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Contact:

Bethany Blake
Director of Philanthropy & Marketing
978-473-7153
Bblake@harborlighthomes.org

Harborlight Homes Awarded State Funding to Build 52 Affordable Homes at Depot Lane in Ipswich, MA

Transit-oriented development marks culmination of multi-year partnership with the Town of Ipswich and the Ipswich Housing Partnership

BEVERLY, MA - Harborlight Homes, a Beverly-based nonprofit Community Development Corporation, has been awarded Massachusetts state funding to begin construction of Depot Lane, a new development that will bring 52 much-needed affordable homes to individuals and families in Ipswich. The award was made possible in part through Governor Maura Healey's Affordable Homes Act, which significantly increased state support for housing production.

The project has been supported by, and developed in close collaboration with, the Town of Ipswich and the Ipswich Housing Partnership and Housing Trust. Depot Lane is the result of a partnership between Harborlight Homes and these committees, whose members worked together to identify and evaluate potential housing sites in Ipswich, efforts that ultimately led to the current project. The Trust also providing funding at a very early stage, helping to make this a viable undertaking for Harborlight.

Secretary Juana Matias of the Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities recently visited the Ipswich site, which currently holds a building, formerly owned by EBSCO, that will be razed to make way for the new housing. In the meantime, the existing building is being used by other nonprofits, including as a food distribution site for Three Sisters Farm, which provides fresh produce to families in need. Harborlight hopes to create a permanent commercial location for Three Sisters Farm within the new building, forming a unique partnership that addresses both housing and food insecurity.

Secretary Juana Matias, upon her visit, expressed her gratitude to state, municipal and nonprofit partners who collaborated over several years to make this project happen. The Secretary was especially impressed by Depot Lane's proximity to the MBTA commuter rail as well as Ipswich's vibrant downtown.

In addition to Harborlight Homes, development project partners include SV Design and Egis USA Inc. (formerly Green International).

Andrew McKenzie-DeFranza, Harborlight Homes' executive director, said, "We are so pleased to be able to advance this important project. Depot Square not only combines affordability and transit access, but it is also an outstanding example of collaboration between nonprofit and municipal entities. This will be a development that both Ipswich and the Commonwealth will be proud of, adding to the community in much needed ways."

Following early discussions with neighbors and Town officials, formal permitting for Depot Lane began in September 2024. After a thorough review spanning eleven Planning Board meetings, a Special Permit was issued in May 2025. Close coordination with Town Planning staff ensured a smooth, if lengthy, process and resulted in a design that will become a landmark of downtown Ipswich. The homes will be transit-oriented, located just steps from the MBTA commuter rail line.

Family Housing

- 52 affordable family homes with one-, two-, and three-bedroom units
- Passive House Certified with rooftop solar; the highest levels of sustainability

Financial support for Depot Lane was provided early on by the Ipswich Housing Trust, which awarded a $400,000 grant in September 2024. Half of those funds have been used for predevelopment activities, and the remaining half will be contributed toward development costs. Harborlight looks forward to continuing its work with the Trust and the Ipswich Housing Partnership to bring 52 affordable and sustainable homes to Ipswich.

Charlie Allen, the Partnership Chair, commented that "we are very fortunate to have a group as capable as Harborlight Homes take such an interest in our Town and do the hard work of securing this highly competitive funding. The Partnership and Trust are thrilled to see this important development moving forward. It's great for the Town."

About Harborlight Homes

Harborlight Homes is a non-profit, Massachusetts-certified Community Development Corporation that develops, manages, and advocates for quality, service-enriched housing that is affordable and inclusive. Currently providing affordable homes in 12 communities across Boston's North Shore, Harborlight serves low- and fixed-income elders, struggling families, essential workers, individuals with disabilities, and families and individuals experiencing homelessness. The mission of Harborlight Homes is to collaborate with communities to cultivate just, equitable, and sustainable housing opportunities vital to the health and strength of Boston's North Shore.

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