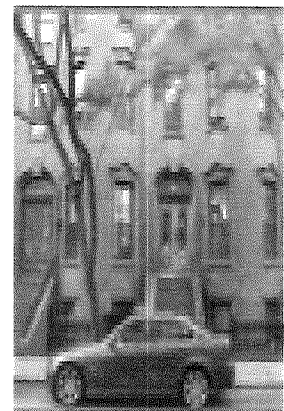
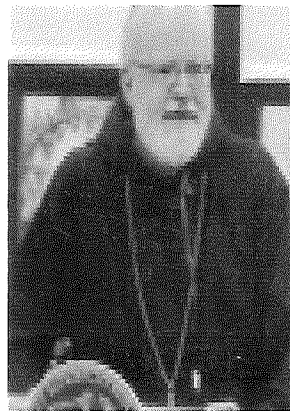


SouthEndPatch

Officials, Supporters Celebrate Upton Street Project

By John Waller October 20, 2011



The past controversy of the 40 Upton St. project took a backseat Wednesday afternoon, as those involved with the project thanked each other and supporters at a dedication ceremony at the Pine Street Inn.

About 100 people, including the mayor and the archbishop of Boston, attended the event, which marked 40 Upton St.'s official transformation to "supportive housing" for homeless men and women.

"Make no mistake, these projects are not just houses, they are life-changing houses for the people who move in," Lyndia Downie, the Pine Street Inn's president and executive director, said at the ceremony.

Four Years in the Making

Since 2007, the Pine Street Inn has focused on obtaining residential units around Boston. The inn, with help from its partners, purchased the Upton Street space from the Hope House, an established nonprofit that took in people recovering from substance abuse for more than 50 years.

The Hope House was determined to sell the valuable South End brownstones to another nonprofit that would maintain a commitment to affordable housing for people in need. However, neighbors spoke out strongly for and primarily against the project, which has 18 residential units, as well as space for a live-in manager from the inn.

On Wednesday, Mayor Thomas M. Menino gave special thanks to the neighbors and South End residents who stood behind the project – and those who wore pins in support.

He said it wasn't an easy process, but he said it's not always easy to do the right thing. He added the people who inhabit the Pine Street Inn and these type of units are as much a part of the city of Boston as anyone else.

"People would say, I don't want *these people*," Menino said, "well, *I want these people*."

Praise for Menino

Downie, and others, championed Menino's steadfast commitment to the homeless and urbanized poor in Boston.

"The mayor took more hits and arrows on this than anyone," she said. "He took arrows, but he kept marching forward."

Lisa B. Alberghini, president of the Planning Office for Urban Affairs, a social justice ministry affiliated with the Archdiocese of Boston, said Menino is more dedicated to the issue of housing for the less privileged than any mayor in the country. She said she hopes the Upton Street project serves as a model that is duplicated "many more" times.

In addition to these speakers and Cardinal Sean P. O'Malley, representatives from the project's other major partners – the state, Bank of America, Federal Home Loan Bank of Boston, the Massachusetts Life Insurance Community Investment Initiative and John Hancock Financial Services – also gave remarks.

The ceremony was moved from 40 Upton St. to the Pine Street Inn, at 444 Harrison Ave., due to the inclement weather.

The Pine Street Inn, which was established in 1984 to work to end homelessness in Boston, provides housing to roughly 650 tenants at 34 locations and serves more than 1,300 homeless individuals daily.

On Wednesday, Menino also referenced **Occupy Boston** in his remarks, emphasizing that one of government's main responsibilities is to work to help those less fortunate.

"The people in Dewey Square are sending the right message," he said, "but no one is listening."

Related Topics: 40 Upton St., Cardinal Sean P. O'Malley, Homeless, Homelessness, Lyndia Downie, Mayor Thomas M. Menino, and Pine Street Inn