

Lisa Boyd, King's Crossing senior housing at Frogtown Square

Interviewed by Peter Myers at Frogtown Square, February 2011

Q Describe the clientele who will be moving into King's Crossing.

A The residents who will be moving in – it's quite a diverse population and actually that's part of what attracted me to the project. We will have a lot of Asian immigrants moving in – about half the building will be Asian immigrants coming from Vietnam, Cambodia, China, Laos, we do have some people on the list who are waiting who are Hmong refugees as well. A lot of them have families right in the neighborhood or they've been living right in the neighborhood. Some of them have been living out in the suburbs with younger family members and are at the moment quite isolated so it'll be really nice for them to move into the center of town where they're on public transportation, there's a lot of services, and they'll have neighbors who are peers, people who are also older and looking for senior activities. We also have another good chunk of the population again from mostly right around here in the neighborhood or who have family, who are African Americans. A number of people who I interviewed remembered the old Rondo neighborhood, which is kind of just across the street and they've got old photographs of the house where they grew up. And then we've also got a Caucasian population as well. So it's going to be a really interesting mix of people.

Q Could you re-state that as if it's current?

A The residents who are living here, it's quite a diverse population. About half the building is actually Asian immigrants coming from a number of different countries including Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, China, we have some people who are waiting to come in who are Hmong. And then another good chunk of the population is African Americans who come from right around the community. In fact some of them have shown me pictures of where they used to live in the old Rondo neighborhood – they have pictures of the house where they grew up.

Q Talk about the Cambodian couple as one example.

A The very first people to move in were this Cambodian couple and they are actually refugees and she, the wife has lived here for about three years; her husband slightly less than that, maybe about two years. They have yet to have their own home, until now. They were living with family, they were living with community workers, they were getting a lot of help from a local church, but they didn't have their own home until they moved in here. So they were so excited to be able to come.

Q Marvin Plakut (CEO of Episcopal Homes, the developer) mentioned that the facility was sold out in 24 hours. How are you handling people that want to get in but can't?

A For people who have found out about this project only recently and got excited about the prospect of moving in, we do maintain a waiting list and we do take people on a first come, first served basis as long as they meet the eligibility requirements, which is that they have to be 62 or older and they have to be categorized as low income. For those people I am still taking applications and I add their name to the list and then it's

just a matter of when units will turn over. We will start going down the list. Obviously people who got their applications in sooner will have the first opportunity for those units that open up as the current population starts to move out. So for some folks it may not be too long a wait, for some folks they may be waiting several years. We wish we could build even more of these.

Q Is there anything else you'd like to add?

A Some of the diversity that we have in the building is not only that people are coming from other cultures, but we have people who've come from a variety of living situations. There was a question that came up on the tour today – one of the members of the tour group today asked me if anyone was coming from owned homes, if we had any homeowners who were moving over here? And we do have two or three ladies who've moved in who did own homes. All of them went through foreclosure and so again I'm very satisfied that we're able to provide a service to those people who've been caught up in the crisis that a lot of people in this country are facing, which is the foreclosure crisis. And yet here they have a nice, attractive, well-maintained place to live even if they've had to give up their other home.