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## Key players in Harbor Place visit city

By Mike LaBella [mlabella@eagletribune.com](mailto:mlabella@eagletribune.com) Nov 2, 2017



MIKE LABELLA/Staff photo State Secretary of Housing and Economic Development Jay Ash speaks during the Harbor Place dedication ceremony.

Amanda Sabga



HAVERHILL — For Harbor Place to be built, it needed multiple partners and help from the state.

All of that was evident this week when high-ranking state officials and others involved in the project took part in a dedication that included a visit by Cardinal Sean O'Malley.

More than 150 people showed up for the dedication and ribbon cuttings for both the Harbor Place commercial building and the Harbor Place residential building, which are the new anchors for the eastern end of downtown.

O'Malley called the project "beautiful and stunning."

"Harbor Place is a wonderful example of the church partnering with local, state and nonprofit communities to offer families safe and affordable housing," said O'Malley. "Through this development, the Planning Office for Urban Affairs of the Archdiocese, in partnership with the Greater Haverhill Foundation, is also supporting new economic growth to help revitalize this once distressed area of the downtown. This is what building strong communities is about, and we are blessed to have the opportunity to be part of this wonderful project."

Harbor Place includes 80 units of mixed-income housing, a neighboring five-story commercial building, a public plaza and a boardwalk that brings pedestrians to the Merrimack River in this part the downtown for the first time in more than 80 years.

The development replaces the former F.W. Woolworth building, which sat vacant and abandoned in the downtown for 45 years, and several other vacant or underutilized structures.

Of the 80 units of housing at Harbor Place, 56 are affordable workforce housing and 24 are market rate, according to Archdiocese spokesman Terrence Donilon.

Occupants of the commercial buildings include HC Media; UMass Lowell, which operates a satellite campus in the building; Pentucket Bank's corporate headquarters; and office space for rent at the penthouse level. The new boardwalk provides views of the Merrimack River, which was once hidden by a 10-foot high flood wall.

O'Malley was joined by guests with ties to the project, including Secretary Jay Ash of the state Office of Housing and Economic Development; Mayor James Fiorentini; Lisa Alberghini, president of the Planning Office for Urban Affairs of the Archdiocese; Ronald Trombley, managing director of the Greater Haverhill Foundation; former state Rep. Brian Dempsey; Susan Moro, senior vice president of Community Development for Bank of America; and Judith Jacobson, deputy director of the Massachusetts Housing Partnership.

During the event, a bronze plaque was unveiled naming the boardwalk behind Harbor Place after Dempsey, the former chairman of the state House Ways and Means Committee, who was instrumental in making the development a reality.

Dempsey helped secure \$36 million in various forms of state funding to assist in the \$70 million project.

Dempsey credited UMass President Martin Meehan and Chancellor Jaqueline Moloney. He said the partnership with UMass Lowell and Northern Essex Community College was the catalyst that helped secure millions of dollars in state funding for Harbor Place.

Ash told the crowd that Harbor Place will bring critically needed housing and revitalize vacant, underutilized buildings in the city's downtown.

He called Harbor Place a "great model" for what he, the governor, lieutenant governor and members of the legislature are hoping to replicate, especially in gateway cities around the state.

Fiorentini called Harbor Place "one of the greatest projects ever to hit the city of Haverhill."

"For the first time in our lifetimes, you can see the Merrimack River from Merrimack Street," Fiorentini said. "You've never been able to do that before."

Trombley said the Harbor Place project has been a major undertaking in Haverhill that could only have been accomplished through a total commitment to teamwork at both the state and local levels.

"We are very pleased to be a partner in this transformative downtown initiative," Trombley said.

Alberghini noted the project's many partners included the Greater Haverhill Foundation, the state, and in particular Secretary Ash and Chrystal Kornegay, undersecretary for Housing and Economic Development.

"We are also grateful for the city of Haverhill, and the many local institutions that played a critical role in this development," she said. "What we have accomplished together is remarkable, and it has already triggered further investment in the downtown for the benefit of all who live and work there."

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