

Cruz cuts ribbon on renovated affordable development

Yawu Miller | 8/31/2017, 6 a.m.
Bay State Banner

In a city of more than 272,000 housing units, the renovation of the 87 units in the Wayne at Columbia housing development may seem inconsequential. But elected officials and heads of both city and state agencies came to the ribbon cutting of the newly-renovated, seven-building affordable housing development.

Cruz Companies President and CEO John Cruz joined Mayor Martin Walsh, state Housing Secretary John Ash and state Sen. Linda Dorcena Forry for the ceremonial event held on the Blue Hill Avenue portion of the development outside Mattapan Square.

“The redevelopment of Wayne will help preserve affordable housing for the next generation of Boston’s inner-city residents,” Cruz said.

The renovation comes as the mayor seeks to create 53,000 new units of housing by 2030 to keep up with demand from the city’s growing population.

“We have 30,000 new people living in the city,” Walsh said. “We have to continue to meet the demand.”

As part of that push, developers have built 1,380 new units affordable to low-income renters or buyers and 2,000 affordable to middle-income renters or buyers. Thus far, more than 4,000 have been preserved, among them, the 87 units in the Wayne at Columbia development, which occupies seven buildings in Roxbury, Dorchester and Mattapan.

Major renovation

Cruz Companies acquired the scattered-site affordable housing development more than 30 years ago and conducted renovations. “Inner-city housing after more than 30 years needs a rehab,” said Cruz Companies Vice President Danny Cruz. “There’s a lot of traffic in the buildings.”

Cruz Companies completed the renovations, installing new roofs, kitchens, baths, energy efficient windows and doors, plumbing, flooring, masonry, paint

and security systems. The project employed 258 workers logging 71,000 hours, with more than 80 percent workers of color and 65 percent Boston residents. Additionally, 72 percent of the firms with which Cruz contracted were owned by people of color.

The renovation was completed with the support of the Mayor's **Department of Neighborhood Development** (\$900,000) and the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development (\$2,500,000). MassDevelopment provided more than \$20 million in tax-exempt bonds, which were purchased by **Eastern Bank** (60 percent) and Cambridge Trust Company (40 percent) to provide construction and permanent financing for the transaction.

The Wayne at Columbia development is part of a larger 53-building, 349-unit scattered-site development the Cruz Companies are redeveloping.