

Toggle navigation

Burlington County Times



Making Headlines: General Excellence Award 6 years in a row!

2 affordable housing projects in county get tax credits

By Rose Krebs, staff writer

Rose Krebs

Sep 9, 2017

The state has announced the award of more than \$2.5 million in tax credits for affordable housing projects in Mount Laurel and Cinnaminson.

Among the 29 projects in 14 counties to be awarded about \$40 million in tax credits through the New Jersey Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency low-income housing tax credit program were projects planned for **Riverton Road in Cinnaminson** and Centerton Road in Mount Laurel.

"This most recent round of tax credit awards demonstrates that New Jersey is taking full advantage of the Low Income Housing Tax Credits program, which has been a successful tool in the state for creating affordable housing," said Charles A. Richman, commissioner of the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs. "Through these credits, the state is able to leverage funding and expand housing opportunities that will positively impact the lives of working families, seniors and special needs residents, all of whom are of limited financial means."

The credits are awarded to developers so they can sell them to investors to produce equity to cover construction costs. Typically, about 70 percent of development costs can be funded using the equity produced, according to the state Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency.

Moorestown Ecumenical Neighborhood Development Inc., commonly known as MEND, and Conifer Realty, of Mount Laurel, were awarded \$1.05 million in tax credits to build 54 age-restricted affordable housing units on 2.7 acres on Riverton Road.

The property, which has a large home on it that was formerly used by a nonprofit for senior citizen housing, was purchased by the town more than a decade ago. Deputy Mayor William "Ben" Young said the property has since been eyed for use as a municipal building, community center and even a library.

"We're ecstatic," Young said of the notice that tax credits have been awarded for the project. "We've been working on this for eight years."

Young said this is the fourth attempt to secure credits for the project.

"It was a huge team effort," he said, adding that the project will help the town meet some of its fair-share affordable housing obligation set by the state Council on Affordable Housing.

The house on the site will be demolished and replaced by a three-story building with 53 one-bedroom apartments and one two-bedroom apartment, according to Matthew Reilly, president and CEO of MEND.

To qualify, residents have to be at least 62 years old and meet certain low- and affordable-income standards.

"We are just thrilled," Reilly said. "We've been working on this project for three to four years. ... The town has just done a tremendous amount and shown a tremendous amount of persistence."

The project's estimated cost is \$11.7 million, with the tax credits funding about \$10 million, he said. The project will also be funded with a \$500,000 mortgage, to be paid to the town to acquire the property, a \$200,000 county loan and \$400,000 bank loan.

Volunteers of America Delaware Valley was awarded \$1.75 million in tax credits to build 103 affordable homes on Centerton Road near Marne Highway.

The equity generated by the award should fund about 80 percent of the estimated \$23 million project, said Owen McCabe, vice president of acquisition and development for the organization.

Purchase of the land has yet to be finalized, approvals are still needed, and construction is not expected to start for about a year, McCabe said.

"We still have a lot of work to do before we put shovel in ground," he said.

The two four-story buildings will contain 20 one-bedroom apartments, 57 two-bedroom units and 26 three-bedroom units. A manager will live on-site. The property will also have a playground and community space.

Rents at both sites will be determined using limits and income-eligibility requirements set by the state. Based on current figures, rent would range from about \$450 for a one-bedroom apartment to \$1,300 for three bedrooms.

For more information on income eligibility, visit state.nj.us/dca/hmfa/media/download/tax/incomelimits/tc_2017_income_limits.pdf.

Applications are not yet being accepted, but anyone interested can call MEND at 856-722-7070, ext. 20, or Volunteers of America Delaware Valley at 856-854-4660 to be put on a list to have an application sent later.

Enjoying our content? Become a Burlington County Times subscriber to support stories like these. Get full access to our signature journalism for just 44 cents a day.

Rose Krebs: 609-267-7586; email: rkrebs@calkins.com; Twitter: @rosekrebs