

Stamford's New Affordable Housing Development Officially Opens

By Nora Naughton

STAMFORD — Just 18 months after breaking ground, the city's newest affordable housing development celebrated its grand opening Wednesday.

The five-story, 41,000-square-foot building at 992 Summer St. will provide affordable housing for Stamford's 55-and-older population, replacing Charter Oak Communities' Czescik Homes on Greenwich Avenue.



The building will be co-owned by Charter Oak, the city's affordable housing authority, and local homeless shelter, Inspirica. The new age-restricted housing development, dubbed Summer Place, marks the first joint venture for Charter Oak and Inspirica.

The building includes 48 units, all of which are taken. There are 40 one-bedroom apartments and eight studios. Amenities include a community event space, laundry on the ground floor and a rooftop deck and covered rear patio. On-site support services will also be available to residents who need counseling.

Summer Place is also in the shadow of Inspirica's Franklin Street headquarters, giving residents easy access to supportive resources, activities and volunteer opportunities, Inspirica CEO Jason Shaplen said at Wednesday's ribbon-cutting ceremony.

"One of the most remarkable aspects of this building is its actual, physical location," Shaplen said. "It's a place where residents of Summer Place can both get the services they need and — this is important — also volunteer to provide services to others. As we all know, keeping the elderly engaged, physically and mentally and emotionally, is critical to their wellbeing and their health."

In addition to its proximity to Inspirica, Summer Place also takes Stamford's affordable senior housing out of a dangerous flood zone, Charter Oak Executive Director Vincent Tufo said. Czescik's location on the Rippowam River was always a stress point for Charter Oak, Tufo said, but it took an "act of nature" to finally relocate the housing.

"Hurricane Sandy ... was the straw that broke the Czescik's back — when we thought Czescik was so vulnerable that Charter Oak Communities simply did not want to continue to house residents in the old, obsolete and highly vulnerable facility," he said. "We've gotten out of the flood zone and into a much richer and much more supportive, high-quality environment."

After Czescik residents are relocated to Summer Place, the city plans to demolish the Greenwich Avenue structure.

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Inspirica has helped Summer Place become more than a replacement for Czescik.

Summer Place apartments, which are rentals, will be priced below market rate, with about half designated to be “deeply affordable” and available to those earning less than 40 percent of the area median income. About half of the 48 units will be available to Housing and Urban Development Section 8 voucher holders.

Several local and state officials attended Wednesday’s ribbon cutting, including Stamford Mayor David Martin, Board of Representatives member John Zelinsky, state Department of Housing Commissioner Evonne Klein and U.S. Rep Jim Himes, D-Conn.

Himes, who has a long history in affordable housing, lauded the project as an essential resource for Stamford’s older community, which will give “the people who built this city a place to live” even as housing costs continue to rise.

To view the article online, please visit: <http://www.stamfordadvocate.com/local/article/Stamford-s-new-affordable-housing-development-11068920.php>