

February 23, 2007 - Slaughter Holds Press Conference to Announce First Demolition in Revitalization Project

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Slaughter Holds Press Conference to Announce First Demolition in Buffalo Revitalization Project

Buffalo, NY - Rep. Louise M. Slaughter (D-Fairport), Chairwoman of the House Rules Committee, today held a press conference with City of Buffalo Mayor Byron Brown to announce that work is now underway on a project to revitalize an ailing Buffalo neighborhood. Following the press conference, demolition began on the abandoned house at 248 Loepere Street, the first of up to thirty-seven houses that will be torn down using funds secured by Rep. Slaughter.

"Today is a day of celebration for the Broadway-Fillmore community," said Rep. Slaughter. "Today is the day when we turn the corner and begin to revitalize this neighborhood from the ground up. I'm proud to be a part of this effort, alongside Mayor Brown, the Matt Urban Center and the Darul-Uloom Mosque, to give this historic neighborhood a fresh start and unlock its economic potential. The demolition of these abandoned buildings will help facilitate the economic redevelopment of the community and encourage the construction of new housing."

Rep. Slaughter obtained \$464,000 in federal funding for the Broadway-Fillmore Corridor Revitalization Project in 2006. The project is part of the City of Buffalo's larger economic redevelopment plan to increase the rate of vacant property demolition.

"Over the last 30 years, the Broadway-Fillmore area lost more than 52% of its population, which has resulted in 28% of its housing stock becoming vacant and uninhabitable," said Mayor Brown. "These vacant properties are in serious need of demolition. I want to thank Congresswoman Slaughter for dedicating these funds to demolitions. The goal is to have new homes built to ultimately revitalize the Broadway-Fillmore neighborhood."

In place of the approximately 37 demolished homes, the Matt Urban Center, in conjunction with the Mosque and the City of Buffalo, is spearheading a housing redevelopment plan. Under the plan this sixteen square block area will be the focus of significant investment. Ten new subsidized houses are slated for construction later this year pending final approval and as many as twenty-four other homes will receive grants to undertake property repairs ranging from major rehabilitation improvements to correcting building code violations. In addition to the homes that may be purchased by the Matt Urban Center for rehabilitation and resale, eleven new, privately-financed homes are already under construction.

Background

Facts about the Broadway-Fillmore Corridor Revitalization Project

- § Rep. Slaughter announced the \$464,000 for the City of Buffalo's Broadway-Fillmore Corridor Revitalization Project last summer.
- § The funding will be used to demolish up to 37 abandoned houses in a 16 square block area of the Broadway-Fillmore neighborhood to maximize new development planned in the neighborhood now being called "Crescent Village."
- § Up to 45 new or rehabilitated homes are expected to be constructed beginning this year.
- § Ongoing problems with crime and drugs in the Broadway-Fillmore neighborhood have been exacerbated by the presence of numerous abandoned housing sites in the community. It is estimated that these neglected buildings have reduced overall property values to \$5,000 - \$20,000 and severely limited economic growth.
- § The Broadway-Fillmore revitalization plan is a collaborative project involving public and private dollars, along with efforts of the Darul-Uloom Mosque and the Matt Urban Center.

New Construction Plans Already Underway

- § Eleven new homes are currently being built by members of the mosque. The homes are privately financed by the homeowners and are expected to be valued at approximately \$160,000 to \$200,000.
- § Ten new subsidized single family low-to moderate income homes are slated for construction this spring, pending final approval. They are being developed by the Matt Urban Center with state and city subsidizing funds
- § Ten to twelve homes are eligible for a grant of up to \$5,000 for minor property improvements. The Matt Urban Center received \$62,000 from the Federal Home Loan Bank to pay for his program.
- § Ten to twelve homes are eligible for a grant of up to \$30,000 to do major home repairs. The Matt Urban Center received \$270,000 from the Affordable Housing Corp. and New York State for this program.
- § A number of congregants of the Darul-Uloom Moque have indicated interest in purchasing 59 vacant, city-owned parcels around the Mosque on Sobieski Street to build new homes or upgrade existing ones. Mosque members are working on this with the city and the Matt Urban Center.

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