

LIFESTYLE, NEWS

A POSITIVE DEVELOPMENT AT RIVER'S END

SUBMITTED BY PAUL HALLORAN | May 26, 2022



Lynn Mayor Jared Nicholson, left, speaks during the ribbon cutting of the River's End Townhomes in Lynn on Thursday. (Spenser Hasak)

LYNN — As speakers came to the podium to express their pride and pleasure with the West Lynn housing development on which the ribbon had just been cut, a young couple came out of one of the townhomes, golf clubs in hand, heading off for an afternoon on the links.

Mission accomplished.

The celebration Thursday was for the official opening of the River's End Townhomes, 12 units spread among four buildings at the intersection of Burns and River streets on property that was once owned and used by General Electric, but had been vacant for the better part of three decades.

"This is a great example of the kind of development we are looking for in the City," said Mayor Jared C. Nicholson. "It enriches a neighborhood with thoughtful planning that creates a project with the whole being greater than the sum of its parts."

River's End represents the third phase of a \$9.8 million development plan in the area undertaken by Neighborhood Development Associates, the development arm of the Lynn Housing Authority & Neighborhood Development. NDA invested \$3.5 million in the River's End project, according to Peggy Phelps, director of planning and development for LHAND and the project manager.

NDA built and sold four single-family homes on Minot Street in 2019 and four on Richard and Light streets in 2021, Phelps said, also on former GE land.

The fourth phase, six units on Western Avenue, is under construction on a former brownfield site that the City transferred to the Economic Development & Industrial Corporation (EDIC/Lynn), which obtained two grants for a clean-up that restored it to residential use, according to EDIC/Lynn Executive Director James Cowdell. EDIC then entered into a development agreement with NDA.

"We are committed to providing more housing opportunities," said LHAND Executive Director Charles Gaeta, who noted that, while 25 percent of the units at River's End were earmarked for low and moderate-income buyers, the rest were priced so that they would be affordable for a wide range of people.

Gaeta credited Realtor Eileen Jonah Daley of Century 21 Northeast with effectively marketing and selling the units for NDA and the boards of both LHAND and NDA for supporting the project.

Gaeta thanked Salem Five bank for providing the financing, and praised Phelps for her work in seeing the project through from start to finish.

State Rep. Peter Capano, a lifelong West Lynn resident, said it took a coordinated effort among LHAND, the City, GE, and the state delegation to get this project done.

"There were a lot of broken beer bottles and weeds on this property," Capano said. "To see where we were years ago to where we are now is amazing. It looks beautiful."

Ward 6 Councilor Fred Hogan said residents in the area are "excited to have this development. To turn parking lots into homes is amazing. And we're attracting new people to the City. This is exciting for Lynn."

City Council President Jay Walsh, who represents Ward 7 in West Lynn, said while it is unfortunate that so many jobs at GE have been lost over the years, this development helps turn that negative into a positive. "It's a perfect example of a stepping stone" to future development.

Longtime NDA board member Christine Newhall said she continues to be impressed by the quality of the projects NDA completes. “Every one of these new projects that is completed I think it is the best one ever, then the next one is better,” she said. “The projects continue to evolve and integrate into Lynn’s neighborhoods.”

“These homes represent something uniquely American – the opportunity to have home ownership for hard-working people to get ahead,” said Salem Five Senior Vice President Mark Leff. “You have really smart people and extraordinary leadership in Lynn.”

Phelps attributed the success of the project to teamwork, singling out for praise architect John Crowell, engineer and surveyor Chuck Faia, site manager Jim Connors, and others who worked on the development.

“We met with the neighbors to see what they wanted,” Phelps said. “We didn’t want to push a plan on them.”

Looking at the final result, four well-appointed buildings that fit seamlessly into the neighborhood, it’s safe to assume they approve.