



Southwest Visions Inc.

Spring 2006

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MISSION STATEMENT

Believing in the dignity of all people and their right to decent, affordable housing, Southwest Visions, Inc. provides low- and moderate-income rental and home-ownership opportunities while creating a more stable neighborhood.

PRINCIPLES AND VISION

Southwest Visions, Inc. sets and maintains a high standard of quality in construction, property management, and services it offers to residents and families who rent or purchase properties from the organization.

Human dignity and quality of life for the individuals we serve is always our first priority.

Southwest Visions collaborates and partners with other organizations to improve the standard of living through meeting the spiritual, social, health, environmental, and security needs of individuals, families and neighborhoods.

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PRESERVING AFFORDABLE HOUSING IN HOT MARKET NEIGHBORHOODS

As the development around Baltimore City's Inner Harbor accelerates, anyone who hasn't been in the area in the past six months will be amazed to see the large number of construction projects that have emerged. The housing market in Baltimore has outperformed even national trends, and city-wide development projects, both large and small, are taking place everywhere.

What now concerns many people, and not just advocates for affordable housing, is that the housing boom is generating a decrease in the number of decent houses available for families in the lower economic tiers. Such concerns have helped raise the awareness of citizens and government officials alike to the need to preserve housing for workers in jobs that pay low wages but provide critical services to the community.

Legislation has been introduced in the Baltimore City Council, CC Bill 05-0700, that would require new development over 30 units to maintain 10 percent of the units for buyers whose income was 80 percent or under the Baltimore area median. (\$52,000 for a three person household in Baltimore City). Many housing advocates feel this does not adequately address the shortage, particularly considering nearly one-quarter of Baltimore City residents live at or below the federal poverty level. There is a growing need for quality, affordable rental units and homeownership opportunities that work within the budget of people employed as nurses aids, school teachers, policemen and firemen. It is even more difficult for the working poor, those employed full-time holding minimum-wage jobs and earn less than \$20,000 a year, to secure housing.

Southwest Visions has joined with other groups to lobby for a more comprehensive plan. Groups such as the Archdiocesan program Beyond the Boundaries, the Citizens Planning and Housing Association (CPHA), and BRIDGE, are also urging the council to lower the income-range to include very-low income families and to increase the percentage of lower-income units that are set aside.

As a result of these efforts, the city has convened an Inclusionary Zoning Task Force, ably chaired by Michael Sarbanes, executive director of CPHA,

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Purchasing a home in Maryland has become so expensive that it is beyond the buying power of the average earner



THE SUN
DAVID HOBBY (SUN PHOTOGRAPHER)

SUNDAY 03.12.2006

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MARTINI WITH A TWIST

In late January we gathered at the Martini Bar at the Luna Bella Restaurant on Baltimore National Pike to thank the many sponsors and restaurants of our *Taste of the Town* event. It was an honor to "toast" such a generous group of supporters.

RESTAURANTS

G.L. SHACKS GRILL
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JORDAN'S STEAK HOUSE
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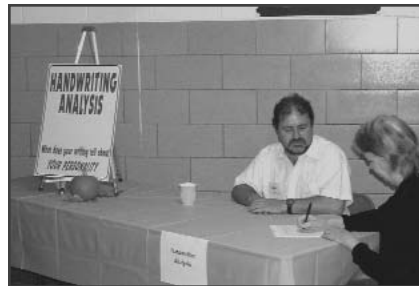
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TASTE OF THE TOWN

A large and enthusiastic crowd braved a rainy, blustery night last October and turned out for the 2nd annual *Taste* event. Again held at the Church of the Resurrection in Ellicott City, guests sampled delicious appetizers, entrees and desserts from many excellent local restaurants, indulged in wine and beer, all to the smooth jazz of Phil Heiliger Quintet. The Silent Auction was a highlight of the evening, featuring a chance to bid on such items as restaurant packages, two nights at an Ocean City B&B, sports memora-



Viewing some Silent Auction items



*Handwriting analysis
thanks to Craig Strohmer*

abilia, tickets to the Terps and many other items donated by Ellicott City merchants. A raffle drawing for gift certificates to local restaurants in Ellicott City and Columbia completed the evening.



