

September 25, 2008

**ECCA- EAST CENTRAL CIVIC ASSOCIATION OF SHAW
(A HISTORIC AFRICAN-AMERICAN CIVIC ASSOCIATION
SINCE 1947)**

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RE: ECCA Support for Case No. 08-14
(Kelsey Gardens -Consolidated PUD &
Related Map Amendment @ Square
421, Lots 67 and 68)

Anthony Hood
Chair
Office of Zoning Hearing Room
441 4th Street, N.W., Suite 220-South
Washington, DC 20001

Dear Mr. Chairman & Office of Zoning Commissioners:

The Ward 2 ECCA -East Central Civic Association overwhelmingly supports
Metropolitan Development plans to develop Kelsey Gardens Apartments.

The Metropolitan Development team has had an astronomical amount of
community groups/organizations contacts in the Shaw community briefing them on
their development plans for Kelsey Gardens regarding Case. No 08-14.

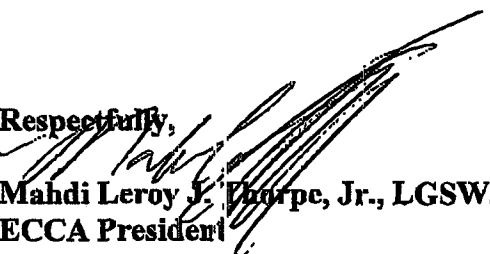
The ECCA have found the Metropolitan Development Team open and inclusive
regarding soliciting community input for design, community amenities, possible
retail opportunities for DC residents who meet the requirements to go into business
as well as market rate and affordable housing.

ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia
ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia
CASE NO. 08-14
EXHIBIT NO. 30

-2-

The ECCA urges the Office of Zoning not to delay in approving Case No.: 08-14 (Kelsey Gardens -Consolidated PUD & Related Map Amendment @ Square 421. Lots 67 and 68).

Respectfully,


Mahdi Leroy J. Thorpe, Jr., LGSW., LPC
ECCA President

CITIZENS ORGANIZED PATROL EFFORTS**C/O 1704 5TH STREET, NW****WASHINGTON, DC 20001****(202) 286-5474****mlthorpe2c02@aol.com****Leroy Thorpe.Net****September 26, 2008**

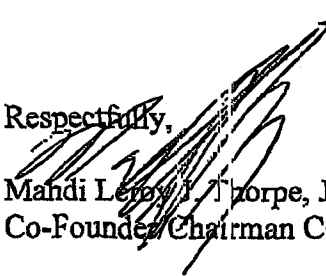
Anthony Hood
Chair
Office of Zoning
Office of Zoning Hearing Room
441 4th Street, N.W., Suite 220-South
Washington, DC 20001

Dear Chairman Hood and Office of Zoning Commissioners:

COPE – Citizens Organized Patrol Efforts a volunteer and drug/crime patrol group in DC with a track record of closing down 56 documented “Crack Houses,” since 1988 and hosting over 120 anti-drug/crime rallies marches in DC strongly supports Case No. 08-14 (Kelsey Gardens -- Consolidated PUD & Related Map Amendment @ Square 421, Lots 67 & 68.

It is vital that the Metropolitan Development Team gets the approval by the Office of Zoning to build this needed state of the art PUD in the heart of the crime epidemic in the Shaw community which would aid restoring law and order with a quality PUD that would displace the crime and offer the market rate and affordable housing and retail opportunities that the community needs and the tax base to aid the city economy. I have attached two articles regarding COPE's involvement in combating crime and drugs previously at Kelsey Gardens since COPE has patrolled that area for nearly a year.

