

Springfield / Metro

Poor neighborhoods targets of cities' CD funds

By PHILIP D. BRUNELLE Union Staff

Despite new federal regulations giving them more flexibility, Springfield and Holyoke officials said Thursday projects to boost their poorer neighborhoods will remain the main thrust of federal community devel-

New regulations published Thursday in the Federal Register allow cities receiving Community Development Block Grant funds to shift their use away from projects princi-pally helping low-income and moderate-

Springfield Community Development Com-

E. Dimauro said the new regulations would not change the way Springfield spends its annual \$4.2 million in CDBG money

Benoit said the new regulations will give city government "more latitude to clear slums and blight" and to prevent borderline neighborhoods from deteriorating.

He said in fact local officials are working with private city groups on an ordinance that would legally require the city to spend its CDBG funds the way it does at present with an emphasis on sprucing up and reviving poor neighborhoods.

We will continue to spend most of our money the way we do now - on rehabilita-

missioner John Benoit and Mayor Theodore tion grants." Benoit said, adding that the new proposed local law would "institutionalize" regulations bring under the grants deteriorating neighborhood commercial districts that don't qualify now for CDBG grants. He said he will use some of Springfield's allocation to boost commercial

> Barbara Craig, director of the Springfield Project for United Neighborhoods, said CDBG money is awarded to cities with lowincome populations.

"Now there would be no guarantee the money would benefit those people who are the means for getting the funds.

Mrs. Craig, who has worked on the pro-

present city policy toward CDBG funds. "It will make sure it continues when a new administration comes in.'

She said Springfield has a better record than many cities for spending community development money on projects helping low-

Holyoke Community Development Administrator Thomas J. McColgan said that city may continue to be entitled to CDBG funds with an annual allocation of \$1.7 million even though its population has dropped below 50.000

He said Holvoke will receive that amount posed city ordinance with Benoit, said the for the coming fiscal year and "things look cities must spend grant money.

good in Congress that the funding will con-

tinue" in subsequent years.

McColgan, immediate past president of the National Community Development Association, said the new federal regulations will not change the city's CDBG spending policies and the grants will continue to be aimed at lowincome neighborhoods.

In Washington, D.C., a congressional committee has promised to review the proposed changes in November. They could not take effect until February at the earliest.

Congress could nullify them sooner by passing a resolution of disapproval or by changing the CDBG law to specify where

Revaluation team taking to airwaves

By CAROLYN ROBBINS Union Staff

Springfield residents will have the opportunity to put their questions to representatives of the firm revaluing property here during a radio and television talk show blitz beginning

City Councilor Mary E. Hurley Thursday announced the schedule for a series of five public service broadcasts on revaluation to be aired on local radio and television stations beginning Oct. 7.

Cole Layer Trumble, the firm carrving out court-ordered revaluation. has nearly completed a round of individual hearings on the proposed new

During those hearings, about a third of the city's commercial and industrial property owners have conproposed property values and 15 percent of residential property owners have challenged the firm's assessments.

City officials arranged for the air time after a public hearing on revaluation was scratched at the request of Cole Layer Trumble.

Firm representatives refused to appear before large groups of taxpayers, saying experience had shown that such & erings were emotionally charged and nonproductive.

In the wake of that refusal, city officials arranged for the television and radio spots.

"The City Council believes that it is essential that the public receive straight answers to the very legitmate questions which have been raised," Miss Hurley said.

"The council believes that Cole Trumble should be held accountable before the public, and wants the firm to reach the broadest audience possible," she said.

Sherwood Vermilya, vice president of the firm, will appear on the broadcasts with Miss Hurley, City Councilor Robert T. Markel and members the Springfield Board

WSPR radio will air the first broadcast Oct. 7 from 10 to 11 p.m WMAS radio and WHYN radio will broadcast programs on revaluation Oct. 13 from 7 to 8 p.m. and 9 to 10 p.m., respectively.

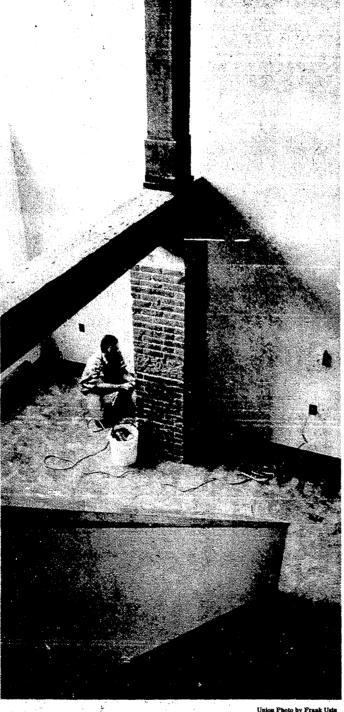
WGGB-TV, Channel 40, will host a broadcast Oct. 16 from 7:30 to 8

WWLP-TV, Channel 22, will broadcast a program Oct. 17 from 4:30 to 5:30 p.m.

