

**RE: BLOCHER APARTMENTS PROJECT
LATEST STATEMENT**

October 11, 2019

From: Daniel O'Neill
CEO/President – Beechwood and Blocher Homes

Project Description

Blocher Homes, as an affiliate of not-for-profit Beechwood Continuing Care, is exploring with People Inc. the opportunity to repurpose its Williamsville assisted-living facility as Blocher Apartments to provide expanded and needed housing opportunities for others to enjoy village life, while also preserving the overall character of the 5.26-acre Evans St. site.

The current proposal calls for 97 mixed-income one and two-bedroom apartments in three new buildings and the current Blocher facility. A project of this nature requires a number of government and regulatory agency approvals before it becomes a reality and any definitive actions can take place for our residents and employees. Expectations are the earliest all approvals could be received is May 2020.

Why Now?

Given the physical limitations posed by the current Blocher facility and increasing changes in the type of care our seniors desire and need, there is no choice but to repurpose the physical plant for future use other than assisted living and that meets the needs of the wider community.

First, we are not able to achieve maximum utilization of Blocher facility's second floor because, for safety reasons, New York State (NYS) regulations prohibit assisted living facilities from admitting residents who "chronically require the physical assistance of another person(s) to climb or descend stairs."

Second, senior care is not the same today as it was in the past. Today's seniors are often waiting until later in life to enter the assisted living level of care – when many are already living with health challenges that limit their ability to ambulate. Depending on the severity of these challenges, they may also need to bypass assisted living and go directly into skilled nursing care.

For those now in assisted living, current regulations stipulate that when a resident with health challenges experiences even a minor change in medical condition, the facility is not allowed to provide the nursing care needed to return the resident to good health – therefore, the resident must be sent to the hospital.

Because of these external factors and despite a strong reputation for quality living and compassionate care, Blocher – as an affiliate of the not-for-profit Beechwood Continuing Care -- has failed to reach its full capacity of 57 beds in recent years, saw occupancy decline to 73% last year, and has registered financial deficits in each of the past four years.

Communications to Residents, Employees and Neighbors

Every step of the way, we have shared and continue to share the most current information not only with our neighbors but also with our residents and family representatives and Blocher staff so we can assist them – almost a year in advance -- in best preparing for new homes and continued employment opportunities if the project receives the required approvals.

Taking Care of Our Residents

We know we have created a special place in Blocher Homes. Happily, it has fostered a caring and nurturing home for our residents, while also generating a great sense of loyalty and affection.

Although a large number of residents and families support the proposed Blocher Apartments project, we understand that even the possibility of moving to another home could be viewed by a few residents as undesirable and unnecessary.

Besides personal conversations, we have met with residents and family representatives in two formal meetings – one before the project was publicly announced – to provide them with the most current information. The wellbeing of our residents is and always will be the priority throughout any proposed transition. If and when alternative placement is desired or necessary, and which may not occur until mid-2020, Blocher residents will have the opportunity to choose either Beechwood or another residential facility they desire for the proper level of nursing services with an emphasis on quality of life and dignity.

By working with our Blocher residents, we are looking at redesigning and renovating existing space on the Beechwood campus to create the quality living experience our assisted living residents desire – with the added benefit of immediate access to additional nursing and medical care, as needed, provided without a trip to the hospital and in the comfort of their own “home.”

Such access to care will be afforded under the auspices of skilled nursing but Blocher residents have been assured that, if this transition occurs, they will pay the same assisted living rate as at Blocher until their medical condition requires additional skilled nursing services.

Taking Care of Our Employees

We met with our employees July 25 to inform them that we would be taking preliminary steps toward possibly repurposing the Blocher Homes property from an assisted living facility to an affordable and mixed-income housing complex to serve Village of Williamsville residents.

Prior to meeting with our employees, we informed the 1199SEIU Business Representative, Marshall Bertram, that we were planning to make an announcement and invited him to attend the employee meeting, which he did. 1199SEIU represents about 18 of the estimated 60 employees at Blocher, or an estimated 30% of the total workforce.

During this meeting we explained that a project like this will require New York State and local government approvals, which could take until early next year to complete.

We were surprised then that, 1199SEIU conducted an informational picket Oct. 7 in spite of our assurances that, if and when necessary approvals are received, and Blocher Homes decides to take this project forward, Blocher Homes will meet with 1199SEIU to bargain the effects of such decision.

