



Creating Communities Where We Choose to Live, Work & Invest

For Immediate Release
Oct. 31, 2025

Contact: Kerry Flathers
kflathers@nvcomm.org

NewVue Communities Celebrates Groundbreaking for New Mixed-Income Housing Project in Athol

ATHOL, MA -- NewVue Communities celebrated the groundbreaking of a new mixed-income housing community in Athol with federal, state and local leaders Friday, October 31.

Partnering with the Town of Athol, NewVue Communities is spearheading the redevelopment of two vacant historic schools to create much-needed new housing for seniors and families. Residences at the Park, located at the former Riverbend and Ellen Bigelow Schools, will create 53 units of mixed-income and intergenerational housing, open space and parking.

NewVue Communities Executive Director Marc Dohan said the project was made possible thanks to the support of local, state and federal partners.

"Residences at the Park and our partnership with the Town of Athol is a perfect example of what NewVue can accomplish through our economic and community development work," Dohan said. "This project will help transform Athol by taking two vacant and blighted former schools, and turning them into vibrant, affordable homes. We're grateful for our community partners at the local, state and federal levels who have worked together to make Residences at the Park a reality."

Funding for the \$32 million project is primarily through tax credits. Other funds include loans, as well as \$1 million in federal funding secured by U.S. Rep. Jim McGovern (D-MA, 2nd) and \$400,000 in ARPA funds from Athol.

"Finding affordable housing remains out of reach for far too many families, and is particularly challenging for seniors" said Congressman McGovern. "This housing community will infuse new life into Downtown Athol, preserve the historic significance of these school buildings, and provide homes people will be proud of. Access to housing has always been one of my top priorities in Congress, and I'm thrilled I could help secure \$1.4 million of federal funding to help make this project a reality."

State leaders have also been instrumental in supporting this project, which comes at a time when Massachusetts is facing a severe housing shortage.

"The Healey-Driscoll Administration is committed to tackling the housing shortage across the Commonwealth, and the Residences at the Park is a great example of state, local, and private partners coming together to build something that will have a real impact," said Housing and Livable Communities Secretary Ed Augustus. "These vacant, historic buildings will soon be a beautiful community that families and seniors will call home, and EOHLC is proud to have supported this project."

Added state Sen. Jo Comerford (D-Northampton), "As rural communities across Massachusetts grapple with pressing housing needs, today's groundbreaking in Athol offers hope and momentum. This mixed-income, intergenerational development is exactly what's needed — in exactly the right place. My thanks to NewVue Communities, the Town of Athol, and everyone who helped bring this project to life."

Local officials said this project will not only bring two historic buildings to life but provide much-needed housing in the community.

"The Town has worked collaboratively and purposefully with NewVue Communities and our state and federal partners to bring this transformative project into construction," said Athol Town Manager Shaun Suhoski. "The effort will yield 53 units of vitally needed and affordable senior and family housing. This productive reuse of two neighborhood school buildings is only possible through the collective efforts of all project partners."

Added Athol Select Board Chair Rebecca Bialecki, "I'm excited to see this project move forward, it will create a beautiful and much needed resource from a rundown eyesore in our community."

In September 2019, the Athol Board of Selectmen chose NewVue Communities as the town's developer/partner to renovate the two-building campus of the Riverbend and Ellen Bigelow Schools, add a new building, and redevelop play space, community space and parking.

NewVue took ownership of the property in early 2025, closed on its construction financing on May 1, 2025 and immediately started construction. The project is expected to be completed mid-summer 2026.

The development will preserve the Ellen Bigelow School, built in 1912, and portions of the Athol Riverbend School, constructed in 1907 and 1937.

About NewVue Communities: NewVue Communities is a nonprofit community development corporation dedicated to creating strong and healthy neighborhoods where residents choose to live, work, and invest. NewVue Communities is dedicated to serving the 240,000 residents of North Central Massachusetts, a region of 22 municipalities stretching from Harvard to Athol. We strategically use a five-pronged approach to strengthen communities and fuel economic and social progress through homeownership, small business development, housing development, asset management, and community organizing.

###