



Hawthorne Empowerment Coalition

The Source

Your Source for News and Views in *YOUR* Community

September, 2004

PHA fires two firms from King complex *The Housing Authority, citing delays, will take over the final phases of the S. Phila. development.*

By Anthony S. Twyman
Inquirer Staff Writer

Citing delays in construction, the Philadelphia Housing Authority board yesterday fired Universal Homes and Pennrose Properties as developers of two phases of the Martin Luther King housing development in South Philadelphia.

The five-member board, which is chaired by Mayor Street, voted, 3-0, to terminate two contracts totaling nearly \$29 million with Uni-Penn, the limited-liability company formed by Universal and Pennrose. The board made its vote without any discussion and with two members absent.

Officials at Pennrose and Universal could not be reached yesterday for comment.

The Housing Authority plans to take over where Uni-Penn left off on the remaining two phases of the four-phase project.

It will construct the project through its recently formed development arm. And, despite having fired Uni-Penn, it will collaborate with Universal, headed by Philadelphia music mogul Kenny Gamble, on the remaining two phases.

"Universal is still in the transaction," said Carl R. Greene, authority executive director. "In effect, Universal is our partner moving forward, but we bring into the transaction the responsibility of managing the construction."

Greene said the Housing Authority would rely on Universal's existing neighborhood social services programs, schools, job training and home ownership counselors.

The board's action means that Pennrose will lose out on more than \$600,000 in development fees it would have received for completing the second and fourth phases of the redevelopment project.

"The Housing Authority felt the developer was behind on his schedule, and we have commitments to make sure all of our projects move on time," Greene said.

The authority had hoped to complete the redevelopment project, which began in 2000, by January 2005. The completion date has now been pushed back to January 2006.

"It's not our intent to cast any aspersions toward their company," Greene said. "In this particular situation, we thought that we were the best person to take responsibility for saving the reputation and the image of the Housing Authority as an effective,

efficient developer."

The second phase of the Martin Luther King redevelopment project, in the vicinity of 13th and Fitzwater Streets, involves building 109 townhouses that will be put up for sale. This phase of the project will cost \$18.9 million.

The fourth phase of the redevelopment project involves building 42 rental homes at a cost of \$9.98 million. The total includes the cost of streets, sidewalks and other infrastructure.

The entire redevelopment project involves the construction of 245 homes, as well as the renovation of a community center and a nearby park.

It will not be the first time that the Housing Authority has acted as developer. The authority developed the old Tasker Homes, now called the Greater Grays Ferry Estates, in South Philadelphia, and it developed portions of the Cambridge Plaza housing development in North Philadelphia.

Contact staff writer Anthony S. Twyman at 215-854-2664 or atwyman@phillynews.com.

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Next HEC Meeting

September 14, 2004

7:30 P.M. – General Meeting

at the

Arts Bank

Aerial View:**A Corner of Hawthorne 1913**

Arrow points to 13th and Christian Streets



Photo's courtesy of Mr. Bob Arlington. Thank you Bob—got any more?



Broad and Christian Streets (City Hall in the center)

Lets Meet

Starting in September Monthly Meetings will be held at The Arts Bank, Broad and South Streets.

PLEASE NOTE – THE OCTOBER MEETING WILL BE HELD MONDAY OCTOBER 11, 2004, at 7:30

Listed below are the meeting dates for the upcoming year. All meetings begin at 7:30 P.M. sharp. Don't be late you may miss some important information.

Tuesday–September 14, 2004; Monday–October 11 2004;
 Tuesday–November 9, 2004; Tuesday–December 14, 2004;
 Tuesday–January 11, 2005; Tuesday–February 8, 2005;
 Tuesday–March 15, 2005; Tuesday–April 12, 2005;
 Tuesday–May 10, 2005

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