



Search

News Calendar Real Estate Classifieds Business Directory AuctionMV Reader Forum Visitor Information Publications Store Advertising

Headlines · Briefs · Sports · Editorial/Letters · Court Report · Webcams · Weather · Archives · Submissions · Contact Us

July 22, 2008

MARTHA'S VINEYARD FERRY
FROM NEW BEDFORD

It's Easy TO get 1st THERE

NEW BEDFORD TO VINEYARD
1-HOUR FERRY
1.866.MVFERRY
(866.683.3779)
MVEXPRESSFERRY.COM

the Furniture Store

AT VINEYARD DECORATORS

MARTHA'S VINEYARD FAST FERRY

CLOSEST FERRY

Morgan Woods opens to enthusiastic reviews

By Susan Vaughn - September 20, 2007

State and local officials, professional developers, financiers, and the volunteer residents who were responsible for the creation and completion of Martha's Vineyard's largest affordable housing development were on hand Friday for the official opening of Morgan Woods in Edgartown, a 60-unit, \$15.7-million complex.

Alan Gowell, chairman of the town affordable housing committee that worked on the municipally developed project for eight years, noted that just 15 months ago the 12-acre parcel was all woodland. "It's been a long slog for us," he said.

Mr. Gowell recalled the anxiety of some of the 4,000 Edgartown voters in supporting the large project, but he said they cast almost overwhelming votes approving all phases at five town meeting votes. "It was clearly, as we all know, in everyone's interest," he said.



Edgartown selectman Arthur Smadbeck, Morgan Woods project manager Beverly Gallo, and Sharon Purdy of the Edgartown affordable

Morgan Woods is now an attractive rental community of two- and three-family landscaped homes situated in three clusters around a central commons, and connected by wide paved streets ending on cul-de-sacs. It is accessible on a newly paved South 10th Street off Edgartown Road, and a new bike path to the complex.

Some of the units have been occupied since June, and already show evidence of settled tenants, with flowers, pumpkins, and lawn chairs on the front porches and back patios. Two young mothers strolled over with their children for the noontime ceremony and luncheon, and expressed satisfaction with their new homes.

Salissa King said the opportunity to move into the complex couldn't have come at a better time for her. Recently separated, she was living in temporary quarters with her two children and expecting a third child, but had no place to go in July when she got the call on May 31 that she

LOUISA GOULD
PHOTOGRAPHY AND GALLERY



[Morgan Reviews](#)

Free price quotes, reviews & more.
 Yahoo! Autos: Get behind the wheel
autos.yahoo.com

[1, 2, & 3 Bedroom Apts.](#)

Search by city, state, address, college, zip, or property name.
www.Move.com

housing committee take a tour of the new 60-unit housing complex after an official opening ceremony Friday. Photos by Susan Vaughn

qualified for a Morgan Woods unit. She said she had been afraid she was going to have to move off-Island.

Ms. King said she loves the wooded setting, the fact that her children can ride their bikes without worrying about traffic, and that she can have her dog. "It's a great place to bring up kids," she said. She and her neighbors have established friendships, organized a neighborhood potluck on Thursday nights, and share carpooling for their schoolchildren. Her neighbor, Tia MacLeod, who also came to the opening with her baby, has started an art group for neighborhood children.

Ms. MacLeod, who grew up on the Vineyard, said she and her partner are in a higher income bracket, and the \$1,500 a month rent for a two-bedroom apartment is still a stretch for them, but they are looking at the benefits of living in Morgan Woods. She likes the people, the location, and the fact that everything is new.

"The neighbors are terrific," Ms. MacLeod said. "It's nice to have a new house with no mold or things falling apart." She mentioned some problems, such as road drainage, but she said she realizes that because the project is new there are still things to work out. The two women commended the on-site manager and maintenance supervisor for their quick response to problems.

Priscilla Sinatra, who lives on nearby Jernegan Avenue, attended the opening and said she was in total support of the complex.

Morgan Woods has attracted many young, local working families, and has 52 children under 18, said Jessica Burgoyne, the on-site property manager. All the residents are from the Island, belying some townspeople's fears that the project would draw many off-Islanders or seasonal workers, she said while conducting visitors on a tour of the complex. Seventy percent of the units were allotted to people who live or work in Edgartown.

