
RESPONSES TO ALDERWOMAN HOFFMAN

Question: Will the closets have real doors or curtains like at The Grove?

Response: *In the more than 140 developments Gorman has completed, they have found the traditional bi-fold doors are a maintenance challenge. For this reason, they have gone to the canvas grommeted curtains so they can focus maintenance expenses on keeping the property in good condition for the long haul. This is actually becoming an industrywide item in many markets for the same reason.*

— — —

Question: Will the units have individual washers and dryers?

Response: *Yes. Energy star rated.*

— — —

Question: Will there be a playground? Back when The Grove was built basketball courts were not safe but things have changed and we have put them back up in Rolling Green. It is a place for male teens.

Response: *There will be. It will be for the whole site and is located south of the mixed-use apartment property. We would love to have a discussion with the City and Rockford Park District, as it is our understanding that the neighborhood park, off Preston Street, next to the City water department building, may be eliminated to allow for the expansion of the water department building. If this is true, we are willing to donate land for a move of the park to our site so it becomes a larger community park. We are in the process of following up on this information to see if this is the case.*

— — —

Question: I do not like the garden area unless you are going to handle it like the one at Blackhawk. That was done well.

Expecting the residents to maintain is just going to lead to empty gardens. Rockford has severely dropped off in community gardens. Rockford is now down to 20 and most are being left to wither. Consider deleting this part of the plan.

Response: *This area will not be a garden. It will be a farm with a similar setup to the farm I started at Blackhawk Courts with Angelic Organics. This needs to be more than a resident garden, as we agree those are maintenance nightmares with inconsistent participation. Residents who attended our meetings indicated they wanted fresh vegetables and to achieve this, we need a business entity programming that space. Further, like Blackhawk used to be, this space is also helpful for youth programming.*

To be an organic farm, like Blackhawk, we need to put a barrier between the existing site and new soil. This is note because of the history of the site, as it is clean, rather, it is a requirement of organic farms. Here is an example of a model we are working on – [Growing Home](#) (Chicago). [VIDEO](#).

Question: Head Start - I believe this may become an either-or and the Pace Center might be closed when Fairgrounds is taken down. I talked to Anquetette as I am Chairman of the CAA Board. It is open for discussion.

Response: *Former Alderwoman Ann Thompson-Kelly has connected us with Headstart. We are working on a meeting with HS to discuss the space and any possible interest.*

The 8,000 sq ft space set aside for childcare/education can house HS as an early childhood center and/or a childcare center. It is our hope that we can work to increase the availability of childcare in the neighborhood and would love to see if we can include both childhood education and childcare in the same building and if that was possible, would be willing to use some of the additional, 10,800 sq ft of the social services space to accommodate both.

As noted in council, now is a difficult time to plan an expansion of childcare given the funding environment; however, we are working in Springfield and working with Birth to Five to put a spotlight on this site as a solution in Ellis Heights to the childcare desert in this area. The lack of childcare is a workforce issue that we, and our community must address. We will seek others on this path to approval to help advocate for change and advancement of childcare policies and funding.

I am happy to explain more of this, but one can suggest we haven't solved this space yet, and that is partly true, but we would be negligent in honoring what residents told us they needed if we didn't include the space and work towards a solution.

Question: I am strongly opposed to the high-priced single-family homes as are many of the Council Members. That is the proposal that may sink into this whole plan. I would instead like to see reasonable townhomes like The Grove. This was done in Nashville and is beautiful.

