

## **Fenway CDC selected to develop 27-29 Hancock St. into affordable homeownership units**

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By Dan Murphy



*Two adjacent properties at 27-29 Hancock St., which are poised to be redeveloped into 15 affordable homeownership units.*

After a lengthy process involving extensive community input and collaboration with city and state officials, Fenway CDC (Community Development Corporation) has been selected to redevelop two adjacent properties at 27-29 Hancock St. into 15 affordable homeownership units.

“Fenway CDC is delighted to be designated as the developer for the 27-29 Hancock St. project in Beacon Hill and excited at this opportunity to increase affordable homeownership opportunities in the City of Boston,” Steve Farrell, executive director of the nonprofit, said in a statement. “Of particular importance is the fact that, as per City of Boston data up to 2022, there is only one affordable homeownership unit in Beacon Hill.”

Per its agreement with the developer, JDMD, Fenway CDC would redevelop the two properties into 15-17 affordable units at 80-100 percent AMI (Area Median Income) for new homeowners. None of the units would be SROs (Single Room Occupancy units). JDMD has also committed up to \$300,000 to address any potential funding gaps. (The agreement now hinges on the signing of a purchase-and-sale agreement for the properties agreeable to both parties.)

JDMD, which developed The Archer Residences – a luxury condo building on Temple Street - purchased 27-29 Hancock St. in 2018, with plans to gift the building to another developer for the creation of off-site affordable housing units to satisfy its IDP (Inclusionary Development Policy) with the city for the Archer project.

Farrell noted the process surrounding the Hancock Street properties benefitted from ongoing community input facilitated by the Beacon Hill Civic Association and Homes on Hancock – a grass-roots group which continually advocated for the creation of adequate affordable housing at 27-29 Hancock St.

Similarly, Farrell expressed gratitude to Mayor Michelle Wu; Sheila Dillon, director of the Mayor's Office of Housing, Rep. Jay Livingstone; and District 8 Councilor Sharon Durkan for their leadership in “this efficient, community-centered and transparent process.”

In a Dec. 24 email announcing the news, Councilor Durkan wrote in part: “This milestone is a true success story of what we can achieve when we work together. The designation of Fenway CDC for this project brings us closer to creating 15 much-needed affordable homes in Beacon Hill, ensuring Beacon Hill has affordable homeownership units and opportunities for future residents.”

Councilor Durkan also noted the project was made possible via a \$1 million in federal funding she helped secure as Chair of the Council's COVID-19 Recovery Committee. “This is a tangible example of how the American Rescue Plan is creating lasting impacts for Boston residents,” she wrote.

Rep. Livingstone was similarly pleased with the designation.

“This is the type of result that Homes on Hancock and the BHCA have long sought. It is a great outcome. It would not have happened without the advocacy of HOH and BHCA, the cooperation of the owner, as well as the participation and funding secured by the Wu Administration and Councilor Durkan. I was happy to help bring these stakeholders

together and work with them to achieve this result. There is still more work to come to achieve a final product, but I'm excited about this important step and look forward to continuing to work with these stakeholders and the community to achieve a final project of which we are all proud," Rep. Livingstone wrote.

In a written statement, Joshua Leffler, chair of the Beacon Hill Civic Association board, said: "From the outset of the BHCA's discussions with JDMD, it was clear they were committed to finding a solution that aligned with the long-term interests of Beacon Hill. The BHCA has long advocated for family-oriented affordable housing on Beacon Hill, and we are thrilled to welcome another such property to the neighborhood. This outcome reflects a transparent public process, robust community organizing by the BHCA and Homes on Hancock, and the leadership and responsiveness of Representative Livingstone, Councilor Durkan, the Mayor's Office of Housing, and JDMD."

Meanwhile, Farrell of Fenway CDC is celebrating the project as a coup not only for Beacon Hill but also for the future homeowners in that neighborhood.

"The opportunity to provide affordable homes in Beacon Hill is a big win not only for the Mayor's Office and the elected officials who helped make this happen, but also for the 15 families who will be able to move into a neighborhood that currently has only a single income-restricted home," added Farrell. "These families will bring additional vibrancy to an historic and welcoming neighborhood."

In the coming months, Fenway CDC will work on securing any needed variances or approvals, including from the Beacon Hill Architectural Commission, the Boston Planning Department, and the city's Zoning Board of Appeal. Construction is expected to get underway by this fall, according to Farrell.