



Senator McCray, Councilman Stokes, Deputy Mayor Williams and Representatives from HUD and DHCD Celebrate the Grand Opening of Next Phase of PSO

Baltimore, MD – Today, the development team of Mission First Housing Group, The Henson Development Co. (THC) and the Housing Authority of Baltimore City (HABC) celebrated the Grand Opening of The Ruby at Somerset at 420 Aisquith Street. This project is part of the Perkins Somerset Oldtown Transformation Plan (PSO).

Maryland Senator Cory V. McCray (45th District); Baltimore City Deputy Mayor Justin Williams; Baltimore City Council President Nick Mosby; Baltimore City Councilman Robert Stokes, Sr. (District 12); US Department of Housing and Urban Development's Richard Monocchio; Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development's Gregory Hare and Baltimore City Department of Housing and Community Development's Stacy Freed joined Mission First's Thomas Queenan and Sarah Constant, THC's Daniel and Dana Henson and HABC's Janet Abrahams and Robin Carter, as well as project funders, community members and new residents of The Ruby at Somerset, to celebrate the opening of this new community asset.

"The transformation in this development over its many phases demonstrates the power of collaboration and aligned partnerships," said Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary Richard J. Monocchio from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. "It is critical to preserve and expand our Nation's housing supply as well as ensure residents have access to opportunities to thrive."

The Ruby at Somerset is brand-new housing community with 72 apartments, including 52 affordable homes. Residents will enjoy access to many amenities inside and outside their apartment. New, modern kitchens with Energy Star Appliances and spacious floor plans welcome residents home. Residents can fellowship with neighbors on the 2nd floor outdoor deck and club room, as well as do work in the business center.

"The Ruby, named for my late friend and wonderful entertainer Ruby Glover, is the second of four apartment buildings we are creating at Somerset to fill in this hole in the middle of the City that I love", said Daniel Henson, President of THC. "We are proud of the plan and the execution of that plan and think you will also love it. This will be a great place to live."

Mission First, THC and HABC are undertaking an extensive redevelopment of the former Somerset Homes and Old Town Mall neighborhoods; centrally located between downtown Baltimore and the prestigious Johns Hopkins Medical Campus, as part of PSO, MD. The Ruby at Somerset is the second phase to be completed in the Somerset Homes neighborhood.

"We are so pleased to be part of the dynamic development team, with Henson and HABC, that is bringing new resources to this neighborhood," said Thomas Queenan, Chief Executive Office for Mission First Housing Group. "True to our mission, the Ruby and the other projects part of Somerset Homes and PSO support residents and strengthen communities."

The Ruby at Somerset was financed by Choice Neighborhood Initiative grant awarded to HABC from HUD, tax exempt bonds and 4% Low Income Housing Tax Credits issued through Maryland CDA, along with subordinate loans from CDA's Partnership Rental Housing Funds and National Housing Trust programs, a HOME loan and PILOT through Baltimore City Department of Housing and Community Development and tax credit equity provided by Enterprise.

Somerset Homes also includes 1234 McElderry Apartment, which opened in 2021, The Ella at Somerset, opening later this fall, and The Blake at Somerset, slated to start construction mid-2024, as well as a 1.3-acre park along Central Avenue and retail space. The completed redevelopment of Somerset Homes will ultimately replace 275 apartments beyond repair and add a total of 558 apartments across all four properties. The new Somerset community welcomes back neighbors who lived in the Somerset Homes community - the former public housing development that existed at the site - and new residents to this hub of open space, retail, commercial, apartments and schools, so residents can live, work, shop, go to school and play within their neighborhood.

“The Ruby is another example of a successful collaboration with our development and community partners to deliver new affordable housing in the City of Baltimore,” said Janet Abrahams, President and CEO for HABC. “Not only are we excited to realize the results of the extensive planning that has gone into revitalizing Somerset, but more importantly, we want our residents to realize the opportunity to thrive in a community they deserve. We look forward to welcoming our residents back into their new and improved home!”

The team is also developing the southern portion of Oldtown Mall that will bring retail space, a 50,000 sq. ft. merchandise mall, a 120-key hotel, an Entrepreneurial Incubator HUB, office space, a 220 unit mixed-income apartment building and 2 parking garages.

The six-year PSO will result in 1,345 new apartments, doubling the amount of available, high-quality housing, including one-for-one replacement of 629 aging public housing apartments. Located minutes from Downtown Baltimore and the thriving Fells Point waterfront, the Plan spans 244 acres and is designed to create a diverse community that will enable residents to live in economically integrated, high-quality housing with exceptional amenities.

For more information about the other phases of the work Mission First, THC and HABC are doing in Somerset, go to www.somersetbaltimore.com. For more information about the full PSO Transformation Plan, visit the project website at <https://www.habc.org/habc-information/programs-departments/planning-development/psa-transformation/>.

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About Mission First Housing Group

Mission First Housing Group develops and manages affordable, safe and sustainable homes for people in need, with a non-profit, mission-driven focus on the most vulnerable. Mission First currently provides affordable housing and services to more than 6,000 people in nearly 4,000 apartments, serving populations in need, such as veterans, survivors of domestic violence, seniors and the disabled. www.missionfirsthousing.org.

About The Henson Development Company

The Henson Development Company, Inc. (THC), a 100% family owned and operated minority-owned business enterprise, is a fully integrated real estate developer, consultant and program management corporation based in Baltimore, Maryland. The firm’s vast portfolio includes low-to-moderate income rental and homeownership units, elderly housing, garden and high-rise facilities, and townhouses and market rate integration with affordable housing. THC is committed to revitalizing communities and developing lives. www.hensondevelopmentco.com.

About Housing Authority of Baltimore City

The Housing Authority of Baltimore City is the fifth largest public housing authority in the U.S., providing quality affordable housing for more than 23,000 households. The agency creates diverse and vibrant communities, provides opportunities for self-sufficiency, and builds pathways for strong partnerships. www.habc.org