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"THE TRUTH SHALL SET YOU FREE"

North Las Vegans seeking clarity

By Lés Pierres Streater
Sentinel-Voice

This was the first community forum held in this neighborhood to address some of the concerns of the residents, along with informing the public about efforts to improve the community.

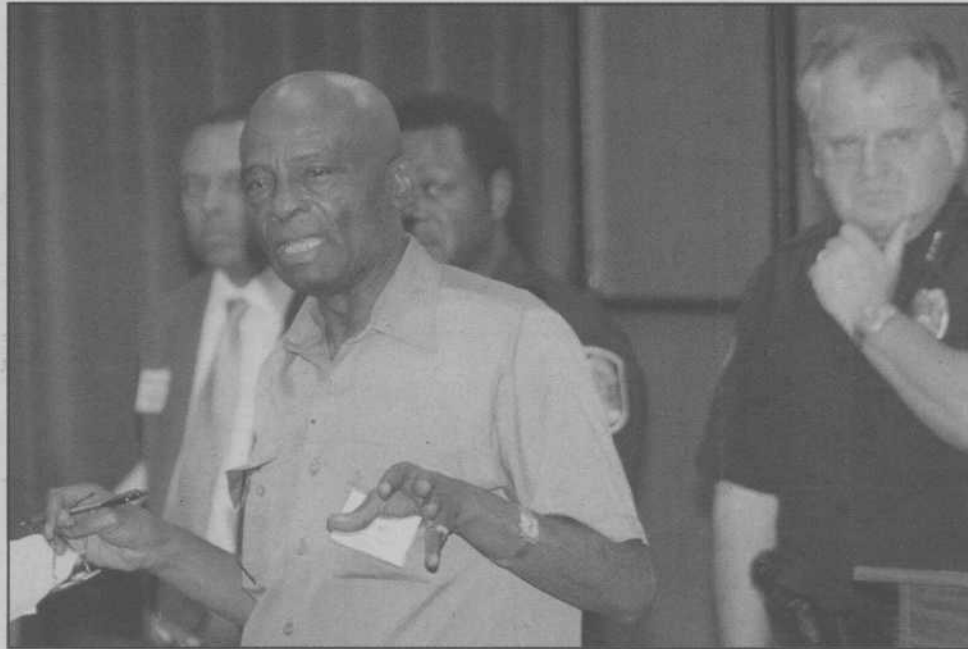
Seventy-five people assembled from 6-7:30 at the CVT Gilbert Elementary School located at 2101 W Cartier Ave. recently to discuss ongoing community concerns with representatives of the City of North Las Vegas.

Many issues were discussed at the meeting last Thursday, including illegal drug abuse and underage users of harmful substances and other criminal activities. Other topics were: people loitering all over the neighborhood and causing a nuisance; non-owner tenants occupying rental properties without any vested interest in

community harmony; people unemployed and not having any access to jobs; kids hanging out in the streets late at night without parental or adult supervision; drive-by shootings and acts of violence by individuals terrorizing the community; streets and roads deteriorating and debris littering throughout the neighborhoods. Residents voiced concerns about a lack of appropriate police presence to deter crime and violence, and a host of other issues.

North Las Vegas Mayor Pro Tempore William Robinson served as the host to the meeting and provided the opening remarks.

In addressing the redevelopment in this community, Robinson stated, "There is a bankers' 40-block collaborative that is being developed to revitalize the community along with economic development that is ongoing. We



Sentinel-Voice photo by Ramon Savoy

North Las Vegas City Councilman William Robinson served as host of a meeting designed to engage North Las Vegas residents in discussions on efforts to improve the community.

need more than houses in this community. We need jobs, we need resource centers, we need improvements in the infrastructure and services provided to this community,

and if we work together we can get things done."

He expressed his gratitude to the residents for attending the community forum and told them that this was the be-

ginning of establishing an ongoing dialogue with city representatives and addressing issues in the neighborhood.

