

Developing a better neighborhood

NDA helps turn around Jackson Street

By PAUL HALLORAN

Mike Pasquale and his wife, Anne, will no longer have to struggle to answer the inevitable question when friends visit for the first time: "What's the story with that house next door?"

For two decades, the Pasquales, who keep a meticulously groomed front yard, could only shrug when asked that question. Thanks to the efforts of Neighborhood Development Associates (NDA) and the City, that is no longer the case.

"This has worked out beautifully," Mike Pasquale said, referring to the new, two-family home at 46 Jackson St. that has been built by NDA, a not-for-profit housing corporation.

The former house at 46 Jackson St. had been vacant for more than 20 years and had become a haven for illicit and illegal activity. Pasquale, who has lived in the neighborhood since 1972, would tell anyone who would listen that the blight was seriously impacting the quality of life in the neighborhood, yet for years nothing was done.

Then along came Ward 3 Councilor Darren Cyr and NDA. Pasquale had never met Cyr until three years ago, when he asked him to come down and take a look at the abandoned house. From that point on, things began to change.

Cyr worked with his council colleagues, the mayor's office, NDA and its administrative partner, the Lynn Housing Authority & Neighborhood Development, to eradicate the problem. NDA was eventually able to purchase the property from the former owner, demolish the eyesore and build a new townhouse that features two 3-bedroom, 1½-bathroom units.

"No matter what the City tried to do, there was always a roadblock put up," said Cyr, who contacted LHAND Executive Director Charles Gaeta in an effort to solve the problem. "LHAND and NDA came in and worked with us to come up with a solution agreeable to all parties. Everybody in the neighborhood is thrilled that house is gone."

"This project really defines what our agency is about," said NDA board member Oliver Toomey. "By redeveloping this property and a few others in the area, we are able to make a significant positive impact in the neighborhood."

Pasquale gives the bulk of the credit to Cyr and NDA.

"(Cyr) has worked his butt off for this neighborhood," he said. "His top priority was getting rid of that house. He and the NDA have done a great job for this neighborhood."

NDA is working on other projects in the Jackson Street/Essex Street area. The agency bought a foreclosed property at 63 Jackson St. and plans to rehab the house back to a single-family from the three-family it had been converted to. The house sits on a double lot, with 10 garage bays in the back. Those will also be knocked down in order to reduce density.

In addition to Jackson Street, NDA has redeveloped a property at 160 Essex St., which included demolishing a two-family house and building a new single-family.

"An old East Lynn neighborhood is getting a facelift," said Peggy Phelps, assistant director of Neighborhood Development Services for LHAND. "We

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Peggy Phelps, LHAND

encourage the neighbors to get involved. Redevelopment is contagious. The LHAND is also offering loan and grant programs to Jackson Street neighbors to spruce up their homes as part of the comprehensive neighborhood development plan.”

For more information about NDA visit www.lhand.org or call 781-477-2800.



From top, Ward 3 City Councilor Darren Cyr, NDA board member Oliver Toomey, Peggy Phelps of LHAND, and Jackson Street residents Mike and Anne Pasquale in front of the new house that replaced one that had been vacant for more than 20 years (right).



NDA

Neighborhood Development Associates, Inc.