



## Defend Glendale response to Bob Boyd's Minneapolis Public Housing Authority Rebuttal of City Pages' article.

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Recently, Cora McCorvey wrote on the MPHA website: "Dignity in housing is the bedrock upon which a rich, productive, and meaningful life is built." In addition, "The mission of the Minneapolis Public Housing Authority (MPHA) is to promote and deliver quality, well-managed homes to a diverse low- income population and, with partners, contribute to the well-being of the individuals, families and community we serve."

A recent [City Pages' article](#) by reporter Susan Du, prompted a response from Bob Boyd, MPHA Director of Policy and Special Initiatives, that directly counters Cora McCorvey's proclamation and the mission of MPHA. Mr. Boyd called the article "compelling, difficult, and challenging," <http://tinyurl.com/MPHAtoCityPages>. If the article is so "difficult and challenging," what is MPHA as an organization and its staff prepared to do to meet these challenges besides ultimately blaming MPHA residents, other partnering agencies, and housing climate realities?

As a housing authority that works with public resources and funding, MPHA must rise to the challenge and commit to providing better services to its residents. The Defend Glendale Campaign wants to help MPHA figure out how it can be a better steward of public resources.

- MPHA directorship's response to this article is disappointing at best: It is a denial of the residents' reality of life in MPHA properties. Instead of undertaking the "blame the victim" approach, MPHA must promise to work better for the residents. Mr. Boyd even takes the time to outline a series of incidents involving inadequate resident services in order to provide the MPHA's defense. Nowhere in his response does MPHA **provide a positive offense to be a change-agent and/or remedy the problems bravely brought to their attention by their residents. Rather than work to change its failing processes, MPHA continues to claim that if a resident-identified problem is not fixed, it is because the resident did not follow the MPHA process correctly.** Bob Boyd brings up no solutions, no strategies, and no next steps for MPHA to take.
- MPHA has failed to promise to work for and with the residents brave enough to publicly speak out about how MPHA could be a better and stronger agency for the public good. Therefore, we fear possible retaliation and consequences for MPHA residents named and pictured in the City Pages article.
- MPHA cannot continue its "business as usual" work. MPHA's claims to provide great resident services is directly contradicted by the experiences of residents and their testimonies in the City Pages article. Instead, MPHA should commit to racial equity, improvement to resident services, protection of public ownership, and a promise of 0 displacement and 100% repairs. These have been the residents' continuing demands.

Mr. Boyd also makes inferences to the vast number of rental units they manage on a yearly basis as another reason for why resident services are not fulfilled from the start of the issue to the completion.

Mr. Boyd and other MPHA staff have outlined their work order system in a defensive manner in a variety of chances to respond to resident-identified problems. Yet Mr. Boyd, and other MPHA staff never state any efforts to look into improving the work order system or that maybe it is not perfect. As Defend Glendale leaders, we know, and have heard many times that residents' call for work orders and management either denies, or ignores, and the problem gets worse. Thereby, MPHA is engaged in the anti-public housing policy of demolition by neglect.

In addition, instead of immediately laying out new solutions to the tenant-reported "relentless infestation," Boyd actually takes the time to debate the fruitless point on whether the work order for dealing with the infestation was placed in 2008 versus 2015 and 2016. We know for a fact these work orders are called in, placed every year by each resident to management to make repairs, and continuously management fails to send maintenance to make the repairs needed.

Boyd continues to negate MPHA responsibility by casting blame on U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development ( HUD), its reduction of subsidies and capital funding. Instead, MPHA must use the resources they currently have available to improve its performance with its residents, to create an environment where the dignity of residents is respected, and to work towards the necessary improvements.

- While Boyd blames the increased capital needs of Glendale Townhomes on the cuts by HUD, there is no mention of possible solutions to these financial problems. No mention is made of the yearly staff salary increases enabled by cuts while the funding to repairs decrease by MPHA. It seems that MPHA staff salaries are dependent on extracting money from low-income and working class families. Instead, MPHA must re-evaluate their priorities and commit to the protection of public housing and respect for human rights.
- Bob Boyd brings up no solutions, no strategies, and no next steps for MPHA to take. Boyd makes no mention of using the vast budget currently available to MPHA or its relationship to the local HUD office. For example, instead of repairing our homes, MPHA has given a contract to millionaire Sherman of Sherman Associates to come up with redevelopment scenarios for Glendale.
- Mr. Boyd states that the City Pages story has a number of inaccuracies but fails to articulate these. Moreover, he dismisses the stories of the residents that are facts and real. Boyd cannot take their voice and experience away from residents who were brave to share it with the public. This is a true accounting of MPHA's track record of irresponsibility, neglect of public housing, and its disparate impact on residents.

The only solution Boyd states is that residents must follow the work order process, which does not work at all because MPHA does not want it to work. There has to be a

greater solution than focusing on work order process. Boyd continues to ignore and does not mention the residents of Glendale that are willing to take leadership, pride in their homes, who want 0% displacement, 100% repairs, no selling, leasing of the land, and for Glendale to stay as it is, publically owned. He ignores all of that, the real issue at hand and focuses on work order process that is an easy fix from their end that they ignore on purpose. Mr. Boyd blames City Page and **Glendale residents for what?** He fails to take responsibility for the failures of MPHA.

- Boyd fails to provide resident-centered strategies and solutions and fails to acknowledge the long history of MPHA displacing residents from their homes. Failing to recognize Glendale residents' demands for 100% repairs to their homes shows that MPHA is interested in creating another Heritage Park-like public housing disaster by selling off publicly owned land and housing.
  - The promise of a "Right to Return" to one's home does not alleviate residents' fears, nor is it a legally binding guarantee. For example, many Heritage Park residents did not return to their homes, and research shows that only 1 out of 5 residents may come back after being pushed out during redevelopment for profit.
  - As the evidence and article stated, MPHA wants to sell Glendale to a developer by any means for profit and does not care about what happens to residents after they are pushed out of their hand and leases. Defend Glendale slogan is "Glendale is for the needy not for the greedy" and MPHA must adopt this slogan so as to work towards the protection of public housing.
  - Defend Glendale has been able to prove through organizing, research and data the real intent of MPHA for Glendale Townhomes that is demolition by neglect, and to sell public land for profit.

In conclusion, Bob Boyd's rebuttal of the City Pages article is a defense of MPHA's 44 years of "business as usual": It lacks solutions, it lacks a vision for improvement through repairs, and it lacks adherence to MPHA's own mission. Boyd admits that it is impossible for MPHA to do everything perfect; using the rhetoric of scarcity, he claims that "we will never be able to do everything we, or residents want us to do." At this point, we, the residents of Glendale Townhomes are not demanding a perfect MPHA; we are demanding basic conditions fit for human habitation, and an adherence to our human rights.

Sincerely,

Defend Glendale Campaign

