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Beacon Communities Development completes 97-unit Ocean Shores Apartments

December 15, 2011 - Construction Design & Engineering

In early 2011, Beacon Communities Development LLC completed construction of Ocean Shores Apartments, a 97-unit, affordable, age-restricted rental housing development at 1209 Ocean St. This development transformed the property from an abandoned drive-in movie theater site to a residential area that includes two single-family homes alongside a well-maintained and professionally-managed green rental housing community serving the senior population. As of July, the community is two-thirds occupied.

The 97 one and two-bedroom apartments are rented to individuals with incomes at or below 60% of the area median income, and the community will be affordable for 45 years, after which at least 20 of the units will be affordable in perpetuity. All the apartments are restricted to individuals aged 55 and older.

Ocean Shores' single, three-story building has a wood-frame construction and is in keeping with the architectural context of the area. In particular, the layout of this building has enabled Beacon to follow the aesthetics of many classic wood-frame New England inns and hotels, with a pitched roof, balconies, and other architectural elements seen often in the resorts and beach towns of Mass. and New England. The building boasts an interesting but classic, New England look. Its surrounding landscaping was carefully designed to reflect the town's proximity to the beach, ocean, and surrounding wetlands.

Ocean Shores sought to be as environmentally-conscious as possible. The building is currently seeking LEED Platinum certification under the LEED for Homes program. If successful, Ocean Shores will be the first LEED Platinum building on the state's South Shore. Beacon has taken numerous measures to make Ocean Shores a green community whose efficiency benefits both the residents who live there and the surrounding environment. For example, they have made environmentally sound landscaping decisions by choosing plants that require less water than most. Utilities are individually metered in order to encourage energy conservation. The entirely smoke-free community is Energy Star certified, with an estimation that the apartments at Ocean Shores will, on average, use 50% less energy than equivalent homes built to code; each home also features Energy Star appliances. Also, the land behind the building is conservation-restricted and has been deeded back to the town, ensuring that no further development takes place that might threaten the wetlands and wildlife habitats close to the site.

The community is outfitted with many amenities for the residents to age-in-place, stay healthy, and generally enjoy. Beacon used universal design in every unit and throughout the building and site so that the entire community is accessible to all; in addition, 5% of the units are fully handicap-accessible. Every home has additional storage on their floor to accommodate their extra belongings. The building has a fitness center, a media room and a common room connected to an

outdoor patio. The common room has a small kitchenette and is used for socializing, book clubs, card games, and other meetings and activities, fostering resident involvement and community cohesion. There is also a dog park in the community for residents and their pets to use freely. With the particular needs of the community's senior residents in mind, Beacon also has included a hair salon and a wellness center on-site for residents, and has arranged a partnership with the Visiting Nurses Association.

Through its fitting aesthetic design, environmental sensitivity, community amenities and age- and income-restrictions, Beacon has successfully developed an affordable housing community of exceptional quality designed to meet the needs of both its residents and the surrounding neighborhood.

Green Design Features:

Through measures that include voluntary participation in the U.S. Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) for Homes program, Ocean Shores Apartments has created new apartments that offer energy efficiency, improved indoor air quality, and reduced environmental impact.

In the apartments:

- * Low VOC Paints, which have fewer harmful chemicals;
- * Fresh, healthy, and filtered air via MERV8 filters;
- * High efficiency lighting;
- * Energy Star appliances (kitchen, washer & dryer) and windows;
- * High efficiency heating & cooling system;
- * Carpet & floor have low chemical emission & recycled content;
- * Water efficient faucets, shower heads and toilets; and
- * Individual thermostat for residents' control.

In the building:

- * Certified by EPA's Energy Star Homes program - Program estimates that the apartments at Ocean Shores will, on average, use 50% less energy than equivalent homes built to code.
- * Approximately 70% of construction waste was recycled rather than put in a landfill. Walls of new construction building built with pre-manufactured panels, reducing material waste on site
- * Significant levels of insulation and air sealing throughout building
- * High efficiency lighting fixtures, elevator, and HVAC equipment.
- * Green cleaning - all cleaning products and equipment are nontoxic & certified by GreenSeal.
- * Separate trash & recycling chutes to make recycling easier for residents
- * Drought-tolerant plants and minimization of conventional turf: less water, fertilizer, and maintenance required efficient, water-saving irrigation techniques

In the neighborhood:

- * Land surrounding building has been restricted for conservation in perpetuity, furthering protection of adjacent wildlife and wetlands; and
- * Smart location: walking distance to many attractions, minimizing emissions from cars and other vehicles:
 - Beach less than a mile away
 - Nesaralla's Farm, a convenience store, and other shops are next door
 - Outdoor recreation areas located within 1 mile.