Kenny Young Sr., assis-

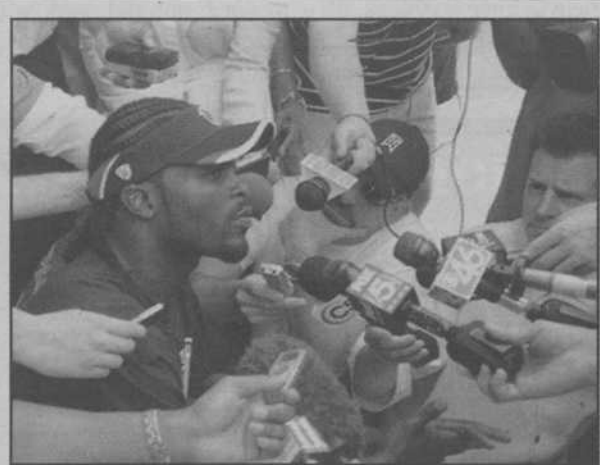
tant to the city manager of North Las Vegas, spoke about neighborhood and code enforcement issues.

"One of the positive things of this meeting tonight is engaging with the community residents to hear from you what is going on and needs to be addressed," Young said.

He indicated that the city is working with the residents and community partners to bring in economic development opportunities, redevelopment, housing and more resources that would be concentrated in more mature areas of the city.

Young added, "This is a comprehensive effort that involves many departments of the city, police, public works, housing and economic development, neighborhood services, parks and recreation, etc., working together holistically to address existing

(See NLV, Page 2)



Atlanta Falcons quarterback Michael Vick talks to reporters after the first workout at mini-camp at the Falcons Complex in Flowery Branch, Ga., in this May 11 file photo. Vick's future is now in jeopardy.

Vick indicted in dogfighting ring

RICHMOND, Va. (AP) - Atlanta Falcons quarterback Michael Vick was indicted Tuesday by a federal grand jury on charges related to illegal dogfighting. Vick and three others are charged with competitive dogfighting, procuring and training pit bulls for fighting and conducting the enterprise across state lines.

The dogfighting operation was named "Bad Newz Kennels," according to the indictment, and the dogs were

(See Vick, Page 11)

Analysts: Housing slump lags

LAS VEGAS (AP) - Analysts see no end in sight to a housing slump in Las Vegas, where home sales are off by 40 percent, prices continue to fall and home builders have sharply cut back on construction.

Experts said the downturn has particularly hit areas that had the most rapid run-up in home appreciation.

Foreclosure filings are highest in states such as Nevada, California, Florida and Ohio.

"I walked into the office of the title company I use and they were down to less than half their normal staff. People are losing jobs in this market," said Robin Comacho of Direct Access Lending.

"We'll see a lot of part-time Realtors and mortgage officers leave the business before the market turns around. Experienced Realtors and mortgage officers are surviving, but those with

less knowledge or a small network of contacts are leaving for a more steady paycheck," Comacho added.

New homes sales through May were down 43.8 percent in Las Vegas from a year ago and resales were off by 34.7 percent, according to Home Builders Research.

Median new home prices have declined 4.4 percent to \$308,874 and existing home prices slipped 3.8 percent to \$278,000.

The inventory of homes for sale on the Multiple Listing Service climbed to a record 23,642 in June, with about 40 percent of them sitting vacant.

"It's worse than I thought, considering I wasn't too optimistic in the first place," said Debi Averett of a Phoenix-based website, Housingdoom.com. "Typically, June is rush hour for Las Vegas, as busy as you'd expect, and it's dead."

She attributed most of the

slump to the subprime lending meltdown.

Home prices have been falling and defaults have been rising, especially among so-called subprime mortgages given to buyers with shaky credit.

Real estate consultant John Burns said home prices in Las Vegas must drop by 33 percent, or about \$100,000, before the market returns to normal conditions.

He said the housing cost-to-income ratio in both Las Vegas and Reno is 50 percent, meaning people spend half their income on housing. The national average is around 30 percent.

Mike Galatio, owner of Desert Wind Homes, said he expects about 100 home sales this year, down from the average of 150 to 200 a year.

He said buyers are getting incentives such as appliance packages, free upgrades, lot premiums and some closing costs paid by the builder.

Las Vegas was ranked among the top four at-risk housing markets by PMI Mortgage Insurance Co. The others are Phoenix, Riverside, Calif., and West Palm Beach, Fla.

"If you've followed the media this month, you know that this market has been tapped to be the worst performer in the United States in terms of sales and pricing in 2007," said real estate consultant Steve Bottfeld of Marketing Solutions.

"Thus far, this market is performing at a much higher level than the pundits suggest. What outside observers tend to miss — and sometimes even local analysts — is that this market is in the middle of a major transition. Things are changing and, we think, for the better," he added.

Other analysts agreed, saying Las Vegas' job creation will help create future demand for housing.