

Initiative begun to rehab empty homes in Mattapan

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The Mattapan Community Development Corporation will host a ribbon cutting for one of its rehabilitated homes at 327 Wood Ave in Mattapan on Wednesday, October 13 at noon. The renovation project is the first step in a strategy dubbed the Mattapan Housing Stabilization Initiative—a collaboration between the Mattapan CDC and the Dorchester Bay Economic Development Corporation.

“We are going to take back Mattapan,” said Mattapan CDC director Spencer DeShields. “We are going to take those houses that are blighted, that are areas of [criminal activity,] clear all those things out and get families back in these buildings.”

The goal of the MHSI is to acquire foreclosed properties, rehabilitate them, and offer the homes as affordable rentals to local families. According to a report by the city’s Department of Neighborhood Development, Mattapan, along with Dorchester, East Boston, Roxbury and Hyde Park accounted for 80 percent of the city of Boston’s total foreclosures in 2009, while only representing 36 percent of the city’s total residential properties. There were at least 97 foreclosure deeds issued for homes in Mattapan alone in 2009, down from 151 issued in 2008.

The three-decker property on Wood Ave was purchased by the Mattapan CDC in early June 2010. By mid-July, renovation of the building had begun, handled by an Everett contractor, Vertical Konstruction. The project was funded by a \$615,000 grant by the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development. Mattapan CDC is on track to give similar treatments two other buildings: 302 Fuller St. and 25 Nelson St, both in Dorchester. The CDC officials hope to acquire up to 12 buildings or 36 rental units by the end of 2011.

“This building will be a flagship for us because it will indicate that we can take a property and turn it around in 90 days,” said DeShields.
