



Apartments for low-income seniors are approved for Markham Gardens

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By **Stephanie Slepian**



This is an artist's conception by SLCE Architects of the Markham Gardens senior housing.

STATEN ISLAND, N.Y. -- The redevelopment of Markham Gardens is moving toward its final phase now that the City Planning Commission has approved construction of apartments for low-income seniors on the grounds of the former public housing project.

Last week's vote sets the stage for the city to transfer 57,000 square feet in West Brighton for the sum of \$1 to the **Sisters of Charity Housing Development Corp.**, the nonprofit that will erect a five-story, 80-unit residence for Staten Islanders who are 62 and older.

Closing is expected this month, according to **Eric Feldmann**, the Housing Development Corp.'s executive director.

"This will provide affordable and decent housing for seniors," he said.

Individuals making \$27,750, or couples combining for \$31,710, will be eligible for the apartments and will pay 30 percent of their income in rent.

A social services coordinator will be on site to help the tenants with entitlements and benefits. Those kind of community-based services often postpone the need to place the low-income elderly in more expensive nursing homes, **Feldmann** said.

"They will have support services that will allow them to age in place, and as they age and as they have greater needs, they can be responded to and they won't have to move on to higher levels of care."

Other amenities will include a community room, an outdoor recreational area, a computer and library room, and activities, including arts and crafts.

Feldmann expects to apply for permits following the closing with the city Housing Authority, which owns the land where the apartments will be built. The project is slated to be complete by next year.

Applications will be collected closer to the project's completion date and the apartments will be allocated by a lottery.

The senior housing will add 79 one-bedroom apartments — and a two-bedroom apartment for the live-in super — to the 240 mixed-income rental units and 25 two-family homes that replaced the housing project after it was razed in 2007 and turned over to private developers.

Markham Gardens Senior Housing received a \$12.5 million grant from the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development, \$4.1 million from the city Department of Housing and Preservation and an \$800,000 Federal Home Loan Bank of New York Affordable Housing Program Grant.

Sisters of Charity already operates affordable housing at four borough locations: St. Vincent's Manor in Port Richmond, Joseph House in West Brighton, Sister Elizabeth Boyle House in Stapleton and St. Elizabeth Manor in Sea View.

Lafayette Manor, which was built on the site of the 19th-century New Brighton Village Hall, is expected to be ready in the coming weeks.

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