Respectfully,


Mandi Leroy Thorpe, Jr., LGSW., LPC
Co-Founder/Chairman COPE – Red Hats

Attachments

DC Muslim Fights Crime Using Islamic Principles

By Rashad Mulla

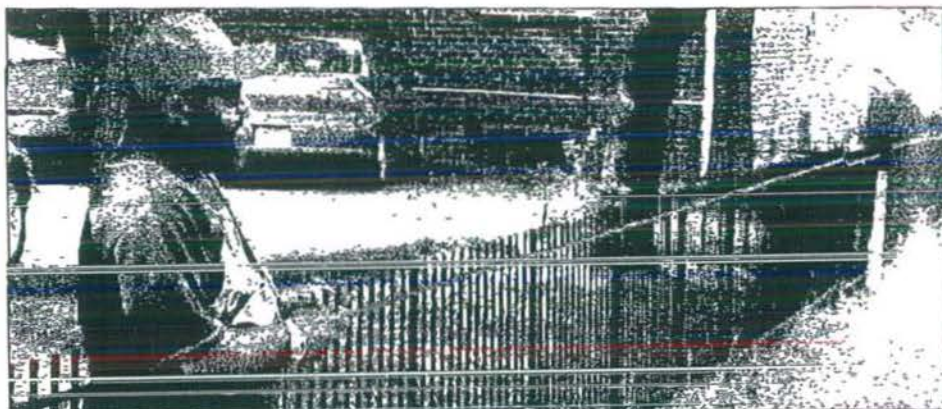
Muslim Link Staff Writer

Mahdi Leroy J. Thorpe Jr.'s walls are adorned with awards for crime and drug prevention. The former commissioner of Washington, DC's Shaw neighborhood is a dedicated social worker who has been fighting crime and drugs since the mid-1980s.

Along with then-Imam Taalib Abdus Samad, Thorpe founded Citizens Organized Patrol Efforts (COPE) in 1988, to help ensure the safety of Shaw residents. Thorpe also works alongside Teaching America Sound Knowledge (TASK), an Islamic educational group founded by Imam Khalil Davis of the 18th & Monroe Street Masjid in Northeast Washington.

"In the beginning, you had some drug boys hanging here, and they were verbally abusive with profane language," said Thorpe. "Imam Davis was very effective in terms of communicating with them and giving them Dawah."

COPE collaborates with TASK in order to encourage drug-sellers and users to follow the teachings of Islam. Ever since COPE's inception in 1988, the organization has shut down 57 documented crack houses and hosted over 120 anti-drug rallies in the nation's capital.



Mahdi Leroy J. Thorpe Jr. of DC — part of the Citizens Organized Patrol Efforts (COPE) to rid neighborhoods of drugs and crime — stakes out his spot on a neighborhood street in North West DC. (Photo by Muslim Link staff)

For the last few weeks, Thorpe and his fellow patrollers have monitored 7th Street NW between P and Q streets, effectively covering the entire block.

"Historically, this has been a very drug-ridden neighborhood," said Thorpe. "Particularly here, we had two homicides so far this year. There were nightly shootings before we took on this project six weeks ago, and we haven't had any shootings up here [since then]."

Thorpe says that COPE works very closely with the DC police department and is well respected by politicians and city council. On Saturday, July 14, police chief Cathy Lanier presented Thorpe with an award for the effectiveness of COPE, adding another chapter to his long history of neighborhood safety projects.

"This is probably one of my callings, Allah knows best," said Thorpe. "I consider myself an expert in fighting crime and drugs."

Why has COPE, an organization run in the heart of a small neighborhood, been so successful, and why has it caught so much attention from city politicians?

"We're civil with people, and we're doing what we're supposed to be doing," said Thorpe. "A lot of people who didn't know too much about Islam acted somewhat apprehensive towards us when he first started taking on this project. However, they are [now] happy to see us. People that are still remaining here feel security in their houses. It's been very positive."

A daily patrol usually consists of three or more brothers taking positions throughout the sidewalk, with an eye for suspicious activity. The majority of patrols will reveal no odd operations, but as the 57 crack houses show situations do arise.

"You're looking for people going in and out of a house that's in poor shape," said Thorpe. "Maybe the water is shut off, the electricity is shut off, and [the neighbors] are making complaints."

COPE patrols from 4 p.m. – 12 midnight on Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays, and from 12 midnight to 4 a.m. early Friday, Saturday, and Sunday mornings. These patrols take place in "rain, snow, or shine." COPE is divided into different patrol groups. One group is entirely Muslim, while the other is integrated.

"This group is a collaborative effort to take care of some hardcore drug and gang activities through the use of Dawah, Islam, and adaab (etiquettes)," said Thorpe. "We try to emulate the Prophet Muhammad's example of how to deal with people [using] tolerance."

Despite fighting crime routinely, the image of a safe Shaw community keeps Thorpe motivated every day.

"This is my community," said Thorpe. "I want a drug-free, safe, and clean community. It gives me an opportunity to do some Dawah and it lets people see Muslims lead."

