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Six low-income housing Watertown properties to undergo major renovations

By CRAIG FOX
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Emerson St., with 11 apartments; an eight-unit building at 550 Coffeen St.; and 152 Academy St., which contains four three-bedroom apartments.

The work includes new windows, heating and ventilation systems, appliances, kitchen cabinets, bathrooms, flooring and, in some cases, interior walls and stairwells.

"Everything you touch in an apartment is new," Mr. Allen said.

The rehab work will be done in stages, with units in the Mullin, Academy and State street properties starting first.

Tenants will have to relocate to other units while their apartments are completed, Mr. Allen said, adding that residents will pay the same rent after they move back.

The project to renovate all six buildings will take about 15 months. Six fully handicapped-accessible units also will be added to the Mill Street building.

Qualifying low-income tenants occupy the units, which are subsidized through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Section 8 program.

The properties were acquired under separate partnerships from local real estate developer Brian H. Murray, who owns Washington Street Properties. All six will be under the control of Evergreen Partners, Mr. Allen said.

Mr. Murray's company had acquired the six properties in early 2015 before deciding to approach Evergreen Partners with the deal to sell them. Mr. Murray thought that Evergreen was better suited to operate them because of its background in owning 7,000 low-income housing units in about 13 states, Mr. Allen said.

In June, Evergreen Partners completed a similar rehabilitation of 92 low-income units at Maple Court Apartments, off Weldon Drive.

To finance this project, the developer sold low-income and historic housing tax credits to investors, Mr. Allen said.

Mr. Allen also received \$150,000 from the city's 2016 Community Development Block Grant to help fund the project. Lecesse Construction, Rochester, is the general contractor.

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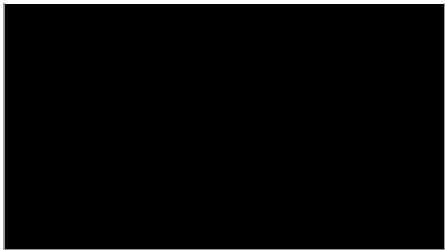


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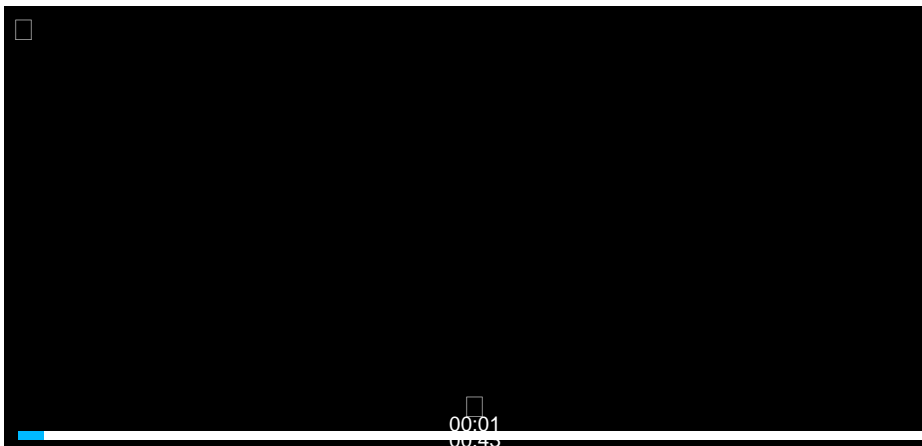
The \$20 million project will join two other more publicized major housing projects that are planned or underway in the city. Neighbors of Watertown Inc. recently started a \$15 million construction project to renovate the Brighton Apartments and four low-income senior citizen housing buildings in the city. COR Development Co. plans to build 108 apartment units and about 30,000 square feet of commercial space at the former Mercy Hospital site off Stone Street.

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Nick Bouquet • 2 hours ago

I want to note that the community has been extremely supportive of the effort to renovate and preserve these buildings as affordable housing. The Development Authority of the North Country (DANC) and the Watertown Local Development Corporation (WLDC), in addition to the City, have both made important financial contributions.

Nick Bouquet
Evergreen Partners



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