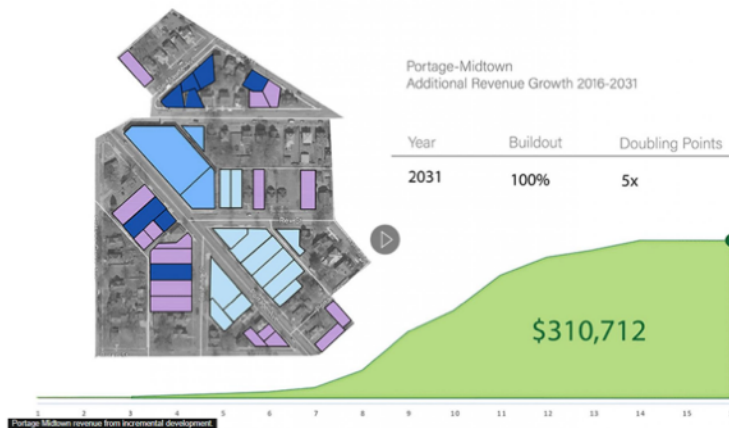
Response: *I appreciate your concern, but I have to respectfully push back on the opposition. The price of construction is no different from anywhere else in the city where a high-quality, energy-efficient home would be built. There have been no such homes built on the west side, and no new homes built in this neighborhood since Comprehensive Community Solutions completed and sold their last homes in about 2010. Prior to that, it was the RHA that built homes in the adjacent area (the 1980s), although further west Oliver Emerson and Hope 6 work was done in the time between RHA and CCS, but they aren't considered part of this near westside neighborhood.*

Construction of new homes in this area, and other neighborhoods like it, is essential to the continued viability of any neighborhood. We can't continue to remove decaying homes without replacement and expect to have a viable city.

The cost, as mentioned is consistent with new home construction in Rockford. The challenge is appraised values. This is where state and federal tools are created for buyers to fill the gap in value between construction costs and what a bank will deem the property worth. There are countless models across our nation where new, infill construction stabilizes neighborhoods using HOME and CDBG funds to bridge the appraisal gap. In these successful communities, we see evidence of these investments through healthier neighborhoods and stable home values. We also see more equity in the ownership of homes between minority and white households.

What does this mean for the City? Investments in HOME or CDBG funds, as well as other appraisal gap sources we would bring, increase property tax receipts as vacant lots become revenue-producing properties.

Here is an example of a project similar to the Avon Street project in Indiana and its return over time:



The case study is located [HERE](#), and you can see how each SF home added to city property tax receipts AND provided residents a healthy home to live in. This work also led to other improvements such as added retail, restaurant, and a focus on schools.

Please also keep in mind that people who buy these homes must be qualified for loans from traditional banks. We are positioned to ensure those banks are local and regional and not predatory lenders, as has been common in this area.

Question: You may want to visit their Public Housing. They have one new area done very right.

Response: *We are very familiar with Nashville Metropolitan Housing and Development Authority. I (Ron Clewer) know members of their leadership team from our mutual membership in NAHRO. They have done a magnificent job. Their housing repositioning plan was very much like the one we had approved back when we were both at RHA – the 1,100-unit repositioning plan. The tools and designs are similar. The Grove was our first phase in that plan.*

Question: The main building: How many entrances does it have?

Response: *The building has various entrances depending on the use. Each social service space will have at least 2 egress/ingress unless the code dictates otherwise. The childcare spaces are undetermined at this time as ages and daycare/education uses have different code requirements, but they will meet or exceed the code. The apartments will also follow the code. Each apartment will*

have 1 entrance/exit that is key FOB controlled like our other properties. The apartment portion of the building currently has 5 at the first-floor level. Each door is electronic access controlled and video monitored, consistent with all Gorman properties. This is another "Gormanism".

Question: Are there hallways that go the length of the building or is it sectioned off as it should be in accordance with "Defensible Housing"?

Response: The halls are staggered and incorporate defensible housing design concepts.

Question: Gorman knows how to build "Defensible Housing". Have they implemented the necessary plans throughout?

Response: *Gorman does, and they and we have. Landscape plans and site plans also incorporate Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) design concepts.*

Question: Rents for the units: Will there be flat rents based on income/size of family as well as the size of the unit? Most Section 42s have set rents.

Response: *For clarification, all Section 42 properties have set rents. There are some variations in unit sizes, because of location in the building but 1-bedrooms are about 600 sq ft, and 2-bedrooms are about 800 sq ft. These are common sizes in our market.*

