

Apartments, Synagogue Join Forces in Fondren Southwest

By Sarah Kortemeier

The Chabad Lubavitch Center at 10900 Fondren was landlocked in a one-acre campus and gasping for extra space. The Fondren Court apartment complex next door had a density problem.

The two solved their problems in one stroke when the Chabad Lubavitch Center acquired two acres of property from the Fondren Court complex, nearly tripling the size of the Center's campus and reducing density at Fondren Court by 72 units.

"It's a win-win situation," says Jerry Winograd, president of the Houston-based Judwin Realty Group, which recently acquired the Fondren Court complex as the re-

sult of a foreclosure. "We're now at about 350 units [down from 421], which is a perfect size."

The decreased density in the apartment complex will improve safety, efficiency, and quality control in the complex, according to company representative Rene Jauvert.

Meanwhile, the Chabad Lubavitch Center plans to use the newly acquired space to expand its parking, playground, and playing field facilities. The Center houses a synagogue, a Hebrew school, a day school, and a Judaic library. Before this land acquisition, the Center "had no breathing room," according to Program Director Rabbi Chaim Lazaroff.

"We hope to utilize [this purchase] as another step toward revitalizing the neighborhood and bring density down," Lazaroff says. The acquisition is also "great for the future development of the school and the synagogue. It provides more greenspace for our kids."

The Center had to get creative to provide play space for students in the past. There is currently a playground set up on the roof of the building. "We made an architecturally beautiful structure and we put a lot of effort into it, but now it's not as necessary," Lazaroff says.

Both properties are undergoing substantial renovation. The Chabad Lubavitch Center is currently add

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Additions to the Chabad Lubavitch Center are already underway.

West U. City Secretary Resigns

By Kate Bolen

West U. City Secretary Kaylynn Holloway has walked away with six months pay and other benefits after ending her 16 year employment with the city by signing a severance agreement.

The severance agreement, which went into effect at 5 p.m. Monday, Jan. 28, says the former city secretary will be given six months pay

City Secretary." Council bounced back and forth into open and closed sessions to discuss other matters while they awaited word from Holloway and her lawyer.

The meeting was the fifth in a series of closed-door meetings that started Dec. 17. Council made the decision to place Holloway on paid administrative leave on Jan. 21.

Attorney Marilyn Griffin of

Alan Petrov, the city's attorney.

Griffin said council refused to allow her extra time to review the severance agreement. It was agreed that if Holloway waived her right to legal counsel before a notary and signed the agreement, council would accept the offer. West U. Assistant City Secretary Gayle Schultz served as the notary.

Council reconvened in open session where Councilmember

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vice to the citizens of West U. We extend to her our best wishes for the future," Kelly said.

According to the agreement, Holloway may not seek legal action against the City or council for



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Cooperation from p. 2

ing space for eight new classrooms, two ritual baths, and expanded synagogue, social hall, and kitchen facilities. The project has been underway for nearly a year.

Judwin Realty Group has just been approved to receive nearly \$10 million from the City of Houston in Apartments to Standard funding. The money will be used to renovate the apartments at Fondren Court.

The company will commit some of its own funds in addition to the Apartments to Standard funding to "completely redevelop the [Fondren Court] project and to reposition it in the market," Jauvert says. "We will strip every unit down ... These will be brand-new units."

The company plans to replace appliances, cabinetry, and outside siding, relandscape the property, and install security cameras and a new activity center.

The construction will take place in two phases. Since parts of the complex will have to be shut down as renovations progress, the company is currently in the process of relocating some residents temporarily, both within the complex and in partnership with several neighboring apartment complexes. Fondren Court is currently at about 35 percent occupancy, according to Winograd. After the renovations are complete, Winograd believes the occupancy level will "stabilize" at around 90 percent.

Winograd, a longtime real estate developer, is familiar with the area; he built several of the apartment complexes neighboring Fondren Court, including Braesridge Apartments at 11100 Braesridge and Wilhows Apartments at 10919 Fondren. He views the Fondren Court acquisition as a "gateway" back into the community, he says. "We're hoping to bring the street back up to another level."

The Apartments to Standard funds are a series of interest-free, performance-based loans administered by the City of Houston in order to rehabilitate affordable housing. If recipients meet certain criteria over a period of 15 years, the loans

do not have to be repaid. Most of the Apartments to Standard funding is being distributed to properties in the Fondren Southwest region. District C Councilmember Anne Clutterbuck says the City is taking a "laser-beam approach" to the area.

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but was pushed back to the Feb. 11 meeting.

"We need to move quickly," Kelly said. "This is a key position that needs to be filled."

Citizens who witnessed council's motion to accept Holloway's resignation expressed their disapproval at the public meeting.

Beverly Loftis said she believed that Holloway "went way beyond her duties" and was always there for citizens.

Sue Dailey said she has been a West U. resident for 35 years and "had never seen anything like this."

"I am here in support of Kay Holloway. I think the way she was treated behind closed doors and the way decisions were made were embarrassing and deplorable," Dailey said. "Something just doesn't pass the smell test and as the saying goes 'you just can't fight city hall'."

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Ink from page 4

29 works spanning 50 years of the artist's career.

Suh says that the viewer completes the meaning of his work. The title composition of this exhibition, "Where Clouds Disperse," consists of a series of light touches with the brush, occurring only at the edges of the composition. The center is empty, inviting the viewer to create his or her own meaning in the negative space.

"Where Clouds Disperse: Ink Paintings by Suh Se-ok" will be on view through April 20, 2008 in the MFAH's Caroline Wiess Law building, 1001 Bissonnet.