The format for the programming will be brief, explanatory comments on revaluation by Cole Layer Trumble and the assessors. A phone-in question-and-answer period will follow opening remarks.

The firm's new property values will become city property Nov. 1.

Homeowners' property taxes will be set by the value of their property. The highest possible assessment will be \$25 per \$1,000, according to city



Building superintendant Thomas Gaul puts some finishing touches on one of the Morgan Square lofts on Lyman Street.

Morgan Square, parking garage give new look to North Blocks Places. Two weeks ago the Massashops had awnings and copper spin-

By PENNY FILOSI Union Staff

The North Blocks in Springfield

are getting a facelift these days Between the opening of the Morgan Square project, with market rate apartments in four buildings, a new parking garage ready to open in a month and more than half a dozen stores, restaurants and office buildings with new facades and new windows, the area hasn't looked better in

The North Blocks are located between Bridge Street and the Arch and Dwight Street to Columbus

The area once cruised by men looking for prostitutes is a place where new housing, offices and potential restaurant space is attract-

These changes are just the beginning, according to Carlo Marchetti, executive director of Springfield Central Inc., the driving force behind renovation of what used to be the

sleaziest blocks in town Changes to come include landscaping streets, refurbishing Stearns Square park to look as it did 100 years ago and attracting new developers.

This is the last of the old combat Kitchen on Lyman Street, run by a nun, where the poor and homeless can pick up a free dinner. A man slept on the sidewalk near the soup

The kitchen will be moving out of the area in about a month, Marchetti

Just down the block was the old Vanilla Tree and Shamrock Lounge and Bar. They are padlocked now, owned by Springfield Central.

Marchetti said the hope is to renovate them into housing or offices or something just as nice. "They could be adapted into a fine restaurant," he

The adjacent buildings in which the two bars once were located is known now as the Lyman Block. Marchetti said. Springfield Central has worked with the city and put the the National Register of Historic Square with several shops in it. The

chusetts Historial Commission voted to nominate them for the national register

The keystone to the area is the Morgan Square project. Marchetti said without the \$12 million renovation of four brick blocks into market value housing, investors might not be attracted to the area to open new offices, stores and restaurants in the

Marchetti turned into an entranceway leading to the Morgan Square project. Amid what used to be neglected buildings was a bright green park, a new brick walk and some of the newest apartments in town. The project consists of 266 apart-

ments to be rented at market value for \$235 to \$475 and a parking garage to be opened next month. The housing complex opened last

month and there are 27 tenants living there, Marchetti said. What we're trying to establish is rejuvenated neighborhood," he

In some ways that means attention

to fine detail. Looking at Stearns Square Park. Marchetti said, "We want to bring it back to the way it was 100 years

That means bringing back a statue zone," Marchetti said as he stood in front of the Loaves and Fishes Soup next to Springfield Public Library. Another fixture to be returned to the park is the Four Seasons turtle

fountain. The fountain, once located on the Bridge Street side of Stearns Square, is stored in the Springfield Parks Department.

The Junior League of Springfield has contributed \$10,000 to renovate the fountain.

"This is a project in process right now," Marchetti said. The project lacks another \$7,000 that would help buy a circulating pump.

A pink granite bench was in the center of Stearns Square.

Six weeks ago the bench was in pieces in storage at the Park Department. It was brought to the park. Sometimes it's just a copper spin-

dle that makes all the difference. Marchetti pointed to the Stearn dle to decorate the facade.

The owner, F.L. Roberts, had organized tenants to spruce up the fronts of their shops.

The Salvation Army at Stearns Square is no longer in operation. The building has changed hands and the new owners plan to develop it into

offices, Marchetti said. A building that was a bar on Taylor Street was sold a few months ago to a restaurant owner who plans to open a restaurant with a nautical theme next spring.

A parking lot between Taylor and Worthington streets will become a

"Bill's Parking Lot we plan to convert into a park," Marchetti said. The park will be part of a pedestrian network.

If the owner does not sell, Marchetti said the property will be taken

by eminent domain by the city. At least one old business that was still in the area was a welcome

Marchetti said developers wanted Smith's Billiards at 205 Worthington St., the oldest billiard parlor in New England, to stay

The owner of the Playboy Lounge has opened Gabriel's restaurant in the North Blocks.