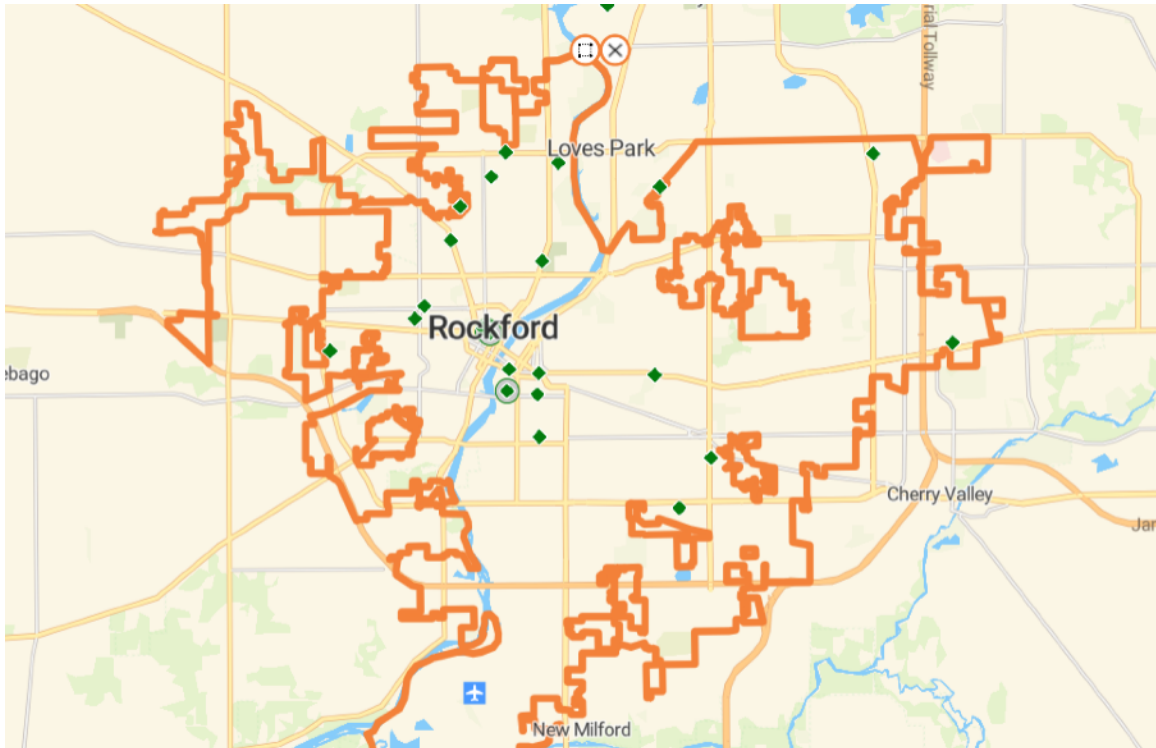
This property currently has the following rents set for each unit set aside category. (I say "currently" as these change annually due to market fluctuations)

AMI Set Aside	# bedrooms	#baths	# Units	Utility Allowance	Tenant Rent
30%	1	1	10	\$74	\$453
30%	1	1	1	\$74	\$453
50%	1	1	18	\$74	\$755
60%	1	1	15	\$74	\$906
30%	2	1	5	\$97	\$543
50%	2	1	5	\$97	\$906
60%	2	1	10	\$97	\$1,087
			64		

This is a mixed-income/mixed-affordability property.

Question: I have many section 42 units in my Ward. Some are great but for others, I had to encourage the landlord to sell.

Response: *Combined, the City of Rockford and Loves Park has 30 Section 42 apartment complexes, with most of them built prior to 1995. The number of units in these properties ranges from the lowest of 4 to the highest of 120, with an average of about 66. It appears 2 developments may be in your ward with a total of 65 units (40 units + 25 units), with construction dates in 1998 and 2011 respectively. If ever there are issues with the landlords of these units, there is 1) code enforcement, and 2) IHDA for sources to address these concerns if the landlord is non-responsive.*



Question: Management: I have not been impressed with the maintenance of The Grove. I am not blaming the manager as I don't know the cause of the issue. The garbage room should be power washed on a regular basis.

Response: *Please feel free to send me other concerns if you have them, but I know from our monthly meetings at RHA, you had concerns about the entry door paint failure. We had to address this with the original contractor due a prep issue. It took longer than we all wanted, but it was resolved and addressed.*

RE: the trash building, over summer months it is sprayed down routinely, but winter conditions don't allow for that because it creates icy surfaces. Part of the reason we built an enclosed building vs. a trash surround, is that multi-family trash control is routinely an issue. Not all residents use the dumpsters the way they are intended – affordable or market rate. I know management has been diligent to ensure residents put the trash in the dumpster vs. next to it. Can we do better in that space, absolutely, we always can, and we continue to focus on correct resident behaviors about trash disposal.

