



Courtesy photo

Cardinal Sean O'Malley was recently in Salem to celebrate the opening of 135 Lafayette, an affordable housing project. From left, Salem Mayor Kim Driscoll; O'Malley; Lisa Alberghini, president of the Planning Office for Urban Affairs; the Rev. Daniel Riley; and Aaron Gornstein, Massachusetts undersecretary for Housing and Community Development.

Cardinal celebrates 135 Lafayette building

Cardinal Sean O'Malley came to this city last weekend to celebrate the opening of 135 Lafayette, the affordable housing development on the former site of St. Joseph Church.

"135 Lafayette is an example of how the church and civic leaders can work together to provide a sustainable response to the need for affordable housing," O'Malley said, "while making an important contribution to the economic and social life of the community."

O'Malley was accompanied by Lisa Alberghini, president of the Planning Office for Urban Affairs, the project's developer and a Boston Archdiocese affiliate. Also on hand were Driscoll and Aaron Gornstein, state housing and community development undersecretary, according to a recent statement about the event.

"Throughout the archdiocese, we hear of experiences that are becoming all too common: families made homeless when they lose their houses to foreclosure, families paying high rents for apartments that are in poor condition, working people who cannot afford to pay rent, elderly residents on fixed incomes who have to choose between paying rent and buying their prescriptions and food," O'Malley said.

At the corner of Lafayette and Harbor streets, 135 Lafayette features 51 units of varying size — residents moved into them earlier this year — and about 4,000 square feet of commercial space on its first floor.

Calling it a "first-class building," Driscoll said 135 Lafayette would be vital to increasing "the economic vibrancy and vitality of our ever-growing downtown core."

"I am excited to be here

today to celebrate this occasion," Driscoll said.

Noting that more than 1,000 people applied for living quarters at 135 Lafayette, Alberghini commented that there was clearly a "dramatic need" for such housing.

"Redeveloping the former St. Joseph's parish campus in this way uses the property to continue the mission of the church, in a new form, for generations to come," she said.