina Streeter, Jeanine Morales-May and Karen; sons, Larry K. and Benjamin A.; sister, Alice Mitchell; brother, B.J.; and five grandchildren. Interment was at Willamette National Cemetery. Arrangements were by Killingsworth Little Chapel of the Chimes.

Willa Mae Chambers-Grissom

A funeral was held at 11:30 a.m. Monday, April 2, 2001, in North Baptist Church in Portland for Willa Mae Chambers-Grissom, who died March 29 at age 83. Mrs. Chambers-Grissom was born Dec. 19, 1917, in Edgefield, S.C. Her maiden name was Holloway. She moved to Portland in the 1950s and was a nurse's aide for several nursing homes, retiring around 1975. In 1940, she married Arthur Chambers; he died in 1952. In 1955, she married Clifford Grissom Jr.; he died in 1962.

Survivors include her sons, James A. Chambers Jr., Donald D. Chambers, Wesley W. Chambers and Richard Chambers; daughters, Anna L. Chambers, Artie M. Christmas and Deborah Kabia; brothers, Robert Holloway and Oscar Holloway; sisters, RosaBelle Holloway, Peggy Crawford, Jenny Black, Nellie Bradwell and Kathy Kendricks; 15 grandchildren; and 10 great-grandchildren.

Interment was at Willamette National Cemetery. Arrangements were made by Caldwell's.

Charles E. Fair Sr.

Services were scheduled for Charles E. Fair Sr. on Wednesday, April 4 at 3 p.m. at Lincoln Memorial Park and Funeral Home, 11801 S.E. Mt. Scott Blvd. Mr. Fair died March 28. Mr. Fair was born Feb. 19, 1932 in Mound Bayou, Miss. He graduated from Cleveland High School in Revona, Miss. He recently retired from Kaiser Permanente, where he worked for several years. Mr. Fair was known as a jokester and for making everyone laugh. He leaves his wife, Mary Barrientos-Fair; his father, Jesse; his children, Sandra Killings, Charlene Fair Bell, Alena Dawson, Charles Jr., Rene Ward, Tonya and Derrick Ward; sisters Lois A. Grimm, Christine Jones, and Anita Ball; brothers David, Gail and Chris Stevens, 7 grandchildren and 4 great-grandchildren.

There will be a second memorial service on April 5 at 11 a.m. at Lincoln Memorial Park & Funeral Home.

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