Question: In this new development, will you ensure that there are outside water faucets to maintain the grounds?

Response: *We understand the intent but won't put exterior spigots on the property. On any multifamily property (market or affordable) spigots are a problem with children playing with them, causing flooding and freezing. We can discuss the potential for an irrigation system, as we agree with your concerns and are not fans of sunburnt grass in the fall on any property.*

— — —

Question: Right now, this is going to be a very tough sale but this type of housing is very necessary.

Response: *We agree with you on both the necessity and the likelihood of successful council passage. We think there seems to be a disconnect between what our community needs for housing and what is perceived as the need. Rental housing reports show the need for housing across all income levels, including market-rate rents – excepting the 31% to 50% AMI level. (See chart at end) We are hopeful we can navigate this and see a successful passage of this much-needed housing and address the*

— — —

Question: By the way, are there any plans to put in access to water outside of the units at The Grove? They are desperately needed.

Response: *There are not, given the same reason mentioned above. Is your request to ensure the grass remains green, or is there another need I am not aware of?*

— — —

Question: Please consider the above suggestions and if changes are made and you use set rents, I may be able to explain to the Council the difference between Affordable and Low Income. Affordable is wanted. Low Income is not anywhere in the City.

Response: *I am hopeful we can navigate a better understanding of the value of providing affordable housing to those considered low-income as well as moderate-income. As noted in the rents above, we will serve both populations by the set rent levels we agreed to in the Section 42 Tax Credit application. There are countless studies that show crime goes down and surrounding property values go up when high-quality, well-managed affordable housing options are*

Income Bracket	Renters
<p>“Extremely Low Income” or 0-30% HAMFI</p> <p>\$0 - \$16,910 annual income</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There was a shortage of 5,402 units in 2019. • Gaps occur across all apartment types, but 0-1 BR rental units make up more than half of the shortage, with a shortage of 3,038 units in 2019. • Due to the shortage of units affordable to those at 0-30% MFI, they are likely competing with households of all incomes for units that are out of their price range. • Even assuming no population growth, Rockford will need 5,483 units affordable to this income group by 2029 to house today’s population.
<p>“Very Low Income” or 31-50% HAMFI</p> <p>\$16,911 - \$26,550 annual income</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There was a surplus of 269 units in 2019, but not enough to meet the high gap from those in the less than 30% income bracket • As in the 0-30% MFI category, the largest supply shortage is with the 0-1BR units.
<p>“Low Income” or 51-80% HAMFI</p> <p>\$26,551 - \$42,450 annual income</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is an excess of 5,369 units that are affordable to this income. However, residents at this income level compete with residents in the extremely and very low-income brackets for housing. This nominal excess is still resulting in an overall shortage of over 5,000 units affordable to the extremely low income and very low income levels.

provided to residents in need. RHDC President Lumpkins shared this information in a recent email to the council with one study, but there are others, and we have the benefit to prove it based on the New Towne Condo study of the last three sales. One can look at the last six, or ten sales and find the same results. We are happy to provide additional studies and/or data if Council wishes.

I am hopeful we can see the return affordable housing provides for those who live on the property and those who live around it.

— — —

Please give me the guidelines.

Response: Housing unit analysis by

income level:

<p>81-100% of HAMFI \$42,451 - \$53,100 annual income</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There was a surplus of 1,212 units that are affordable to this income group, which is likely meeting the demand for housing across income groups.
<p>100%+ of HAMFI \$53,101+ annual Income</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There was a shortage of 3,067 units that matched the income levels of this bracket, meaning they are renting units that are affordable to renters in lower income brackets.

###

The Rockford Housing Development Corporation (RHDC) is a 501c3 organization with a mission to provide affordable housing for low-income individuals in the Rockford area. The RHDC is led by a Board of Directors composed of five Rockford residents with a strong desire to address the underlying conditions of poverty and improve the conditions of Rockford neighborhoods.