



MEDIA RELEASE

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BRHA Announces Plan to Replace Bonham Circle Apartments with New Affordable Housing Complex

BRISTOL, Va. – The Bristol Redevelopment and Housing Authority (BRHA) Board of Commissioners today announced plans to launch a major public housing redevelopment project. Plans call for a new apartment complex to be erected on the site where the current Bonham Circle Apartments are located, resulting in a development that will be more compatible with the residential character of the surrounding neighborhood.

Demolition of the existing Bonham Circle Apartments is expected to start in early 2015, and construction on the new complex is scheduled to begin in the spring of 2016.

The redevelopment project is one of several recommendations included in the organization's 2010-2025 Master Plan, which was adopted in February 2009.

"Fiscal responsibility precludes BRHA from making renovations to Bonham Circle Apartments, but affords an opportunity to create suitable housing for a broader population, while adding value to the neighborhood," says Dave Baldwin, executive director of BRHA. "We are excited about this new redevelopment project. It will serve a critical housing need in Bristol and incorporate a variety of rental housing programs to better serve this community."

The Bonham Circle Apartments, located at 400 Oakview Ave. in Bristol, Virginia, were built in 1953, and renovations to the units have been determined to be cost prohibitive. A draft plan for the new complex includes 48 housing units constructed in a combination of duplexes and quadruplexes with green space. Although each housing unit will be built on a single level, some of the buildings will be two-story structures. The exteriors of each building will be designed to

look like large, single-family homes rather than apartments, and be reminiscent of the old neighborhood on Moore Street in Bristol, Virginia.

“For 75 years, BRHA has been growing with Bristol, developing and operating public housing in the city to meet the needs of its citizens,” says Scott Otis, chairman of the BRHA Board of Commissioners. “As those needs have changed over the years, BRHA has adapted by creating new programs, updating housing units and adopting a master plan. As a result, BRHA continues to make a lasting contribution to the housing and redevelopment needs of the city of Bristol. This project is another step forward in fulfilling our mission of providing safe and affordable housing for all members of this community.”

Similar to BRHA’s last redevelopment project, Sapling Grove, built in 2007, the new housing units will include modern amenities such as central air conditioning, dishwashers, and washers and dryers. A number of the new units will be ADA compliant.

“BRHA directly impacts economic development in the city of Bristol, Virginia, and helps determine success in our community,” says Catherine Brillhart, mayor of the city of Bristol, Virginia. “In addition to providing more than 425 units of affordable housing for Bristol’s low-income families, BRHA offers a variety of self-sufficiency programs designed to provide residents opportunities for upward mobility. BRHA is a vital partner in paving the path to a brighter future for all Bristol citizens.”

BRHA has spent the past several months preparing the 39 families currently residing in Bonham Circle Apartments for relocation. The housing authority anticipates relocation efforts will be complete by Nov. 1, 2014.

Funding for the redevelopment project is expected to come primarily from two sources, one of which includes approximately \$500,000 that BRHA received from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). For more than five years, the housing authority has earmarked these monies specifically for the purpose of redevelopment. BRHA will also seek funding through the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit program, a program that originates with the Internal Revenue Service but is implemented through the Virginia Housing Development Authority (VHDA).

About BRHA

Located at 809 Edmond St., BRHA is the designated public housing agency in the city of Bristol, Virginia. It is the second-oldest such authority in Virginia, having been founded in 1938 and housing 40 percent of low-income renter families in Bristol. Its mission is to provide safe, attractive, affordable housing and housing assistance, and the opportunity for families and individuals to achieve a higher standard of living. BRHA (www.brha.com) is governed by a five-member board of commissioners that is appointed by the mayor of Bristol, Virginia. The staff is comprised of an executive director and 25 employees. BRHA is a member of the National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials (www.nahro.org).

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