

There's shared blame for Homestead saga

Letters to the editor

March 24, 2006

News & Record

Jacky Dowd's question about Project Homestead underscores a basic problem. The years of Homestead's unethical behaviors escaped the attention, much less action from the entities that should have been on the job - the state's attorney general and the federal Internal Revenue Service.

There's lots of culpability, including a nonprofit board asleep at the wheel, but the oversight agencies were missing in action.

The DA's conclusion that Homestead's expenditures were unethical, but lacking in evidence to declare the actions illegal, demonstrates why tougher laws are necessary to ensure that nonprofit miscreants like the Homestead executives and board don't stick it to shareholders - the taxpayer.

Project Homestead hurts the credibility of every good nonprofit, not to mention every reputable community development corporation.

But the answer isn't to write off Project Homestead as the lost cause of a "bad apple," but to use it along with the Nature Conservancy, Red Cross, and others to raise the bar for accountability and put real muscle into oversight and enforcement. Otherwise, Dowd and others will encounter more Project Homesteads governed by self-enriching CEOs and memory-deficient boards.

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