*Bob Connolly presents
the Vision Award*

The Annual Vision Award was presented posthumously this year to Steve Costello and graciously accepted by his wife, Barbara. Steve was an ardent supporter of the mission of Southwest Visions, and served as Chairman of the Board of Directors for over five years.

From the Executive Director . .

This is indeed a time of change and challenge in southwest Baltimore! The staff and Board of Southwest Visions are responding to these opportunities by developing new projects and partnerships, all in an effort to provide for more families who are searching for a decent home or apartment where they can be comfortable and secure. The need for decent housing is so great we cannot be complacent with our past accomplishments. We are working hard to increase our capacity to assist a greater number of families in need.

We appreciate the help and support that, as partners in our Mission, you have given in the past. We ask for your continued generosity and prayers.

*Brenda Dymond
Executive Director*

AN HISTORIC FIND

to bring private and non-profit developers, housing advocates, city planners and housing department officials together to study best practices in communities throughout the country and make recommendations. Members of this Inclusionary Zoning Task Force have been meeting monthly since October to prepare recommendations for the City Council. We hope these recommendations will also be included in the new Baltimore City Comprehensive Master Plan which is being devel-



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Master Plan effort.

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oped by the City Planning Department to guide its resource deployment for the next six years.

These forums have provided Southwest Visions an excellent opportunity to speak out for the needs of the people we serve and those who struggle daily to find decent shelter for themselves and their families.

According to the NLIHC:

**Maryland
ranks as the 4th least
affordable state nation-
wide for home owners
and renters**

A previous newsletter detailed our 101 S. Arlington Street renovation project, one that a number of volunteer groups have helped us work on. This house was the first property purchased by Southwest Visions in 1986. It originally served as a community food bank and the property was later renovated into two apartments. Last year Southwest Visions decided to pull the property from our rental inventory and renovate the first floor one-bedroom unit to accommodate a person with wheelchair requirements. A spacious, three-bedroom unit will comprise the second and third floors.



McAuley Food Center
opening dedication in 1986



101 Arlington today

Bradford Bank, Baltimore City Office of Project Finance - HOME, Maryland Affordable Housing Trust and the Black & Decker Corporation are all contributing renovation funds for this project.

Baltimore City Office of Project Finance requires approval from Maryland Historic Trust on all projects. Although the property is not in a designated historic district, it is considered a unique structure. Maryland Historic Trust notes that 101 S. Arlington may be one of (or the only one) remaining example in Maryland of an 1830's era storefront. The review by Maryland Historic Trust, along with changes required by our architect to preserve the unique features of this property, have resulted in numerous delays. In late February 2006, Maryland Historic Trust agreed to our proposed renovations. Southwest Visions is proud to own such a unique building.



Current facade



27 State St.
Newburyport, MA



Sketch of proposed
renovation

Our revised plans will bring the building back as close as possible to its original appearance. We are fortunate to be able to use an existing 1820 building located in Newburyport, MA as a guide for this type of storefront building.



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WHO IS SOUTHWEST VISIONS ?

As a non-profit community housing development organization founded in 1983 by Sr. Katherine Nueslein RSM, Southwest Visions:

- * Holds as its first priority human dignity and quality of life for those we serve.
- * Renovates vacant and deteriorating houses in Southwest Baltimore.
- * Creates home ownership and rental opportunities for low to moderate income families.
- * Provides a variety of volunteer opportunities.
- * Collaborates with others for the stabilization of the neighborhood.



Southwest Visions Office Dedication



Gathering for the dedication of The Costello Building

Located just across the street from the historic Hollins Market, the Southwest Visions office building was purchased by the organization in October 2002. Staff, board members and volunteers worked hard to renovate this former sushi bar into the organization's office facility.

In recognition of the financial support Steve Costello graciously contributed to Southwest Visions, his professional advice as a developer and his dedication to our mission, the Southwest Visions Board of Directors voted to name and dedicate the building as The Costello Building in his honor.

The Costello family and friends gathered on a warm September afternoon to pay tribute to Steve. Father Joseph Lacey, pastor of St. Alphonsus Rodriguez in Woodstock, offered the blessing and Sr. Katherine Nueslein, RSM dedicated the building to his memory.



Unveiling a portrait of Steve Costello