"We opposed him," Marchetti said. "That's the irony. He has done an exceptional job.

Investors from Hartford, Conn., bought a three-story building at 274 Worthington St. and are renovating it into offices.

A new Greek restaurant, called Athens, opened in the North Blocks on Main Street.

"These are spinoffs. Without Morgan Square, a lot of this action wouldn't have happened," Marchetti said, adding that investors looked for a "healthy climate" in which to invest their money.

Marchetti said developers were looking for people to invest in a book store, a coffee shop and candy and ice cream stores.

The changes in the North Blocks also include the very streets and sidewalks themselves.

Marchetti said stre block on a list to be considered for Square Building bordering Stearns planned for the area through the city

Strike possible at midnight

Kidder-Stacy negotiations in 11th-hour session

By HELAYNE LIGHTSTONE Union Staff

AGAWAM - Management and union represenfatives for the Kidder Stacy Company have scheduled a day-long bargaining session today in an attempt to avert a possible strike after the current one-year pact expires at midnight.

The 30-year-old firm manufactures customdesign flexographic printing presses and is a division of the Motter Printing Press Co., with headquarters in York Pa.

The firm at 270 Main Street employs 115 workers, who are paid an average of \$8.21 per hour under the terms of a one-year contract ratified last October by a narrow margin of

That agreement, approved by a five-vote margin, provided the workers with an 8.5 percent wage increase.

Albert Berrourd, president of Local 221 of the International Brotherhood of Electrical and Machine Workers, said Thursday this year's talks are snagged on money and contract language issues.

since the talks began several months ago . Berrouard said he was not optimistic that the rank and file membership would ratify the company's latest offer during a union meeting scheduled for Sunday.

Kidder Stacy Industrial Relations Manager John Rico refused comment today on the negotiations, but stated that "these are diffi-

The firm has undergone a series of lavoffs and rehirings during the past two years as the

He said there has been little progress made result of an uneven backlog of orders, company officials said.

In March, the firm purchased 2.5 acres of land for possible future expansion next to their 15-acre parcel on Main Street.

At the time company President Ronald Hable aid the purchase would not affect a nearly two-year old plan by the firm to mobe to a 50-acre site on Egleston Road in Westfield.

Hable said it was unlikely the move would occur in 1982 because of poor economic

Concern expressed for Hispanics displaced by renewal project

By CAROLYN ROBBINS Union Staff

The Springfield Redevelopment Authority Thursday agreed to work with a coalition of groups concerned about the displacement of Hispanic families by a South End urban

Richard Mundo, a member of the Community Development Coalition, said that a massive housing rehabilitation plan for the South End could result in the permanent displace-

ment of 1,000 Hispanic residents. for the restoration of deteriorating apart- to go to.

ment blocks with the infusion of approximately \$5.5 million into the neighborhood.

Under the plan, the SRA hopes to make available low-interest housing rehabilitation loans for the rehabilitation of market-rate housing for families.

Mundo said that his group wants assurances that the needs of low-income groups continue to be met in the neighborhood.

"We're concerned about the 1,000 Hispanic residents now living in the South End," Mundo said. "Basically they're low-income The South End Urban Renewal plan calls families and they have no other neighborhood

needs into account," Mundo said. "We'd like low-income families. to work along with the SRA staff in making the plan more humanistic," he said.

Although the new housing is to be marketrate, Mundo said his group wants the SRA to seek developers who will agree to include some low-income units in their projects.

The SRA board, led by Joan Belt, agreed to meet with the coalition as plans for the renewal project unfold.

"I can assure you that the board is concerned about this," Mrs. Belt said. SRA Administrator Dominic Sarno said the authority "has always been supportive of streets on the east.

"We hope that the SRA will take these plans that would minimize the impact on

"Hopefully we'll develop a plan where many of these families can remain," he

"One of the problems we have now is that we don't have a developer yet, so it's difficult an advocacy group for low-income groups

to talk specifics," he said.

The SRA and Springfield City Council have already approved the urban renewal plan for the area bounded by Union Street on the north, Marble Street on the south, Main Street on the west and Ashmun and Dale

The SRA is currently in the early relocation phase of the plan.

The plan is being funded with a bond and federal community development block grant

The CD coalition was formed to serve as affected by federal programs.

The Spanish and American Union, Memorial Square Citizens Council, NAACP, the Springfield Action Commission, Springfield Projects for United Neighborhoods (SPUN) and the Urban League are members of the