



Sacramento LGBT-friendly Senior Housing Plans Progress

By 2020, there will be an estimated three million gay seniors nationwide, and many LGBT seniors, including many in Sacramento and the Central Valley, have run into discrimination in retirement communities, assisted living and convalescent homes.

As at least a start on the solution to that problem, a local nonprofit is planning the first LGBT friendly senior affordable housing community in the Central Valley.

Land for the 50-some apartment development at the corner of 16th and F Streets in Sacramento has just been purchased by Mutual Housing California.

Similar communities already are built in Hollywood, Philadelphia and Minneapolis and one is in construction in San Francisco

“This proposal is long overdue,” said Rachel Iskow, Mutual Housing California CEO. “Sacramento has a large LGBT population and we all need a place of acceptance and community as we live out our elder years.”

A 2014 Harris poll of LGBT people aged 45 – 75 found that 44 percent of those surveyed were very interested in living an affordable LGBT-friendly housing development sometime in the future.

“LGBT seniors have unique needs, and this project will help fulfill those needs,” said Steve Hansen, Sacramento City Councilmember, District 4 “The project also will fill an unsightly lot that has been vacant for more than 20 years furthering the renaissance of this important neighborhood.”

The current proposal is for a courtyard and community room, property management, service offices and parking garage on the ground floor with apartments on the three floors above.

Because resident involvement is the core of Mutual Housing philosophy, the development also will have a community organizer.

“As we know, community connections are so important to mental health and longevity, especially with your neighbors,” said Jim Joseph, J. Joseph Professional Tax Services owner and a long-time supporter of LGBT senior housing.

Joseph and Michael Farnham, owner of Trendsetters Hair Design, first approached Mutual Housing with the idea of LGBT senior housing a number of years ago.

“It is clear that Mutual Housing has the experience and capacity to make this happen,” said Joseph.

Because a senior population also needs to be near public transportation, medical facilities and retail such as grocery stores and pharmacies, finding the right parcel took longer than expected.

“The parcel is perfect for seniors,” said Iskow of the 0.6-acre parcel. “It is across the street from great community assets such as Sampinos and Washington Park on F Street and just blocks from a light rail station.”

Mutual Housing staff now will start applying for funding, including housing tax credits.

The whole process, from purchasing the parcel to completing construction is expected to take two to three years.

An LGBT leadership group has been put together to support outreach efforts and advise Mutual Housing.

Mogavero Notestine Associates will be the project architects; Cunningham Engineering will serve as civil engineer.

Founded in 1988, Mutual Housing California develops, operates and advocates for sustainable rental housing for the region’s diverse households.

A member of NeighborWorks America – a congressionally chartered nonprofit that supports community development nationwide – Mutual Housing has more than 3,000 residents, nearly half of whom are children.

Through its focus on leadership, the nonprofit provides training and mentoring as well as educational programs, communitybuilding activities and services for residents and neighbors.

For more information, go to www.mutualhousing.com.