



Developer tapped for Brooklyn residential project

City selects Dunn Development Corp. to develop 270 units of low-income rental apartments for first phase of the planned 791-unit Livonia Avenue Initiative.

BY **AMANDA FUNG**

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The city announced Thursday that Dunn Development Corp. has been selected to develop four city-owned vacant lots in East New York, Brooklyn, as part of the first phase of the Livonia Avenue Initiative designed to create a vibrant mixed-use community.

The Brooklyn-based developer beat out 15 other groups, which submitted responses to the request for proposal that was issued last year by the city's Department of Housing Preservation and Development. Dunn plans to develop 270 units of low-income rental apartments, roughly 11,000 square feet of retail and 21,000 square feet of community space. The project will be called Livonia Commons and is located on Livonia Avenue, between Pennsylvania and Williams avenues.

Additionally, Dunn, along with partner Boys' Club of New York, was picked to develop a facility of up to 60,000 square feet that will be the Boy's Club of New York's first Brooklyn location, on a fifth lot nearby.

"I am extremely excited about the revitalization of the Livonia corridor," said Martin Dunn, president of Dunn Development Corp., who recalls having an office one block away from the sites when he was the head of the East New York Urban Youth Corp. a community development group. "The city has made an investment in the area and this is the final piece of it."

When the request for proposals was issued, Mr. Dunn said he jumped at the opportunity. Livonia Commons, which will be green and energy efficient, will take up to 20 months to complete from start of construction, he added.

"East New York has persevered through some of the toughest times the city has seen," said Mathew Wambua, the commissioner of the city's Department of Housing Preservation and Development, in a statement. "Through the blight and abandonment of decades past, and the economic downturn of the present, the city has had a firm commitment to investing its human and financial capital right here in East New York."

The lots will be transferred over to Dunn for \$1 each when the deal closes in roughly 18 months. The development will be financed by city subsidies and the city Housing Development Corp., which will

provide funding through the issuance of tax exempt housing revenue bonds and subsidy from its corporate reserves.

Livonia Commons will be made up of four buildings consisting of a mix of studios, one-to-three bedroom apartments: 37 units will be for supportive housing, 54 will be set aside for households at 50% area median income and 121 are for households at 60% area median income. Only two the buildings will have commercial and retail space.

"We expect demand to be super high for the housing units at Livonia Commons because of the range of affordability levels," said Mr. Dunn, adding that when his firm marketed his other East New York development Liberty Apartments two years ago they received 15,000 applications for just 43 units.

The community space will include a senior center run by Wayside Outreach Development, which operates seven centers in East New York, Brownsville and Bedford-Stuyvesant, and arts programming by ARTs East New York. The Boy's Club of New York new facility located at Livonia Avenue, between Williams Ave. and Hinsdale St., will be the organization's fourth in the city. It will provide youth programs for 6-to-12-year-old boys and 13-to-20-year-old girls.

When complete the entire Livonia Avenue Initiative will have a total of 791 affordable housing units, 251 of which will be part of the next phase of the project and will focus on developing sites located between William Avenue and Van Sinderen Avenue.

It is part of the Mayor Michael Bloomberg's New Housing Marketplace Plan, a multi-billion dollar initiative to finance the creation or preservation of 165,000 units of affordable housing by the close of fiscal year 2014.