

THE ADVOCATE

NEWSPAPER ARCHIVES

Rehabilitating Melrose East

Advocate - Baton Rouge, La.

Date: Mar 9, 2004

Section: News

With reference to Howard Gyler's letter to The Advocate's Readers' Views editor, dated Monday, March 1, regarding the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's misguided and irrational plans to allow the incompetent East Baton Rouge Parish Housing Authority the opportunity to assume ownership of the Tall Timbers Apartments complex in the Melrose East area (formerly known as Mall City) in Baton Rouge for a token \$174,000, rather than making an effort to resell it to the highest bidder for \$2 million to \$3 million that would be of far greater benefit to the nation's "overtaxed" taxpayers on a defaulted \$7 million loan.

Public housing, national shame, HUD's to blame! In just 12 months, Howard Gyler and his associates have accomplished what decades of incompetent mismanagement of the East Baton Rouge Parish Housing Authority has never been able to repair, rebuild and revive a blighted and crime-infested urban neighborhood to provide safe, decent and sanitary affordable housing that promotes serviceability, efficiency, economy and stability for the poor and low-income people of East Baton Rouge Parish.

Where is the public outrage? The time, effort and financial investment of developers such as Mr. Gyler and his associates as well as the other developers making an outstanding effort to rehabilitate the Melrose East neighborhood should not be put in jeopardy by rewarding a failed agency with additional multifamily housing units that will surely, within a very short time, be returned to its former blighted, crime-infested state, not physically fit and safe for human habitability.

The developers rehabilitating the Melrose East neighborhood are making a dramatic, positive difference in the future quality of life of those who have few advocates. The developers deserve our commendation and need our support! I urge the people of East Baton Rouge Parish to phone or write U.S. Rep. Richard Baker, U.S. Sen. John Breaux and U.S. Sen. Mary Landrieu (their phone numbers and addresses are in your local phone book) and request that they intervene on behalf of the poor and low-income people who reside in the Melrose East neighborhood.

Max J. Thibodeaux Jr.

3224 Wytchwood Drive

Morgan City