

CITY OF ALBANY



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

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FEDERAL FUNDING SPURS NEIGHBORHOOD CONSTRUCTION IN ARBOR HILL

City Uses \$4 Million Neighborhood Stabilization Program to Fund Rehab

Albany, NY (Dec. 8) - The City of Albany gathered with partners in Arbor Hill today to highlight the progress that has been made rehabilitating dilapidated properties using federal funding through the Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP). Working with the Albany Community Development Agency (ACDA), Albany Housing Authority (AHA), and New York State Homes and Community Renewal, among others, the City demonstrated its ongoing success leveraging federal stimulus funds to make improvements in the community.

Since the City acquired the 15 properties along Clinton Avenue in February, it has performed necessary environmental and engineering assessments on the properties to determine the work needed to bring them back into active use. The buildings, formerly owned by St. Joseph's Housing Corporation, were turned over to ACDA who assumed ownership of the properties on behalf of the City and is working with the Albany Housing Authority to oversee the rehabilitation. Due to the deteriorated condition of the dwellings the vast majority of the units were abandoned and uninhabitable at the time of acquisition.

"This is exactly the type of project that NSP funding is designed for," said Mayor Jennings. "It provides us an opportunity to take neglected and dilapidated buildings and turn them into safe, high quality housing which will make a positive difference not only for residents, but also the surrounding neighborhood and the entire city."

The City of Albany was among the first cities in the state to have a project approved using NSP funds. The program, established through the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and administered through the State of New York provides grants for the purpose of stabilizing communities that have suffered from foreclosures and abandonment. Through the purchase and redevelopment of foreclosed and abandoned properties, the City is bringing these

buildings back into use and at the same time providing safe, affordable housing for low income residents.

“These buildings represented a challenge for the City to bring back into active use as safe, quality affordable housing,” said Michael Yevoli, Commissioner, City of Albany Development and Planning. “This project demonstrates that we can put federal stimulus dollars to good use, and there are more projects to do, but we need more money to make them happen.”

ACDA and AHA are working closely with Norstar Development, the construction firm doing the work on the project. Norstar has extensive experience with rehab projects in the City of Albany, particularly projects of a historical nature like these properties.

“We have a long and positive track record of partnering with the City and private developers to create safe, affordable housing,” said Steven Longo, Executive Director of the Albany Housing Authority. “These properties will build on other successes we've had in Arbor Hill that are beginning to transform that neighborhood.”

The NSP grant from HUD was administered through the New York State Homes and Community Renewal (HCR).

Brian Lawlor, Commissioner/CEO of HCR, said, “Integration of the State's housing and community renewal agencies and programs under a single management structure has allowed HCR to become more responsive to the needs of our great partners, including the Albany Housing Authority, Mayor Jennings and the Albany Community Development Agency. We are very pleased to play a role in several community revitalization projects in Albany, including this initiative in Arbor Hill.”

The project is not just creating residential space, but it is retaining valuable street-level commercial space as well. To date, a commercial tenant has already been secured for the property at 341 Clinton Street. Trinity Alliance of the Capital Region will occupy the ground floor commercial space. The social services organization, which recently expanded its operations, will establish a presence at this newly renovated location. This move will provide added services to the neighborhood and create another occupied storefront.

Currently, the properties are under construction with safety fences blocking off the site. Demolition will continue and infrastructure will be replaced bringing the buildings up to code. As the project progresses, the buildings will get much needed materials including updated utilities, new windows and other treatments that will improve the streetscape and provide safe, quality housing for Albany residents. Construction is expected to continue through the winter with an anticipated completion in spring of 2011.

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