

The Berkshire Eagle

Complex gets good reviews

By Derek Gentile

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GREAT BARRINGTON -- Curious neighbors and town officials alike were on Hillside Avenue Monday afternoon, inspecting the newly completed Hillside Avenue Affordable Housing complex.

The overall assessment was a positive one. Selectman Alan Inglis pronounced the units "rather nice," adding that the interiors were attractive and clean.

"I think they came out really well," said Town Manager Kevin O'Donnell. "The units look very nice. The kitchen, the interior, these are nice apartments."

There are 10 units in the project, according to Lisa Henriques of Construct, Inc., one of the co-managers of the complex. There are five one-bedroom units, three two-bedroom units and two three-bedroom units, she said.

One of the two-bedroom units will be accessible to the handicapped, she said.

The rents will range from \$575 to \$900 monthly, and five of the units will receive public rent subsidies.

The subsidies were a bone of contention for some critics of the complex. Henriques said criticism of the prospective tenants now is "prejudiced and unfair" before they move in.

The other major issue was drainage, and potential

problems that heavy rain might generate.

James Culliton, vice president of Allegrone Construction of Pittsfield, lauded engineer Robert Hoogs' design work on the drainage plan.

"The design works very well," said Culliton. "Rob Hoogs and [his company] Foresight Land Services did a great job."

Culliton said the installation of a large drainage area underneath the parking lot is the key. During excess rains, he said, water collects in the drainage area and is gradually allowed to leak out.

"It does one heck of a job," he said. "We've had some torrential rains lately, and we've had no problems whatsoever."

The site was a little tight, according to architect Dana Bixby. "But Foresight did a great job engineering the site. I'm very pleased with the final product."

Timothy Geller, executive director of the Great Barrington Community Development Corp. said the complex is awaiting a final certificate of occupancy, which it hopes to have in a day or two.

"It's a paperwork issue," said O'Donnell.