

## **DOMUS/CATHOLIC CHARITIES BREAKS GROUND FOR SENIOR HOUSING**

October 23, 2014



JAMES LEGGATE/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Officials from several government agencies and the Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Newark at the groundbreaking ceremony for an affordable senior housing complex.

**BY JAMES LEGGATE**

MANAGING EDITOR |

OCTOBER 23, 2014

### **Officials broke ground at the site of a future senior housing development Friday morning.**

Once it's complete, the building will include 49 one-bedroom apartments for low-income seniors at the former "Kirk property" on Cedar Lane, near Hillsdale's Stonybrook Swim Club. The project is being built by Domus Corp., the housing arm of the Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Newark, on township-owned land using funding from the county, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and the New Jersey Housing and Mortgage and Finance Agency.

"This project shows local, county, state and federal government coming together to provide senior housing," Domus President John Westervelt said.

Construction is expected to last 14 months, depending on the weather, and Westervelt said he hoped to hold a ribbon-cutting for the project in December 2015.

"It's going to be great for River Vale, and New Jersey," Westervelt said. "Providing affordable housing is always important."

Domus has finished nine projects to date, providing 423 affordable units. This project is their second in Bergen County, and they have several more in the works. A similar 50-unit project they built drew 250 applicants

"There's a tremendous need," Westervelt said.

The project has been in the works for several years as part River Vale's obligation to the Council on Affordable Housing. Mayor Joseph Blundo said that he felt "stung" several years ago at a COAH meeting when a state worker said that River Vale complied, but "has really done nothing" in terms of affordable housing. "Today that changes," Blundo said. "Today we are doing something."

The mayor also spoke about the difficulties they faced in making the project come to fruition, including battling what he called "a misinformation campaign" which had claimed "the ghetto is coming to River Vale."

The project could have some benefits beyond providing affordable housing for seniors. Donna Rendeiro from the New Jersey Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency estimated that the project would have a positive economic impact of about \$19 million during the construction and \$2 million per year afterward. "Projects like this don't happen unless you have partnerships between the public sector and private sector at all levels of government," she said.

<http://www.northjersey.com/news/officials-break-ground-1.1115334>