

East Winston Task Force tags two 'blighted' areas for improvements

By VALERIE ROBACK GREGG
Chronicle Staff Writer

Two East Winston areas have been declared "blighted" by the city Planning Board so the city can improve the areas' environment and economy, a planning official told the East Winston Development Task Force Thursday.

The city may eventually be able to acquire and refurbish the blighted plots -- one 42 acres and the other 23 acres -- said Ann Massey, city planning division supervisor.

The move is included in the East Winston Area Plan adopted by the Board of Aldermen last September. The plan calls for the redevelopment of East Winston by improving transportation, housing and the economy.

The \$9 million raised in last November's bond referendum will fund the city's renovation of the blighted areas. The city will renovate some of the apartment buildings there for public housing, other buildings will be demolished and vacant lots filled with tall weeds and debris will be cleared, Massey said.

A survey of the blighted areas, conducted by the city Housing Services Department, determined that the structures have fallen into such disrepair that many must be demolished or renovated in order to successfully redevelop East Winston. The city Planning Board and Department of Housing and Redevelopment are now designing a redevelopment plan for the blighted areas. The redevelopment plan is another step in the East Winston Area Plan, and must be approved by both the city Planning Board and

Board of Aldermen.

Neighborhood meetings will be held near the end of August, before final completion of the plan, said Monica Lett, director of the city Department of Housing and Neighborhood Development. Lett said she hopes the redevelopment plan will receive final approval by November.

"We're almost at the end of the planning stage now and ready to begin implementation," Director of Housing Services David R. Brooks said Friday. To implement the plan, the city will acquire some of the land through condemnation and then demolish or renovate it, Brooks said.

Under state urban redevelopment law, if an area fits the definition of "blighted", the city can take control of the land. To be declared blighted, the area's buildings must be dilapidated, deteriorated, have poor ventilation and lighting, have little open space, pose fire hazards, and have unsanitary and unsafe conditions -- all of which impair the sound economic growth of the area, Massey said. These conditions contribute to health problems, infant mortality, crime and juvenile delinquency.

At least two-thirds of the buildings must fall into this category in order for the city to claim the land, Massey said. "There were two areas in East Winston where we found these conditions," she said.

The 23-acre "blighted" section borders to the south at 18th Street, on the west at Liberty Street, on the north at 21st Street, and on the east at Cleveland Avenue. The 42-acre plot borders to the south on 14th Street, to the west at Cleveland



photo by Mike Cunningham

The East Winston Task Force has identified two areas in East Winston as "blighted" and targeted the areas for economical and environmental improvements.

Avenue, on the north at 18th Street, and on the East at Jackson Avenue.

Of 148 structures in the 42-acre area, only 18 need no repairs, Massey said. About one-half of the houses here were built before 1940 and, "they do show their age," she said. Several overgrown lots there are filled with trash and debris and

10 lots, but no buildings, are owned by the city. About 412 people live in the area.

In the 23-acre area, only four of the 73 buildings there need no repairs. Drugs are a serious crime problem in this area, Massey said, and about 235 people live there. Of the 146 housing units available in

the area, only 93 are occupied. Many are vacant and boarded up. City Alderman and real estate agent Virginia K. Newell said the

action is "a step in the right direction" and should eventually encourage development.

Ernest H. Pitt, chairman of the task force, asked Massey if the city had plans to promote the area's commercial development. Massey said, "The city does not have a very aggressive marketing program for East Winston, but the first major step is in implementing the housing plan."

The possibility of declaring part of East Winston an "Enterprise Zone" to attract commercial development has been discussed by the task force, but state funds to finance this effort have not yet been approved, city Development Director J. Allen Jones said.

"The enterprise zones could be important," Pitt said. "We need to follow that. I have a concern that the city follows through on that commitment."

While conditions in these areas of East Winston have worsened over the last three years, they are substantially better than five years ago, Massey said. "The worst has come down," she said. "The Board of Aldermen had an aggressive policy of going after slum lords, and many units were torn down." The Board of Aldermen voted just last month to condemn four buildings on Cannon and Gray Streets.

The city Department of Housing and Redevelopment has developed a five-year housing and redevelopment schedule for East Winston, Massey told the task force.

