



Proposed housing for homeless on Esplanade draws criticism

by WWLTV.com

Posted on March 15, 2010 at 10:27 PM

NEW ORLEANS – Residents of an Esplanade Avenue neighborhood were largely unhappy with plans to turn a former senior citizen’s home into housing for the homeless.

Monday night the groups Unity of Greater New Orleans, Common Ground and Odyssey House presented their plans to residents and faced plenty of opposition.

“The only way they have of making money is by begging and stealing,” complained one resident. “There is no way they can improve the neighborhood.”

Representatives of the groups said that they can’t guarantee that the new residents wouldn’t loiter in the neighborhood but said that all of their other projects around the country have been successful in helping people find a permanent home.

“It’s not necessarily something to be scared of,” said Jessica Vanegas. “We’ve got people with disabilities that are eligible for this housing. People who are veterans, people who are youth-aging out of foster care, people with HIV, these are all folks who need a place to live and who can contribute to society.”

The representatives said the homeless they serve need a place to call home while they transition back into becoming successful members of society.

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