

Housing authority nixes plans to ax guards

By **Mike Underwood**

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City housing officials have scrapped plans to replace security guards with surveillance cameras in 13 Boston Housing Authority developments for the elderly in the wake of a Herald expose.

The Boston Housing Authority planned to ax the guards as part of a \$650,000 cost-cutting measure that left senior residents so angry that an army of some 200 golden-agers was due to march on City Hall Friday to protest to the Inspectional Services Department.

But BHA yesterday announced it was ditching the plan after an outpouring of anger in the community.

"The administrator (Sandra Henriquez) and the mayor have been working together on the proposal, and they wanted the plan to have widespread support," said BHA spokeswoman Lydia Agro.

"We feel the proposal has merit, but we did not feel it had enough support from the community so they have decided to withdraw it."

Mayor **Thomas M. Menino** said he was waiting for the Inspectional Services Department, in charge of security at complexes, to release its decision on the plan Friday - but was forced to make an early judgment call because of the lack of support from the community.

"The mayor wanted to look at ways of having both security guards and cameras. His number-one priority is to make sure the residents are safe," said Menino's spokeswoman Dot Joyce.

Councilor-at-large Sam Yoon, the city's housing committee chairman, welcomed the authority's U-turn.

"This is a big victory for Boston's senior citizens and people with disabilities, who rely on security guards to help ensure their safety and well-being," he said in a statement.

The plans to ditch guards was unveiled by the Herald Monday. It would have affected some 1,800 residents.