

New Housing Director sketches new project ideas

By SAMANTHA MCKENZIE
Chronicle Staff Writer

Arthur S. Milligan Jr. has spent one short month as executive director for the Winston-Salem Housing Authority and would like to make it known that he doesn't like it when people use the word "projects" when referring to low-income housing. "They are public housing communities. They can no longer be called projects. We've been operating since 1937 and we've been successful," he remarked.

Now that's off his chest, Milligan continues, he's looking forward to making significant improvements for the residents of the said 'communities.'

"We're in the process of finding out what (the residents) would like to see done in their communities," he said. Milligan said the authority has already passed out surveys to the occupants.

A few programs already brewing in his head are tutorial classes, cultural classes and modernization projects that will enhance the quality of life for the residents.

During his first month on the job, Milligan said, he's spent his time addressing complaints from residents and meeting with resident councils.

His biggest challenge will be to satisfy his customers, who he readily admits, are the residents.

"That's what a lot of directors seem to forget. The residents are their customers. We're the biggest landlords around and we have to serve our tenants," he said.

The public housing authority is quasi-city entity that is funded by the federal government. The authority reports to a board of commissioners appointed by the mayor. The Winston-Salem Housing Authority Board of Commissioners include D.D. Adams, chair; Larry Little; William Andrews; Ross Andrews; Louise Davis; and, Phoebe Satterwhite. Milligan said the board is scheduled to hold a retreat on Saturday to discuss long-term goals of the housing authority.

"What I've found is that there are a lot of good people in Winston-Salem who care about housing and even though there are problems, there are also opportunities here," he said. There are approximately 2100 units owned by the housing authority.

"My job is to make the units a decent safe environment that the people can call their homes. His year-end goal will be to lower the number of vacant units which currently near the 100 mark.

"The residents do deserve the best of everything," he said.

While he admits changes to the overall housing communities will take a little bit of time, he's glad he was chosen to do the job.

"I get paid well and I get to help people; particularly African-Americans," he said. "There aren't much people who can say that." African-Americans make up approximately 75% of the public housing units in Winston-Salem.

Milligan also wants people to know that his doors to suggestions are always open. "I tell people

they're welcome to by with a list of problems, just make sure you bring a list of solutions also," he said.

Milligan commended the Happy Hill Gardens Community for the recent purchase of the corner store. "That shows that the residents care," he said.

"When the people decide that they want drug dealers out of their communities that's when they'll get out. I haven't seen a community that has cleaned up its neighborhood that wasn't initiated by the residents," said the 34-year-old director.

Milligan is a native of Columbia, S.C. Before coming to Winston-Salem, Milligan served three years as executive director for the Rocky Mount Housing Authority. He also served two years as assistant executive director of Wilson Housing Authority.

Even though he graduated college with a degree in biology and a minor in psychology, Milligan said, his years in managerial positions has well prepared him for his present job.

"Management has been my forte," said Milligan who graduated from The Citadel of Charleston, S.C. in 1980.

Milligan has also served as a manager at First Wachovia Corporation in Atlanta, Ga. and as an industrial engineer at Blue Bell Wrangler in Wilson,



Arthur S. Milligan Jr.

N.C. before getting into the housing. He has received a distinguished service award from Rocky Mount Jaycees and was nominated as one of the five outstanding young North Carolinians for 1990.

CDC to tackle new community projects

By SAMANTHA MCKENZIE
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The East Winston Community Development Corporation met Saturday for its third annual meeting at the Winston Lake Family YMCA to announce the progress of the New Walkertown Market Shopping Center which had been at a stand still for the past six months and its plans for upcoming projects.

Executive Director James Grace Jr. said CDC is moving forward to secure tenants at the development site, but have no definite prospects at the time.

Janet DeCreny, city economic development coordinator said "city has reverted the land back" to its ownership, but are still accepting any proposals from CDC. The only business open at the site is the ABC (Alcoholic Beverage Control) Store.

"We're doing everything humanly possible to get this shopping center open and back on track," he said. Following the delay in Phase I of the project which included the construction of the ABC store and the building of connector roads, turning lanes and landscaping, CDC has been actively working on securing tenants.

"There were some mistakes made," Grace said during the two-hour meeting, but quickly assured the group that those mistakes will be used to prepare CDC for future projects.

Two projects that will assist the continuing success of CDC's commitment to community development is the 36 East Housing Rehabilitation Project and its most recent partnership with Winston Salem State University through SEEDCO. The 36-East housing project has already begun.

"Because we made those mistakes (on the shopping center project) we were able to move pretty swiftly in securing the 36-complex project," Grace said.

In January, CDC purchased 36 of the "city's worst units" from the city for \$725,000. The rehabilitation of three buildings located on 19th and Cleveland avenues started shortly after.

While the housing units are being renovated, Grace added, programs like Neighbors for Better Neighborhoods, Homebuyers Club and Tenant Training, are available for residents to get involved in the development of the East Winston and becoming homeowners.

Another project recently added, called SEEDCO, Grace said, will serve as a backbone to the other CDC projects. SEEDCO is a national non-profit organization that specializes in revitalizing low and moderate income neighborhoods by

enlisting the help of universities and other urban institutions. CDC formed a partnership with Winston-Salem State University with the help of a \$21,000 grant from R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Co. The goal of the partnership, Grace explained, was to pool resources and expertise with the university that will aid East Winston's development.

But, Grace stressed, the projects will and can not be successful without the support of the community.

"We don't have enough people to say 'I'd like to take on this project to move it along,'" he said. "We can't do everything. We need the help of the community. My job is to try to assist in building the community."

Approximately 40 people attended the meeting and six additional board members were voted in. Also attending the Saturday morning meeting were WSSU Chancellor Cleon Thompson; County Commissioner Earline Parmon; 12 District candidate, Larry Little; and school board candidate David Thompkins.

"The community needs economic development but we also need human development. And they go hand-in-hand," Grace said.

Other projects addressed at the meeting included the city's Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy; Church/CDC Partnership; Adoption of LIFT, Inc. and a monthly community forum sched-

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