The March 1 lottery for placement in the new housing drew 238 applicants. The apartments are allocated to people in four income tiers from less than 30 percent of Dukes County's 2006 median income of \$68,300 to 140 percent of the median, an income range from \$15,050 for one person to \$110,900 for a family of six. Thirty-six units are reserved for individuals or families who earn less than 60 percent of the median income, nine are for those who do not exceed 100 percent of the median, and 15 are reserved for those not exceeding 140 percent of the median.

The rents at Morgan Woods range from \$299 for a two-bedroom apartment in the lowest income tier to \$1,893 for a three-bedroom unit in the highest tier.

Ms. Burgoyne said all the three-bedroom units are rented, but there are several vacant two-bedroom units and one one-bedroom unit, so she has been advertising those in the local newspapers. Those units rent at the market rate, and are still too expensive for some people who could qualify, she said. There is still a long waiting list for people in the lower income tiers.

The need for the affordable housing was noted many times during a short noontime program on the first section's common area. Felicia Jacques, director of development for the northeast region of The Community Builders (TCB) of Boston, the nonprofit general contractor, 99-year lease holder, and management company of Morgan Woods, said



Fred B. "Ted" Morgan and Alan Gowell enjoy lunch Friday after the official opening of Morgan Woods affordable housing complex in Edgartown. Mr. Morgan is the former chairman of the town's affordable housing committee and Mr. Gowell is the current chairman.

that in the early '90s Edgartown recognized that Martha's Vineyard was losing its affordability, and the Island had become more than a tourist destination. "The reverse commute had become an unexpected byproduct of its success," she said. Morgan Woods is providing affordable homes to a wide array of professional people who work on the Island, she said.

Willie Jones, TCB senior vice president, commented that of all of the company's projects in 13 states, he couldn't think of one that turned out better than Morgan Woods. "Once in a while you hit a home run," he said. "This is a heck of a home run. This is incredibly beautiful out here."

"We want to put housing in neighborhoods that neighborhoods actually want," Mr. Jones said. He commended the leadership of Edgartown people on the project, saying their efforts will help spawn similar communities on the Cape and the Vineyard. "We don't think this will be the last place on the Island," he added.

Janet Billane of MassHousing, which provided \$8.2 million in permanent and bridge financing, and helped get \$2.8 million in funding from the Affordable Housing Trust Fund, said Morgan Woods is already attracting national attention for its design and responsiveness to the community.

State Rep. Eric Turkington (D-Cape and Islands) told the gathering bluntly, "Some towns avoid affordable housing like the plague. Edgartown is rare. It not only recognized the need, but also did something about it."

"If there is going to be a future in Edgartown, it's because there are kids in Edgartown, and kids need a place to grow up," Mr. Turkington said. "We want kids here, and that's rare."

Many speakers bestowed thanks on those involved in the project, and particularly the town's affordable housing committee, and Fred "Ted" Morgan, the former committee chairman who spearheaded the project and for whom it was named. At the opening Friday, Mr. Morgan thanked the committee, and Mr. Gowell in particular, TCB and its building superintendent Jerry Dineen, the Williams Building Co., manufacturer of the modular units, and others. "This was a team effort of a lot of people and a lot of cooperation," he said.

Mr. Gowell also identified project manager Beverly Gallo "as the face of TCB," and thanked her for her "unbelievable patience." He also admitted that when the housing committee put out the requests for proposal on the project, it fudged a bit by saying the road, water, and wastewater were in place when they weren't. He thanked the town departments for getting those projects done after TCB accepted the project.

The town's only cost connected with the project was \$400,000 to build or add on to the streets connecting to the site, and to install town water mains and wastewater connections.



Printer-Friendly Format



Email This Page

[Luxury on the Vineyard](#)

near the beaches and in the woods, quiet, romantic and intimate,
www.blueberryinn.com

[Harper Woods Apartments](#)

We have over 6 million apartments for rent - get \$100 cash back!
www.MyNewPlace.com

