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GETTING THE BALL ROLLING ON 10-YEAR BAYSIDE PLAN

Museum, office to open Monday

by Marge Neal

Bayside at Fort Howard, a senior veterans housing project slated for the former VA medical center campus on the tip of the North Point peninsula, might be far away from welcoming its first resident.

But that isn't going to stop Fort Howard Senior Housing Associates (FHSHA), master developer of the ambitious project, from throwing a grand opening ceremony for its new Fort Howard Veterans Museum.

Bayside, which will take about 10 years to complete, according to company literature, will consist of four types of housing facilities offering a continuum of services from active living to skilled nursing care for senior veterans.



Old Fort Howard VA Medical Center buildings like this one will be preserved and used anew at Bayside at Fort Howard.
Photo by Marge Neal

"Our community will offer four levels of care so our senior veterans never have to leave the property," manager Kimberley Smearman said Friday.

Local residents are invited to join elected officials and community leaders Monday at a 10 a.m. ceremony to celebrate the new collection of war memorabilia, which will be permanently displayed in the former Fort Howard VA Medical Center's bakery, also known as Building 70.

'Get the ball rolling'

Federal Development LLC, parent company of FHSHA, has mailed out introductory paperwork that details the types of housing available as well as tentative rent ranges.

As of Friday, 166 deposits were on file with the company, according to Smearman.

"This open house and grand opening ceremony is really to get the ball rolling on the project," she said.

The company has been compiling names on a wait list for quite some time. A completed application, when submitted with a deposit of \$500 for an individual or \$750 for a couple, establishes priority for admission.

Applicants then request a specific type of housing with another form, accompanied by an additional deposit of \$1,000 (individual) or \$1,500 (couple). Later, Bayside informs the applicant when appropriate housing becomes available.

In addition to the four levels of housing available at market rents (plus additional fees and charges), 195 affordable units will be built, according to Smearman.

“Enterprise/Habitat America is going to do the affordable housing,” she said.

“They specialize in tax credit work,” said architect Jon Fisher of Kann Partners architectural firm.

Kann is directing the design and restoration work on the historic campus.

Vendors still need to be found to provide the other housing types, including independent and assisted-living facilities and skilled nursing units.

Most, if not all, of the 37 historic buildings on campus will be restored and used for housing and a variety of services and activities.

Former officers’ quarters will become rental cottages, complete with front porches and uncovered parking spaces in front of each. Apartments will be located in existing homes and buildings as well as newly constructed buildings, according to the organization’s Web site.

Fee structure

Rents on active living units will range from \$1,045 and up for studio apartments to \$2,840 and up per month for a duplex containing at least 2,340 square feet.

Security deposits equal to the first and last months’ rent will be required, as will a one-time community fee of \$550 for an individual or \$1,000 per couple.

A nonrefundable fee of \$500 will be charged for a pet, and a monthly service fee will pay for electricity, water, cable TV, telephone and Internet service (except in the skilled nursing unit).

Affordable apartments — applicants for which must be at least 62 and meet federal income guidelines — will average \$575 for a one-bedroom unit and an average of \$770 for a two-bedroom dwelling.

Residents in the independent living quarters will pay \$1,515 and up for a studio, \$1,945 and up for a one-bedroom and \$2,690 and up for a two-bedroom unit.

Assisted-living residents can expect to pay \$2,491 and up for a studio, \$3,315 and up for a one-bedroom and \$4,420 and up for a two-bedroom unit.

Extended care fees, like medication management and Alzheimer’s care, cost extra on a per diem basis.

Skilled nursing care will cost \$175 a day for a private room and \$145 a day for a semi-private room.

Priority to veterans

Bayside is projected to have a total of about 1,300 units when finished in 10 years.

North Point peninsula community leaders were upset when the project —which was embraced by the community when pitched as a 300-unit complex strictly for veterans — morphed into an 1,800-unit community with a retail center and marina.

The plan was scaled back to 1,300 units, while applications will be accepted from nonveterans on a sliding priority scale.

The priority given to applicants in descending order is veterans and spouses; widows or widowers of veterans; divorced spouses of veterans; and nonveterans.

Historic preservation

Architect Fisher is excited about the historical nature of the property and the chance to preserve such an important part of the area's history.

Building "green" structures — those that are energy efficient and use fewer raw materials — is a popular trend in the architecture field, Fisher said, but he feels not enough credit is given to developers who preserve existing structures.

"If you have something that can be used, there's a lot of validity in keeping it," he said. "And all of these buildings can be used."

Preserving current buildings saves time, energy and resources.

"If we were to tear down these buildings, there's energy and time to tear them down, energy to truck away the debris, which is going in a landfill, and then energy and bringing in new materials to rebuild," he said.

A priority of the design team will be to "maintain the integrity" of the property and treat it with the respect it deserves, given its place in history.

"For example," he said, "from our research we found the parade grounds were an important focal point — everything occurred there. So we've decided there will be no construction there.

"This is a great opportunity to be part of the history of Baltimore."

For more information about Bayside, call 410-477-1193 or visit baysidefthoward.com.