



Way Finders breaks ground on Ludlow affordable housing

by Sarah Heinonen | Jul 8, 2024 | Hampden County, Local News, Ludlow



Chair of Way Finders Real Estate Committee Jim Broaderick, Chair of Way Finders Board Jasmine Naylor, state Sen. Jacob Oliveira, state Rep. Aaron Saunders, Way Finders President and CEO Keith Fairey and Massachusetts Housing Partnership Chief of Public and Community Engagement Dana LeWinter get ready to break ground at the Greenstead Grove affordable housing site in Ludlow.

Reminder Publishing photo by Sarah Heinonen

LUDLOW — Amid a substantial, well-documented housing shortage in Western Massachusetts, a community housing organization has broken ground on 43 new apartments in the town of Ludlow.

Way Finders, an organization that helps build affordable housing and provide rental assistance, has begun construction on seven two-story townhomes at 188 Fuller St. that are scheduled to be complete in 2025.

The townhomes, designed by Dietz & Company Architects and constructed by the contractor Allegrone, will offer one-, two- and three-bedroom apartments that include heat, cooling, electricity and hot water utilities. There will be on-site laundry, off-street parking and 24/7 maintenance.



Reminder Publishing submitted photo

In addition to the townhomes, the project will also include a community building. The buildings will be outfitted with solar panels to provide about half of the electricity for the apartments.

As affordable housing, the rent is dependent on the median area income, which is \$76,650 for a single person in Hampden County and \$109,500 for a family of four. Sixteen of the 43 units will be available to people with an income of 30% of the median income or less, while the remaining 27 will have an income threshold of 60% of the median income or less.

Of the \$24.5 million construction project, Way Finders CEO Keith Fairey said, "The budget has been recast several times. What we kept in mind [was] the end project. These are permanent homes for people."

Fairey said Greenstead Grove and similar Way Finders projects throughout Western Massachusetts are "creating more housing choice and opportunity." He emphasized that the project is an "investment." He said, "When people have a good, stable home, you have a great launchpad for every day." Housing stability supports the local economy, people's growth, and academic and employment success.

"This project was a long time coming," Fairey said, acknowledging that it was controversial when the property was purchased by Way Finders in 2015. He said there were concerns raised by Ludlow residents, which contributed to the delay in construction, but Way Finders had worked to address them.

State Rep. Aaron Saunders (D-Belchertown) said he first became aware of the project as a selectman in the town. "Ludlow has a long history of being a working-class community" and "has welcomed families for hundreds of years," he said to those who had gathered for the ceremonial groundbreaking. "This community is proud to have Greenstead Grove." As a legislator, Saunders said, "There are very few

issues more pressing than knowing the people of the commonwealth have a safe, affordable place to live.”

State Sen. Jacob Oliveira (D-Ludlow) said, “We hear from constituents on a daily basis who are facing housing insecurity.” He shared that people living nearby in Springfield must earn 130% of the median income to afford a median apartment in the city.

Oliveira explained that the state Senate had just completed work on the \$5.6 billion Affordable Housing Act, which includes funding for public housing construction and repairs; housing production and down-payment assistance for first-time homeowners in Gateway Cities, challenges for housing in rural towns, seasonal communities and mid-sized communities and addressing water, sewer and septic challenges in housing developments.

Way Finder board Chair Jasmine Naylor also talked about the housing crisis in the state. “Rents are rising astronomically,” she said. “People are needing safe, affordable housing.”

Naylor also wanted to dispel the stigma of affordable housing. She said that she had purchased a home next door to the Way Finders affordable housing community in Agawam and said affordable housing tenants are grandparents, working professionals and young families.

Dana LeWinter shared similar sentiments. As the chief of public and community engagement at Massachusetts Housing Partnership, a nonprofit that works with the state to increase the supply of affordable housing in Massachusetts, she said MHP is the lender for six of Way Finders’ current construction projects. They reflect “a range of household sizes, a range of incomes.” Noting Greenstead Grove’s location across the street from Harris Brook Elementary School, LeWinter said, “Forty-three families will call this spot home.” She added, “Every community has a role to play in providing housing.”



Sarah Heinonen

sheinonen@thereminder.com

PROUDLY COVERING

Agawa , Amherst, Belchertown, Blandford, Chester, Chesterfield, Chicopee, Cummington, East Longmeadow, Easthampton, Enfield, Goshen, Granby, Granville, Hadley, Hampden, Hatfield, Holyoke, Huntington, Leverett, Longmeadow, Ludlow, Monson, Montgomery, Northampton, Otis, Palmer, Pelham, Russell, Shutesbury, Somers, South Hadley, Southampton, Southwick, Springfield, Sunderland, Tolland, Ware, West Springfield, Westfield, Westhampton, Whately, Williamsburg, Wilbraham, and Worthington

Copyright © 2024 Reminder Publishing, LLC. All Rights Reserved.

[Privacy Policy](#)

Website by Envision Marketing Group