VIETRO

TUESDAY, AUGUST 28, 2007

NORTHWEST WASHINGTON

Muslim Patrol Quiets Crime in Shaw

By OMAR FAKKAKI
Washington Post Staff Writer

On a sidewalk in Shaw, a dozen Muslim men wearing red T-shirts gather an hour before sundown.

Half line up quietly behind an imam. Facing southeast toward Mecca, they bow their heads and read aloud verses from the Koran. The other half spread themselves out and look up and down the street. After a few minutes, they switch places.

The men have come not just to pray but to assume control over a crime-prone block.

They are part of a Muslim neighborhood watch that lately has focused its efforts on Seventh Street NW between P and Q streets, site of the long-troubled Kelsey Gardens apartment complex. Just a few weeks ago, the location was beset by drug dealers, armed assaults and random shootings.

The group is composed of Muslims who practice a more orthodox form of Islam than such groups as the Nation of Islam, says founder Leroy Thorpe.

It is a spinoff of the Citizens Organized Patrol Efforts, or COPE, a neighborhood watch established in 1988 in Shaw. Both groups dress in simple red T-shirts and red baseball hats with "COPE Patrol" written on them.

About two months ago, owners of the 35-unit Kelsey Gardens complex asked Thorpe to arrange security for the residents and crack down on drug dealers who had gravitated to a parking lot in the complex, Thorpe said. The complex is slated to be razed next month, and a new structure will take its place. Thorpe said that the owners want to encourage more investment in the area.

"Nobody is going to invest in a drug-infested area," said Thorpe, a former Advisory Neighborhood Commission member who also goes by the Muslim name Mahd.

no other religion-based citizens patrol operating in the District, credit the Muslims with rousting the drug dealers and restoring a measure of public safety to the neighborhood. "There was an overwhelming difference," said Officer Earl Brown of the 3rd Police District.

Patrol members carry no weapons, and several of the men said they had no training in self-defense. But their presence seems to be effective.

"You have eyes and ears in the neighborhood," said Cmdr. Larry McCoy, who heads the Third Police District. "Most people don't like to commit crimes in front of people who are going to tell the police about them."

Driven by the power of faith, the patrol has a secondary aim: to "call people to worship Allah," said Khalid Davis, the imam for the Salafi Society of D.C. mosque.

With a long, salt-and-pepper beard framing his thin face and dressed in a white dishdasha, the traditional Muslim men's calf-length garment, Davis handed out literature to passersby describing Islam as a religion of peace.

One leaflet contained two pictures, one of waterfalls and natural greenery, the other of a huge, smoky fireball. "You decide," it said. The group called the leaflets "Islam's anti-terror message."

"It is a therapeutic ambience to the community," Davis said of the religion. "This creates a community that is pure and free of crimes."

But its message can be difficult to spread. Davis tried to distribute the leaflets to pedestrians, but most refused to take them.

The Muslim patrol works 12-hour shifts, three nights a week: Thursday, Friday and Saturday, which Thorpe said are peak nights for drug dealing.

On a patrol one recent weeknight, the men walked around the complex in pairs. They were scouting for "suspicious activity" and "undesir-

They peered behind large trash cans in alleys, looking for drug addicts who might be hiding. They went into a parking lot between two buildings and walked between the rows of cars, hoping their presence would chase off anyone who might be lurking.

"They see us, they are going to flee," said Thorpe, who carries a cellphone to call police if he needs help.

This night was uneventful. The walkie-talkies remained mute. Residents walking out of their apartment building waved to the Muslim patrol members, who waved back.

Residents seem to recognize the Muslim patrol by now, and the Muslims have come to recognize most of the people who live on the block. "Assalamu Alaikum," they say in greeting — Arabic for "peace be upon you."

The Muslim patrol group is the only one of its kind in the District, according to the police department, but several patrol members said they hope to duplicate it in other neighborhoods.

"I would love to do it in my neighborhood," said Brian Christopher, 40, who lives with his wife and two children in a Northeast neighborhood that has no citizens patrol. "But it has to start somewhere."

Several residents and business people said they were pleased the effort had started in Shaw.

"They are really helping out," said Tony Dolford, 38, a Kelsey Gardens resident who has lived in the neighborhood since 1993.

Everett Lucas, 66, owns the Variety Market across the street from the apartment complex. The market has been open for 34 years.

"One thing you don't see now [in the neighborhood] is drug activity," Lucas said.

"Knock on wood," McCoy said. "It's made a difference. Those planning to do wrong in the neighborhood know they are out there,