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MPZ Development and Capstone Communities celebrate groundbreaking for Baldwinville School Apartments

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Shown (from left) are: Senator Peter Durant; representative Jonathan Zlotnik; Capstone Communities principal Jason Korb; secretary of EOHLC Ed Augustus; SVP at Rockland Trust John Quintal; MassDevelopment president and CEO Navjeet Bal; Templeton Selectboard chair Jeffrey Bennett; interim town administrator for Templeton Holly Young; MPZ Development principal Mathieu Zahler; VP of The Life Initiative Brandon Braxton; commercial loan officer at Rockland Trust Claudius Zorokong.

Templeton, MA MPZ Development LLC (MPZ) and Capstone Communities LLC (Capstone) have celebrated the official groundbreaking of Baldwinville School Apartments redevelopment project. Baldwinville School Apartments is the first multifamily housing project permitted in town in more than 25 years, providing much-needed, mixed-income housing to the community.

Baldwinville School Apartments will transform the historic Baldwinville Elementary School into 54 rental units, 49 of which will be affordable for households earning at or below 30-60% of the Area Median Income. Designed by ICON Architecture, Baldwinville School Apartments project will transform the historic school, as well as create a new Enterprise Green Communities-certified, Passive House addition. The apartments will be available in several layouts and sizes, including loft, studio, one-bedroom, two-bedroom, and three-bedroom, many of which will be rehabilitated from the original elementary school.

Baldwinville School Apartments will offer numerous on-site amenities to future residents including an outdoor courtyard and community green space, children's playground, fitness center, electric-vehicle charging stations, in-building laundry, and a community walking trail leading to an overlook of the Otter River.

Capstone and MPZ have secured financing to make this project possible. Financing for Baldwinville School Apartments was provided by the Massachusetts' Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities (EOHLC), MassHousing, Rockland Trust, National Equity Fund, the Massachusetts Historical Commission, and The Life Initiative. Capstone and MPZ were awarded \$1.924 million in funding for Baldwinville School Apartments through the Community Preservation Act via Templeton's Community Preservation Committee, as well as \$750,000 through the Underutilized Properties Program (UPP) via the Commonwealth's Community One Stop for Growth awards, administered by MassDevelopment.

"Capstone Communities and MPZ Development are thrilled to celebrate the official groundbreaking of Baldwinville School Apartments in Templeton today," said Jason Korb, principal of Capstone Communities and Mathieu P. Zahler, principal of MPZ. "We're proud to breathe new life into this historic school building and bring deeply-needed affordable housing to Templeton. Baldwinville School Apartments are a reflection of what's possible through collaboration, both locally and throughout the Commonwealth. We hope that this project will support Templeton through thoughtful and purposeful redevelopment."

"The Healey-Driscoll Administration is committed to bringing down housing costs for all residents and creating more housing across the state for families at all income levels," said Ed Augustus, secretary of Housing and Livable Communities. "We are proud to contribute funding in support of these new mixed-income units that will allow families to live affordably in Templeton."

"This long-awaited housing project is a fantastic example of a public/private partnership and the

Healey-Driscoll administration's commitment to uplifting rural communities," said Anne Gobi, director of rural affairs. "I look forward to seeing the historic school occupied again and I know the new residents will enjoy all Templeton and the region has to offer."

"Today is a day of new beginnings for this site and it's my pleasure to be here to see the ceremonial shovels going into the ground to kick off this project," senator Peter Durant, R-Spencer, said. "Templeton has recognized its need for additional affordable housing and the Baldwinville School Apartments will fill that need. The design plans look amazing, and I am looking forward to the day when we see the finished project."

"I'm thrilled that funding has been secured for the Baldwinville School Apartments, and the project is celebrating its official groundbreaking today," said state representative Jonathan Zlotnik, 2nd Worcester District. "This project is going to provide an increase in affordable housing in the area, and I have been happy to support this project over the years. I look forward to seeing the work completed by Capstone Communities and MPZ Development to reimagine and transform this former school building into over 50 units of housing."

"This project has been in the works since early 2020 and the Town of Templeton is very excited to see the building renovated and re-used to provide our community with some of the housing that our residents need," said Holly Young, Templeton's interim town administrator. "It has taken a lot of work and joint efforts from the Town of Templeton departments working with Matt Zahler of MPZ Development and Jason Korb of Capstone Communities to see this project come to fruition. I would like to thank our staff as well as our Templeton Community Preservation Committee for their contributions to this project in the total amount of \$1,924,000. I look forward to seeing the building take shape and the project completed as it will enhance the entire neighborhood."

"It is exciting to see this project having reached this phase," said chair of the Templeton Select Board Timothy Toth. While it has been a rather lengthy and at times seemed an arduous and somewhat daunting task, we are now seeing the results of a thoroughly developed and implemented plan. Capstone and MPZ's commitment and partnership have been great, and I look forward to seeing this concept become reality as it continues to move closer to crossing the finish line."

"Congratulations to MPZ and Capstone for reaching a big milestone in their effort to convert a former school building into the Baldwinville School Apartments," said MassDevelopment president and CEO Navjeet Bal. "MassDevelopment was pleased to advance the development of these new housing units with a \$750,000 grant from the Underutilized Properties Program and an earlier approximately \$50,000 loan from the Brownfields Redevelopment Fund."

"MassHousing is pleased to be part of this transformative project with a talented development team and very strong support from the Town of Templeton that will create 54 brand new rental homes for residents with a range of incomes," said MassHousing CEO Chrystal Kornegay. "The Baldwin School served the town as an elementary school for many years and this development is going to breathe new life and vibrancy into the building that will continue to serve the community for many more years to come."

“Rockland Trust is proud to stand alongside the many dedicated public and private partners who helped bring Baldwinville School Apartments from a concept to a reality, as we celebrate the project groundbreaking today,” said John Quintal, SVP and lending center manager at Rockland Trust. “Thanks to the leadership of Capstone Communities, MPZ Development, and the strong collaboration from local and state-wide stakeholders, this project is transforming a historic asset into much-needed affordable housing for the Templeton community.”

“At NEF, intentionality and innovation are core values that drive the way we do business,” said Tony Thesing, managing director at National Equity Fund. “Our partners at Capstone Communities and MPZ Development share in those values and have worked diligently to develop an environment where increased access to affordable housing empowers all individuals and families to reach their full potential. The Baldwinville School Apartments is an adaptive reuse of a historic school building and exemplifies creativity, perseverance and an unwavering commitment to the town and people of Templeton.”

“The Life Initiative is honored to play a continued role in this team’s projects,” said Brandon Braxton, vicePresident of The Life Initiative. “This is the second school we’ve worked with Capstone and MPZ to revitalize and bring back to life for its community. And to do so in a way that increases affordable housing is especially rewarding. We wish the team continued success and look forward to partnering with them in the future.”

“As most residents know all too well, there is a tremendous need for affordable housing throughout Massachusetts. Fortunately, today marks significant progress in addressing this challenge as we break ground on the Baldwinville School Apartments,” said Pat Callahan, president of Callahan Construction Managers. “We commend local and state leaders, along with our project partners, MPZ Development and Capstone Communities, for bringing this project to life, and we are proud to add this school conversion to our list of affordable housing projects completed throughout the Northeast.”

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