

New housing authority chairman gets busy

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MIDDLETOWN — The Middletown Housing Authority's newly elected chairman has promised a different look and direction for the agency.

Mark Masselli, who was elected Friday night, said job training and job creation will be a major new component.

"Public housing is not lifetime housing. It's a steady job is the better life, and a steady job is the way to do it," Masselli said in an

interview following his election at the authority's annual meeting and banquet.

The five commissioners met in a corner of the banquet room at the Monte Green Restaurant for the brief meeting to elect officers.

Masselli, 43, founded the Community Health Center 21 years ago and is its current president. He has been a commissioner for three years.

Working in partnership with businesses to create job opportunities and apprenticeship programs is one area in which the new chairman

wants to see the authority move.

He said he has asked Salvatore Monarca, who was elected vice chairman Friday, to look into how to create apprentice programs. Monarca was apprenticeship director of Carpenters Local 24 prior to his retirement.

"Our people want to work but they're not able to. We will hold tenants accountable but also be supportive," Masselli said.

"There is a lot of work to be done, and new directions to embark on," he said in the interview, along with

completing such tasks as the downsizing of Long River Village.

Masselli said he has already started talking to tenants and to community leaders, educators, business leaders, human services personnel.

He will be attending the Community Unity Day today at Traverse Square.

"We need to establish communication" outside the authority, Masselli said. "We need to know what people are thinking, what their hopes are and how they could contribute."

He said he will begin to build confidence in the authority with a proposal that he will make at Monday's regular meeting.

"Everyone genuinely cares. We need to deliver a good product. That's what we're about the business of doing," he said.

Commissioner Joyce Bunche said Masselli was the best qualified person for the job. "He is top-notch for housing affairs and for people affairs," she said.

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Masselli as resourceful and knowledgeable who will strive for consensus. "He knows his stuff. He's a good administrator," Serra said.

Former Mayor Paul Gionfriddo, who appointed Masselli to the authority three years ago, said he was a "terrific choice. He's extraordinarily skilled as a manager. Starting with just a few dollars, look what he's built the Community Health

Center into."

Masselli is also exceptionally committed to the authority's constituency. Gionfriddo said, which includes families in federally funded housing and state moderate-rental complexes. Section 8 scattered housing and elderly housing.

P. Thomas Gionfriddo, the authority's executive director, said he is looking forward to working with Masselli. "We both have a strong

desire to downsize Long River Village and to make the authority more tenant-service-related," he said.

He said the Section 8 program has expanded from 50 units to almost 500, and the modernization efforts at all of the complexes have taken a lot of energy.

"Now we can start looking at some other areas. You'll see some changes in the authority," Gionfriddo said.

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Middletown Press
Date: 7-9-94