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Myrtle Avenue Apts Receive Energy Star Designation *Residents, Developers, Officials Celebrate at Grand Opening*

By Linda Collins



BEDFORD-STUYVESANT — As new residents celebrated the grand opening of the Myrtle Avenue Apartments earlier this month, the developers, financiers and Brooklyn Borough President Marty Markowitz joined in to also celebrate the building's qualification as an ENERGY STAR building.

One of the first multi-family affordable apartment buildings to earn the label, it also exemplifies "the kind of public/private partnership that is helping to transform the landscape" of Brooklyn and the city, said Deborah VanAmerongen, commissioner of the New York State Division of Housing and Community Renewal (DHCR).

"Myrtle Avenue Apartments is the embodiment of so many of the principals DHCR stands for: beautiful design that is also green, supportive housing for persons with special needs, and rents that are affordable to area residents," she said.

A project of Dunn Development Corp., a Brooklyn-based firm, and Northeast Brooklyn Housing Development Corp. (NEBHDCo.), a non-profit community-based organization in Bedford-Stuyvesant, the building was part of a national pilot program administered by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and implemented by the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) to set a higher level of energy-efficiency standards for multifamily buildings.

To qualify for the label, energy consumption must be reduced by at least 20 percent compared to a code-compliant building.

The newly constructed building, at 854 Myrtle Ave., has 33 rental units — all permanently affordable to families earning less than \$41,000 a year — with 21 of them leased to working families (more than half of those residents of Bed-Stuy) and 11 leased to formerly homeless families with disabilities. CAMBA Inc. will provide onsite social services for these families with funding from the city's Department of Health and Mental Hygiene.

Said Martin Dunn, "This project is part of Dunn Development Corp.'s socially conscious approach to real estate development. We wanted to show that it's possible to build a beautiful building, make it highly energy efficient, and still provide affordable rents.

"We are very proud to have achieved the designation as one of the first ENERGY STAR multifamily building in the country. The energy efficiency elements we incorporated at Myrtle Avenue Apartments will directly result in lower utility bills for the residents and for the building, and because they are easily replicable, will help contribute to the long-term viability of affordable housing in New York City."

Dunn said the six-story brick building, designed by SLCE Architects, "raises the bar for affordable housing design, featuring façade details from the neighborhood, including the decorative cornice, eyebrow window headers and precast stone bands and quoining."

Funding for the \$8.3 million building was obtained from a number of public and private sources, including DHCR, Citibank, Community Preservation Corp. on behalf of the New York City Employees Retirement System, and from NYSERDA for energy-efficient upgrades. The city Department of Housing Preservation and Development provided the vacant parcel for \$1.

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Residents celebrate the opening of the Myrtle Avenue Apartments along with Brooklyn Borough President Marty Markowitz, center; and, at left, Marc Jahr of Citi Community Capital (Citibank), Deborah VanAmerongen of the Division of Housing and Community Renewal (DHCR) and Jeffrey Dunston of the Northeast Brooklyn Housing Development Corp.; and, at right, Martin Dunn of Dunn Development Corp. Photo by Jung Chin, courtesy of DHCR.