

## Group hopes to raze, revive empty street

**ADAMS:**

### Only ghosts live on Waterbury street

**BY MIKE PATRICK**

REPUBLICAN-AMERICAN

WATERBURY — Nobody lives on Adams Street.

This tiny strip that connects Grove and Hawkins streets is populated entirely by decrepit, vacant houses, their residents having moved away or died long ago.

Yet, when Kevin Taylor and Eden Brown look around at the crumbling sidewalks and overgrown grass, all they see is hope. Because they're the ones bringing it.

Taylor is executive director of Neighborhood Housing Services, which plans to tear down all seven blighted houses on Adams Street and replace them with six modern, energy-efficient homes, and a little park.

The lots will be two-unit, owner-occupied, with a rental component to it, of a modern aesthetic, "all tied to geothermal," Taylor said.

Geothermal energy heats and cools a home by tapping into a temperature-consistent layer more than 200 feet below ground.

Though it's more costly up front, Taylor said, the savings to the homeowner are immediate.

"What we feel is our selling point is we will minimize drastically your energy cost or, best-case scenario, eliminate it completely," Taylor said. "It's neighborhood revitalization; going in and providing better housing stock and affordable, alternative, renewable means of energy. Providing the renewable energy sources makes it truly affordable to someone."

Taylor said he expects the project to cost NHS in the vicinity of \$3 million to \$4 million, with much of the money coming from the state Department of Housing, the Water- *See ADAMS , Page 6B*



**Neighbor Housing Services Executive Director Kevin Taylor, right, and Eden Brown, community building and engagement specialist, stand near homes on Adams Street in Waterbury. The group is planning to revitalize the area with new, affordable, owner-occupied housing and green space.**

**JIM SHANNON** REPUBLICAN-AMERICAN

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bury Development Corp., Federal Home Loan Bank of Boston and other sources.

The houses, which are to remain owner-occupied in perpetuity, will be sold for no more than \$150,000, to buyers who earn no more than 80 percent of the area's median income, he said.

Once homeowners and their renters have moved in, it will be Brown's job as NHS's new community building and engagement specialist to ensure they become active participants in their community.

Brown has already been active in the rest of the North End, helping neighbors in the area of Martin Luther King Park learn to be community leaders.

She said NHS will remain a presence on Adams Street once the project is completed, helping to maintain the neighborhood and specifically the new park.

The park will sit at the edge of a parking lot that serves the Refuge Church of Christ, and the church has been asked to provide ideas for what amenities it should have.

"We would like to see a seating area, maybe a fountain, some sort of planting or horticultural setting, maybe outlets so if we have an outdoor service we'll have somewhere to plug in equip, and also attractive lighting for evening time," said Elder Jason Ward, the church's associate pastor.

"I believe everyone is looking forward to the rehabilitation of the area. We think it will be good for the neighborhood."

Adams Street sits right at the beginning of the Crownbrook neighborhood.

"It was an easy street to target," Ward said, noting the close proximity of Martin Luther King Park, the church and a Family Dollar store. "We felt we should start from beginning of the Crownbrook neighborhood and work our way in."

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