

Doing what must be done

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Charlie Gaeta has a bit more vision around here than most people trying to help the city's historically significant neighborhoods to come back or to re-do themselves.

As the head of the Lynn Housing Authority and Neighborhood Development (LHAND), Gaeta's efforts are more often than not routed in his understanding of development and how one must control an area before getting down to the business of remaking it.

Such is the case with Gaeta's efforts on Washington, Sagamore and Suffolk Street, Sagamore Hill in general and the surrounding area leading down to the sea.

It is a neighborhood on the cusp of a revival but without a major push as Gaeta is suggesting, the area will remain as bar-

ren as an empty field absent of its topsoil.

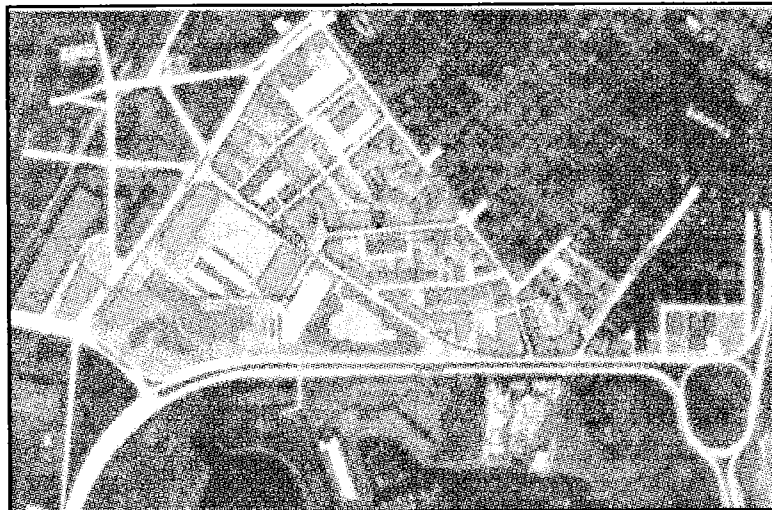
"We're attempting to create the assemblage we need to move this area into a new era," Gaeta said.

Indeed.

Gaeta sees a mix of affordable housing and commercial development mixing with the neighborhood as it already exists.

I love what Gaeta is trying to

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GRAPHIC COURTESY OF LHAND

LHAND's Charlie Gaeta has been trying to work his magic in the detailed areas of the map above for the past three years. But the real prize is downtown.

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do. I know how difficult it is to move forward right now because everything has been turned upside down by the near collapse of the American economy little more than one year ago.

Yet Gaeta is doing what must be done – he's trying against heavy odds to make something good happen.

If anyone can make something positive come to life around here, Gaeta is that man.

On that theme, we know that James Cowdell is also a man of vision not unwilling to take risks – and that his biggest challenge, is to find an anchor of some kind to come into the downtown area of the city and to build 2,000 to

3,000 units with all the accompanying commercial outlets that would be necessary to support such a venture and more importantly, to insure the success of a rebirth downtown.

As the head of the EDIC, and as a former council president, Cowdell can be depended on to make something happen.

But he would need the tools to alter the direction of history and investment here.

He needs a sweet tax deal in his hand from the city to entice developers seeking a way to invest their money.

The belief that the downtown could once again thrive in a major way is not the stuff of dreams – it is the stuff of hard-nosed business reality.

Cowdell working with Gaeta and both of them working with Mayor Judith Flanagan-Kennedy and the city council,

the Chamber of Commerce, and with every big time real estate guy and gal in the city – well – doing this and anything becomes possible.

Those of us who can still recall the Lynn of the late 1950's, 1960's and early 1970's grow impatient with nothing happening.

The spate of condo and studio type developments made here in the past decade have changed part of the downtown persona but not enough to make it a great place to live, to shop, to visit, et cetera.

Charlie Gaeta is doing yeoman's work near to Sagamore Hill.

We know Cowdell is trying to do the same.

Lynn needs a major hit – and it is going to have to give something away to get it.