

# Public housing result of City Hall mix-up

By SCOTT WILLIAMS  
of the Journal Star

Angry homeowners in a West Side neighborhood are fighting to get rid of a public-housing project that cleared the bureaucracy at City Hall because of a mix-up between Mayor Jim Maloof and staffers opposed to the project.

The Lexington Hills apartment complex was converted to government-subsidized housing late last year, over the objections of city staffers who feared that the neighborhood would become overcrowded with such housing.

Despite the objections, the U.S. De-

partment of Housing and Urban Development transformed the 264-unit apartment complex after receiving the go-ahead from Maloof, whose support had been sought privately in the interim.

Upon learning of the mayor's action, city staffers immediately appealed to HUD and even offered to find the government accommodations elsewhere in the city.

But federal housing officials refused to reconsider and proceeded to convert Lexington Hills into Peoria's newest public-housing project — saying they had received the necessary city approval from the mayor.

Now, city officials are accusing HUD

of exploiting a "bureaucratic ricochet" in City Hall, while neighboring homeowners are going to court in hopes of forcing the federal government to return Lexington Hills to normal.

Organized homeowners from the nearby Wardcliffe and Forest Hills subdivisions filed suit against HUD in federal court earlier this month, seeking an injunction against any further subsidies of the new tenants of Lexington Hills.

The homeowners contend that the conversion of that apartment complex has given their area a higher concentration of public housing than anywhere else in the city, except the Warner, Harrison and Taft Homes.

They pin their legal challenge on the same complaint now being made in City Hall — that HUD did not have proper authorization from the city to take over Lexington Hills.

Assistant City Manager Quentin Davis said officials at HUD's regional office in Chicago have known for years that the city manager, not the mayor, is the person who must approve such developments in the city.

Davis said those officials chose to ignore the concerns of then-City Manager James Daken, who had asked HUD for more time to study the proposed develop-

**Please see MIX-UP, Page A2**