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Ruggles group gets nod to develop Parcel 3

Neal Simpson

A seven-acre plot of land on Tremont Street, now littered with chunks of concrete, rusted pipes and the carcass of a red Toyota, may soon

be the home to shops, restaurants, affordable housing and a 60,000-square-foot museum for the National Center of Afro-American Artists (NCAAA).

The proposed project, called Ruggles Place, received the initial go-ahead from a committee of community members on April 26, beating out proposals from two competing developers.

"We're very pleased," said E.J. Walton, president of Elma Lewis Partners LLC, the developer behind Ruggles Place. "We are looking forward to an opportunity to continue working in good faith with the community to make that parcel vibrant for our youth."

The Ruggles Place proposal now goes to the Boston Redevelopment Authority, which will decide whether

to award the project final designation for development on the Parcel P-3 site, located across the street from the Boston Police headquarters in Roxbury.

"The BRA will give them some time to refine the package, to make sure the letters of interest become letters of commitment," said BRA planner Hugues Monestime.

At a meeting of the Parcel P-3 Project Review Committee (PRC) last Thursday, seven out of 10 members voted in favor of recommending the Ruggles Place project, which was designed by Elma Lewis Partners LLC in conjunction with the NCAAA. The remaining three votes went to the Heritage Common project, backed by the Canyon-Johnson Urban Fund and other investors.

Madison Park Development Corporation's controversial Tremont Center, which originally included a 300-unit Northeastern University dormitory, received no votes.

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First lady Diane Patrick (right) leaves with her husband, Gov. Deval Patrick (left), after the two attended the 2007 Victim Rights Conference at the State House in Boston last Thursday.

Diane Patrick made her first public appearance since deciding in March to step back from her public role due to exhaustion and depression. (AP photo/Chitose Suzuki)

City Council holds hearing on trespassing controversy

David Pomerantz

The Boston City Council held a long and tense hearing Monday in an effort to learn the reaction of public housing residents to a controversial trespassing policy proposed by the Boston Housing Authority (BHA).

The general answer the council received was that most everyone wants a policy that keeps them safe without infringing on their rights. But tenant leaders and housing advocates disagreed sharply on the details of such a policy.

The controversy comes at a time when violence in Boston is on the rise, with much of it occurring in or near public housing developments. There have been 19 murders in the city in 2007, compared with 14 at this time last year.

At the same time, sharp cuts in federal housing funds have forced the city to pay \$2.2 million just to keep the BHA's police force afloat through this September. As it is now, there are only 26 BHA police officers for 64 public housing developments in Boston that house 26,000 residents.

The new trespassing policy was first proposed on March 12 and, since that time, has sparked both criticism and approval from tenants and their representatives.

The major departure from the BHA's previous policy is a new section that allows for individuals who have received a "no-trespass notice" to file for an internal review of the notice with the BHA Department of Public Safety.

The BHA's chief of police, Stephen Melia, would then have final say **Trespass**, continued to page 14

Turner: Peace we seek must come from within

Yawu Miller

City Councilor Chuck Turner is not hesitant to point out that Americans live in a violent society. He spearheaded a council resolution calling on the state's congressional delegation to bring U.S. troops home from Iraq and curtail the more than \$600 billion per year the government allocates to military expenditures.

But when it comes to the wave of violence now gripping Boston's black, Latino and Cape Verdean communities, Turner is urging his constituents to look within for answers.

"To change the conditions, the people who are feeling the negative impact need to take action," Turner said.

Turner is asking his constituents



City Councilor Chuck Turner explains his peace pledge during a meeting at the Twelfth Baptist Church. Turner's initiative asks local residents to take personal responsibility for the violence in their community. (Yawu Miller photo)

in City Council District 7 to sign a "peace pledge" vowing to do no harm to others. The pledge has three other elements — a pledge to develop oneself physically, mentally,

emotionally and spiritually; to develop a legal economic strategy for self and family; and a pledge to hold the government accountable for its role in society.

Explaining the idea of the community looking inward for the root causes of violence, Turner cited statistics showing that there are more than 3,000 restraining orders a year filed in courts that serve the city's communities of color.

"These are people who are saying, 'Protect me from verbal abuse or physical abuse,'" he said, speaking at a community meeting at the Twelfth Baptist Church in Roxbury on Monday.

"If we have 3,000 people who **Turner**, continued to page 10



The curtain goes up tonight for the engaging "Street Lights," a new original play penned by and featuring Boston Arts Academy seniors. The play's five vignettes explore issues such as sexual abuse, drug use and violence at BAA's Black Box Theatre, 174 Ipswich Street, Boston. Call 617-635-6470 x515 or visit www.bostonartsacademy.org for tickets. (Photo courtesy of Boston Arts Academy)

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