

NeighborWorks

A good tool for Manchester

The newly -renamed "NeighborWorks Greater Manchester" is one of the many local efforts that are going to continue to need public support if Manchester is to once again become a safer city.

Under the highly regarded Felix Torres, Manchester Neighborhood Housing Services, now Neighborworks, was a key tool in fighting blight in Manchester's inner city. It provided homeownership for people who didn't think they could afford a home and it restored pride in place for low-income tenants who had to take what they could get in terms of housing.

The organization is not big. It gets financing from banks and other lending institutions and it fights, house by house and block by block, to reclaim abandoned and neglected properties.

In combatting criminal elements, it has used the model

that was successful years ago in cleaning up the old Rock Rimmon project: evicting tenants charged with serious crimes or drug possession. That no-tolerance policy for bad actors must be enforced.

Current executive director Robert Tourigny says NeighborWorks has started a Community Services Committee comprised of tenants, landlords, homeowners and activists to address neighborhood issues such as crime, trash and absentee landlords.

"Activists" is an interesting term that is often used as a catchall phrase.

But everyone in Manchester who cares about this community is going to have to become active to make sure that it continues to be worth caring about.

On a sad weekend for the Queen City, that is a bright goal and a fitting legacy for a slain police officer who cared.

► John Harrigan
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