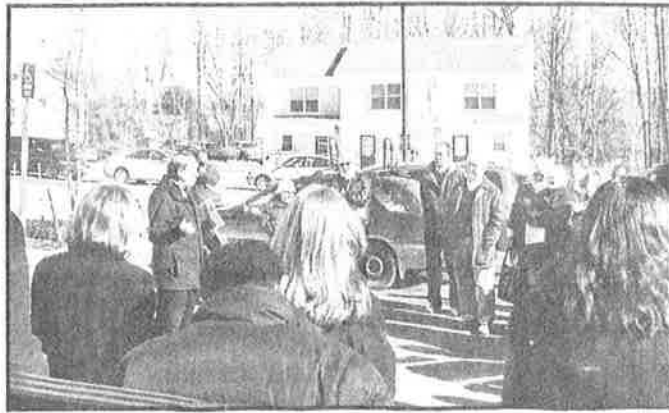


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MATT SUTKOSKI, Free Press

Colchester Town Manager Al Voegelé addresses a crowd Monday at a celebration marking the opening of Brookside Village, 42 mostly affordable housing units in Colchester.

Affordable housing units fill up fast in Colchester

By Matt Sutkoski
Free Press Staff Writer

COLCHESTER — The 42 units of Brookside Village are almost fully leased even as the developers of the affordable housing complex on Monday celebrated the just-completed construction.

Champlain Housing Trust and Housing Vermont formed a partnership to build the 42 rental units on Morehouse Drive, off Malletts Bay Avenue. The \$9.6 million development is just across the city line from Winooski.

Brookside Village consists mostly of townhouse-style duplexes and triplexes, with 31 two-bedroom apartments, eight have one bedroom and three of them have three bedrooms.

Most of the units are termed affordable, starting at \$775 a month, utilities, snow and trash removal and grounds keeping included, said Chris Donnelly, director of community relations for Champlain Housing Trust.

Seventeen of the apartments are regarded as permanently affordable to households earning 50 percent of the area's median income, which is about \$34,000 for a family of three.

Nineteen apartments are affordable for households making 60 percent of the region's median income

Champlain Housing Trust CEO Brenda Torpy said affordable housing like Brookside Village is important in the region. She said market rents in Chittenden County increased by 9 percent in the last year even as a recession suppressed wages.

She said the project's construction was well timed, too, because it created 84 on-site jobs and 125 off-site jobs.

Brookside Village is on a new street, perched on a bluff overlooking the Winooski River.

Planning for Brookside Village was complex as the nonprofit developers used 12 sources of financing for the project. Builders also had to help prevent further pollution in nearby Morehouse Brook.

All but three units in Brookside Village have been leased, but the housing organizations are reviewing several applications from people seeking to move into the remaining units, Donnelly said.

Contact Matt Sutkoski at 660-1846 or msutkosk@bfp.burlingtonfreepress.com