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## Long road ends with affordable housing in Washington Township

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WASHINGTON TWP. – A four-year process to win approval for 10 low cost housing units on Reservoir Road has reached a point of celebration.

Government officials and representatives of Homeless Solutions of Morristown joined to turn the first shovels of dirt in groundbreaking ceremonies on Thursday, May 6.

The apartments will be built on the site of a former farmstead in the footprints of a former barn and other buildings torn down in the past year. Each of the units, equipped with a package of environmentally friendly technology, will be rented to low and moderate income families.

"We are very proud on this important day, it's been a long time coming," said Mayor Kenneth Short. "Washington Township is a community that chooses not to export our responsibilities. We welcome this project. Many hours were put into it and we're very proud of the commitment to get it going."

### Housing Commitment

The township will receive state Council on Affordable Housing (COAH) credits toward its third round commitment.

"They were one of the few to have their COAH certification approved before the old rules were tossed," said Dan McGuire, director of Homeless Solutions.

The non-profit agency received \$550,000 from the township in developer contributed fees that had been kept in trust to assist affordable housing.

A combination of state grants and other public financing was used to cover the more than \$2 million project costs.

"We knocked on a lot of doors and even broke a few down," said McGuire.

The ceremonies were held in the shade of several large trees which will be preserved on the site.

McGuire said the project is the first in the state to reach LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) platinum certification.

The complex of three separate buildings will include high efficiency fiberglass windows, heat pumps and tank-less water heaters. In addition, Energy Star light fixtures, roofing and appliances, as well as low flow water fixtures, bamboo or linoleum floors and formaldehyde-free counter tops will be used for each unit.

The 9,838 square feet of living space exceeds COAH standards for affordable housing. Four two-bedroom apartments will be included in the mix.

After initial hearings before the planning board, the size of each building was slightly reduced and a corner building was moved 10 feet further back off Drakestown Road.

Although the address of the complex is technically 34 Reservoir Road, it does not actually border the thoroughfare.

Paul Stridick, director of New Jersey's Balanced Housing Program praised the job done by Homeless Solutions and the township.

"This is a remarkable day," said Stridick. "Look around you. There are thousands of jobs, hundreds of places of business, bus and rail transportation nearby. The setting is beautiful. Who doesn't want to live here?"

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