



Community Planning and Economic Development Department

News Release

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Commons at Penn to Break Ground at Corner of Penn Ave and Golden Valley Road September 30

Monday, September 29, 2014 (Minneapolis, MN) - On Tuesday, September 30, 2014, locally based nonprofit Building Blocks will break ground on the Commons at Penn, a new 47-unit affordable housing apartment complex located at 2201 Golden Valley Road. The event will begin at 11:00 a.m. with the Building Blocks team and Board of Directors joined by several local officials including City Council Member Blong Yang, Representative Raymond Dehn, Policy Aide to Mayor Hodges, Erick Garcia Luna, and representatives from other public and private partners in the project.

“Building Blocks should be commended for their efforts and this investment in Ward 5, which is much needed,” said Council Member Blong Yang. “Devean George’s story of a hometown boy returning to his hood to do good is inspiring and hopefully will inspire others to do the same.”

The Commons at Penn will offer office and program space for Building Blocks, the nonprofit founded by Devean George in 2011 and the lead developer of the project. Building Blocks supports the development of youth and families by focusing on a combination of housing, mentoring, and educational programming. The first floor of the building will also include space for an outreach clinic operated by NorthPoint Health and Wellness Center where community members will have access to health education classes, events, and health care services.

“Our team at Building Blocks believes that we can make a real and lasting difference by working to revitalize our community one block at a time,” said Devean George. “Commons at Penn embodies this philosophy and provides a space that will allow us to go even further in our efforts to partner with young people and their families.”

The project is being supported by the City of Minneapolis through the Affordable Housing Trust Fund and Tax Exempt Housing Revenue Bonds, Hennepin County through its Environmental Response Fund, Transit-Oriented Development program and Affordable Housing Incentive Fund (AHIF), Metropolitan Council through its Livable Communities Demonstration Account program, Minnesota Housing through its Economic Development and Housing Challenge program, the Pohlad Foundation, the Family Housing Fund, Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) and Sunrise Bank who is providing the first mortgage.

Construction of Commons at Penn is expected to wrap up by mid-2015 with the first residents moving in by the fall. The programs that will be provided by Building Blocks and NorthPoint Health and Wellness Center will be open to all residents in the community. This is Building Blocks first development in Minneapolis.

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