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Pawtucket highlights the importance of homeownership - by Donald Grebien

July 08, 2022 - Rhode Island



Donald Grebien

In honor of Homeownership Month across the country, on June 23rd, the city of Pawtucket Commerce Department with Centreville Bank, along with resource partners Blackstone Valley Community Action Program, Rhode Island Housing, Housing Works RI, Housing Network RI, Pawtucket Housing Authority and Pawtucket Central Falls Development (PCF Development), hosted a Homeownership Resource Fair for those looking to buy a home. This event is part of the Pawtucket Promotes Series that promotes the city's different business sectors and provides resources to individuals.

During this month, the city along with Pawtucket Central Falls Development, also celebrated the completion of a mixed income housing development of 5-two-family homes on a Middle St. parcel that had been vacant for more than a decade. Each house was sold to a first-time home buyer earning up to 80% of the area median income. All five homes also include a market rate rental unit. The buyers all graduated from an 8-hour HUD approved home buyer education class.

These units required a long process to bring them to where they are today as the housing units couldn't be built by existing zoning ordinance and required regulatory relief. The project overcame title issues and required a subdivision and lot merger to create these lots. When PCF Development experienced unprecedented construction price increases during the COVID-19 pandemic, my administration assisted in funding support to close the gap.

With Pawtucket's homeownership rate at 44%, the city and PCF Development are committed to developing affordable housing units for its residents. Pawtucket is committed to reaching the state's 10% affordable housing goal and getting to 300 additional affordable housing units within the community.

I want to thank everyone who helped get this project where it needs to be and through the long process to put families in those homes. Pawtucket is always dedicated to creating opportunities for residents; in business or homeownership.

Funding for this project came from the RIHousing Acquisition and Revitalization Program; Pawtucket HOME funds; Building Homes RI; RIHousing Homeownership Investment Fund; Centre- ville Bank and of course, sales to homebuyers.

For details about Pawtucket's economic development incentives, contact commerce director Sandra Cano, 401 728-0500, Ext. 430 or email scano@pawtucketri.com.

Donald Grebien is the mayor of the city of Pawtucket, R.I.

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