

News

Waterfront developer, Habitat team up in City of Newburgh

By John Doherty
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City of Newburgh — Call it a housewarming gift, or maybe a goodwill gesture.

Leyland Alliance, the Tuxedo developer who won the right to redevelop 30 prime acres along Newburgh's Hudson riverfront, is teaming up with Habitat for Humanity on another project.

Leyland and Habitat will build or refurbish 21 buildings in the East Parmenter Street area near Washington's Headquarters in the city's East End.

Seven of the homes will be traditional Habitat Projects — sold to very low-income, working families, who'll put in labor as part of their low-price deal.

The other 14 homes, Leyland says, will be marketed at "work force" market prices. Leyland said its buildings will be a mix of affordable town houses and single-family residences.

"This is something that we've been working on with Leyland for a while," said Deirdre Glenn, the executive director of Greater Newburgh's Habitat for Humanity. Aside from the large number of buildings being done at once, said Glenn, what's exciting about the partnership is the combination of Habitat homes and market-value ones.

"This is an interesting neighborhood; it's really old Newburgh," said Glenn, who grew up in the city and returned several years ago. "This will give it a nice mixed-income group. (The Leyland portion) should really bring in the police and firefighter, the teacher types."

The project, which includes a good chunk of East Parmenter and a piece of Washington Street, does not abut the land Leyland is redeveloping along the water. But it is close to the leafy Washington's Headquarters property and a slowly rebounding section of Liberty Street that has become, along with the riverfront's bars and restaurants, a draw for out-of-towners.

But, as elsewhere in the city, the pocket of rehabilitated buildings here quickly gives way to dilapidated buildings and empty lots. Many of the two- and three-story homes and office buildings have been empty since the late 1970s, Glenn said.

She hopes Habitat will begin its portion of the project by year's end.

For Leyland, the project also answers one of the rare criticisms of its work in Newburgh thus far.

Residents who attended public planning hearings for their waterfront project this winter were almost universally impressed.

But residents worried that the working-class neighborhood on the Leyland land, plowed under in the 1970s, is now being replaced with town houses and condos many residents could never afford.

The city's agreement with Leyland requires it to include 10 percent affordable housing — pegged at about \$240,000 — in its waterfront project. Half of that can be off the 30 acres.

But Lou Marquet, Leyland's executive vice president, said Habitat had approached them about a partnership earlier this winter — and eventually sold them on the idea.

"If we can put a good thing or two in Newburgh, that's enough. That's how we do business," said Marquet, who expects Leyland's 14 or so homes to be priced around \$180,000 to \$200,000.