

# THE CALL

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## Council Members Clash Over Prospect Corridor

By Tracy Allen

There's a war brewing in City Hall and it is coming from the same district.

Two Council members -- Mary Williams Neal and Troy Nash, council representatives from the 3rd District -- have staged a battle that relates to what is going on in the Prospect Corridor.

Councilwoman Neal, 3rd District representative, has questioned how some things have been carried out regarding one of Kansas City's most blighted areas. She says that some people in the community have not

gotten a fair shake when it comes to positions relating to the Prospect Corridor Initiative.

She has accused Councilman Nash, 3rd District At-Large representative, of trying to get friends into certain positions. Councilman Nash refutes her claims. In fact, he calls Councilwoman Neal's actions as "political."

And the war begins.

"She's angry because we made a lot of progress over 24 months and she's been on the City Council for six years and has very little to show for it," Councilman Nash said. "People

understand a personal attack when they see it."

According to Councilman Nash, his colleague has been questioning his moves ever since he was sworn-in to his seat three years ago. Councilman Nash, who has been active in helping to revitalize the Prospect areas between 25th and 46th street through initiatives such as the 144-hour marathon sponsored by MOVE UP last summer, and the demolition of several dangerous buildings around the 39th and Prospect area, has been involved in the Prospect Corridor Initiative, a long-term plan to once

again, beauty and encourage economic business along the corridor.

He says that the attacks that he has received from Councilwoman Neal toward himself and Kim Carlos, who currently is an assistant for the Councilman, are not only unfounded but simply causes a stink in the air.

"We've been meeting for over a year now about the plans we have for Prospect," Councilman Nash said. "We've invited Mary to a number of the initiatives we've had down there and she has never attended not one

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of the activities. She has never supported the idea. In fact, I remember her saying that it was a dumb idea."

What has Councilwoman Neal upset is the hiring of two individuals for two of four positions -- Program Manager, Community Outreach Director, Community Economist and Development Director -- that will work to carry out some of the initiatives Councilman Nash and other local government and community members want to see happen on Prospect.

In question was the jobs of Program Manager and Development Director. Councilwoman Neal became angry when she learned that Mrs. Carlos, who works for Councilman Nash, had applied for the Development Director job. The Councilwoman told **THE CALL** on Wednesday, "I'm quite pleased that (Councilman) Nash took an interest in that area (Prospect) and wanted to do something to develop that community, but I was quite disturbed that we continue to spend money tearing down buildings rather than putting the money where it needs to go -- into the community's hands."

Councilwoman Neal continued, "We have had four different neighborhood assessments in that area in the last four years and we have had little results to show for it. Now, we're once again spending \$176,000 for four new persons to work in an area that has seen little results from the previous people."

She also said that the committee formed to do the process failed to consider qualified people in the urban community. Councilwoman Neal was particularly irked over the application of Mrs. Carlos, who along with Stanley Counts Jr., were approved during the City Council's meeting on Thursday, June 14, by a 10-1 vote to begin work as the Development Director and the Program Manager within 30 days. Both jobs are one-year assignments.

Councilwoman Neal was the dissenting vote. "I'm excited about the job. I think the community is ready and I'm

ready to get on the job, knock on doors, talk with businesses, help bring in money to make this project a reality," said Mrs. Carlos. "Government can't do everything, so somebody has to get out there and raise funds to make this project a reality."

In question was the process of hiring Mrs. Carlos. Councilwoman Neal was concerned that Councilman Nash was involved with the process and in fact, recommended Mrs. Carlos for the job of Development Director. But, Councilman Nash said he had nothing to do with encouraging Mrs. Carlos to apply for the job or was he involved with the process.

He said although he knew of Mrs. Carlos' interest in the job, he had nothing to do with the interview process.

In fact, the short-term contract positions of Development Director and Program Manager were publicized in a number of media sources in the metropolitan area. The Councilman says that Mrs. Carlos has just as much right to have applied for the position as any other community person.

"It seems to me that Mary Williams Neal has thrown a monkey wrench on just about everything I've tried to do," said a frustrated Nash. "I've been dealing with this stuff ever since the election. Since day one, I've never heard her say anything positive about what I'm trying to do."

Councilman Nash says all he's trying to do is improve areas like Prospect that tend to get ignored by people in positions of government. Despite the feud going on between the two, Councilman Nash says he will just keep on doing what he's always been doing -- helping improve urban Kansas City.

"I'm not mad at Mary and what she has done or said. But I am saddened by some of the actions," Councilman Nash said. "This is a prime example of how African Americans tear each other apart. It's not necessary. This is what discourages young people from going into politics when they see the nastiness and viciousness, especially from your own people."