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House headed for rehab

Couple has one year to do job

BY HOWARD MCEWEN | ENQUIRER CONTRIBUTOR

NEWPORT - In the battle to rehabilitate a city, the fighting is done block by block, street by street and in cases such as 1006 Central Ave. in Newport, house by house.

The city recently turned the house over to investors Tim and Thelma Kiser, who plan to spend at least \$75,000 rehabbing it into a single-family, owner-occupied, 3,000-square-foot home.

"We had a building that had been in a severe state of disrepair and was cut up into five efficiency rental units. After this renovation is completed, it will be restored to its original grandeur as a single-family building, be put back into productive use, and placed back on the tax rolls as a revenue generator for the city," said Brian Steffen, director of code enforcement.

ADVERTISEMENT The project was advertising for bid and those applying were screened for several qualifications, including past experience and financial ability.

Tim Kiser has been in the construction business for more than 20 years and is a construction consultant for U-Buildit, a firm that offers guidance to do-it-yourselfers.

"Staff will inspect the progress monthly in addition to the required inspections of the construction. As part of the development agreement, the city has the ability to foreclose on the building and take possession again should the Kisers fail to meet the terms," Steffen said.

The Kisers have one year to complete the project. They are well aware of the challenges ahead of them.

"What doesn't the home need?" asked Tim Kiser. "New 100-amp electric, plumbing, HVAC, windows, roof, interior walls ..."

"I hope that after its completion, this building will become a springboard for development in this area. There are a number of beautiful homes in this neighborhood which are in need of rehab," said Steffen.

The city has had past experience with similar situations. Several years ago, a 12-family house at 543 E. Fourth St. sustained severe fire damage. The contract was bid out and the city considered the results a success. The couple that rehabbed it still calls it home.

"In this situation the developer went to great extremes in renovating this building and did a phenomenal job. In fact the building was recently showcased on an HGTV program for its renovation," Steffen said.

The Kisers aren't calling HGTV yet. The attic needs to be cleared out and they are researching the home's history as they begin the first steps of the project.

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