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Boston nonprofit opens Melpet Farm affordable housing in Dennis

27 units of energy efficient rental housing available to households earning 60% of the area median income or less

BOSTON— Preservation of Affordable Housing (POAH), a national affordable housing nonprofit based in Boston, today opened The Residences at Melpet Farm - an affordable housing development in Dennis, MA - at a morning ribbon cutting attended by Congressman Bill Keating, Housing Assistance Corp. of Cape Cod, and funders and supporters of the project.

The redevelopment of the Melpet Farm property has been a priority for the Town of Dennis and advocates of affordable housing for Cape Cod for nearly a decade. “There is a dire need for affordable housing on the Cape and it has been a long road to get to today’s ribbon cutting for Melpet Farm, but I am proud of the town’s commitment to this project and of the federal support we were able to secure,” said Congressman Bill Keating (D-MA 9th District).

Melpet Farm has 27 units of rental housing that are 100% affordable to households earning 60% of the area median income (AMI) or less, with 25% of the units set aside for those experiencing or facing homelessness. The eight newly constructed residential buildings are two-story wood-framed buildings designed in a simple, traditional local farmhouse style and have three or four units each with a mix of 1-, 2-, and 3-bedroom apartments. The buildings share a common green and incorporate solar design and day-lighting strategies. A freestanding community building at the entrance to the property includes a property management office, a common laundry room, and a multi-purpose community room. The Residences at Melpet Farm were designed to be 57% more efficient than a code compliant building

of the same size and program and include super insulated walls, roof and slab, high performance windows and a super air tight environment 70% better than code requirement.

“POAH already has a long history of development on the Cape – much of that in partnership with HAC – and we already have a track record of green building – but this is, by far, the most energy efficient project POAH has ever done, said POAH President and CEO Aaron Gornstein.

Directly across the street from the town’s middle school and is less than a mile from Dennis’ major shopping and commercial district as well as its public transportation hub, Melpet Farm holds a piece of nostalgic trivia; the adjacent town-owned barn and pasture lands were the site of Boomtown, a popular long-running children’s show starting Rex Trailer and his sidekicks Pablo, Cactus Pete, and Sergeant Billy, that aired on WBZ TV in Boston from 1956 – 1974.

POAH partnered with Housing Assistance Corp. of Cape Cod on the project and the town of Dennis demonstrated its support for by expediting the permitting of Route 134 Community Housing through its Affordable Housing Bylaw. The Town also committed \$470K in Community Preservation Act funds and Barnstable County HOME Consortium’s committed local HOME funds.

“As sometimes happens, this project has been a long struggle but with the joint efforts of our local housing advocates, elected officials and supporters, I’m happy to be celebrating this victory in front of these beautiful residences,” said HAC CEO/President Frederic B. Presbrey.

The project received an allocation of Low Income Housing Tax Credits and additional funding including HOME, Housing Innovative Funds and Affordable Housing Trust Funds.

Federal Support for Melpet Farm included:

1. The Low Income Housing Tax Credit – this is THE essential capital source for affordable housing – without it, there would be virtually no production or preservation of affordable housing. It is an effective, efficient program.
2. The HOME program (both state and county allocations) - the Budget Control Caps are forcing congress and HUD to cut HOME and other capital programs (in order to prioritize the rental assistance programs Section 8 and public housing – a priority we support). Congress and the president need to come to an agreement to eliminate the caps and restore HOME to pre-BCA levels.
3. The Housing Choice voucher program – provides essential deep subsidy for very low income households.