

In response to “Gentrification plans of MPHA and Sherman Associates,” Jan. 19-25 issue

A letter published in a recent issue of the Spokesman-Recorder discussed gentrification in the Twin Cities, as well as the writers’ concerns about possible changes at the Glendale Townhomes owned by the Minneapolis Public Housing Authority. Given MPHA’s mission to provide housing for many of the very poorest city residents, we could not agree more with the writers’ concerns about gentrification and access to truly affordable housing. Unfortunately, the writers’ points about Glendale rest upon a collection of incorrect facts, and upon assigning nefarious intentions to us that we simply do not have.

In this short space, it is hard to address the full array of misstatements. MPHA has been clear in our public materials and to anyone who asks that we have approved no plan of any kind to “demolish” or redevelop Glendale. The “Sherman Report” that draws so much ire from the writers is nothing more than an analysis of four hypothetical options, among a universe of many more we might explore, spanning a range that included both rehabilitation and comprehensive redevelopment. Every option included two top priorities for us: preserving all 184 family units at current rent levels, and continued ownership by MPHA. The assertions that our goal is to “gentrify,” “privatize,” “destroy,” or otherwise reduce the precious family housing at Glendale are entirely untrue.

The involvement of Sherman Associates began and ended with this study, delivered in June of last year. Sherman Associates did not propose and has not sought any further involvement in Glendale beyond the independent, third-party analysis of options we asked them to provide. If and when we move forward with the city and community with a plan to preserve the homes at Glendale, they would be free to submit bids like any other entity.

While there is no design or funding mechanism that have been proposed, much less approved, MPHA makes no secret of the need to face the long-term, structural needs at Glendale. We continue to maintain the comfort and quality of life at Glendale at the high standard we set for all our facilities, albeit at a perilously increasing cost. The townhomes are our oldest major property, and after 65 years the time has come for a constructive conversation about how to preserve these family homes for the next 65 years and beyond. MPHA is charged with ensuring that Glendale is a resource for families today and for future generations. While we hold this responsibility, we recognize that we can move forward only by working with partners who share an interest in ensuring that Glendale preserves and retains homes for very low-income families. We welcome all groups—and most especially public housing residents—to join this partnership.

Minneapolis Public Housing Authority

More information on this topic at <http://mphaonline.org/glendale-townhomes/>