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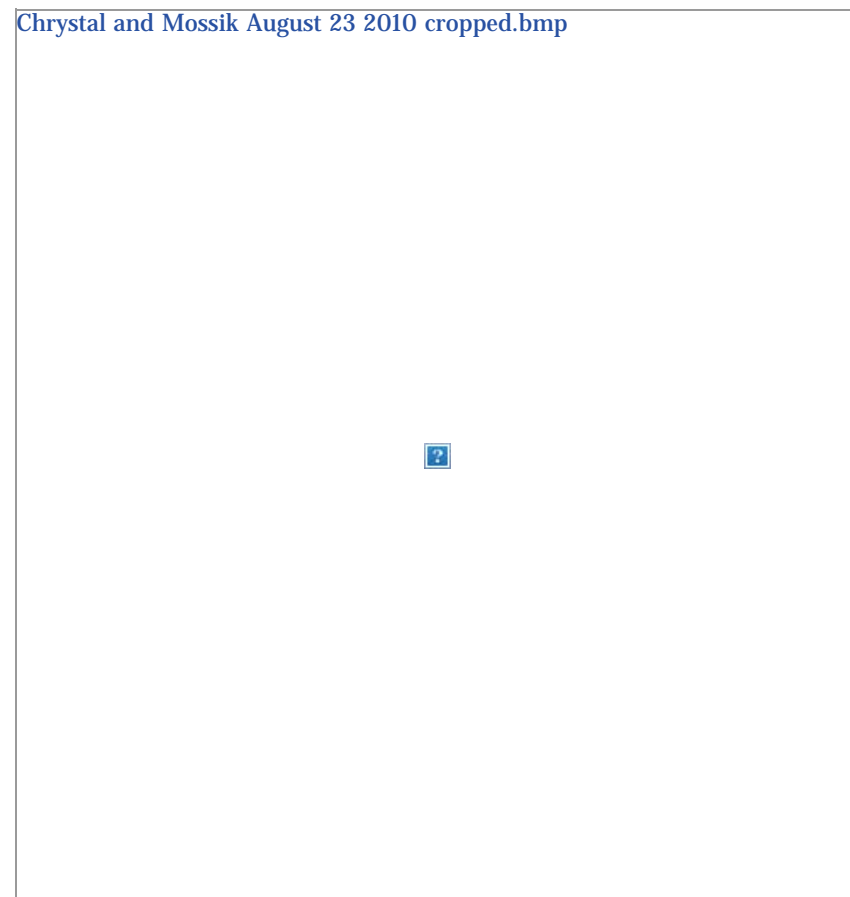
JAMAICA PLAIN

Nonprofit Urban Edge planning seamless leadership transition

Posted September 13, 2010 03:44 PM

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(Courtesy: Urban Edge)

Chrystal Kornegay will take over Mossik Hacobian's leadership role at Boston nonprofit community developing organization Urban Edge in January.

By Matt Rocheleau, Town Correspondent

By year's end, leadership will change hands at a prominent community-development organization that serves Jamaica Plain. And though a very familiar, beloved local figure will be missed, the group believes the transition will be seamless.

Founded by a group of Jamaica Plain community activists in 1974, [Urban Edge](#) works to improve the quality and affordability of housing, assisting small businesses, developing educational facilities, and offering homeownership and lending programs.

The group, with headquarters in Roxbury, has been led by Mossik Hacobian for the past 22 years. In his 33 total years with Urban Edge, Hacobian has been recognized for directing community development efforts in Jamaica Plain, Roxbury, and throughout much of Greater Boston.

Long-time Egleston Square resident Maria Quiroga helped hire Hacobian in 1977 as chair of the nonprofit's board of directors.

"Little did we know the impact he would have," Quiroga said, according to an Urban Edge statement announcing the looming leadership change. "Mossik has led Urban Edge's growth and development into a nationally recognized and respected innovative community development organization."

In January, Hacobian will step hand the reins to CEO Chrystal Kornegay, who will assume a consolidated CEO/president position. But, in a phone interview Monday, Kornegay said area residents should not anticipate the organization will change how it operates.

"For the folks who work here, it's not going to be that much different in terms of how we conduct business, and for those who use our services, it won't be different," she said. "But we're all certainly going to miss Mossik."

Urban Edge will continue running the same programs it always has that aim to bring local residents together so that they can have control over their own neighborhood, said Kornegay who lives in Mission Hill near the Jamaica Plain border and is in her 11th year with the group.

The organization will continue to shift its offering to meet the needs and changes of the community – like how it has increased its focus on sustainability and green building and added foreclosure buying education programs in recent years, she said.

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The president position is not something entirely new for Kornegay. In 2005, while Hacobian was on a three-month sabbatical, she assumed the role, and became deputy directory upon Hacobian's return.

In 2008, as part of a three-year leadership transition period outlined by the board of directors, she became CEO essentially putting her on equal footing as Hacobian in terms of responsibility.

In their shared leadership role, Hacobian and Kornegay formed a close professional relationship and friendship, she said, and she won't hesitate to seek his advice.

"You go to the people you trust to ask those kinds of questions," Kornegay said, adding that there are plenty of others beside Mossik at Urban Edge to assist in the decision-making process.

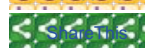
Hacobian plans to remain active with Urban Edge on a part-time basis, and there are currently no further details on an event to celebrate his service to the local community, other than that it is being planned.

As for where Kornegay sees herself down the road with Urban Edge: "I don't have this thing where I feel like, 'Once I achieve x, then I'll do blank,'" she said. "I choose everyday to come to work, and I have made that choice for the past 11 years for a variety of reasons. I'll be with Urban Edge for as long as it is good thing for both Urban Edge and for me."

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