

The Hanover Mariner

Barstow Village project to benefit from tax credits, subsidies

By Ruth Thompson

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Hanover — Hanover's proposed Barstow Village affordable senior housing development is one of several state projects that will benefit from Gov. Deval Patrick's pledge of \$71 million in resources from various affordable housing programs.

"By investing this targeted blend of funds to spur housing development, we are actively strengthening our communities across Massachusetts," Patrick wrote in a statement released on Feb. 16. "Creating affordable housing helps to generate jobs, grow local businesses, and build a better, stronger Commonwealth."

On Tuesday of this week, Hanover's Asst. Town Planner Margaret Hoffman said that in 2009, EA Fish Companies was awarded the Request for Proposal (RFP) for the Barstow Village project, and would be spearheading the development process with EA Fish Development.

The company will be working closely with the Planning Office for Urban Affairs, Inc., a non-profit self-sustaining justice ministry of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Boston, which strives to create vibrant communities through the development of high quality affordable and mixed income housing.

"They do a lot of good work with senior housing and affordability," Hoffman said.

Also part of the team will be Peabody Properties, the management arm of the EA Fish Companies, and Dellbrook Construction.

According to the statement from the governor's office, EA Fish Development and the Planning Office of Urban Affairs will use \$1 million in federal low-income housing tax credits and an additional \$2.3 million in DHCD (Dept. of Housing and Community Development) program subsidies to construct 66 new units of affordable rental housing for residents aged 62 or older.

The project, according to the governor's statement, is expected to generate 72 jobs.

"The federal tax credits and the DHCD subsidies will definitely help this project go forward," Hoffman said. "Everybody applies to this. We didn't get it last year and there was some concern but we got it this year."

The 66-unit development is to be built on a parcel of town-owned land in a wooded area off of Legion Drive.

"It's all affordable, rental units," Hoffman said, adding that the units would count towards the town's 40B requirements.

She said 10 percent of the units would be built for low income residents.

The project, Hoffman added, will offer a range of affordability. The units will be available to households that earn less than or equal to 60 percent of the area median income.

Eligible incomes will range from \$18,930 per year to \$43,320 per year, Hoffman said

Hoffman said the town would continue to own the property and give E.A. Fish a 99-year lease.

“Fish will maintain the property and the town will maintain ownership,” Hoffman said.

According to barstovillage.com, a website about the property maintained by the EA Fish Company, the development will consist of 64 one-bedroom units and two two-bedroom units in a three-story building with approximately 77 parking spaces.

Half of the units are to be made handicap “adaptable.”

“The property will provide much needed affordable housing for the elderly, with supportive services that will help promote independent living,” the website reads. “The building will be reminiscent of grand examples of New England coastal architecture, and will include a community room, kitchen, laundry facilities and other ancillary spaces. The site plan will incorporate a series of “low-impact” design elements that minimizes impervious surfaces where possible and provides usable open space for residents, and buffers to adjacent land uses.”

Hoffman said the original timeframe for the project was to be able to move residents in by fall of 2012.

“I think the town is very pleased that this happened and that EA Fish was awarded the tax credit and subsidiary,” Hoffman said. “It will mean the project can go ahead as scheduled which is a positive step for the town.”