Communicating with Neighbors

Beechwood/Blocher Homes reached out to adjacent neighbors to share information on the proposed repurposing to Blocher Apartments at a special meeting at Blocher on August 1 -- before the proposal was first publicly considered by the Williamsville Village Planning Board on Aug. 5.

Project architects took the neighbors' concerns and feedback and revised the project to eliminate an access road to Village Pointe Lane as well as parking at the rear of the property closest to Village Pointe Lane, provide more green space, and change the one additional large building to three smaller ones facing Evans St., as well as a zoning variance request for fewer parking spaces.

These changes were shared with neighbors at a Sept. 19 meeting and then formally presented to the Williamsville Village Planning Board Oct. 7.

About Beechwood Continuing Care

Beechwood Continuing Care is a locally owned, not-for-profit senior care community in Amherst and Williamsville. It has been an integral part of Western New York, serving the housing and care needs of the senior community for more than 50 years. Affiliates include: Asbury Pointe, an independent retirement community; the Blocher Homes,

assisted and enhanced living community; the Wesley Rehabilitation Center, short-term rehabilitative care; and the Beechwood Homes, a person-centered skilled nursing community.

More About Blocher Homes

Blocher Homes was founded in 1904 by the late John and Elizabeth Blocher of Williamsville, NY. John Blocher's vision included providing "a home where aging men and women may enjoy their senior years." The original home opened for residency in 1906 and the current building opened in 1970. Blocher Homes joined Beechwood Continuing Care, a not for profit senior care community, in 1977.

FACT SHEET AND TIMELINE – PROPOSED BLOCHER APARTMENTS

- July 25, 2019** Beechwood/Blocher Homes President and CEO Daniel O’Neill meets with Blocher residents and family representatives to inform them that preliminary steps are being taken toward possibly repurposing the Blocher Homes property from an assisted living facility to an affordable and mixed-income housing complex to serve Village of Williamsville residents.
- Facility administrator shares the same information in meeting with Blocher employees, including members of 1199SEIU as well as its business representative, Marshall Bertram, who was extended an invitation to attend. They were informed that, if and when necessary approvals are received in 2020, and Blocher Homes decides to take this project forward, Blocher Homes will meet with 1199SEIU to bargain the effects of such decision.
- August 1, 2019** Beechwood/Blocher, People Inc. officials and project architects and attorney present initial project concepts and enlist feedback from approximately 11 adjacent neighbors, invited according to Village Law requiring direct notification to all neighboring properties within 150 feet. Major concerns expressed were a proposed access road to Village Pointe Lane, height and expanse of new building on Evans, loss of green space.
- August 5, 2018** Beechwood/Blocher and People Inc. share announcement of proposed project with local media.
- Concepts for proposed project publicly presented for review and comment at meeting of Williamsville Village Planning Board.
- August 7, 2018** Concepts for proposed project presented for review and comment at meeting of Williamsville Village Zoning Board of Appeals.
- August 23&29, 2019** Group meetings where Blocher residents offer ideas, recommendations on common area space usage, general décor, important everyday amenities to be incorporated into architectural renderings for further resident comment at future design planning sessions.
- September 19, 2019** Revised project concepts incorporating neighbors’ feedback – no access road, back parking closest to Village Pointe Lane eliminated for more green space, expansion for three smaller buildings rather than one larger one on Evans St., variance request for fewer parking spaces – was presented at meeting of more than 20 neighbors invited from a wider database than first meeting.

- September 24, 2019** Daniel O'Neill shares updated project information, why the project was proposed and how residents would be transitioned if project proceeded with required approvals during a 2:15-hour Q&A meeting with more than 50 residents' family members, as well as a few Blocher residents.
- October 7, 2019** 1199SEIU elects to stage informational picket in spite of assurances first stated in July 2019 that, if and when necessary approvals are received, and Blocher Homes decides to take this project forward, Blocher Homes will meet with 1199SEIU to bargain the effects of such decision.
- Williamsville Village Planning Board reviews revised project concepts, asks for amended traffic study and other considerations for its November meeting.
- May 2020** All government and regulatory approvals expected to be received if process proceeds without major delays.

10.11.19