

Frequently Asked Questions

Parkside Village I Redevelopment

June 29, 2017

What is the Branford Housing Authority and what does it do?

The Branford Housing Authority (BHA) was formed by the Town of Branford to oversee and operate Parkside Village I at 115 South Montowese Street and Parkside Village II, which is on Block Island Road. It is not involved in the operation of any other properties. BHA is governed by a commission of Town appointed volunteers, and the day to day operations of the property are managed by Merit Properties.

How large are Parkside I and II and when were they built?

Parkside I is 50 units and Parkside II is 40 units. Parkside I is made up of 10 one-bedroom and 40 studio apartments and has 30 parking spaces. Parkside II is 40 units. Both properties are approximately 40 years old.

What regulations govern the BHA and Parkside I and II?

Parkside I and II were both built under the State of Connecticut's State-Sponsored Housing program and are regulated and receive ongoing support through the Department of Housing and the Connecticut Housing Financing Agency. Under its regulations, the property is age-restricted to residents over the age of 65, and federal law requires that age-restricted properties are also open to those with physical and cognitive disabilities. All residents must also be low-income to qualify for an apartment and rents are restricted to be affordable.

Who presently lives in Parkside Village I?

Currently 50 residents live in Parkside Village I. Roughly half of the property is senior and half is younger and physically or cognitively disabled.

Why does Parkside Village I need to be replaced?

Parkside Village has had no major capital investment since it was built in the mid-1970s. The property suffers from years of deferred maintenance, small unit sizes, and does not meet accessibility requirements. The redevelopment would update accessibility, mechanical systems, and make crucial improvements to safety, energy efficiency, and quality of life standards. In addition, the proposed redevelopment would expand onsite security, management services and supportive services for residents.

How will the new building be funded?

The Federal Low-Income Housing Tax Credit Program will be the primary funding source for this redevelopment. This program prioritizes properties that are general occupancy and have greater than 50% two-bedrooms. This redevelopment will not require funding from the Town of Branford.

Will the new building be open to people of all ages?

Yes, it is not currently possible to receive competitive State funding for age-restricted properties. The property is currently 50% senior and 50% younger disabled, so we do not expect the number of seniors to be meaningfully reduced.

What is the vetting process for present and future tenants?

Residents are required to meet income and screening requirements in accordance with the tenant selection plan which meets Federal Fair Housing restrictions. The tenant selection plan is also approved by the State of CT. Included in the resident screening are extensive background and criminal checks as well as financial assessments such as credit and landlord history. To the extent permitted by state regulating agencies, the new development will currently include a local preference for those working and living in Branford.

Has the BHA looked at alternate sites?

Yes. The BHA evaluated 17 sites in the town of Branford in a comprehensive, 3rd party study. In addition, the BHA issued an RFP asking land owners to submit proposals for available land. The only viable site identified was the former Branford Hills School land which an RTM subcommittee determined was important to be preserved as open space for the community.

How does the new site plan respond to previous concerns and comments?

In response to comments from neighbors and Branford officials, the new site plan flips the building away from South Montowese Street which accomplishes several benefits:

- Moves the bulk of the building away from South Montowese Street.
- Preserves more of the woods and rock outcroppings on the northern portion of the site.
- Reduces the need for rock removal to build the foundation.
- Provides better fire department access to the building.

On whose property will the new project be built?

The new building will be built on the Branford Housing Authority's land. We are requesting that a small boundary adjustment be made in order to meeting zoning setback requirements and improve fire access to the site. We also want to take this opportunity to transfer land to the town which is owned by the BHA but is occupied by one of the ball fields.

How large will the new project be and how was that determined?

The current design is 67 units, 33 one bedrooms and 34 two bedrooms. The unit count was determined by the need to create additional units to satisfy an extensive waiting list and make the property more economically sustainable, while balancing the capacity of the site.

What regulations will govern the new project?

The redeveloped Parkside I will continue to be income restricted by the state for 40 years. The Branford Housing Authority will retain an ownership interest in the property in order to control the long-term future of the development.

Who is the architect and what is their experience?

Newman Architects is the architect and the principal architect is a Branford resident. Newman Architects has received more than 125 design excellence awards, including awards from the American Institute of Architects, the Boston Society of Architects, and the Interior Design Institute.

How was Beacon selected as the developer and what is their relationship to the BHA?

Beacon Communities was selected by the BHA through a competitive RFP process. Beacon Communities is the developer, meaning they manage the day-to-day of planning for the redevelopment, and will ultimately be a co-owner of the new Parkside Village I with the Branford Housing Authority.