

Sanders Has Done a Lot on Housing

Your editorial of Nov. 12 has to be a joke. You state that "the record shows fair editorial treatment of Sanders." You go on to argue that "precious little in a meaningful way has changed since Sanders took office. The street problems are worse. So are the housing problems...."

Well, let's focus on housing and let's examine the record.

The Community and Economic Development Office was created in May of 1983 with the strong urging of Mayor Bernard Sanders. Among other responsibilities, CEDO was charged with the responsibility to develop, coordinate, implement and administer programs and activities in the area of housing. This has not been an easy task considering skyrocketing rents, high interest rates on mortgages and the dramatic reduction or elimination of federal housing programs.

We have accepted this challenge and have initiated an unprecedented range of programs and activities designed to address Burlington's housing problems. Activities under housing development include housing rehabilitation, new construction, affordable housing, fair housing and home ownership opportunities.

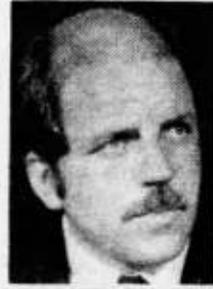
Financial assistance is available through the Housing Improvement Program, which gives loans for homeowner and rental units, handicapped accessibility grants and free paint and free smoke detector programs.

In addition, CEDO administers the Federal Section 312 Loan Program, Rental Rehab Program and Housing Development Action Grants for new construction. The Housing Unit provides support for the Burlington Community Land Trust and develops code ordinances that promote fair housing for renters.

More specifically, below are the highlights of major activities in the area of housing over the past year:

- Housing staff negotiated a "Lump Sum Drawdown" Agreement with the Bank of Vermont which leverages \$750,000 of private investment in Target Area housing, creates new housing funds through investment and provides the most cost effective and efficient loan and accounting services to the program.

- More than 156 housing units have been upgraded since June 1983 through CEDO's Hous-



It's My Turn

By Peter Clavelle

ing Improvement Program. Seven housing units were modified for handicapped accessibility through the grant program. In cooperation with the Public Health and Safety Department and the Sara Holbrook Center, \$7,500 was made available to the Katon Memorial Fund to supply free smoke detectors to low/moderate income families. More than 65 units were supplied with free paint.

- Housing staff worked closely with the municipalities of Winooski, South Burlington and Colchester in the development of HUD's Rental Rehab Program, which makes available \$420,000 for the rehabilitation of 120 units and 88 Section 8 Certificates for tenants. Loans must be matched dollar for dollar.

- An application of \$3.8 million was awarded by HUD for the new construction of 260 units known as the South Meadow Project. The developer is Coburn, Cooper & Feeley. Eighty of the units will be rental, while 80 units will be cooperatively owned. The rentals will have 48 two-bedroom and 12 three-bedroom market-rate units, and 20 moderate-income three-bedroom units. The Cooperative will have 60 market-rate two-bedroom units and 20 moderate-income three-bedroom units. The moderate-income large-family units will account for 25 percent of the total development.

- CEDO worked closely in the development of the Burlington Community Land Trust, utilizing a \$200,000 seed grant from the City of Burlington. The Land Trust insures affordable housing by buying housing and land, and selling the house and leasing the land to first-time homeowners. The resale price of the house is limited through the lease agreement.

Since its beginning with an informational

meeting in December 1983 the Land Trust has incorporated, developed an acquisition strategy, elected a nine-member Board, developed lease documents and has 50-plus active members working in four committees. It has purchased one home, will exercise its options on a two-unit apartment building and is working with a developer in the development of nine newly constructed homes on Gazo Avenue. The Land Trust is an independent community board, non-profit corporation.

- Housing staff, in cooperation with the City Attorney's Office, developed two rental housing ordinances, one relating to anti-discrimination and another relating to security deposits.

- An inclusionary zoning ordinance was developed that attempts to create affordable housing through insuring that large development of 10 units and more must guarantee that 30 percent of the units should be affordable to low- and moderate-income families.

- Discussions continued with Alden through the year in order to formulate a strategy to reduce the cost of waterfront housing.

- CEDO continues to work with the University of Vermont to implement a program to mitigate the pressure of students on local housing.

- The Northgate Housing Development was weatherized through the cooperation of the Burlington Electric Department, CEDO and the private developers.

- Burlington was one of 10 communities in HUD's Region I (New England) which was picked to participate in HUD's Joint Ventures Program. Joint Ventures provides technical assistance to municipalities that have a solid track record in innovation and administration of housing programs.

- CEDO secured a Federal Section 312 loan for a six-unit building for \$16,700.

- The Home Improvement Program provided two rehabilitation loans to the COTS, the second of which leveraged \$200,000 in bank financing for the purchase of the building which provides both temporary and residential shelter to the city's homeless.

Take off the blinders, guys!

- Peter A. Clavelle is director of the Burlington Community and Development Office.