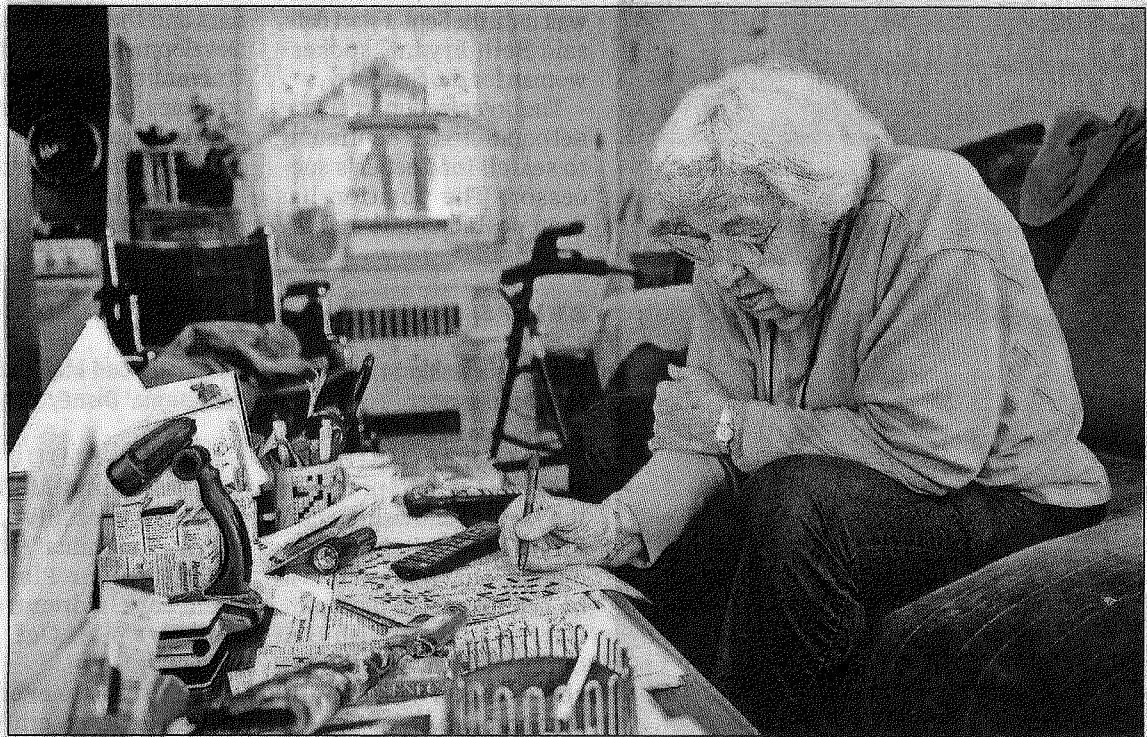


MARLBOROUGH ENTERPRISE

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A modernization plan that is long overdue



Del Gabin, 87, a 10-year resident of senior housing on Pleasant Street in Marlborough, works on a crossword puzzle in her apartment after attending a meeting on Oct. 2 to discuss the long-awaited modernization of her living quarters. [DAILY NEWS STAFF PHOTO/KEN MCGAGH]

Money secured for \$5.5M senior housing rehab

By Jeff Malachowski
Staff Writer

MARLBOROUGH - Residents of the nearly 60-year-old Pleasant Street senior apartments last week called the planned modernization of the facility exciting and long overdue.

The city was recently awarded \$3.3 million in state money to help pay for the \$5.5 million project. The state initially granted Marlborough \$2.2 million, but increased the amount as estimated construction costs rose and city leaders secured additional money for the work.

Marlborough will also use

\$720,850 in solar net metering credits over 10 years, \$100,000 from the neighborhood stabilization program, \$100,000 in Community Development reserves and \$400,000 approved by the City Council to help fund the project. The city also received a \$100,000 earmark from the Legislature for the upgrades.

The complex was last upgraded in the 1980s. That work included window replacements and a new roof.

About 15 residents of the facility met with state Sen. Jamie Eldridge, D-Acton, state Rep. Danielle Gregoire, D-Marlborough, and Community Development Authority

officials to discuss the project. Residents are eager for the upgrades, which will likely commence in a year.

"I love this place," said resident Del Gabin. "It's a really good place. I believe we should have done it years ago."

Emmie Lafreniere, a seven-year resident of the four-building complex, is very pleased but wishes the project were moving faster.

She said the apartments have a variety of problems: too few electrical outlets, aging kitchen cabinets and balky windows.

"Half of the windows you

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can't put up and down, unless you're Superman," she said.

Renovations to the 42-unit apartment complex - which opened in 1961 - are set to include kitchen and bath replacements, plumbing upgrades, bath ventilation, electrical and fire alarm system improvements, asbestos abatement, new

entry doors and sprinkler systems. The upgrades will help seniors age in place by replacing bathtubs with walk-in showers and easy to reach cabinets.

"We realize the units need to be upgraded," Eldridge told the residents. "We recognize much more needs to be done. We're looking to make sure you live in quality apartments."

Gregoire called the renovations "a quality of life issue."

Residents are unhappy

that additional parking will not be part of the plans. They hope the city can expand the number of parking spots. They asked city leaders to have the interior work done building by building to reduce the effect on the tenants.

Douglas Bushman, Housing Authority executive director, said city officials are working on a plan to relocate tenants during construction.

Architects hope to complete designs by January.

Bushman anticipates putting the project out to bid next spring, with construction beginning in fall 2019. Work is expected to take about a year.

"This project is several years in the making," said Bushman.

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Doug Bushman, executive director of the Marlborough Housing Authority meets with residents of the Pleasant Street senior apartments to discuss the long-awaited \$5.5 million overhaul of the facility. [DAILY NEWS STAFF PHOTO/KEN MCGAGH]