

Homes Over Hotel Rooms
Position Statement: We Will Struggle Alongside the Metropole Tenant Association
Greater Cincinnati Coalition for the Homeless
11-09-2009

Introduction:

The Metropole building has 230 units (SROs) of subsidized, affordable housing. Approximately 208 are occupied. 3CDC (under the guise of Azeotropic Partners, LLC) has purchased the Metropole. 3CDC plans to move all tenants out and convert their homes into the rooms of a boutique hotel, while providing false promises of relocation to tenants. 3CDC has brought in Model Management (under the guise of Brick Stone Properties) to manage the building because they are one of two organizations with the congressionally-given ability to split up and disperse HUD HAP contracts. Splitting these contracts has never been attempted and we do not believe it would be successful. Over the past twenty-five years thousands of units of affordable housing have been closed in Cincinnati. Now thousands of people are homeless in Cincinnati. Metropole is the last housing of its kind in the Cincinnati Business District (CBD). The primary cause of homelessness is a lack of affordable housing. The loss of Metropole would be a net loss of affordable housing. Historically, when tenants are promised relocation, many actually become homeless.

Further, forcing the tenants out of Metropole would likely cause the CBD to lose its thirty-year classification as a diverse neighborhood. 3CDC is attempting to cleanse the downtown of people who are African-American, have a low-income, are handicapped or are elderly. This breaks Federal Fair Housing Law.

It is immoral for any person(s) or company(s) or government(s) to force other people to leave their homes. 3CDC asked GCCH three times not to tell tenants about the pending purchase. After more than a year of planning, on November 3rd, 3CDC finally told the tenants about the purchase in a letter and then at a meeting on the 4th in which they used police to stop Legal Aid and GCCH from entering as tenant-invited advocates. This act broke Federal Law allowing such organizing. Four months ago, immediately upon having knowledge of the plan, GCCH began working with the tenants. The owner at the time sent a letter to tenants stating that GCCH was wrong and eventually escorted GCCH staff out of the building. Soon after, the Metropole Tenant Association (MTA) was formed and has been in existence for nearly 4 months. Nearly all tenants have said they do not want to move and chose to live in Metropole because it makes sense for their lives (i.e. affordable, bus-lines, jobs, banks, amenities, etc.) Legal Aid also became the official legal representation for MTA. On Thursday, November 5th, MTA took over a meeting set by 3CDC and declared that they will not leave the Metropole and demanded improvements to their homes. With more than 69 members, MTA filled a legal complaint with HUD, asking for the end of the 3CDC/Model Management take over. In addition, in one day approximately 120 tenants signed a petition to HUD saying they would not move.

With all this stated:

- 1. The Greater Cincinnati Coalition for the Homeless (GCCH/Coalition) will follow the lead of the majority of the Metropole Tenant Association (MTA).**

2. The Coalition vows to thwart all efforts of 3CDC and Model to force the tenants of Metropole from their homes. The Coalition will stand by the rights of MTA until they see victory.
3. GCCH's stance is that at the end of the MTA struggle against 3CDC and Model to keep their homes, the Metropole building will still have 230 units of affordable housing and the residents of MTA will still be there for as long as they choose.
4. Once the threat of displacement has been prevented, GCCH calls for 3CDC to put an equal investment into the homes of Metropole residents and affordable housing in general as 3CDC has invested in downtown and Gateway condominiums and luxury apartments.
5. GCCH calls for local, state and federal laws to be created to prevent the take-over, closing and forcing out of tenants of affordable housing.

We are in support of the above Position Statement (Signatures, Titles, Name of Organization):

The Call to Action:

1. Have your organization and any individuals sign in support of the Position statement. Fax back pages 1 and 2 to 513-421-7813 or Scan and email to: joshspring@cincihomeless.org or Mail to: 117 East 12th Street, Cincinnati, OH 45202
2. Call or email HUD, 3CDC, Model Management (using the attached list) with the following message:

“Our organization stands with the Metropole Tenant Association and will not allow 3CDC and Model to force the Tenants of Metropole from their homes. Our organization does not have the capacity to deal with the increase in homelessness this will cause. Further, we believe this will strengthen the harmful precedent that has led to twenty-five years of affordable housing loss in Cincinnati.”

3. Forward this document and email to all staff, clients if possible, donors, supporters, etc.
4. Contact the GCCH office with ideas, strategies or names of people that should be involved or to join the advisory committee. Rob Goeller, Civil Rights Outreach Coordinator: 513-421-7803 ext. 15 or robgoeller@cincinhomeless.org

Contact List:

- HUD
 - John Trasvina, Assistant Secretary for Fair Housing & Equal Opportunity
 - 202-708-4252; John_Trasvina@hud.gov
 - Carol Galante, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Multifamily Housing
 - 202-708-2495 ext. 2400; Carol_J._Galante@hud.gov
 - Scott Hunley, Multifamily HUB Director
 - 614-469-5737 ext. 8307; Scott_Hunley@hud.gov
 - Carolyn Murphy, Columbus Fair Housing Center
 - 614-469-5737 ext. 8170; Carolyn.Murphy@hud.gov
 - James Cunningham, Cincinnati Field Office
 - 513-684-8775; James.A.Cunningham@hud.gov
- 3CDC (Call both at 513-621-4400)
 - Steve Leeper, CEO: sleeper@3cdc.org
 - Adam Gelter, Development Manager-Metropole: agelter@3cdc.org
- Model Management
 - Steve Smith, President: 513-559-0048; steve.smith@themodelgroup.net