\$28K earmarked to fight AIDS in E. Winston

By VALERIE ROBACK GREGG
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The Forsyth County Health Department has pinpointed East Winston as harboring the greatest concentration of people in the city who are at risk of contracting AIDS. Consequently, county groups are aiming the fight against the disease at the city's Afro-American community.

The Winston-Salem AIDS Task Force and STEP ONE, Inc., a drug abuse treatment program, have applied for a \$28,000 federal grant to conduct an intense AIDS education effort in East Winston. The state will vote on the grant in early August, said John Shields, executive director of STEP ONE, Inc.

East Winston was identified as an AIDS high risk area because the highest concentration of intravenous drug users are known to live there, and AIDS is spreading most rapidly among that group, Shields said. IV drug users are at risk of AIDS because they commonly share drug

needles, he said.

"When they say the highest risk group is in East Winston, it is because it's easier to find them there, because of the way housing is," Shields said. "That's not to say there's not as many whites doing it elsewhere. We don't want to give the false impression that it's just a Black problem, but one of our biggest problems is convincing the Black community that it's not just a gay, white disease."

The grant would be part of \$90,000 of federal funds earmarked especially for the state's minority communities and dispensed through the North Carolina AIDS Control Program. "Some of the assumptions behind that is the higher rate of addiction among low-income people," Shields said.

The \$28,000 grant would help STEP ONE, Inc. and the county's AIDS Task Force to educate IV drug users in East Winston. Two half-time employees will be employed by STEP ONE to search out IV drug users there and tell them how to

avoid getting and transmitting AIDS.

The problem of AIDS among the Afro-American community, both men and women, heterosexual and homosexual, is growing, according to statistics from the Division of Health Services AIDS Control Program. Of the 558 AIDS cases reported to the Center for Disease Control by June 27, 249 -- or 45.8 percent -- of the victims were Afro-Americans, 54 were females and 504 were males. About 54 percent of the reported cases have already died.

According to Dr. Thomas R. Dundon, director of the Reynolds Health Center, 55 Forsyth County natives have contracted the disease and reported it to the county Health Department. This figure does not include those who are infected with the AIDS virus but have not yet developed the disease, he said. "For every person reported to have AIDS, there are a number of people who have been infected," Dundon said. "There are more whites with the disease, but the incidence within the

Black population is higher."

Shields said that AIDS is now spreading faster nationwide among IV drug users than any other group. STEP ONE is only one of several drug treatment programs in the city, but 65 percent of their admissions during the last fiscal year were Afro-American. Of the total 539 admissions in STEP ONE last year, 135 were IV drug users. "And I wouldn't be surprised if that's only 5 percent of the folks who are (IV drug users in the city)," Shields said.

If approved, about \$20,000 of the grant money will be used for the two employees' salaries, \$1,025 will purchase condoms for the employees to distribute, and the remainder will be used for administrative purposes, Shields said.

Every patient in the STEP ONE program must attend an AIDS education workshop, Shields said. Reynolds Health Center also conducts regular AIDS education sessions as well as counseling for those who are tested for the AIDS virus, Physicians' Assistant Robert Wooten said.

Hatcher says Britt is threat From Page A1

Hatcher accused Britt of being relentless and biased in his prosecution of minorities.

Britt had faced serious opposition for the judgeship from Julian Pierce, an Indian and Pembroke attorney, who was murdered before the primary election. Pierce was reportedly killed by an irate acquaintance, who later killed himself. Despite his death, Robeson County voters still delivered a sym-

bolic victory to Pierce.

Hatcher and many Robeson County Indians remain skeptical about the nature of Pierce's death. "We have two investigators working around the clock on the Julian Pierce case," said Hatcher.

He said that they had requested a Congressional investigation into the activities of law enforcement officials in Robeson County.

Hatcher moved to Winston-

Salem to live with his uncle, Jim Hatcher, a former candidate for the County Board of Commissioners. His trial had been scheduled for this week, but has been postponed until August 7.

He said he planned to spend a lot of his time getting Afro-Americans and other minorities, in Winston-Salem and around the state, organized against Britt.

"Blacks and other minorities

need to know what will happen if he is elected Superior Court judge," said Hatcher.

He addressed the congregation at Emmanuel Baptist Church Sunday. He said he planned to speak with other ministers and heads of organizations. "They need to inform their church members and organization members of what's going on so they will know what to do."

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